

# Derbyshire Squash Rackets Association

Press Release - 20 May 2008

<http://www.derbyshiresquash.co.uk>

## DERBYSHIRE'S ENGLAND MASTERS 2008



Jason Foster   Kevin White   Neil Nightingale  
Lesley Sturgess   Greg Loach

Derbyshire boasted five England players in the recent Home Internationals. All the England teams retained their titles against Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

England O35s were in Edinburgh to defend their title, but having only beaten Scotland 3-2 last year in Cardiff, Scotland were looking to go one better with home advantage. England were again captained by Duffield SC's Kevin White, who was joined by club and Derbyshire team-mate Jason Foster also representing England for the second time. England's first match was against Wales, who were last year's wooden-spoonists and they were to go on to repeat that feat this year. England duly cruised to a 5-0 victory without dropping a game. The Welsh fought hard and the score-line didn't reflect their efforts kindly. Foster was particularly in mean mood beating D Jones 9-1 9-0 9-0. Meanwhile, Scotland and Ireland had a fine tussle; the Scots pulling through 4-1 to leave

England just ahead after the first round of matches. In the second round Scotland beat Wales 5-0, to put the pressure back on England in their tie with Ireland. Foster was rested for this match ready for the Scots later that day. White was wishing he had had the morning off too as the Irish No. 1, Rob Staunton, was in good form and his motivation bolstered by a small wager placed the previous evening. Staunton clinched the 1<sup>st</sup> 5-9 and led the second 5-2, before White slowly began to gain the upper hand. 2-0 down would have been difficult to reverse and White pushed hard to take the 2<sup>nd</sup> 9-7. White didn't look like losing the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>, but was made to work particularly hard, eventually winning those 9-5 9-6 and securing the victory for England.

England 2 Scotland 2; and so to what was effectively now a final. Scotland had breezed through their earlier match without expending too much energy, but England had had far more obdurate opponents in Ireland. England's No. 5 Glen Ragou (Lancashire) lost the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and trailed 4-2 in the 4<sup>th</sup>, before clawing his way back into the match to take an edgy 3-2 win against a gutsy Craig Thomson. With relief England were on the score board. No. 3 Jamie Goodrich (Norfolk) started in good form, but in the 2<sup>nd</sup> game he was well kept off the T, as Jamie Jacobson levelled. Goodrich was now on the back foot, defending some great drives from the Scot who duly reached game ball in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, but luck was with Goodrich finding a back-court 'nick' and then a poor cross-court also found the nick in the service box for Goodrich to take the game 9-8. Jacobson's concentration was elsewhere in the 4<sup>th</sup>, probably thinking

## Derbyshire Squash Rackets Association

Press Release - 20 May 2008

<http://www.derbyshiresquash.co.uk>

why he had chosen 'set-one' in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Goodrich sped to game ball in the 4<sup>th</sup> winning it at the first ask and clinching victory to put England 2-0 up. White was again slow to start in the first against some excellent power hitting from Scotland's No.1 Peter O'Hara. White gamely got into the 2<sup>nd</sup>, but poor shot selection at 7-8 and a couple of lusty blows from O'Hara took the game away. O'Hara's made short work of the 3<sup>rd</sup> keeping Scotland in the tie and holding on to a chance to surprise England. Things were looking good for the Scots as 4<sup>th</sup> string Jason Foster quickly found himself 2-0 down to some unorthodox and inventive shot making from Steve Lucidi. The nerves were set jingling in the England camp. During the break between games 2 and 3, White 'gently' persuaded Foster to up the pace at the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup>; the captain's advice was put to good effect. Now Lucidi had much less time on the ball, was less creative and soon the mistakes came. Foster kept the pace high and the ball deep and pushed for the win England desperately needed. Lucidi started the 5<sup>th</sup> well to go 4-2 up, but from there Foster found a great width and with his deft volleys took the 5<sup>th</sup> to seal his win and give England the O35 crown once again. England No.2 Nick Wall made the score-line a rather flattering 4-1 for England, but in reality it was a mighty close match.

England O45s ventured into Welsh territory for the defence of their title. LA Fitness' Greg Loach's first season in the Masters Series got off to a shaky start, but vital wins over team mates Chris Harland and James Ockwell meant he was selected at No.2. England got off to the best possible start with a 5-0 win over Ireland. Loach made a

happy start to his International debut beating Ireland's Julian Bidlake 9-0 7-9 9-1 9-6. Scotland's erstwhile champion Alan Thompson defeated England's No.1 Greg Pearman, but Loach and the rest of the team brought England close to another title. Loach beat Scotland's Jim Wells 9-4 9-4 9-3 for his second victory. England dropped only one tie against Wales with Loach adding a third victory in a thoroughly solid display, 9-5 9-1 9-3, over Mike Workman.

Neil Nightingale (Lumb Farm) helped England O55s retain their Home International title for a second season. England made do without Nightingale in their first match against Ireland winning 5-0 comfortably. Nightingale then played at No.5 against Scotland where he overcame the loss of the first game to beat E Cowell 2-9 9-7 9-7 9-4. Nightingale then played at No.4 against Wales beating C Morgan 9-7 9-2 9-5.

Lesley Sturgess (Duffield) was playing in her 5<sup>th</sup> successive England O45 side and had the honour of being captain. Ireland pulled out at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. Sturgess, last season's National O45 Champion, was in fine form only a few weeks after major surgery and dispatched Scotland's Clair Thompson 9-0 9-1 9-0. Wales proved tougher opponents, but Sturgess came through in convincing fashion 9-3 9-5 9-4. England were once again champions and without dropping a single game.

Kevin White DSRA Chairman  
[kevin@derbyshiresquash.co.uk](mailto:kevin@derbyshiresquash.co.uk)