

Derbyshire Squash Rackets Association

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DERBYSHIRE DUO NATIONAL RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONS 2008



Lesley Sturgess & Laura Hill

England No.8 squash player **Laura Hill** added a third consecutive National **Racketball** Championship to her growing list of titles. Derbyshire's leading squash player has adapted remarkably well to racquetball, with her wall-clinging drives and excellent court coverage she is a very formidable racquetball adversary.

Seeded No. 1, the defending champion brushed aside Caroline Curtis 3-0 after a bye in the first round. Lauren Selby (Herts) proved a tougher challenge in the quarter final making Hill work hard around the front of the court. Selby toughed out numerous long rallies and had some success with deft drop shots and angles. However, Hill doesn't give away many opportunities with every shot having a purpose and this is very wearing towards the end of a game. As each game progressed Hill became more dominant and Selby was forced to open up the court far too often in her search for winners. Hill glided to a comfortable 3-0 win to take her into the final for a repeat of last year's contest against Warwickshire's Vicky Hynes.

Hynes is an accomplished squash player with an array of tricky front court shots and strong will to win. However, Hill was in supreme form hitting both excellent lengths and drops as well as moving with great élan around the court. The full crowd

were thrilled by some excellent rallies, both players opening up the court for possible winners and retrieving the seemingly impossible. Hill's determined game and absence of half court shots frustrated Hynes who wasn't enjoying being hauled from corner to corner. After a tough 1st game 15-12, the 2nd was all Hill's 15-6 for a 2-0 lead. Hynes stuck with the pace in the 3rd, but could never quite ever take the lead. A chance at 12-11 was Hynes' last as Hill powered through to her third Championship.

Lesley Sturgess' recovery from major surgery continued with a fine performance to sweep aside the Ladies O45 field. Not only did she win the O45 category, but amazingly also reached the final of the O35 event losing to England O35 squash player Claire Walker (Yorks).

Sturgess, the No. 1 seed, breezed through her first two rounds without dropping a game. Like her training partner Laura Hill, a great asset of her game is excellent movement enabling her to take the ball early and put her opponents under pressure. In the other half of the draw, unseeded Jo Robinson (Surrey) forced her way through the draw to the final. Sturgess took the first 15-8, but Robinson levelled by taking an edgy 2nd 16-17. Sturgess got her game back on track taking the next two 15-7 15-9 to add the National Racquetball 2008 title to her National Squash title in 2007.

Other Derbyshire interest included **Lee Watson** (LA Fitness) who lost in the quarter-finals of the O45s, **Nigel Millington** (The Manor) who also lost in the quarters of the O50s and **Matt Stone** (David Lloyd) in the main Men's event.

Racquetball is growing fast in the UK and the number and quality of the entrants again took a huge step forward.

Kevin White DSRA Chairman
kevin@derbyshiresquash.co.uk
www.derbyshiresquash.co.uk