

# Derbyshire Squash Rackets Association

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

## Harris Inter-Counties Championship

### **O35 Finals, Bexley, Kent 21-22 Feb 2009**

Derbyshire O35s put in a real team performance beating a strong Middlesex side in a repeat of last years' **semi-final**. At No.5 Murray Scott successfully recovered from a long standing leg strain, but a lack of match play eventually told as he lost 3-2. Scott failed to close out a crucial 1<sup>st</sup> game (8-10) before finding better form to take the 2<sup>nd</sup> and then the 3<sup>rd</sup>, but that lack of match fitness saw him fade away losing the 4<sup>th</sup> then the 5<sup>th</sup> both 9-4. When No.3 Brendan Hickerman (Brampton Manor) puts on a County shirt he becomes a lean mean unstoppable hacking machine and there are few opponents who can cope with his pace. Scottish International Alan Thompson really had no answer to the whirlwind, with Hickerman winning 3-0 to level the match. No.1 Kevin White was struggling with sore Achilles, and Anders Yeo took full advantage winning the 1<sup>st</sup> easily. White gathered himself finding a better line and length and as suppleness returned kept Yeo at bay through the next 3 games to take the match 1-9 9-5 9-4 9-4.

Enter Duffield's Jason Foster who celebrated his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday with a truly heroic performance against the most resilient of opponents Alex Couch. In what turned out to be the defining match of the Championship, Foster crucially won the 1<sup>st</sup> 9-7 coming back from 5-7. Long, strength sapping rallies were par and Foster was relieved to win the 2<sup>nd</sup> 9-5. Couch redoubled his efforts and Foster tired. Trying to cut the rallies short, Foster's error count mounted and Couch looked dangerous as he won the 3<sup>rd</sup> 9-5. After sharing the early points, Couch moved to 8-5 in the 4<sup>th</sup> and Foster was deep in trouble, but not done yet. Pushed on by the vocal supporters Foster regained the serve and long rally after long rally Foster clawed his way to 8-8. The serve changed hands time and time again, but Foster's better stroke play and a few skilful deceptions saw Foster home 10-8 and Derbyshire into the final. In the other semi-final Durham & Cleveland beat Kent 4-1.



**Derbyshire O35s Harris Inter-Counties Champions 2008/9**

**Murray Scott, Jason Foster, Brendan Hickerman  
Kevin White, Richard Woodroofe**

**The final**, against former multiple winners Durham & Cleveland, had the pre-match air of a tense nervy match. However, with Brendan Hickerman again firing on all cylinders he quickly surpassed an early lead gained by the evergreen Pete Lonsdale. From 1-4 in the 1<sup>st</sup> game Hickerman powered to victory 9-4 9-1 9-1 to calm Derbyshire's nerves. Murray Scott's slow start turned to quick fire squash and those powerful drives and scything cross-court kills also saw him home in 3 games , 9-6 9-0 9-4.

Richard Woodroofe, somewhat hampered by a tight adductor could remember the greater pain of losing in the final last year and simply wasn't to be denied in this year's final. Fortunately, Jason Youdale was also struggling for full fitness and once Woodroofe took the 1<sup>st</sup> two games 9-7 9-7, the 3<sup>rd</sup> came easily 9-0. Woodroofe's stoic, stubborn and selfless effort epitomised Derbyshire's team spirit and gave them their 2<sup>nd</sup> and consecutive O35 Inter-Counties title. At No.1 National O40s Champion, Yawar Abbas conceded to Kevin White after slipping in the 1<sup>st</sup> game and Jason Foster revenged his loss to Andy Cross in the earlier group stages to give Derbyshire a resounding 5-0 win.

**Kevin White DSRA Chairman**