

# Derbyshire Squash & Racketball

Press Release - 23 March 2010

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

## Junior Inter Counties Championships Boys U15 Finals

Having got through the Stage 1 Derbyshire U15s reached their first finals of the Inter Counties Championships. Derbyshire started with a semi-final against Kent which always looked like it would be a close affair particularly for the top three strings. Alex Wilson and Craig Osborne played at nos.4 & 5 respectively, but despite brave performances both lost 3-0, so it was all or nothing for the next three matches. Enter James Blythe at no.3 who played well, running every rally down and eased to a fairly comfortable 3-1 victory; match score 1-2. Russell Clark was next at no.1, but he was drawn against an opponent who had beaten him in a close 3-2 match only two weeks earlier. However, this time Clark took control and despite the rallies being long and hard he always looked in front, eventually winning 3-1; match score 2-2. So to the no.2s, and Adam Turner chance to win it against the odds for Derbyshire, however, Turner battled well but victory was just out of his reach. That left us in a 3/4 playoff with Essex who had been beaten by Yorkshire.



Craig Osborne started at 5 but was soon struggling with a recurrence of a hamstring injury and quickly lost 3-0. Alex Wilson looked to be on the wrong end of a short match losing his first game quickly, but he rallied well and played some encouragingly good squash. However, his initial lead in the 5<sup>th</sup> game began to slip to his more experienced opponent and he eventually just lost out, but it was one of his best performances. Now 2-0 down and with it all to do especially as Russell Clark would have to face the current English no.1 and British Champion who has

been unbeaten all season. James Blythe was next though, but this time his stronger opponent kept him at bay for a 3-0 loss. Derbyshire were now 3-0 down and Clark was now up against the best U15 in the country, Richie Fallows. This didn't faze Clark and he fought tenaciously despite the calibre of his opponent, losing 3-2 but put up an impressive performance in an entertaining battle. Adam Turner saved Derbyshire from a whitewash winning the final match 3-1.

Although finishing last in these finals, being the 4<sup>th</sup> best county in the UK was a big achievement and bodes well for the future of this team throughout the age groups. Well done to the whole team.

## Boys U17 Plate Finals

Derbyshire U17s, headed by Ashley Davies, also travel to Kent on 28<sup>th</sup> March to take on Avon, Middlesex and hosts Kent. Davies will be joined by Russell Clark and James Blythe from the U15s and Joe Harvey and Owen Wilson.

## Individual Performances

### English Master Open

Nottingham Squash Club 19-21 March 2010

Greg Loach played the match of the tournament in the semi-final of the O45s event, winning a brutal encounter with Durham's Peter Lonsdale to see him through to another final. Loach's first opponent was fellow Derbyshire stalwart Mike Herridge who had played an early first round match where he defeated Les Chaplin 3-0. In this repeat of the Derbyshire County Closed O45s final, Herridge again looked leaner and hungrier forcing Loach to play some of his best squash. Loach took the first two games 11-6 11-3, but then Herridge found his range on the slow Nottingham courts to get Loach away from the 'T'. Herridge was determined to take a game off Loach after missing out on their previous match and he duly took the 3<sup>rd</sup> 12-10. A good start by Loach in the 4<sup>th</sup> was enough to hold off Herridge as the point a rally scoring doesn't usually allow for exciting comebacks. Loach's quarter final opponent was Nottingham's Clive Walters. This match had a bizarre end to it; Loach took the 1<sup>st</sup> game 11-3, but then Walters shook hands seemingly retiring. However, Walters must have thought he could then continue, but Loach had already showered; match to Loach.

Into the semi-final, both Lonsdale and Loach are known for their fighting qualities and this match didn't half deliver its thrills and spills. The slow but bouncy courts suited Lonsdale's retrieval skills and Loach wasn't able to put the ball away as effectively. There was little to choose between these two throughout the first, but Lonsdale just kept his nose in front and took it 12-10. Loach levelled things taking the 2<sup>nd</sup> 11-9 so the two were on equal points. Another crunching-hard game went to Lonsdale 12-10, Loach missing out on a game point at 10-9. Both were struggling to play outright winners, instead relying on their opponent's mistakes from tight shots. The retrieving from both players was exceptional. Lonsdale, ever the gritty player, led in the 4<sup>th</sup> and painstakingly edged towards match point 10-7, but Loach refused to yield saving three match points with some exquisite drops and boasts. 10-10 and with stuffing knock out of Lonsdale, Loach converted to 12-10 and a 5<sup>th</sup> game beckoned. No quarter was given and again it was point for point to 10-9 where Loach had his first match point. Lonsdale saved that, but Loach's return of serve kill set him up for another chance and with a wide cross court passed Lonsdale the match was his. This 84 minute match was greeted with a standing ovation.

Understandably, Loach hadn't fully recovered for the final and against 'new' O45 Peter Gunter from Middlesex, who will be playing for England O40s at no.2, made sure there were no heroics from Loach. 11-4 11-5 11-4 was a noble effort.

**Kevin White** returned to the O35 fold for this tournament and showed he could still hold his own by reaching the final with ease. Still hopping for an O35 England place despite a lack of ranking points White defeated Chris Stanley 11-5 11-6 11-6 in the quarter finals to set up a semi-final match against Norfolk's Jamie Goodrich. White was looking to impress and he duly delivered playing some aggressive squash to open up the court. Goodrich's phenomenal speed around court kept him in the hunt at 8-8 in the 1<sup>st</sup>, but White's drop shots held sway to give him the 1<sup>st</sup> 11-8. White dominated the next two in almost error free squash and helped along by Goodrich lack of confidence on the drop the match was over 11-5 11-3.

Almost faultless squash was the order of the final, but it was the higher ranked Nick Wall of Yorkshire who was dishing it out. 11-3 to Wall showed an unexpected dominance, but White increased the tempo in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and found a much better length to trouble Wall. The 2<sup>nd</sup> went 11-4 to White, but Wall

quickly re-established his lead rattling off a run of points to 8-1. White had dropped the pace of the game trying to increase accuracy, but that was to Wall's strength. In the point-a-rally scoring there's no way back and White let the 3<sup>rd</sup> go 11-1. Wall was off to a flyer in the 4<sup>th</sup>; White began to match Wall however, with the early lead and the rally-for-rally exchange Wall eased to victory 11-6 for his first European Master's Series title.

**Lesley Sturgess** resumed her career long battle with Nottingham rival Susan Pynegar. Playing on her home courts was enough to give her a slight advantage and Pynegar took the opening two games 11-7 11-9. However, fighting qualities kicked in and she took a close 3<sup>rd</sup> game 13-11. However, in the 4<sup>th</sup> Pynegar's wide swing caught Sturgess just below the eye. Sturgess might have had the match awarded to her, but she was determined to fight on. A game ball was little consolation for Sturgess as Pynegar won 13-11 in the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Kevin White**  
DSR Chairman