

Junior Squash Grand Prix Event and End of Season Awards. May 2017

This season has seen 38 players from Derbyshire and the surrounding counties play in these popular Junior Squash events. Although this is a reduction in numbers from previous years, it still demonstrates there is a decent number of talented, enthusiastic youngsters turning up at these events and we should be proud of them all.

The Grand Prix events are merely a stepping stone towards bigger and better achievements for some, and for others the events provide the opportunity for them to play squash at a slightly more competitive level than perhaps they are used to, and they are a starting point for players to play, and enjoy, the game of squash.

As usual, events were held at Princes Club, Duffield and Ilkeston Manor and some tremendous squash has been played, not just by those in the top groups but also by some of the newcomers to the game. The hope is that many of the players will step up and play in sanctioned events and represent Derbyshire at inter-county level in the not too distant future.

After 12 years, this was the last Grand Prix that my husband Andy and I will organise.

Some Thank Yous:

- A special mention to Dave & Jenny at 'J & S Trophies', Hasland, Chesterfield. They are brilliant and cannot be recommended enough. They go above and beyond normal customer expectations, personally delivering trophies and sourcing cups and awards at all times of the day and evening!
- Jo Wallis, Development Officer - the support and dedication shown by Jo to Derbyshire's young squash players is certainly very much appreciated.
- The coaches: Jane, John, Lesley, Steve, the coaches over at Hallamshire & Abbeydale, Jason, and others.
- Parents and guardians - those who drive the players around to events like the Grand Prix and further afield - not to mention the waiting around that is a part of tournament squash!

- Andy, my husband - he's been helping out with the GP events for 12 years too, perhaps not always front of house, but always there sorting out the GP points, order of play etc.

Michael Wallis, last year's Grand Prix Title winner handed out the awards and a racket grip was given to each player.

Firstly to **Adam Brass**. Following in the footsteps of two of his older brothers, Tom & Seb, who both played in the Grand Prix events, Adam arrived, puppy faced, not much bigger than his racket and in the bottom group. Nervous, just a beginner, he consequently lost all his matches. And that was the case in at least the first 2, if not 3 GPs he played in. No wins. There were tears, there was frustration, but there was also determination. I fondly remember that when Adam did win his first Grand Prix match his Mum wasn't watching - she was supporting one of her other boys. But I saw! His little face lit up and that was the start of things. And look where he is now and still only 13 years old, Adam is an example to us all. He has grit, determination, yes he can get frustrated, but usually at himself, but he's a fighter.

Adam was presented with a squash T shirt with his name on the back.

The Most Helpful Award, was presented to someone who throughout the season was helpful - someone who could usually be counted on and who actually frequently volunteered to mark - **Finlay Stott**, who also received a T shirt with his name on the back.

Most Improved Player, always a tricky category as, honestly, so many players have come on during the season, however, this season, and winning a racket the award was presented to **Alex Lapworth**.

The Future Champion Award, again there are so many players who could potentially win the Grand Prix title one day that it really was difficult to pick just one person out; however, the Future Champion Award, with the prize of a racket went to **Harry Watson**.

The Grand Prix Title Trophy. This award is presented annually to the player who has accumulated the most points throughout the season - check out some of the names on the trophy - Joel Hinds who was, at one time ranked in the top few best players in the world; Phil Scully, who many over at Princes, know and who is the current county champion as well as being captain of the county team. More

recently Matt Barton and my own son, Alex Wilson, both who now play for the first team at Newcastle University, Duffield's, Molly Tomlinson etc etc.

The Runner-Up for the season 2016-17 was **Harry Watson**

And finally, the Winner of the Grand Prix Title was **Matthew Gregory**

Helen Wilson (May '17)