

COLCHESTER & EAST ESSEX BADMINTON FEDERATION

TOURNAMENT SECRETARY'S REPORT 2013

The fifty-sixth annual tournament was held on 23rd and 24th March at the University of Essex, who hosted the tournament for the eighth time. On arising from my bed on the Saturday morning to see heavy snow falling from the skies, I wondered if disaster was about to happen. What if many of the competitors could not journey to Colchester? Fortunately the roads stayed clear and most competitors arrived on time.

Thirty entrants competed in the men's singles open event. In the top half of the draw Li Qi from representing the University of Essex was playing in his last Colchester Open before returning to China. Li has always reached the final stages of the singles event, but alas has never reached the final. This year was not different. In the second round Li Qi won a close encounter against newcomer Arran Weston (Badminton Academy, Basildon). He then had a harder match against veteran Ian Smith (Epping), which he won in three games after setting in the final game. In the semi-final he came up against Stanway player Joe Skornia, who won the title in 2010. He took the first game, but Joe came back strongly to reach the final. Earlier Joe had beaten another good, young player, Stephen Pickering from Chelmsford Casuals. The bottom half of the draw proved no less competitive. Our own Simon Gilhooly took three games to overcome the young James Smith – son of Ian, before losing his quarter-final match to Dan Moss (Garrison & YMCA). The other quarter-final was between YMCA club colleagues Luke Hill and David Poole, with the latter winning in straight games. In the semi-final Dan Moss won through in two games. In the final Joe Skornia won a tight first game, but with Dan Moss taking the second game, another close encounter was in hand. Alas, with the score on 18 points all, Joe had to retire, having pulled a leg muscle, giving Dan his first Colchester Open singles title.

The plate event gave a chance for the young Zach Pallier from Crouch Vale to shine. He made his way to the final with comfortable wins over Joe Perry (Stanway) and John Broadmeadow (Felixstowe). Veteran Matthew Lampard (Epping) experienced a slightly harder time in reaching the final, with wins over Chris Ranson (St Mary Magdalen), Ben Haythorpe (Earls Colne) and Yugal Khatri (University of Essex). Now tiring, Matthew found Zach Pallier too strong for him in the final.

The ladies singles was somewhat decimated by the withdrawal of the two seeded players Rebecca Terry and Catherine Bailey (both Fitzwimarc). The former was injured and Catherine was suffering from breathing problems. Izzy Lucas (Stowmarket) beat Emma Clark in the semi-finals, whilst her ladies' doubles partner Kimberly Gormer (Blestead) was taken to three games by Kate Taylor (Stanway). Izzy took the title by winning in two games. Mandy Davies (Coastal Wanderers) took three games to beat Kate Taylor in the plate event, before beating her ladies doubles partner Linzi Chatfield (also coastal Wanderers) in the final.

The Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress of Colchester, Councillors Colin and Laura Sykes, between them presented the winners and runners-up of the singles events with their trophies. In return our Secretary Louise Walsh presented the Deputy Mayoress with some flowers.

Twenty-fives pairs contested the men's doubles event. Top seeds Bir Singh and Rohan Kapoor (Ramgarhia) reached the semi-finals without mishap. There they met Alex Chu (Stanway), who teamed up with Keith Goodey, who won the title in 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2010 in partnership with Mark Law, following the withdrawal of Nicholas Fan (Redbridge) through injury. The scratch pair had beaten Chelmsford Casuals pair Mark and Stephen Gooday in the quarter-final. The semi-final was a close and exciting affair, with the top seeds winning 21-19 in the final game. In the bottom half of the draw Simon Gilhooly and his left-handed partner Luke Hill did well to reach the semi-finals, beating the Smith father and son combination on the way. Second seeds Dan Moss and David Poole enjoyed a comfortable ride to the semi-finals, before beating Simon and Luke to reach the final. The Suffolk pair then showed good form to take the title by beating the top seeds in straight games. It was time now for a local pair to find success and it was Chris Ranson and Martin Southgate (St Mary Magdalen) who provided it in the plate event. Ben Haythorpe and Wilf Janssen (Earls Colne) defeated James Cesareo and Simon Ford in a closely contested semi-final. The final was even more closely contested with the St Mary Magdalen pair taking the title after losing the first game.

Linzi Chatfield and Mandy Davies were defending the title they had won for the last two years. After losing the first game 20-22 to Kimberly Gormer and Izzy Lucas in the semi-finals, they succumbed to defeat. In the other half of the draw, Rebecca Andras (Garrison) and Vicky Wrycraft (St Mary Magdalen) took the seeded pairing of Balpreet Chager and Jacqui Twitchell (Ramgarhia) to three games, before losing. The latter went on to beat Karen Wilson and Caroline Woodcock (Stanway) in the semi-final (it was good to see the Stanway pair back in action again). Predictably the final went to the final game, with the Suffolk pair taking the title – just. In the plate semi-final Rebecca and Vicky won over Karen and Caroline in three hard fought games, to meet Emma Clark (Crouch Vale) and Kate Taylor, in the final. The latter took the plate title with another three game contest.

We were paid a visit by Stephen Smith (Secretary of YMCA), who had been the first ever winner of the men's singles title in 1958. Stephen also won the title from 1960 to 1962. Nikki Richardson also made a visit on Saturday and a fleeting visit on Sunday.

Sixteen pairs contested the mixed doubles open event on the Sunday. Again the snow fell early in the day, but again all participants were able to arrive on time. The event was played initially on a round robin basis, with four groups. Simon Gilhooly and Michelle Bellman (Stanway) won group 1, with three wins; Bir Singh and Balpreet Chager (Ramgarhia) won group 2, with three wins; Dan Moss and Sue McKinley (Garrison/Corinthians) won group 3, also with three wins; and Martin Everitt (Stanway) and Kate Taylor won group 4, with 2 wins and 5 games. In the knock out stage Simon Ford and Julia Cloughton did well to take Simon Gilhooly and Michelle Bellman to three games in the semi-finals and in the other semi-final Bir Singh and Balpreet Chager beat Dan Moss and Sue McKinley in the closest of matches, winning the final game 21-19. A top quality final followed, with the local pairing of Gilhooly and Bellman taking the title. In the plate final the University of Essex pairing of Jonathan Yu and Jaclyn Lai beat the “never give up” Ben Haythorpe and Emma Clark, after an extremely close first game.

The veterans events are gaining in popularity once again. Two groups of five contested the men's over 40 event. In group one the very strong pairing of Paul Belcher and Alistair Bowen (Chelmsford Casuals) coasted through to the knock out stages with four comfortable wins. It was almost a similar ride for Andrew Jennings (Corinthians) and Michael Laker (Garrison) in group 2, except that they were extended to three games by Dil Pun and Kaman Pun (Harold Hill). Belcher and Bowen put paid to the hopes of James Cesareo (St Mary Magdalen) and Keith Burmby (Garrison) in the semi-finals to meet the winners of group 2. The Chelmsford Casuals pair won the final in two games. In the plate final Kaman Pun had to retire early in the match to give Ajit Rai and Tej Limbu (Harold Hill) victory.

The mixed doubles over 40 event was played as a single group round robin event. James Cesareo and Sally Taylor (St Mary Magdalen) began well by beating Simon Gilhooly and Louise Walsh (Stanway), but unfortunately the latter had to withdraw as an urgent telephone call took her away. However, the winning pair continued their good form and won all their matches. Keith Burmby and Tresa Bartlett (St Mary Magdalen) only lost the one match to become runner-up. James Cesareo had played twelve matches and was still standing by the finish, which was just before the sports centre closed at 8 p.m.

I thank Robin Metson for overseeing the play in the sports hall (whilst the organisation was in progress on the balcony) and for looking after the shuttlecocks. I am also grateful to other volunteers who helped with feeding in the results and other small tasks over the two days; they include Louise Walsh, Joanne Poole, Julie Skornia and Carl Thomas. My thanks, too, to the University staff, who, as usual, were extremely helpful. Finally, I thank Max Sports for providing the trophies, especially to Chris Baker, who had to transport the trophies from Sandwich in Kent on the Saturday through the snow.

Results:

Men's Singles Open: D. Moss (Garrison/YMCA) beat J. Skornia (Stanway) 19-21, 21-8, 18-18 ret.
Men's Singles Plate: Z. Pallier (Crouch Vale) beat M. Lampard (Epping) 21-17, 21-16
Ladies' Singles Open: I. Lucas (Stowmarket) beat K. Gormer (Belstead) 21-11, 21-13
Ladies' Singles Plate: M. Davies (Coastal Wanderers) beat L. Chatfield (Coastal Wanderers) 21-16, 21-8
Men's Doubles Open: D. Moss and D. Poole (Garrison/YMCA) beat B. Singh, R. Kapoor (Ramgarhia) 21-11, 21-18

Men's Doubles Plate: C. Ranson, M. Southgate (St Mary Magdalen) beat B. Haythorpe, W. Janssen (Earls Colne) 12-21, 21-18, 21-17
Ladies' Doubles Open: K. Gormer (Belstead), I. Lucas (Stowmarket) beat B. Chager, J. Twitchell (Ramgarhia) 9-21, 21-12, 21-19
Ladies' Doubles Plate: E. Clark (Crouch Vale), K. Taylor (Stanway) beat R. andras (Garrison), V. Wrycraft (St Mary Magdalen) 21-15, 19-21, 21-13
Mixed Doubles Open: S. Gilhooly, M. Bellman (Stanway) beat B. Singh, B. Chager (Ramgarhia) 22-20, 21-16
Mixed Doubles Plate: J. Yu, J. Lai (Stanway) beat B. Haythorpe (Earls Colne), E. Clark (Crouch Vale) 22-20, 21-14
Men's Doubles Over 40: P. Belcher, A. Bowen (Chelmsford Casuals) beat A. Jennings (Corinthians), M. Laker (Garrison) 21-9, 21-10
Men's doubles Over 40 Plate: A. Rai, T. Limbu (Harold Hill) beat Dil Pun, Kaman Pun, 3-2 ret.
Mixed Doubles Over 40: Winners J. Cesareo, S. Taylor; runners-up K. Burnby (Garrison), T. Bartlett (St Mary Magdalen).

John Stuck
Tournament Secretary