

CLUB TOURNAMENT DAY

To fit in with the busy lifestyles of Club members and to encourage as much participation as possible, the annual tournament took on a new look. Adopting the Fast4 format, the knockout stages of the singles and doubles were played throughout the month of August.

With the Fast4 format proving to be so successful in the knockout stages, the Chairman took the executive decision to use the same format for all finals.

THE BRIAN NORTHWOOD MIXED DOUBLES TROPHY



An Indian Summer provided perfect tennis conditions for the stalwarts who turned up to early morning registration.

With the atmosphere positively electric, the sixteen players whose names were in the hat, milled around the Chairman's table to find out both the match format and the name of their partner with whom they would play with for a chance to win the now established "**BRIAN NORTHWOOD MIXED DOUBLES TROPHY**"

With no punches pulled and every partnership totally committed to the task in hand, the event turned out to be a very competitive affair. Although all the normal pleasantries were obeyed, the format of first to 4 games meant that each match was brutal. Ultimately though, there can be only one winner and with all the scores submitted and the master spreadsheet scrutinised for any anomalies, John White and Josh Geddie were declared the winners with Nikki Geddie and Colin King as Runners Up.

A special mention must go to Max Geddie, the youngest player in the tournament. If there was a prize for the most energetic and competitive player, it would surely go to him.



LADIES DOUBLES FINAL

Due to other commitments, the Ladies final was completed prior to Finals Day. In an exciting and tense match, Nikki Geddie and Di Baily triumphed over Caroline Chipper and Denise Heal, beating them 4-2, 2-4, 10-1

MEN'S DOUBLES FINAL

This year's final saw three of the four participants from last year's final take to the court. On one side of the net, Colin and Michael King, the formidable father and son team and current reigning champions. On the other side of the net, the wannabees of Jim Hunter and Warren Bigwood.



As expected, Michael's serve was always going to be too hot to handle but apart from this overwhelming challenge, Warren and Jim were playing well and always in the hunt for points. Sadly though, they couldn't string enough of them together to make the breakthrough and buckled every time under the pressure of the "sudden death" rule at deuce,

mainly because of Dad's deep shots setting everything up nicely for his son Michael to land the killer blow to eventually take the 1st set 4-1.

The second set started out well with the challengers holding serve. Once more though, the Kings were in no mood to allow a lead to develop and although the underdogs were now playing well and even started to return some of Michael's serves back into play, the lead and the set soon disappeared and a second set 4-2 win was in the bag for the reigning and now the current Champions.

The result might have been inevitable, but surprisingly, the match turned out to be both entertaining to play in and to watch. In-between the aces and short points, there were enough exciting rallies to keep the spectators mildly interested. In fairness though, they always seemed to finish with another blisteringly fast Michael winner. Still – better winners from Michael than errors from the other mortals on court.

MEN'S SINGLES FINAL

Like all Grand Slam Finals, last up on court was the Men's Singles final. Players for this event was the young 22-year-old professional coach Michael King and the veteran 68-year-old Jim Hunter.

With the mandatory warm-up session completed, odds on favourite and fresh from his double's success, Michael oozed total confidence whilst his competitor, fresh from his doubles defeat, oozed absolute fear.

From the outset, Michael showed his intent by hammering down the first serve. Like the next 3 serves, Jim managed to get a racquet on them but couldn't direct any of them back into play. Jim served well in his opener and achieved his 1st goal – get a



point, but in the end, Michael's strength and superlative array of shots proved too much for the underdog. Worse was to come for the old man of tennis, on his way to a 4-0 first set win Michael served 7 aces in a row before he got tired and the sequence could be broken.



Changing ends at 1-0 provided the opportunity for Jim to earwig a chat between Michael and John Fab on how to anticipate huge serves.

I can advise readers to always listen to the Coach because it worked. After a major breakthrough and 2nd goal achievement when Jim held serve on the dreaded "sudden death" deuce, Jim started to return Michael's ballistic 100+ mph serves. However, returning serves was not enough because clearly irritated after losing his 1st game in the whole tournament, Michael doubled his onslaught and brought his whole armoury of shots to

the party. Refusing to give up and bolstered by his unexpected success, Jim clung on to his serve for a 2nd time, curtesy of yet another sudden death point. However, with Michael serving, he quickly reasserted himself and took the lead again, leaving Jim with the unenviable task of holding serve for a 3rd time to achieve the unthinkable – a tiebreak. By now, with nothing to lose, the underdog put everything into his service game. With points see-sawing, it was inevitable that the game would go to sudden death deuce. Although the ensuing rally wouldn't have looked out of place on the telly, it was Jim that blinked first. Thinking he'd won the point after returning a ball out wide, he underestimated the speed, strength and skill of Michael and a trademark curling forehand popped in to win the 2nd set 4-2 and take home the cup for the 9th successive year.

Organising any activity, especially a tournament is both time consuming and an absolute nightmare, so a big thank you goes out to Tim and John for making the day so special.