

CLUB TOURNAMENT DAY

The Brian Northwood Mixed Doubles Trophy

On a sunny but swirling windy morning, 30 club players converged to a socially distanced meeting point where Tim read out the format and the rules of the tournament. In this year of COVID-19, the tournament looked much different as all players had to register beforehand. On the plus side, it gave Tim the opportunity to balance out the partnerships into 3 separate leagues so everyone could have competitive matches. On the downside, socialising was exceptionally difficult as the Rule of Six was enthusiastically enforced and of course, there was no BBQ.



Each league consisted of 5 teams and each match consisted of 4 games with the number of games won by each partnership being the crucial factor in deciding who would progress to the final. Sadly, for the players in the 3rd league, it was so evenly balanced that 3 out of the 5 teams ended up with 11 games each so all failed to make the cut.

The final was a hotly contested affair and looked for all the world to be going to a tie break, when suddenly, the partnership of Denise Heal and Chris Moore blinked, giving their opposition a sniff. With the offer given, it was duly taken, and Caroline Walden and Mark Balaam gratefully received the trophy from Dorothy Northwood.

Pauline Baily Challenge Cup *This cup is awarded to the person thought to be the Junior Club Member of the year. This is not necessarily a person who won a tournament but someone who has behaved well; played their best tennis sportsmanlike and represented the Club well.*

Will Dack was presented with the Cup by Pauline Baily. Pauline is a lifetime member and one of the Club's founder members who donated the Cup back in 2001.

There was strong competition this year but after long deliberations, the Selection Committee chose Will as this year's deserved winner. Thanks to some good coaching and lots of dedication, Will's tennis has come on leaps and bounds this year and has now started to compete in the Fast4 league, hoping to impress enough to earn a place in one of the men's competitive teams.



Well done Will, we wish you well for the future.

Farewell Dear Friend

Pictured is John Fabisz with Chairman Tim, who informed the members present that John was leaving.

With John Fabisz deciding to up sticks and move to Norfolk, the end of an era is nigh. Although John isn't one of the Founder Members, he's been at the Club so long, you could be forgiven for thinking it.

John has worn a good many hats over the years he's been involved with the Needingworth Tennis Club and is our current Safeguarding Officer, Welfare Officer and Head Coach. Not content with that, he's also the men's 1st team and mixed team captain. Throughout the years, John has been a stalwart at the Club, freely giving his time to help build up the Club to its present standard as well as organising events and giving tips to help others to improve their tennis.

It's not all bad news though, with Needingworth Tennis Club blood running through his veins, John says he'll be back periodically and is still wanting to be considered to play for the team.

You just can't keep a good guy down.

Ladies Doubles Final

Having successfully progressed through the knockout stages, the No 1 seeds of Lizzi Fabisz and Margaret Chambers warmed up on court to do battle against the No 2 seeds, Nikki Geddie and Kaz Tyler.

On paper, it looked like a tasty battle and so it proved to be. With the ladies opting for the same Fast4 format as the qualifying rounds, both teams knew there was "no easing in," it was crucial to get a good solid start.

With 4 good players on court, it was never going to be an aerial lobbing battle, instead the spectators were treated to an entertaining and excellent match with the full repertoire of shots on display. This was a match where points were won on merit rather than points gifted by mistakes.

However, the nature of the beast dictates that in any competition, there must be winners and losers. On this occasion, Tim presented the winners medals to the jubilant pair of Nikki (also last year's winner) and Kaz who beat the top seeds 4-1. 4-2. Thankyou ladies, this was a great final to watch.



Men's Doubles Final

This was the second final of the day that Chris Moore appeared in. This time, his partner was John White. Facing them, the reigning champions for the last 3 years, father and son team of Colin and Michael King. In this match, rather than the Fast4 format, the players took the decision to go the old-fashioned way and play the best of 3 sets.

From the start, it appeared that Colin was carrying some sort of injury, allowing their opposition to capitalise on what was an uncharacteristically shaky start, probably due to Michael having to play slightly out of position trying to cover his old Dad.



In a cracking match, where no prisoners were taken, the Kings were surprisingly broken quite early on and it looked like the unthinkable could happen. Getting their act back together, the Kings broke their opposition to get back to 3 - 3 and then went on to take the set. The rest is history, and with the second set in the bag, they retained their title by winning 6-3, 6-3, leaving Chris and John wondering what might have happened if they'd played a Fast4 instead of a full set.

Ladies Singles Final

The Fast4 format was also adopted for the ladies final. In her second final of the day, newcomer to the Club and experienced player Margaret Chambers played the up and coming but relative novice Kaz Tyler, who was already a trophy holder, after winning the Ladies Doubles just moments before.

This turned out to be an intriguing match because after watching both players in the doubles, it looked very much like power and angled shots would be the key to winning, and Kaz had already shown that she had these shots in her armoury. However, never underestimate the craftiness of an experienced player who's seen it all before.



From the very start, Margaret controlled the match, forcing Kaz to play ball up the middle of the court and never letting her get any of her trademark shots in or to play any angles that might force her opponent out of her comfort zone.

This clever manipulation allowed Margaret the opportunity to show off her own skills. It was obvious from the start that Margaret could rally all day long from the middle of the baseline and from there, it was a case of hard ball here, no pace ball there, another pacy ball and boom, a killer drop shot.

A disappointed Kaz learnt a lot from her 1-4, 1-4 defeat by a good tactician and now the new Ladies Champion, Margaret Chambers

Men's Singles Final

The last match on court and one to salivate over. Chris Moore in his 3rd final of the day up against the 9 times Singles Champion Michael King in a best of 3 setter.

Both men were firing their big guns from the very start, so any thought of Michael having a bad day at the office was soon dispelled.

The display put on by these guys was just awesome. Time and time again, cannon balls would be fired over the net at ridiculous angles to what must surely be a winner, only to be returned with interest. Every time Chris looked as if he was getting the upper hand, Michael stepped up another gear to frustrate and somehow win the point.

Michael may have won 6-2, 6-2 to become the Champion for an unprecedented tenth year in a row, but the real winners on the day were the spectators who stayed to watch the match. They were treated to a match that anyone there would have willingly paid to see. The sheer athleticism and racquet skills displayed by both players was beyond belief and a joy to behold.



SO NEAR – SO FAR – BUT DIDN'T THEY DO WELL

