

Dorchester Tennis & Squash Club - Peter Cox Fun Handicap Tennis **Tournament Monday 6th May**

A sunny Bank Holiday weekend meant perfect conditions for the Spring Peter Cox Fun Handicap Tennis Tournament on Bank Holiday Monday 6th May at Dorchester Tennis & Squash Club. The sunshine attracted a great turn-out with a full draw of 24 players competing to try and win the coveted Peter Cox Memorial Trophy, named after a much loved and missed tennis member who always played with a smile on his face. The biannual tournament adopts a handicap scoring system and draws pairs randomly to level the playing field. There were some very close matches and qualification for the semi-finals from the Round Robin stage was very competitive - 3 players just missed out on qualification by a single game. After 3 tough rounds, Derek Hanby was well ahead of the pack with 19 games won, but 4 players were in the chasing pack, each with 17 games. To decide the semi-final pairings, they had to be separated by a tie-break question (guessing the number of seats in the Roland Garros Court Philippe Chatrier, which according to Wikipedia is 14,840!) and they came out in the following order; Ros Clark, Laura Dodington, Mike Williams and Chris Porter. The remaining semi-finalists were; Richard & Elspeth Gracie and Al Clark.

The remaining players could now relax and enjoy their delicious pot-luck lunch in the sunshine whilst they were treated to some exciting tennis. Chris Porter & Mike Williams were too strong for Ros Clark & Elspeth Gracie and wrapped up their semi-final 6-1 in short order. In the other semi-final Al Clark & Derek Hanby got off to a poor start, going down 0-2, but despite some solid play from Laura Dodington & Richard Gracie they came back to take the set 6-4.

Porter & Williams' Final seemed to be going the way of their semi-final. Al Clark held serve in the first game after several deuces and then Porter & Williams took the next 5 games and at 5-1 seemed to have it all sewn up. Clark & Hanby weren't giving up without a fight however and they hung on in there and fought their way back to 5-5. Hanby then held serve to edge them 6-5 ahead. The pressure was now on Porter & Williams, but they held their nerve and their serve and took it into a tie-break at 6-6, which they then won convincingly 7-4, to take the title. The spectators were treated to a see-saw final that saw each pair have a streak of 5 games in a row. Prizes were presented in the still glorious sunshine - is this a taste of a long hot summer of tennis to come?

Results:

Semi-Finals:

Chris Porter & Mike Williams defeated Ros Clark & Elspeth Gracie 6-1

Al Clark & Derek Hanby defeated Laura Dodington & Richard Gracie 6-4

Final:

Chris Porter & Mike Williams defeated Al Clark & Derek Hanby 7-6 (7-4 in the tie-break)