

Dorchester Tennis & Squash Club - Annual Club Tennis Championships 2015

Dorchester Tennis & Squash Club held their annual internal Club Tennis Championships during September, with Finals Day taking place on the first Sunday in October, just before Autumn started. The finals were completed in perfect weather conditions, allowing for quality tennis to be played.

Play started with the consolation event in the Men's Singles with the tournament's youngest competitor, 13 year old **Matthew Smith** taking on the experienced, and deceptively tricky, **Grahame Bennett**. Matthew's tournament experience and incredible consistency enabled him to emerge as the winner with a score of 6-2 6-3.

Keith Mason, playing his first of 3 finals, teamed up with his wife **Ann Mason**, in the Mixed Doubles Veterans consolation event, and came out second best against a rejuvenated **Alison Beaven**, and her partner **Marc Watton**. They stormed through to win 6-1 6-1.

Sarah Skidmore commenced her first of four finals by playing with **Adam Lawrence** in the final of the Mixed Doubles Veterans. They took on experienced, but injured, campaigner **Tim Button** and the extremely keen **Jenny Warrack**. Adam & Sarah proved true to their Number 1 seed billing, and won 6-1 6-2.

The big guns took centre stage next when the big hitting **Guy O'Neill** partnered the larger than life and experienced **Paul Scott** to defend their Men's Doubles title. They were up against the wily skills of **Derek Hanby** and **Tim Toogood**, who fought well but were unable to de-throne Guy & Paul, who took their second successive title 6-1 6-4.

Keith & Ann Mason, playing in their second consolation final in the Open Mixed Doubles event took on the mother and son combination of **Elsbeth & Alex Gracie**. The Gracie's managed to keep their cool and won 6-3 6-3.

The second of coach **Sarah Skidmore's** finals saw her partner one of her young pupils, 15 year old **Alex Baker** in the Mixed Doubles event. They were taking on the holders of the title, **Yvonne Henderson** and **Adam Lawrence**. The match was played with good humour and lots of banter, and included a spectacular dive, but with Alex's consistency, and Sarah's aggression they proved too strong for Adam & Yvonne and won 6-3 6-3.

The main draw singles events took to the courts in the middle of the afternoon, with new member **Hal Cazalet** coming through the Men's Singles draw, as a complete unknown, following a very tight semi-final the day before. He took on **Damo Stacey** who had played some excellent tennis to win through to the final beating quality players in convincing style. Damo was last year's losing consolation finalist, so demonstrated the improvement he has made in his play. However, he was unable to keep Hal's competitive play under control and the newcomer showed his flair by winning 6-1 6-4, with some quality play.

The Ladies' Singles final enabled **Sarah Skidmore** to demonstrate her powerful forehand to keep **Yvonne Henderson** on the back foot, and she proved too strong winning 6-3 6-0.

Keith Mason managed to get a win in his third match of the day, when he partnered **Marc Watton** in the Men's Doubles consolation event. They had to play 15 year olds **Tom Bradbury** and **Will Morgan**, who were unable to crack the experienced pair in the first set, but managed to find their range more in the second set. Age overcame youth in the end though and Keith & Marc won 6-0 6-3.

Elsbeth Gracie started her Ladies' Singles consolation match against **Felicity Quick**, but was unable to continue when the score reached 2-2 in the first set, due to injury.

The Ladies' Doubles consolation event was played in a friendly manner, with **Ann Mason** achieving her first win of three attempts. Partnered with **Alison Beaven**, they took on **Jenny Warrack** and **Sue Rippingale**, and won 6-2 6-0.

The Ladies' Doubles final was the last match on court for the day, and saw **Sarah Skidmore** back out there but with her youngest partner of the day, another of her pupils, 13 year old **Emily Noel**. Sarah has been working with Emily since the youngster started playing when she was 6 years old, and is delighted to see her coming through to start playing in the ladies' teams. They took on **Yvonne Henderson**, and her partner 17 year old **Kayleigh Budge**. Kayleigh is another youngster who has developed over the last few years to playing in the teams and has won the junior singles title for the last 4 years. The match started strongly for Yvonne & Kayleigh who raced into a 5-1 lead. Emily then settled down, and the score was gradually clawed back and suddenly the set was won by Emily & Sarah 7-5. The second set saw Emily & Sarah go into a 5-1 lead, before they stuttered briefly, but came through to win 7-5 6-2. A good battle enabling the youngsters to gain valuable tournament experience with seasoned campaigners.

The Tennis Chairman, **Mike Henderson**, presented the trophies to the finalists, and thanked everyone for coming along to support the Club. It was great to see some of the Clubs junior members playing in the senior club championships, demonstrating to the adult members that they can compete alongside them, and would love to be playing in the senior teams. The emergence of **Damo Stacey** has been fantastic to see. He has thoroughly enjoyed working with the Club's head tennis coach **Kevin Willemse**, over the past year to improve his standard of play, and has certainly reaped the benefits. New member **Hal Cazalet** will be an asset to the Club. He is keen to play in the teams, and to get out on court as often as he can. The winter team matches start soon, and the Club is in a strong position to maintain its threat in the County and Yeovil & District Winter Leagues.