**Cheshire Senior & Super Senior County Championships 2024**

This year’s Championships returned to the excellent venue of David Lloyd Cheshire Oaks. Entry numbers had far exceeded previous years meaning we unfortunately couldn’t fit all players into the draws!

The first weekend (2nd/3rd March) of matches covered the 40’s, 50’s, 60’s 70’s & 80’s age groups. As expected, there were many highly competitive singles and doubles matches played over the course of the weekend, with players also having to deal with the added challenge of playing “sudden death” in all games that went to deuce.

All credit goes to Keith Gordon and Simon Piggott who contested the 80 & Over singles final. Congratulations to Keith who retained his title. In the youngest age group (40+) Vicky McNeight dominated the women’s singles event, not dropping a game in either the semi-final or final! It was no surprise that Vicky & her doubles partner Katie Sidell also took the 40+ Doubles title defeating Jannette Harris & Lorraine Sinclair-Lawrence in a competitive final. The Men’s 40+ singles final was very closely contested with Craig Longman just edging out Phil Spencer in a final set tie break (10 - 5). Mark Green had a very successful weekend claiming his first County singles title in the 50+ age group and then teamed up with Stephen Harvey in the doubles to secure another title. In the women’s 50+ Doubles Jannette Harris teamed up with a new partner in Alison Lewis and in a close final overcame Elisabeth Bevan & Rachel Turner 6 - 3, 6 - 4. The Women’s 60+ Singles saw Debbie McKeever register two impressive wins to become County Singles Champion for the first time. Debbie was also involved in one of the closest matches of the weekend where the 60+ Women’s Doubles final was decided in a 10 - 7 tie break victory for Kathy Clifford & Linda Simpson against Debbie & Jean Thistleton. The 60+ Men’s Doubles event saw two very close semi-finals with John Hilton & Mark Reading and John Simpson & John Turner just edging through. The final was won in convincing style by John & Mark as was the final of the 70+ Men’s Doubles by Jim Gibbs & Brendan Kearney against Tim Kingston & Stuart Shalom. The Women’s 70+ Doubles final was played between the two top seeded pairs with the number 1 seeds of Barbara Bloor & Kate Burrows defeating Cindy Fryer & Kay Young 6 - 2, 6 - 3.

There were lots of entertaining and high quality matches over the weekend. Special thanks go to Tom Brown, Tournament Referee who ensured all 16 events ran smoothly.

The second weekend of the Championships (16th/17th March) focused on the over 45’s, 55’s, 65’s & 75’s age groups. As in the first weekend there were a lot of competitive matches with players having to deal with “sudden death” deuce games as well as 10 point tie breakers.

There were some close matches in the Men’s 45 & Over singles with the two top seeds of David Trainor and Istvan Kaplan meeting in the final. It could not have been much closer with Istvan taking the first set 7 - 5 and David the second set 7 - 6 (4). It was Istvan who eventually prevailed in the tie breaker by 10 - 5. The 45’s Men’s doubles final also featured the top two seeds after James Barlow |& Andrew Moores won their semi-final against Istvan Kaplan & Matin Walker 6 - 4, 7 - 5. The final was, however, dominated by the number 1 seeds David Trainor & Andrew Bloor who won 6 - 3, 6 - 0.

There were a number of long matches in the earlier rounds of the Men’s 55 singles, the standout result being the defeat of No.1 seed Andy Lee by Nicholas Turner 1 - 6, 6 - 4, 10 - 7. Nick also went on to defeat the No.4 seed Andy Tattersall in the semi-final. In the bottom half of the draw Gary Brown (No. 2 seed) played No. 3 seed Chris Leach in the semi-final and this match couldn’t have been any closer with Gary just edging it 7- 6 (5), 3 - 6, 10 - 7. The final proved to be another match decided by a tie break with Gary defeating Nick 6 - 4, 4 - 6, 10 - 3. The 55’s Men’s doubles final was contested by Lee Appleton & Mark Reading and Chris Leach & Andrew Tattersall, Chris and Andrew having defeated No.2 seeds Steven Clarke & Andy Lee in the closest of matches 5 - 7, 6 - 3, 10 - 7. It was, however, a different story in the final with Chris and Andrew losing the 1st set 6 - 1, and although they nearly turned the match around they lost the 2nd set tie breaker 8 - 6.

The 65’s & Over Women’s singles final between Kathy Clifford (No. 1 seed) and Larysa Walls (No.2 seed) was far from predictable with Kathy dominating the 1st set 6 - 0 and then Larysa fighting back to take the 2nd set 6 - 4. So many long rallies made it an endurance test for both players with Kathy eventually finding a way to win the tie break 10 - 4. The 65’s doubles event was also well contested. Unfortunately, the No.1 seeds Barbara Bloor & Linda Wood had to retire in the semi final against Kathy Clifford & Diane Mayman following a heavy fall by Barbara. In the other half of the draw Kate Burrows & Victoria Robertson (No. 2 seeds) played Linda Simpson & Virginia Vale and despite dropping the 1st set 6 - 4, went on to take the 2nd set 6 - 0 and then the tie break 10 - 4. It was Kate & Victoria who proved to be the most consistent in the final wining 6 - 4, 6 - 4 against Kathy & Diane.

A low number of just 4 players in the 65’s Men’s singles draw (due to a number of late withdrawals) resulted in Rob Slade and Roger Moss reaching the final. Rob had won a long match against Peter Ferrett 4 - 6, 6 - 1, 10 - 2 and Roger Moss defeated Alan Brooks 6 - 4, 6 - 1. In the final Roger went on to take the 1st set against Rob by 6 - 1 and unfortunately Rob could not play on due to injury and retired. The 65’s Men’s doubles event also had just 4 entries with No.1 seeds Geoff Forster & John Hilton defeating Gary Laverick & Chris Leyland 6 - 1, 7- 5. The other semi final saw Richard Cassels & David Wilks win through against No.2 seeds Lee Dooley & Alan Weldon, but only after the closest of deciding tie breaks. The final score was 6 - 1, 6 - 7 (4), 10 - 8. It was, however, the top seeds of Geoff & John who defeated Gary & Chris in the final 6 - 0, 6 - 3.

There was a lack of entries in 75 & Over singles events and Men’s 75 & Over doubles, however, two entries in the Women’s 75 & Over doubles meant there was a final between Viv Harrison & Kay Young and Cindy Fryer & Liz Sweeting. It was Cindy & Liz who took the honours winning 6 - 1, 6 - 1.

This year saw the largest number of entries in the Senior Championships for a long time and it is hoped that all the players who entered enjoyed the tournament will return next year.

John Hilton

Tournament Organiser