

2012 Essex Closed Squash Championships Match Report

What a Great weekend!! Rory Pennell returns to claim the title against a fierce challenge from Kingswood's own Anthony Savage, and Keeley Peacock clinches the ladies title beating off junior challenger Hannah Jones.

The 2012 Essex Closed Squash Championships were hosted by Club Kingswood in Basildon on the weekend of 14th & 15th of January. Over 100 of the best squash players from across Essex spent a grueling 2 days at Kingswood battling out the various stages, they brought with them a huge crowd of supporters who were treated to plenty of action. Full results and pictures can be found on the Essex Squash & Racketball website at www.essexsquashandracketball.co.uk.

Match highlights:

The Men's & Ladies Senior finals were last on centre court, the Men's Senior saw top seed **Rory Pennell** (in the world top 150) up against Kingswood's **Anthony Savage**. The pair treated the crowd to a spectacular match with exhaustingly long rallies and unbelievable retrieving. Rory clinched the first game but was unable to hold off the challenge from Anthony, relinquishing the second to make it one game all. Anthony piled on the pressure in the 3rd but Rory was able to maintain an early lead to put him 2 – 1 up. The 4th game proved even more exciting, both players edged closer and closer to clinching the game until a missed winning shot from Anthony gave Rory the break he needed to grab the 4th and consequently the match and title. Both players left the court heralded with raucous applause from the crowd. This had been preceded by a superb Ladies Senior match. Youngster **Hannah Jones** (just 18) found herself up against an experienced **Keeley Peacock**. Both ladies had reached the final after beating off some tough rivals in the early rounds. The first game saw both players matching each other shot for shot with Keeley just snatching the last two points to put her 1 - 0 up. This did not deter Hannah who fought back in the second but was unable to dent Keeley's armour leaving her 2 – 0 down. Keeley started the 3rd game with grim determination, pressurizing Hannah from the onset, coming back from 2 – 0 down is always a struggle but Hannah didn't let that worry her and fought hard. Keeley piled on the pressure gradually drew ahead and eventually clinched the 3rd giving her match and crown.

Plate rounds (for those knocked out in the first round competition)

The other finals kicked off with the Men's & Ladies Plates, the toughest of which being the Senior Plate where **Paul Wallace** took over an hour to beat **James Kearney** in what only can be described as a marathon match leaving both exhausted. The Men's Age Plates saw **Mike Campbell** beat a determined **Mark Kirkman** in the o'45's, in the o'35's plate **Andrew Harvey** beat **Darren Atkins**, and in the o'55's plate **Bob Baker** beat **Malcolm Horswill**. The B Plate was a heated match between winner **Andrew Harvey & Michael Bagguley**, and the C saw **Mick Clarke** and **Weslee Walton** battle it out with Mick being the victor. In the Ladies Plates **Collette Whittington** was awarded the win after **Jackie Gregory** had to withdraw due to ill health, and in the B's **Lyn Briggs** beat **Val Bryant**. In the Ladies Age Plates **Kerry Munn** beat a determined **Eunice Okelve** in the o'40's, and in the o'50's **Barbara Sanderson** beat **Val Bryant**.

Main Competition

The main event finals followed the plates, and proved to be every bit as exciting and even more intensive than the earlier rounds. All those reaching the finals had battled through two day's of grueling matches, and they all wanted the crown! The Men's O'35 number 1 seed and title holder **Jason Friend** from Connaught beat off all rivals and asserted his authority to retain his title beating off Southend's determined **Sharif Safwat**. The Men's O'45's saw **Andy Russell** from Ongar regain past form to beat arch rival **Nick Burr**, and the Men's O'55 title was taken by Chelmsford's **Brian Clay** beating his county team mate Maldon's **Paul Newbury**. In the Ladies O'50's **Sue Vine** regained the title beating off **Elaine Oddie** from Clements and **Jackie Gregory** beat Kingswood's **Lisa Tolhurst** in the Ladies O'40's. The Ladies B saw Connaught's **Kyriana Georgiou DeLisie** take the title against **Suzanne Lavender** from Woodford wells. Waterside grabbed another trophy when **Jon Cordon** took the Men's C title beating Kingswood's newcomer **Dan Carvosso** in a marathon final. The path to the Men's B title had been grueling for both finalists, **Adam Hills** battled to beat a very determined **Francis Engerer** from Redbridge.

The weekend was a great sporting event with tough matches, fierce rivalries and a terrific atmosphere at the host club Kingswood. All players performed to the highest sporting standards, and spectators were treated to thrilling battles, stretching player skills, fitness & endurance.

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Thanks to a sterling effort by markers and referees **Paul Clarke, Sue Woodhouse and Mike Campbell** all play was kept under control, and help over the weekend from **Carl George** ensured all went to schedule. Finalists received a trophy and prize thanks to generous sponsorship from **NSO Associates**, which were presented by NSO's Director and Essex SRA's treasurer **Elaine Oddie**.

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And Many Thanks to our markers

Paul Clarke, Sue Woodhouse & Mike Campbell

Special thanks to all the players and spectators without whom there would not be a tournament

Dave Neller

Chairman

Essex Squash & Racketball Association