

RESULTS FROM EUROPA GENERAL INVITATIONAL TENNIS TOURNAMENT 2010

After a challenging week of changeable weather during the group stages, Saturday 18th September 2010 saw the semi finals and finals take place of the 2010 Annual Europa General Invitational Tennis Tournament held at Hawarden Tennis Club.

The following is a summary of the semi finals matches:

Over 50 Ladies Doubles Semi Finals

Due to the weather conditions, the format of the first semi finals were altered to best of 13 games. The first semi final was contested by Ellen McCartney and Rosemary Masefield of Bangor Tennis Club against Irene Hewitt and Jenny McDonnell of Belfast Boat Club. The match was a close affair with some long rallies, however the Bangor duo proved stronger in tough conditions with some excellent winners at the net, running out 7-3 winners.

The other semi final in this event was between Lurgan ladies Donna Gilpen & Cherry Kirkpatrick against Geraldine Freeland & Wendy Roberts of Belfast Boat Club. This match on the 'graveyard' (many champions have been caught out on this one!) court provided some long rallies in each game with last years runners up Donna & Cherry progressing to their second final in a row winning 7-2.

Over 50 Mens Doubles Semi Finals

Last year's winners Russell Connell from Hawarden Tennis Club and Malcolm McKibben from Belfast Boat Club took part in the first semi final in this section against the long term partnership of Omagh pairing Stephen Cuthbertson and Jimmy McCutcheon. Again playing the best of 13 games, this game was a close encounter with some excellent tennis played by both sides in horrible conditions. This match came down to interceptions at the net with last years winners Russell & Malcolm succeeding 7-4 and once again progressing to the final.

The other semi final of the over 50 men's doubles was between local Hawarden pairing of Trevor Wright and Stephen Heatley against Geoff Jordan and Eric Gould of CIYMS. With a tall player on each side of the court, it was difficult to lob, but with some excellent passing shots, the CIYMS pairing ran out winners of a scoring of 7-2 making it to their first final in this event.

Over 35 Ladies Doubles Semi Finals

Due to the unfortunate withdrawal of Coleraine pairing Angela Stewart & Gem Henderson, Belfast Boat Clubs Julie Maguire and Ballynaveigh's Fiona Ludlow got a late call up and took part in the first semi final against Jenny Lyall from Bangor and Jill Martin from David Lloyd. As the weather conditions had improved slightly, it was decided to revert to the original format of best of 3 sets, with a championship tiebreak at 1 set all. Again this match was extremely close with a long and close first

set with Julie and Fiona winning it 6-4. Jenny and Jill upped their game in the second set to win it 7-5 taking it to a deciding championship tie-break. With both sides now playing well, each point was extremely long and intense for all to watch and to play, with Julie and Fiona holding their nerve and eventually winning their 5th match point at 10-8.

The second semi final in this section saw last year's winners and local Hawarden pairing of Heather Rose & Amanda Leeman against Susan McFall of Belfast Boat Club and Jill Lyttle of CIYMS. Once the local girls got used to playing 2 left handers, home advantage proved key with them running out winners in a scoreline of 6-2, 6-1, and once again keeping their winning streak up and progressing through to the final.

Over 35 Mens Doubles Semi Finals

The first semi final of this event saw last year's runners up – Jim Watt and Paddy Taylor of Larne Tennis Club against Hawarden man Michael Ferguson and Liam Kane of Cavehill Tennis Club. With both sides struggling to hold serve, it was Michael and Liam who made the first breakthrough taking the first set 6-2. It was a similar story in the second set and again it was Michael and Liam who made the initial break and ran out eventual winners – 6-2 in the second set.

The other semi final in this section saw local man Steven Leeman of Hawarden partnering Carlos Miranda of Belfast Boat Club, take on John Maguire of Irvinestown and Andy Moore from Omagh. Steven and Carlos got off to a great start running away with the first set 6-0. In the second set, John and Andy started to get into the game more with some great rallies, however Steven and Carlos always had an answer and won the second set 6-2 and progressing to the final.

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After a lunch including Pimms and Lemonade, unfortunately the weather did not improve, however, the finals provided some excellent tennis for all spectators and players alike. The following is a brief summary of each final.

Over 50 Mens Doubles Final Geoff Jordan & Eric Gould v Malcolm McKibben & Russell Connell

Winners – Malcolm McKibben & Russell Connell

The last match to finish of the day was the over 50 men's final with last year's winners Malcolm & Russell's volleying being too strong for their opponents who put up a great fight especially in the second set. Malcolm and Russell won the match in a comfortable scoreline of 6-0, 6-3, winning for the second year in a row.

Over 50 Ladies Doubles Final

Ellen McCartney & Rosemary Masefield v Donna Gilpin & Cherry Kilpatrick

Winners - Ellen McCartney & Rosemary Masefield

With conditions getting gradually worse, this match provided some long rallies and lobbing at the net, however the experience of the Bangor pairing of Ellen & Rosemary was the dominating factor and they won in a convincing scoreline of 6-1, 6-1.

Over 35 Mens Doubles Final

Michael Ferguson & Liam Kane v Steven Leeman & Carlos Miranda

Winners – Steven Leeman & Carlos Miranda

This match was the final that everyone was waiting for and it didn't disappoint. Steven and Carlos took the initial break at 2-1 in the first set and didn't look back taking it 6-1 with some outstanding points. With both Steven and Carlos in blistering form, they ran out winners of the second set 6-0 and the overall match.

Over 35 Ladies Doubles Final

Heather Rose & Amanda Leeman v Julie Maguire & Fiona Ludlow

Winners – Heather Rose & Amanda Leeman

With a crowded gallery sipping Pimms, the over 35 ladies final took to the 'graveyard court' in horrible conditions. The first set saw the local girls Heather & Amanda having to come from 4-1 down to dig deep and win the first set 6-4. The second set was just as close however the local pair got the initial break and didn't look back winning the second set 6-2 and the overall match for the second year in succession.

The presentation of prizes was made by Wendy Cree on behalf of both Europa General and the Hawarden tennis committee. Thanks were also extended to all the helpers from the club who helped throughout the week.

Russell Connell (winner of the over 50 men's doubles) thanked tournament director Wendy Cree for all her hard work in organising the event and also thanked sponsor 'Europa General' for their support again this year.

Finally thanks were made to all the competitors for supporting the tournament again this year despite the weather conditions!!