

Ladies International Handicap Tournament Paris, 2022
Sponsored by Hotel du Jeu de Paume
Match Report

For the 25th time, the ladies, plus a record number of significant others, invaded France for the International handicap, this year in Paris, where they were welcomed by glorious weather and blooming horse chestnuts and Paulownia trees.

After several mishaps, the final draw saw fifteen players in the singles and 16 in the doubles, and the battles were fierce in the singles round robins, with many scores at 6/4 or 6/5. In the knockout stages some players found it difficult to cope with the handicap difference, but the usual culprits found themselves in the semis: Ros Emrys-Roberts, Lucie Douwes-Dekker, Kim van Boeckel and Hannah Lucey, the youngest participant (22). The Dutch contingent, despite playing confidently, strongly and stylishly, were completely fazed by the cunning and skill of their opponents and sadly, left the tournament in the semis. In the final, Hannah, initially enmeshed in the long rallies that Ros the Retriever is expert in, finally accelerated and roared to an impressive finish at 8/4.

There is one advantage to being a match organiser: sometimes you can choose your doubles partner, and Gabrielle leapt at the chance to play with Hannah, who duly came through in three solid wins to take the trophy, much to her partner's delight, and walked away with all the trophies and all the wine (with great foresight, she had invited her parents along as porters).

Our admiration and thanks go to the young Parisian players (« les gazelles de Paris ») who bravely decided to play in the tournament despite having (in some cases) a bare 10 hours on the court in their lives.... and they intend to continue practising and hope to come to the British Handicaps. Our thanks also to our faithful Bordeaux friends Bernie and Jeannette (the doyenne of the tournament), who triumphed in the Plate singles and doubles, and also gave us part of the prizes.

On the social side, everyone was delighted to dine on a cruise down the river Seine for the 25th anniversary, where Bernie, Gabrielle, and the Dutch ladies took every opportunity to bend the younger people's ears with anecdotes of past glories, and everyone else went glassy eyed, not necessarily from the wine....

As always, it is a delight to catch up with old friends, make new ones, and above all, enjoy the competition. Vive la Paume !