



LRTA British Ladies Open 2022

Seacourt Tennis Club was very pleased to host the Ladies Real Tennis Association (LRTA) British Ladies Open 2022, sponsored by Peter Luck-Hille, in April, the first time since 2019 due to the Covid pandemic. As always a very warm welcome was extended to new and old friends with twenty two ladies from Clubs all over the UK and even Bordeaux, signing up to play.

The British Open Singles Quarter Finals first match between number 2 seed, Sarah Vigrass and Georgie Willis was a thriller. It began with Georgie taking an early lead to 3 games to love in the first set but Sarah recovered her form to win the incredibly close fought first set, 6/5. Then Georgie found another gear, and took the second set 6/1. So it was down to the last set. Both players dug in and took many of the games to deuce. The penultimate game, with an exceptionally long rally/rest, placed the score at 5 all for the last game and a nail biting finish. With Sarah serving on 30 points to Georgie on 40 points, Georgie smashed the return of serve into the dedans, beating a ½ yard chase, thrilling the spectators and winning the match.



Semi-finals saw the previous ladies World Champion Penny Lumley succumb to the reigning World Champion Claire Fahey 6/0 6/0, with Penny's daughter Tara fighting the other semi-final against Georgie Willis winning 6/2 6/2.

Claire went on to retain her British Open title beating Tara 6/0 6/0.

The British Open Plate was won by Minty Oldham who beat Sophia Lewis 6/3, 6/2 in an exciting 2 sets with most of the first set games going to multiple deuces and some great targets on both sides.



The British Open doubles had a strong entry with the top players marking their territory. Penny & Tara Lumley made the final against Claire & Sarah Vigrass but the number 1 seeds were too strong taking the title 6/0 6/2.

In the Doubles Plate, Sophia Lewis & Bernadette Bidouze took on Caroline Macdowell & Olivia Boulton, a great 3 set match with Sophia & Bernadette making it through 6/2 2/6 6/3 and into the final against the holders Di Wilson & Rosie Law who played some strong tennis but couldn't hold off the consistency of Sophia and the experience of Bernadette winning the plate 6/2 6/1.

The handicap doubles was split into 3 groups, with some great matches. The first group was won by Caroline MacDowell and Olivia Boulton closely followed by runners up Jo Lewis and Rose Pierce. Both Seacourt teams defeated the expertise of Penny and Tara Lumley, who had to give away so many points, one serve and banning the tambour. Group 2, kicked off with Boomerang 2020 Seacourt Sirens team mates, Karen Dixon, Jane Grady, Rosie Law and Di Wilson competing with handicaps capped at 60. A nerve steadying decisive win of 8 love by Rosie and Di secured them a place in the knockout rounds.

This was followed by a contrasting 30 owe 30 match in favour of Rosie and Di against Alex and Jess Garside. After a tight score of 5 all, Jess & Alex accelerated to a 8/5 win. Along with another 8/3 win over Karen and Jane on the same handicap, Alex and Jess became overall group winners.

Group 3, with 4 teams, saw some excellent games played in good spirits. Minty Oldam and Irena Durblish, Georgie Willis and Sophia Lewis were level in games won so both secured a place in the knockout rounds. The deciding set between them, with a handicap of owe half 30 receive 15 in favour of Georgie and Sophia, saw some brilliant gallery defense, volleys, targets and ground shots but Georgie and Sophia achieved a decisive win 6/0 to become overall winners of the group.

Through to the knockout stages Caroline & Olivia were up against Di & Rosie. This was a close fought match all the way, with Caroline & Olivia taking it 6/4 before running through the next match to make the final. On the other half of the draw Rose & Jo took on team Garside, also a very tight match with everyone playing well, with the Garside's squeaking a 6/5 victory, before just losing out 6/3 in the semi-finals to Georgie Willis & Sophia Lewis who were in fine form winning 6/3.

We saw some great tennis in the final from all players but it was Sophia & Georgie's day winning 8/2.

What a fantastic four days of Real Tennis with many of the final score lines not reflecting the brilliant tennis being played on both sides. A huge thank you must go to the whole crew who ran the tournament, in particular Alex Garside, Viv Dawes and Jess Garside for making this tournament such a success, organising the players, making the draw and billeting the players; hospitality from Dan MarKham and the bar staff team; Tory Wall for producing her wonderful array



of food from her mouth watering menu, which no doubt helped contribute to the players producing some great tennis; Paul Weaver and other member helpers behind the scenes; the tournament dinner from Alin of the Waterloooville Golf Club was outstanding; Simon Flynn for his countless hours fixing the streaming and making sure the captive audience can hear the markers voice through the mic; and expert marking of each match by Drew who also welcomed back Adam Player to share the load, and ably assisted by James Greenley.

Most of all a big thank you to our sponsor Peter Luck-Hille without whom none of this would be possible, along with Pol Roger. A wonderful end of tournament speech was given by Peter Dawes who came out of retirement to present prizes congratulating all the winners and finalists. Katie Leppard (LRTA Chairman) also thanked everyone on behalf of the LRTA, whilst Claire Fahey praised her fellow competitors on the high standard of play throughout the tournament.

Rosie Law and Andrew Lyons