

British Ladies Handicap Tournaments held at Prested November 3rd-5th 2023

Winners:

Div 1 Singles Ulla Petti

Div 2 Singles Saffron Enticknap

Div 1 Doubles Kate Evers & Bernadette Bedouze

Div 2 Doubles Saffron Enticknap and Emilia Pitts

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Outside, the grey rain... Luckily, the inside of Prested Real Tennis Club is not glumly decorous like most RT Clubs, but glories in a vibrant clash of colours: pink floors, green and blue stripes, yellow lines – some find this a cue to go and lie down on the welcoming leather sofas, but in the weather conditions of the LRTA Ladies Handicap weekend, the bold décor was just the thing to get our blood racing.

There were twenty four players– with an age range from 12 year old Lexi to a select group whose age data is carefully locked behind an inscrutable password (we hope). This year the tournament saw an exceptional French turnout of seven, all thanks to Bernie Bidouze's tour operator talents. Among them, Amy Wintersteen, an American interloper currently living in Bordeaux, to make the tournament a truly global event. Huzzah! Arriving *en masse* in a large van, the Bordelaises proceeded to first take over the club with French chatter, and then the tournament, with feisty, competitive tennis. They also were extremely voluble supporters of their team, cheering not only the success of their own, but also every stumble or fault by the opposition – this cunning plan was very effective...

Bernie provided the gaiety on court - her long shorts billowing round her sturdy calves; hands waving at the penthouse to invite the ball into the right spot; a firm volley at the net into a far corner – and of course, the frequent 'merde!' coming – possibly - from her direction.

The French contingent played above their pay grade with Bernie (and Kate Evers) winning the Division 1 Final, Typhanie and Cécile also reaching the finals, and Amy, Jeannette, Florence and Emmanuelle all going knockout. Not surprisingly, the group plans to come back next year to beat les Anglaises again.

There's no space to give all the results in this report, apart from the Finals results, but the full results will be found on the LRTA website.

Div. 1 Singles: Ulla Petti beat Sarah Sullivan 6/3

Div. 2 Singles: Saffron Enticknap beat Emelia Pitts 6/4

Div 1 Doubles: Bernie Bidouze & Kate Evers bt Amy Pye & Cecile Alchuteguy 8/4

Div 2 Doubles: Saffron Enticknap & Emilia Pitts bt Typhanie Guerin & Emily Wilson 8/6



But to finish, some particularly outstanding efforts:

Most consistent: Sarah Sullivan, who won all her first round single and doubles matches (plus adding more in further stages)

Best hair styling: Saffron and Emilia, the Wellington girls, who not only played their socks off, but also had matching pony tails with an hypnotic bouncy life of their own.

Best Victory Dance: Bernie by a mile.

Best use of the tambour: Amy and Cécile in their semi-final

Most promising: Typhanie and Emily Wilson, who both began to play barely a year ago.

Most fearsome: A tie between Ulla and Kate who were obviously AI generated, hence able to run, reach and return any missile aimed at them.

Our thanks to the Prested Club and committee, and to the professionals, Levi and Vaughan, for their excellent marking. Also the catering staff, the kind hosts who offered beds, and all who made it such a successful tournament, especially Kate Evers, Sarah Sullivan and Candida Nicholls who did the organising, Ian for the scheduling, and all those others too many to mention.

Report by Linda Fairbrother

Details of the Finals:

Div 1 Singles Final

Sarah Sullivan had been playing excellent consistent tennis throughout, solid and safe and she continued this way in the Final, and with a hefty handicap in her favour, kept up with Ulla Petti whose athleticism had been very apparent in all her matches, But by 4/2 to Ulla, the strength and accuracy of Ulla's shots into corners took their toll, though Sarah never stopped trying. 6/3 to Ulla.

Div 1 Doubles Final

Bernie and Kate Evers against Amy Pye and Cécile was a great prospect and so it turned out. There were a number of great rests, with Kate and Bernie usually coming out on top. Amy and Cécile were patchy at times, playing superbly for 2 or 3 points, and then over-casual for the next 3. No such favours from Bernie and Kate, who were solid throughout, and Bernie's war dance told it all. She *really* wanted to win, and she and Kate stayed ahead all the way, embracing French style after every difficult rest, winning 8/4.

Div 2 Singles Final (first to 6)

Played between Saffron and Emilia, the two 17 year old talented girls from Wellington. Both hitting hard but high, so lots of long rests as they both ran to retrieve everything, There was little in it, but Emilia was confined too much at the hazard end, and Saffron managed to keep on top, winning 6/4.

Div 2 Doubles Final (first to 8)

Emilia and Saffron fought Typhanie and Emily Wilson. Bang! Emilia set the tone from the beginning, when her first shot went straight into the dedans. The two pairs were a little tentative at first, and there was little between them till at 4/3 Saffron and Emilia began to confidently attack - not subtle but effective. Then at 7/5 to Emilia and Saffron, nerves set in all round, with a double fault bringing it to 6/7. But the Wellington team kept their cool and won 8/6.