

REVIEW OF 2019 GEELONG OPEN CLASSIC RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The King of Racquetball Cam White lived up to his imposing record by claiming the Geelong Open Classic Men's Open Championship and further extending his eighteen-year unbeaten period, when he overpowered third seeded Steve Andrewartha in a high-class finale to the event, 21/11, 21/17.

In the Women's Open event, Bairnsdale's seven times Australian Open Champion Judy Kool, recorded her fourth Geelong Open title in a row, when she overcame 2019 Darwin Open winner Sue Dunlop in the final, 21/8, 21/7.

Overall, the event attracted one hundred and thirty-five entries, of which nineteen were playing in their first Grand Prix Racquetball event, and the winner of the prestigious Corey Deery Memorial Sportsmanship Award was Judy Kool.

MEN'S OPEN



Due to a heavy CFA work schedule this was White's first outing since the ESRA Open in February, so it was a great chance to gauge where the likes of second seeded and 2018 Victorian Grand Prix Circuit Champion Garry Pedersen, plus third seeded and 2018 Victorian Open Champion Steve Andrewartha stood with White, if either happened to meet up with him in the event's final chapter, which turned out to be the indefatigable Andrewartha, who came into the event with an injury cloud hanging over him.

In their respective semi-finals, White overcame the tenacious fourth seeded and recent Darwin Open winner Peter French, 21/15, 21/13,

whilst Andrewartha came back from a game down to snatch a thrilling victory on the very last possible point of the match over Pedersen, 17/21, 21/19, 22/21.

When playing White you have a total understanding that you will be constantly extended to the four corners of the court with his pin point accuracy in both his short and long games, plus trying to counter his impeccable width which has his opponents doing far more stretching than against any other player in the sport.

The match commenced at a hectic pace with both players unrelenting in their pursuit of claiming every point available, but it was the virtually error free White who took control early, never relinquishing his lead and claiming the first game 21/11.

The second game also opened at a frenetic pace, but this time Andrewartha stuck with White and it became a most enthralling game until White lifted a gear towards the end, displaying an array of shots which virtually broke the gallant Andrewartha, and led to him seizing control and claiming the title, 21/11, 21/17.

Women's Open

Over the past four years it has taken someone very special to deny Bairnsdale's top seeded Judy Kool the winners crown in Women's Open events, happening only four times, once by top Australian squash player Christine Nunn and three times by the unbeaten and ten times Australian Open Racquetball Champion Sarah Fitz-Gerald.

In the final stanza Kool faced-off against the 2018 National Grand Prix Champion Sue Dunlop, but Kool was relentless from the start and was never headed, taking it out 21/8, 21/7.



L-R: Sue Dunlop, Adam Lander & Judy Kool



Elisha Mitchell & Sylvia Tiet

A GRADE:

The A Grade event looked on paper to be an extremely competitive round robin field of five which it became, going right down to the wire with top seeded Steve Theologou dead heating with 2019 ESRA A Grade Champion James Long on 160 points, with Long taking the title on a countback as he had lost ten less points less than Theologou, with Australian Open B Grade Champion Jordan Rounds, finishing in third position on 158 points.



L-R: Elisha Mitchell & James Long



Jordan Rounds

B GRADE:



This event was won by 14-year-old and third ranked in the Australian Squash Under 15-year-old Age Group Andre Lynn, who overcame Ballarat's top seeded Blake Caspersz in a very entertaining final, 21/12, 17/21, 21/13.

In their respective semi-finals, Lynn ousted Squash and Racquetball Victoria's new General Manager Russell McLean, 21/9, 21/10, with Caspersz overcoming Westerfolds Bayswater's Lance Cowan, 21/13, 21/10.

L-R: Adam Lander, Andre Lynn & Blake Caspersz

C GRADE:

The C Grade event provided the biggest field of the tournament with fifteen starters, which meant the winner had to survive up to four competitive matches over the course of the day.

In the end it was two Corio Grand Prix debutants, Lisa Monaghan and Nick Phillips who confronted each other in the final stanza, and it was literally a "last person standing affair".

After sixty-five minutes of unbelievable rallies, comebacks and counter punching, Phillips was able to claim the seventy seventh point and the title, 21/16, 21/19.

In their penultimate match to reach the final, Phillips won a stirring encounter over Mulgrave's fourth seeded Rayleen Cooper, 21/10, 17/21, 21/11, whilst Monaghan overcame Lakes Entrance's recent Darwin Open C Grade winner Michael Smits, in another thriller, 18/21, 22/21, 21/14.



L-R: Lisa Monaghan, Elisha Mitchell & Nick Phillips

D GRADE:

Mulgrave's sixth seeded Emily Cooper has been off the GP circuit for six months, but after conquering Commercial Club's third seeded Cheryl Brigden in straight games, 21/19, 21/19, at the quarter final stage, then surviving an absolute "Nail Biter" against second seeded Elsabe Du Plooy, 21/22, 21/16, 21/18, in their semi-final, Cooper faced off against Westerfolds Bayswater's fourth seeded Leanne Haley in the final stanza.

To reach the final Haley came from a game down to overcome Casino's Ben Bell in their quarter final, 17/21, 21/6, 21/16, then ousted Bairnsdale's top seeded Chris Kool, 21/8, 21/18, in their semi-final encounter.

Cooper held sway throughout the final taking it out 21/6, 21/13, and recording her first D Grade GP title.



L-R: Emily Cooper & Elisha Mitchell

Leanne Haley & Adam Lander

Cheryl Brigden & Elisha Mitchell

E Grade:

In this event Jacqueline Wilcock continued her merry way in E Grade events and extended her lead at the top of the rankings table, when she overpowered Corio's Jackson Lander-Mitchell in the final, 21/8, 21/6.



L-R: Elisha Mitchell & Jacqueline Wilcock

Jackson Lander-Mitchell & Elisha Mitchell

F Grade

Mulgrave's top seeded Amanda Pavia stormed through the F Grade field to record her fourth consecutive F Grade title winning all four of her matches in straight games, including the final over Bendigo GP debutant Sue Moses, 21/7, 21/11.



L-R: Elisha Mitchell & Amanda Pavia

Adam Lander & Sue Moses

Junior Girls/Boys Under 13's

One of the highlights of the tournament was the two juniors under-13 events which comprised youngsters from six years of age, and all players put on a fantastic show for the spectators, their parents and all the other players.

Commercial Club's Amelia Brigden took out the Junior Girl's event, defeating Corio's Claire Lander-Mitchell in the final, 15/7, 15/3, with Corio's Jack McFarland overcoming his club stable mate Ahmed Mahmoud, 15/12, 15/4, to take out the Boy's title.



L-R: Claire Lander-Mitchell, Elisha Mitchell & Amelia Brigden



L-R: James Knight, Grace McFarland & Jack McFarland



L-R: Paul Vear, Ahmed Mahmoud & Adam Lander

DOUBLES



Open: Anthony Hain, Matt Bayley, Geoff Wilcock, Elisha Mitchell & Steve Andrewartha



A Grade: Simon Binda, Elisha Mitchell & James Long



Jordan Rounds, Elisha Mitchell & Judy Kool



B Grade: Andre Lynn, Ben Jacimovic, Rory Fraser, Elisha Mitchell & Lisa Monaghan



C Grade: Helen Collins, Judy Nunn, Elisha Mitchell, Rayleen Cooper & Emily Cooper



D Grade: Rob Toogood, Elisha Mitchell & Sharyn Crawford



Chris Kool, Elisha Mitchell & Graham Cooper



E Grade: Tegan Goulding, Elisha Mitchell, Amanda Pavia & Jacqueline Wilcock



Elisha Mitchell & Thomas Chen

SINGLES		
Grade	Winner	Runner-Up
Men's Open	Cam White	Steve Andrewartha
Women's Open	Judy Kool	Sue Dunlop
A	James Long	Steve Theologou
B	Andre Lynn	Blake Caspersz
C	Nick Phillips	Lisa Monaghan
D	Emily Cooper	Leanne Haley
E	Jacqueline Wilcock	Jackson Lander-Mitchell
F	Amanda Pavia	Sue Moses
Junior Boys	Jack McFarland	Ahmed Mahmoud
Junior Girls	Amelia Brigden	Claire Lander-Mitchell

DOUBLES		
Grade	Winner	Runner-Up
Open	S. Andrewartha/G. Wilcock	A. Hain/M. Bayley
A	J. Long/S. Binda	J. Kool/J. Rounds
B	L. Monaghan/R. Fraser	B. Jacimovic/A. Lynn
C	R. Cooper/E. Cooper	H. Collins/J. Nunn
D	R.Toogood/S. Crawford	G. Cooper/C.Kool
E	A. Pavia/J. Wilcock	T. Chen/T. Goulding -

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Photos: Courtesy of Claire Lander-Mitchell & Jon Perry

Special Presenters: Elisha Mitchell & Adam Lander