

REVIEW OF 2019 GENESIS VICTORIAN OPEN RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

LEGENDS PREVAIL AT GENESIS VICTORIAN OPEN RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The thirty-seventh edition of the longest running racquetball tournament in Australia, the Genesis Victorian Open Racquetball Championships, was highlighted by the capacity field in the Men's Open event, although not surprisingly Cam White claimed his sixteenth Victorian Open crown, another legend Judy Kool, stormed through the Women's Open field to annex her eighth Victorian Open title, Corio's Carlos Da Silva took out the inaugural Don Groom Victorian B Grade Championship, plus Carlos and the Wilcock sisters Jacqueline and Jessica, winning both the singles and doubles events in their respective grades.

SINGLES EVENTS

MEN'S OPEN

Although this event contained a red-hot capacity field, including several greats of the sport, the expectation was that it would take a herculean effort to topple the nineteen years undefeated King of the Sport Cam White, who has the enormous capacity to lift to another gear in the face of adversity.

The expectation became a reality when White, after losing the opening game in his first round encounter against Bayswater's Matt Bayley, 17/21, blasted his way through the top half of the draw which included taking out ninth seeded Geoff Wilcock, and dual Wangaratta Open winner Ryan McCarter, both in straight games to reach the event's finale.

Meanwhile, 2018 Victorian Grand Prix Champion Garry Pedersen was doing likewise in the bottom half of the draw, overpowering all before him, including Mt. Districts Rob Hay, Wagga's seventh seeded Craig Ambler, and Lilydale's sixth seeded Nathan Lindner, who had ousted third seeded and last year's winner Steve Andrewartha in a tight quarter final encounter, 21/17, 21/17.

In what was a high class finale, punctuated by many unbelievable long rallies, plus an incredible range of shots and returns, it was White who finally prevailed, 21/13, 21/17, although Pedersen when he was 7/17 down in the second game, gained a second wind and was putting a lot of pressure on White forcing the King into a few unforced errors before he regained his composure and retained his nineteen year undefeated status.

WOMEN'S OPEN

Although ten times Australia Open Champion and current titleholder of this event Sarah Fitz-Gerald was missing due to injury, great anticipation still surrounded the five player round robin field with the top seed being seven times Australian and seven times Victorian Open Champion Judy Kool, plus second seeded 2018 National Grand Prix Champion Sue Dunlop.

Over the past five years it has taken someone very special to deny Kool the winner's crown, happening only four times, once by top Australian squash player Christine Nunn, plus three times by Fitz-Gerald, so it was no surprise to see her overcome all four of her opponents, including Dunlop in their final match, 21/11, 21/14, and lift the Victorian Open crown for the eighth time.

In the playoff for 3rd and 4th placings, Sylvia Tiet defeated Albury's Kathy Donnelly, 21/17, 21/8.

A GRADE

A very even field of seven fronted the starter for this event which included the Lakes Entrance trio of Steve Theologou and Jordan Rounds who have been around at the top of the Victorian A Grade rankings all year, and Brandon Smits who had claimed the ESRA B Grade title earlier this year after a five year absence from the tournament circuit, Mt. Districts Jamie Evans, runner-up in the ESRA A Grade event, plus Warrnambool's Tim Milne who had not played on the circuit since September last year.

Milne ended up being the event's wildcard overcoming all three Lakes Entrance players in straight games, including Rounds in the event's finale, 21/18, 21/17, and placing him in equal top position on the National Rankings table with South Australia's Lewi Ash, whilst Rounds and Theologou share equal top billing on the Victorian Rankings table.

In their penultimate matches, Milne took out top seeded Theologou, 21/12, 21/16, with Rounds winning a stirring encounter over the indefatigable Evans, 21/17, 20/22, 21/18.

DON GROOM B GRADE

This event was broken up into two pools of three plus playoffs with the top seed being Ballarat's Blake Caspersz, who had been runner up in all three previous Victorian GP B Grade events held this year, but there was no doubt that SS&A's Warhorse Ron Iverson and Bendigo's second seeded Anthony Dzioba would be tough nuts to crack, plus Corio's Carlos Da Silva had lost a very tight encounter against Dzioba in his first GP appearance at the previous months Geelong Open.

Pool One was extremely competitive with all matches going to three lengthy games, and all three players were equal on matches and games won at its conclusion, so the finishing order was decided on points won, which ended up: Da Silva 115 points, Caspersz 109 points, and Bendigo GP debutant David Malone 95 points.

Iverson claimed top spot in Pool Two when he survived an enthralling encounter over Dzioba, 21/19, 19/21, 21/17, and moved him into the final stanza, but it was Da Silva who was full of running and took control of this match early, never relinquishing his lead to take it out, 21/4, 21/3, with Caspersz overcoming Dzioba, 21/12, 21/5, to claim third placing.

C GRADE

The C Grade event was littered with players of varying ages from three states, including Lakes Entrance's top seeded and recent Darwin Open winner Michael Smits, South Australian Father and Son combination of Sal and Jack Lo lacono, with the unknown quantity being Smit's stable mate, Jason Bartheyl, who was returning to the circuit after a three year break.

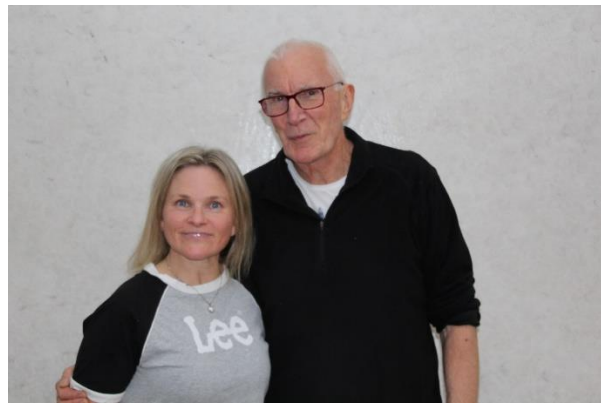
In the end after each had won their three pre final matches, it was Sal Lo lacono and Bartheyl who confronted each other in the final stanza, and it was literally a "last man standing affair".

After seventy minutes of unbelievable rallies, comebacks and counter punching, Lo lacono came back from a game down to claim the one hundred and sixth point and the title, 11/21, 21/15, 21/17.

In their penultimate match to reach the final, Sal Lo lacono overcame Corio's fourth seeded Brandon Morgan, 21/15, 21/13, whilst Bartheyl snuffed out a fairy tale ending to this event when he came back from a game down to literally fall over the line against Jack Lo lacono, 19/21, 21/17, 21/19.



Men's Open: Nathan Lindner Cam White, Gary Pedersen



Women's Open: Judy Kool, Ian Chalmers



Women's Open: Sylvia Tiet, Sue Dunlop, Kathy Donnoley



A Grade: Tim Milne



A Grade: Brandon Smits, Ian Chalmers, Jordan Rounds



Don Groom B Grade: Carlos Da Silva, Ron Iverson



C Grade: Jason Barthel



C Grade: Sal Lo Iacono, Michael Smits

D GRADE

The D Grade event included the two finalists from the Wangaratta Open, SS&A's Scott Haberecht and Commercial Club's Paul Morgan, who were seeded to meet in the event's finale, Geelong Open runner up Leanne Haley, plus three local Grand Prix newcomers.

Lakes Entrance youngster Jarrod Marturano put paid to Morgan's chances of another final's appearance ousting him at the quarter final stage, 21/18, 15/21, 21/13, but then lost to Mt. District GP debutant Paul Mostert, 20/22, 4/21, in their semi-final, whilst in the bottom half of the draw Haberecht had accounted for seventh seeded James Hill in straight games, then staved off a strong challenge from another local GP newcomer David Niven at the semi-final stage, 21/22, 21/17, 21/16.

Haberrecht was unstoppable in the final, creating early leads in both games which he never surrendered and secured the match, 21/13, 21/11, and his second title for the year, plus advancing him to the top of the Victorian rankings table, 180 points above second positioned Haley, and equal leader with South Australian Darius Rafiadeh on the National table.

E/F GRADE

This was a combined event of two pools of three players each with playoffs, ending up with Team Wilco claiming top position in both grades via Geoff's daughters Jacqueline and Jessica.

In their respective final's matches, Jacqueline overcame 2018 Victorian GP F Grade champion Amanda Pavia, 21/6, 20/22, 21/13, following her semi-final win over Lakes Entrance's Zoe McDonald, to claim the E Grade title, whilst Jessica took out the F Grade event defeating Corio's Tegan Goulding in the final, 21/16, 21/16, which positions both sisters at the top of both the Victorian and National rankings tables in their respective grades.

JUNIOR BOY'S & GIRLS UNDER 13

One of the highlights of the tournament was the junior under-13 event which comprised six youngsters ranging from seven up to eleven years of age, and all players put on a great show for the spectators, their parents and all the other players.

SS&A's Connor Haberecht made it a family double when he claimed the Boy's title, as his father Scott took out the D Grade event, when he overcame his SS&A team mate Blake Sutcliffe in an enthralling encounter, 21/17, 21/17, with Bairnsdale GP debutant Emily Kool winning the Girl's event.

Harrison Haberecht claimed third placing in the Boy's event with his win over Bairnsdale's Joshua Kool.



D Grade: Paul Mostert, Scott Haberecht, Paul Morgan



E Grade: Jacqueline Wilcock



E Grade: Ian Chalmers, Tony Holland



F Grade: Ian Chalmers, Jessica Wilcock



Junior Boys: Harrison Haberecht, Blake Sutcliffe, Connor Haberecht



Junior Girls: Ian Chalmers, Emily Kool

DOUBLES



Open Doubles: Steve Andrewartha, Geoff Wilcock, Leon Faustini & Rob Hay



A Grade: Brandon Smits, Ian Chalmers, Jordan Rounds, Marcus Horvat, Justin Smith



B Grade: Tanya Dawson, Carlos Da Silva



C Grade: Jason Bartheyl, Lao Biesbroek, Jack & Sal Lo Iacono, Brett Ramsden



D Grade: Jarrod Marturano, Zoe McDonald, Fraser Smith, Paul Johnson, Tony Holland, James Hill



E Grade: Jacqueline & Jessica Wilcock

2019 GENESIS VICTORIAN OPEN RESULTS

SINGLES		
Grade	Winner	Runner-Up
Men's Open	Cam White	Garry Pedersen
Women's Open	Judy Kool	Sue Dunlop
A	Tim Milne	Jordan Rounds
B	Carlos Da Silva	Ron Iverson
C	Sal Lo Iacono	Jason Bartheyl
D	Scott Haberecht	Paul Mostert
E	Jacqueline Wilcock	Amanda Pavia
F	Jessica Wilcock	Tegan Goulding
Junior Girls	Emily Kool	N/A
Junior Boy's	Connor Haberecht	Blake Sutcliffe

DOUBLES		
Grade	Winners	Runners-Up
Open	G. Wilcock/S. Andrewartha	L. Faustini/R. Hay
A	J. Smith/M. Horvat	B. Smits/J. Rounds
B	C. Da Silva/T. Dawson	N/A
C	M. Smits/J. Bartheyl	L. Biesbroek/B. Ramsden
D	J. Hill/P. Johnson	T. Holland/F. Smith
E	Jacqueline & Jessica Wilcock	T. Goulding/D. Morgan