

15th February: Team Chichester – v – Surrey Health & Racquets Club

Team Chichester welcomed Surrey Health & Racquets Club to Chichester Racquets and Fitness Club for its second home match of the Premier Squash League this half of the season. A formidable Surrey line-up included 4 men inside the World top 55 and the World No. 3 lady player, Alison Waters; a tough task lay ahead for the home side.

Hannah Wright-Davies from Chichester, and making her debut, battled bravely throughout the match and indeed gave a very good account of herself. Backed by a very vocal Chichester crowd Hannah made a nervous start against the World No.3, Alison Waters. Hannah, however, dug in and certainly made Alison work hard for her 2/11, 5/11, 5/11 victory.

0.1

On the adjoining glass-back Chichester's Tim Vail found World No. 53 Adrian Waller a very tough opponent. Over the years they have played each other many times with Waller improving in recent clashes. This time he was moving well clear of Vail and proved to be too strong on the night to clinch a 7/11, 5/11, 8/11 victory for Surrey

0.2

Next on the glass-back Olly Pett, who last month won his first PSA title in Chicago, faced Surrey's Simon Roesner (German No.1 and World No. 33). Roesner started off dictating proceedings, taking the ball very early and keeping Pett on the back foot and raced to a 0/9 lead before closing it out 2/11. The second game continued in the same vein, with Pett looking too hard to hit winners and he found the tin too often. Roesner maintained the pressure and took the second 4/11.

In the 3rd Pett settled down and became more patient – looking for the working shot instead of the winning shot. He began to grow in confidence and found his length of shot and began to force errors from the German to take the 3rd game 11/5. The 4th started evenly, shot for shot, before Roesner eased away and began to dominate with a fast attacking game and, once again, Pett began to find the tin. Roesner closed the match 5/11 to give Surrey an unassailable 0.3. lead.

Next on court Chichester's Robbie Temple, currently World ranked No.73, took on World No.18, Adrian Grant. Temple came out of the blocks very quickly and kept Grant under pressure for the first 2 games and despite Grant getting his game together towards the end of the 2nd Temple took them 11/8, 11/9. At the beginning of the 3rd Grant took advantage of a decision which upset Temple and Grant moved away, giving himself daylight to take the third 6/11. The fourth was neck and neck until the latter stages when Temple hit some outrageous nicks to close out the match 11/6 to put Chichester on the score sheet.

Finally on the glass-back Mo Azlan Iskandar (World No.13) made his welcome return to the Chichester squad. He played World No.8 and England No.4, Peter Barker in a much anticipated match. Both players started at a furious pace, with nothing to choose between them. Barker was moving well and nudged ahead with error free squash to snatch the 1st game. Iskandar battled back by employing some deft drop shots. Both continued to move around the court with admirable speed with Iskandar eventually taking the second. Iskandar maintained the pressure and a few errors began to creep into Barker's game and a few hit tin shots from Barker gave Iskandar the game

for a 2.1 lead. In the fourth game it was nip and tuck all the way until midway, when an extremely hard rally had Iskandar being dragged around the court to the point of exhaustion. Barker then pulled away to level the match and take it to a decider.

In the final game Barker edged to a 1/3. lead before another lengthy hard rally ensued which Barker won to increase his lead to 1/4. He extended the lead to 2/9 but Iskandar was not finished. He threw everything he had left to gain another 2 points before Barker took control and wrapped up the game and match 5/11 after 1 hour 23 mins.

1.4 to Surrey

The next match for Chichester is away to Winchester on March 1st.

Mike Phillips - Team Manager