



● Prize winners with Colonel Mohammed Hussain of Dubai Police, George W. Brazier, Vice-Consul of the USA, and Ajit Trasi of sponsors.—KT photo

Sylvia, Rory are champs

By Alan Taylor

SIXTH SEEDED Rory and Sylvia O'Connor both played brilliant squash to claim the top prize in the finals of the Al Ghandi Electronics-Dubai Police Ramadan Squash Festival at the Chicago Beach Sports Centre last night.

Playing against the top seeds, Abbas Khan and Ginny Rusher, Sylvia was the first to take the court, and after a somewhat hesitant start, settled down to play some fine squash which often had her opponent at full stretch.

In fact, it was Ginny who settled first and took the first game 15-13, after Sylvia had made several costly mistakes which Ginny was able to capitalise on.

In the second game, Sylvia became far more aggressive, taking the game to Ginny and playing some beautiful winning strokes. She raced to 10-1 and continued to dominate the play, taking the game 15-3. With the game finely balanced at one all, both ladies came out for the third game full of determination, and some great squash was witnessed by the large group of spectators.

A long rally at 11-6, brought loud applause from the audience as Sylvia claimed the point with a superbly placed

drop shot just above the line. The shot obviously boosted Sylvia's morale, and she finished off the game, winning 15-6, to take a 2-1 lead in the match.

The all-important fourth game saw Ginny digging deep into her reserves, in an all out effort to reverse the tide of play. Although Ginny was playing well, and scored from a number of great shots in the corners, Sylvia had gained her momentum, and played with composure to take the final game 15-10, and the game 3-1. So, the scene was set for the deciding game of the evening, with Rory O'Connor taking on Abbas Khan in an effort to turn the seedings upside down.

The first game started cautiously, with each player showing respect for the other, and there were a number of long rallies in which both players waited for the other to make the first mistake.

At 8-6, the play was fairly even, but a series of poor shots enabled Abbas to draw away and win the opening game 15-8. The second game was very evenly matched, and at one stage stood at 8-8. Rory was now playing some fine strokes, but these were punctuated with some costly errors, which led him to lose the second game 15-11.

Abbas went on to win the third game

and the match 3-0, but the combined scores of the mixed pairs showed that the O'Connors had won 84-79.

After the game Rory stated that he was extremely pleased to have won the title with his wife, and in fact praised her game, especially as she had been troubled with a knee injury. Although tired after the game he was full of admiration for Abbas, and noted that the American way of scoring made quite a difference to the game. Rory praised the efforts of the Dubai Police in arranging the tournament, and hoped that their support of the game would continue for a long time.

Earlier in the evening the play-offs for third and fourth place saw Kate Newns defeat Nikki Harradine 15-14, 15-11, 15-9, to set up a third place in the tournament for her partner Ramesh to build on. In his game against Phil Deeb, Ramesh played some brilliant drop shots above the line.

In the end Ramesh took control of the situation, kept his head and won the match 15-12, 12-15, 15-11, 15-13, to claim third place with Kate.

At the end of a superb evening of squash the prizes were presented by Colonel Mohammed Hussein Ali, head of the sports wing of Dubai Police.