



The prize winners of the international squash

Nailbiting finish in 'International' squash

By A Correspondent

THE 13th Orient Irrigation Services 'International' squash tournament witnessed a stunning and controversial finish as the final between Nikki Harradine's Rest of the World (ROTW) and Rehbar Shariff's Pakistan went to a sudden death one point playoff.

The day had begun quietly enough, as one would expect from an 11.00am start on a Friday morning as the eight remaining teams, split into two groups of four, cranked into action – the two winning teams meeting in the final.

In Group A Raj Shahani's India 2 and Guy Barfoot's Emirates teams lost both opening matches leaving Ray Kelly's Scotland and Pakistan to fight it out for first and second place.

Jan Deeb, going a long way back to her roots, set Pakistan off with a fine 43-35 win over Mandy.

Waqas Hanif was too good for Dan Keenan, and Andy Maclean too good for Rehbar Shariff which gave Pakistan a 2-1 lead, Sami bin Sadi wrapped it up for Pakistan over a gallant but outclassed Mike Clark, and Javed Rashid beat a limping Ray Kelly 34-27, to seal a 4-1 win.

In Group B, Phil Ellerby's England I and Allyson Ross' Committee Invitation lost both opening games and Ian Colton's England 2 and Rest of the World had to fight it out for first and second. Dot Higgins, who had a fabulous tournament, scored a great win over Nikki (-15), to give England 2 a flying start.

Phil Deeb levelled the match, downing Allan Lupton, and ultimately it was left to the final match between Asel Candelario and Ian for a decision. Despite a gallant effort, Ian, who had probably expended too much energy moaning about the rules, couldn't upset the form book, and it was ROTW and Pakistan in the final. However, Ian's gained some comfort to finish third.

The final was a very tense affair.

Nikki Harradine (-25), endured a very nervous 10 minutes against Jan Deeb before finally overturning the handicap against her very courageous opponent. However, Waqas Hanif, who had a great tournament demolished an exhausted Shane Shabankhani.

Phil Deeb then beat a very nervous Rehbar to put ROTW 2-1 up but in an incredibly nerve-wrecking match Martin Whitehead fought back from 14-21 down to 24-25 against Sami bin Sadi, before Sami wrapped it up and levelled the match at 2-2.

The stage was therefore set for the two best players from Division 2 to battle it out for the title – Ansel and Javed.

After failing behind initially as Javed imposed his pace on the match, Ansel's deadly lobs and drops slowly established a commanding lead and at the two minutes to go warning was 29-24 ahead. 119 seconds later he was down 30-29.

The rules of the tournament required one extra point be played and nerves were strained further as Ansel completely missed a ball, and a let was given. The match ended on the next rally as a crisp forehand cross court from Ansel just eluded Javed to end an incredible game, match and tournament.