

REVIEW OF THE 2023 ESRA OPEN RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS



The first racquetball tournament for 2023 was the ESRA Open Championships, held at the modern Tonic Squash and Gym located at Dromana on the Mornington Peninsula on 25th – 26th February. We had 61 singles and 64 doubles entrants compared with 58 and 54 last year, so numbers were good. Due to having 8 courts available, we were able to give most players 3 matches. Thanks to local organiser Matt Howard and host Amelia Martin for a great venue.

We have an heir apparent to Cam White in the Men's Open with local Tom Steward absolutely crushing his opposition and not conceding more than 5 points in any games he won. Ryan McCarter was runner-up. Amelia Martin repeated last year's win in taking out the Women's Open, although the final against Sarah Quinlivan was a much closer affair than the mens. And to wrap it up, Steward and Martin also took out the Open Doubles. We are all looking forward to the time Tom matches up to Cam, can he be the one to end Cam's dominance?

On the Saturday night, a large group dined out at the Dromana hotel. The food was good (when it eventually arrived!).

SINGLES EVENTS – PRESENTER – IAN CHALMERS

SINGLES		
Grade	Winner	Runner-Up
Men's Open	Tom Steward	Ryan McCarter
Women's Open	Amelia Martin	Sarah Quinlivan
A	Darren O'Donnell	Rob Hay
B	Leon Crooke	Michael Fatouros
B Plate	Paul Dobson	
C	Andrew Curwood	Cain Lestrangle
D	Floyd Cowan	Emily Heyen
E	Justin Williams	Marnie Shannon
E Plate	Jackson Martin	
Boy's U/13	Jackson Martin	
Girls's U/13	Aimee Westman	

MEN'S OPEN



L-R: Tom Steward, Ryan McCarter, Alex Baines

12 players competed in a Swiss Draw which gave some players 4 matches. There were many withdrawals in the final round with some players bodies giving out.

The playoff for 3rd and 4th saw Alex Baines winning by default over Crag Ambler.

The final between Tom Steward and Ryan McCarter saw Tom winning 15-5, 15-3. But the gameplay was much closer with many long rallies and the match time was about 45 minutes. It is a testament to Tom's games that he rarely makes mistakes and covers the court so well, it is difficult for his opponents to hit winners.

We would all love to see him match up with Cam this year if possible.

WOMEN'S OPEN

4 players competed in a round robin in which all players played each other.

The final round proved to be the final playoff for all positions.

Sylvia Tiet took out 3rd place beating Nicola Baines 21-14, 21-9.

The final saw Amelia Martin win 21-19, 21-11 over Sarah Quinlivan. The match was a very good standard with Sarah taking it right up to Ameila in the first game, but Amelia went away with it in the second to take out the match.



L-R: Amelia Martin, Sarah Quinlivan, Sylvia Tiet, Nicola Baines

A GRADE



Darren O'Donnell, Rob Hay

8 players competed in a Swiss Draw, where each player had 3 matches.

The playoff for 3rd and 4th saw Clint Emery clean up Nelson Howard 21-7, 21-8.

The final was a closer affair but in the end Darren O'Donnell, who had dropped back to A Grade from Open, had too much experience for Rob Hay, winning 21-14, 21-15.

B GRADE

7 players competed in a Swiss Draw, with the 3 first round losers playing off in a round robin plate.

The plate was taken out by Paul Dobson, who won both matches in close games 21-16, 21-17 then 21-16, 21-19.

The playoff for 3rd and 4th saw Jacob Van Der Vegt having to forfeit to Chris Hosie.

The final proved one sided with local Leon Crooke easily account for Michael Fatouros 21-7, 21-9.



L-R: Leon Crooke, Michael Fatouros, Paul Dobson

C GRADE



L-R: Andrew Curwood, Cain Lestrage

12 players competed in a Swiss Draw, which guaranteed 3 matches to all players.

The playoff for 3rd and 4th saw Michael Smits edge out Dan Photopoulos 22-21, 21-12.

The final proved to be the match of the tournament with Andrew Curwood beating Cain Lestrage in a very long match 21-19, 12-21, 22-20. Well done guys!

D GRADE

10 players competed in a Swiss Draw, which once again guaranteed players 3 matches.

The playoff for 3rd and 4th saw fan favourite, Denise Skidmore beat James Hill 21-15, 21-16.

The final was won by Floyd Cowan who proved to have too many shots for mum Emily Heyen winning 21-16, 21-15.



L-R: Floyd Cowan, Emily Heyen

E GRADE



L-R: Justin Williams, Marnie Shannon, Jackson Martin

E Grade saw seven players compete in a Swiss Draw with a round robin plate.

The round robin plate winner was Jackson Martin who won both his pool matches against Emma and Aimee Westman.

The playoff for 3rd and 4th saw Eric Evans beat Maddy Rolls after a very close 1st game, 22-21, 21-9.

The final went to Justin Williams, who was probably a bit strong for the grade downing Marnie Shannon 21-13, 21-7.

U13 Juniors

Both juniors competed in the E Grade event.

Girl's winner was Aimee Westman.

Boy's winner was Jackson Martin.



L-R: Jackson Martin, Aimee Westman

DOUBLES EVENTS – PRESENTER – IAN CHALMERS

DOUBLES		
Grade	Winner	Runner-Up
Open	Amelia Martin Tom Steward	Chris England Nelson Turner
A	Jacqui Wilcock Geoff Wilcock	Ryan Birks Jamie Evans
B	David Niven Paul Dobson	Chris Hosie Michael Fatouros
C	Colin Hill Lao Biesbroek	Cain Lestrangle Michael Smits
E	Sara Alger Maddy Rolls	Jack Oster Tony Gerard

OPEN Doubles

Final: Martin/Steward d. England/Turner 21-11, 21-13



L-R: Tom Steward, Amelia Martin, Nelson Turner, Chris England

A Grade Doubles

Final: Wilcock/Wilcock d. Birks/Evans 21-17, 9-21, 21-18



L-R: Jamie Evans, Jacqui Wilcock Geoff Wilcock, Ryan Birks,

B Grade Doubles

Winner: Niven/Dobson d. Fatouros/Hosie 22-20, 21-11



L-R: Paul Dobson, David Niven, Michael Fatouros

C Grade Doubles

Final: Hill/Biesbroek d. Lestrangle/Smits 15-11, 16-15



L-R: Colin Hill, Lao Biesbroek

E Grade Doubles

Final: Alger/Rolls d. Oster/Gerard 21-19, 21-17



L-R: Sara Alger

Words: Shane Skidmore

Photos: Shane Skidmore / Gary Meredith