

Olympic hopefuls battle for Curragh Open Squash title

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Squash is heading to the Olympic games for the first time in Los Angeles 2028. This will be the greatest show in the 150 year history of World Squash. From now on, every professional ranking point for the next four years could get one of our aspiring young squash Olympians entering into squash history in Los Angeles 2028.

Sponsored by Insomnia Café Naas, last weekend Ireland's top women and men's players took on the best of Europe's squash professionals in the Curragh Squash Club. Returning 2023 Curragh Open champion, Irish International and world ranked 161, Sam Buckley was to battle International team mates Conor Moran, Osin Logan, Michael Crevan and Gavin LeStrange. They were joined in the top seedings by squash guru and current Irish professional based in Amsterdam, Sean Conroy.

This fully loaded men's draw would be further strengthened with the arrival of international hot shot Andriean Knoph of Norway. A strong English flavour of Aaron Allpress, Charles Keeble and Dylan Roberts also arrived to hunt for the title. Orkney Island maverick Scottish International, Finlay Scott also made the starting

lineup after three flights and several car journeys. Joining these big names in the men's draw were hard working Irish juniors Conal Jackson and Frank O'Flynn looking to mix it with the best senior

International players for the weekend. It would be a massive effort on court to win the 2024 Anthony Frahill memorial trophy.

The women's draw was equally impressive. Previous Curragh PSA champion and multiple Irish national champion, Breanne Flynn looked to reclaim her Curragh PSA title after a narrow loss in last year's final. Now turning fully professional to try and win an Olympic place in Los Angeles 2028, Breanne was the number one seed and the player to beat in the women's event. Returning favourite and Curragh PSA regular, Juliette Permentier from Amsterdam was joined by Jasmine Thirst from England to try and upset the local favourites.

A highly impressive lineup of Irish women internationals Hannah McGugan, Aimee McConnell, Emma Lundy and Clara Moloney were all looking to establish early season form and improve rankings for International team places. Joined by highly motivated

young players Sara Sabry, Zoe Yeomans, Zoe Sheridan, Rebecca Jackson and Isabel Fallon, the women's draw looked ready for some serious battles. All these junior players were showing great junior form and looked to worry a few of the established International players.

QUARTER-FINAL

The men's quarter finals lined up an amazing Saturday's entertainment. A total marathon match saw the hard running Conor Moran inch through against International team mate Osin Logan in a loser leaves town show down. Logan had chances to upset the seedings and win through to the semi-final draw.

In a match of the highest quality and total physical commitment Conor Moran edged through. Logan having had his chances to win was suitably mithered at letting his chances slip. Meanwhile at the top end of the draw, Irish number 1 and World ranked 161 Sam Buckley won through against Michael Craven.

In the other quarter final, England's Aaron Allpress made short work of the Carlow's aging International Brian Byrne to set up a serious semifinal show down with Sean Conroy.

A highly entertaining semifinal match saw England Lionheart Allpress storm into a quick two game lead against home favourite Sean Conroy. Conroy looked dead and buried after this poor start.

However Conroy's tactical plan of turning off the heating slowly cooled the Allpress surge and also the court. Conroy's highly crafted short game and excellent change of pace with short drops and high lobs gradually wore down the English lionheart on the cooling Curragh court.

In a great win for local supporters, Conroy won through to set up a highly anticipated final with returning champion Sam Buckley. It was a total tactical and physical war with each player working to try and get the ascendancy. Referee Joe Ruddy with his usual grace kept the physicality in check. Buckley eventually won out in the tightest scoreline possible 3 games to 2.

A truly great final from two great Internationals. We wish them both great success in their chase for Olympic places.

WOMEN'S EVENT
Meanwhile in the women's event Breanne Flynn was making short work of her young rivals.

Trying to stop her were Aimee McConnell and Hannah Mc Gugan who played out a very highly impressive quarter final.

Carlow's ever green International Ciara Moloney created some problems for England's hard hitting Jasmine Thirst in her quarter final but went down to the strong young English player 3 games to 0.



Women Young Guns Zoe Yeomans, Isabel Fallon, Rebecca Jackson, Melissa Cosgrove

Each game went down to the wire with Conroy constantly looking at creating havoc in the front left dropshot area. Buckley tirelessly worked at keeping Conroy moving to negate his masterful front court touch play.

Juliette Permentier has improved substantially both technically and physically from last year's event. She had to cover every inch of the court impressively to stay in the match. However Ireland's Flynn was able to control the mid court 'T' position with superb volley control of the mid court.

Permentier desperately tried to get access to the mid court with high lobs and powerful straight lengths. However Flynn just kept the Dutch player working hard and eventually towards the end of each game was able to create winning positions.

A really solid and well deserved Ireland win with a superb 3-0 final scoreline win.

The Curragh local s were delighted to have Breanne Flynn back on the winners podium and wish her the best in her Olympic dream.

The local hackers squash event ran in parallel to the Curragh Open and created a great atmosphere to support

the Professional event over the weekend. Featuring Curragh local favourites Micky 'trickle Boast' Houlihan, Cuan 'Hurling' Mac Aogain, John 'The King King', and Dave 'Achilles Tendon' Cassidy among others.

These men of steel battled an assortment of club players from all over Ireland including Andrew Hendry and Keith Minnikin from Limerick and Scotland.

Players representing Wexford, Derry and Galway all arrived in town to play the local event and watch the pros at work. Young Dublin hotshots Tyler Dromgoole and Advik Ajay won through to the local B event final. In a high competitive B final, Tyler Dromgoole beat a highly motivated Advik Ajay.

We hope to see Tyler and Advik in the PSA section next year where the real prizes are on offer - PSA points!

The men of steel final drew Curragh Club teammates and International Masters' players Micky 'Trickle Boast' Houlihan and Cuan 'Hurling' Mac Aogain play off. As with true team mates neither of them wanted to lose to a club mate and they played out a great C final. Cuan 'Hurling' Mac Aogain battled through to win another Curragh Open C title to add to his growing C section.

Junior Internationals Danny Jones, Advik Ajay, Adam Power, Aaron Knox

Men of steel Micky 'Trickle boast', Houlihan and Cuan 'Hurling' Mac Aogain

Mens Internationals Brian Byrne, Dylan Roberts, Osin Logan, Michael Crevan



Ladies Final Breanne Flynn and Juliette Permentier



Womens Internationals Juliette Permentier and Jasmine Thirst



Mens Final Sam Buckley and Sean Conroy



Englands Thomas Clarke, Charles Keeble, Irelands Elliott Daly and Adam Power



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