

## British Open 2019

A few of the big hitters were missing this year: Kieran Booth knew that he was not able to challenge for the World Championships in 2020, so I imagine he might pick up the Amateur torch again next year. Steve Virgona is very happy to be a new father, so we await his return to the circuit, and poor Tim Chisholm had a very painful knee operation after the British Open last year. I am sure he will threaten the doubles court again soon, but what happens with singles remains to be seen. On a more positive note, the Queen's professionals were pleased the balls were more round than usual by the end of the tournament...

As such, the standard of the British Open was a little weaker than usual – not just at the top, but there were also far fewer entrants in general to the extent that the Qualifiers held at Radley consisted of only one match, and there was no doubles qualifier at all. Next year (if all the relevant parties agree) Queen's hopes to host the Qualifiers in the hope that more of London's Amateurs might be able to join in.

John Lumley turned up in the hopes of surpassing Nicky Howell as they were vying for the last spot in the World Championship challenge. Nicky was sporting a hand injury after a glass had seriously lacerated his hand in multiple places. John needed to reach the final and do better than Nicky, but Ben Taylor-Matthews managed to see him off in the quarters in four sets. Nicky lost in straight sets to Chris Chapman who had made his first journey back from Australia after leaving Hampton Court Palace in the summer. This left the World Championships Challenge process decided as Camden is to face Nicky whilst Chris Chapman is due to play Ben Taylor-Matthews.

It was nice to see Bryn Sayers back in the circuit again, but he had a tough quarters against a Riviere who was on fire for the whole week. Matthieu Sarlangue also had a swift quarter against the World Champion.

Ben and Chris both lost their semis in straight sets to Rob Fahey and Camden Riviere respectively, setting up a final that was quite momentous for a couple of reasons: Firstly if Camden were to win it would be his second ever grand slam; secondly Camden had never beaten Rob at Queen's.

The final saw some great tennis as Camden was showing perhaps more resilience to Rob's forces than he did in the Spring of 2018, but both players were retrieving brilliantly. Rob's railroads were keeping Camden's returns pinned down, but Camden had rocked up to the tournament with a bevy of serves that we had not seen from him at Queen's before as he attempted to restrict Rob's destructive returns using a trio of high serves and a little more spin on his usual fare.

It was a wonderful final to watch, but ultimately Camden won in straight sets 6/3 6/3 6/2, but we expect Rob to pull a few tricks out of the bag for the World Championships on his home ground next year.

In the doubles Rob and Nicky managed to see off Bryn and Ben T-M in four sets, although they managed to lose the second to love. Despite Nicky's hand injury he managed to volley fiercely well throughout at the galleries. The other semi was far more comprehensive as Camden and John Lumley made very short work of Matthieu and Chappy.

The final was explosive as the World Numbers 1 and 2 nailed ball after ball, but after losing the first two 6/4 6/3 Nicky had to re-dress his hand wound as the stitches had started coming loose. The last set was over really quite quickly 6/1.

Camden managed to go through the whole British Open without dropping a set and we are all pleased to see he has bounced back into form since his affliction last year.

Ben R