

# Squash Club Championships Finals 2024



## Best and Fairest **Chris Lipscomb**

A deserved and surprised winner, Chris, had been involved in numerous friendly matches over the season whilst

combining his playing duties with chauffeuring! The inclusion of Harry, his son, a promising junior in the friendly matches has also been a wonderful addition to the section.

**O40s Doubles** **Andrew Wakely and Alison Waters** beat Duncan Kynoch and William Husband 3-1. 11/6, 9/11, 11/5, 11/8.

There would be new names on the trophy in 2024 with Duncan and William finding their way through some tough rounds to face Spike and Ali, fresh from beating the 2023 champions Michael Hill and Cavin O'Driscoll in the previous round. Ali's doubles experience, and a few commonwealth games medals to show for it, helped settle her and Spike quickly into the match.



It looked like it could all be one way traffic, but a team talk after the first game saw Duncan and William come back focused and possibly looking to hit the ball to Spike more! The tactics seemed to work with Duncan and William winning the second game. A fast start in the third with some wonderful winners from Spike – both off the strings and some off the frame saw them race ahead and despite Duncan and William's best efforts they could not claw the deficit back. 2-1 Spike and Ali.

Were there a few nerves on show now as the winning line was in sight? Not from Ali as she continued to return all Duncan's tight and tricky shots. It was a close fought battle with Spike and William both reducing their error count on the forehand side but it was the doubles experience of Spike and Ali that

prevailed to take the fourth game and title.



**Handicap Doubles**  
**John Cumming and Jason Byrne** beat James Rowland Clark and Philipp Saumweber 3-0. Player unavailability meant this match

was conceded with Jason and John taking the title.

**O55s Doubles** **Cavin O'Driscoll and Michael Hill** beat Jan Menneken and Andy Levy 3-0. 11/4, 11/7, 11/5.

Michael and Cavin lived up to their pre final title favourites tag with an accomplished display of patience and hitting into spaces. Their steady play always had Jan and Andy on the back foot and although there were glimpses of brilliance and opportunities to cause an upset, it never materialised with Michael and Cavin taking the match.



**Open Doubles** **Jojo Shean and Michael Shean** beat Adam Shean and Rudi Willemse 11/7, 11/9, 10/12, 9/11, 11/7. A family affair, nearly. Three brothers and four South Africans

in the final. The 2023 champions, Jojo and Mike Shean up against younger brother Adam and Open finalist Rudi. The feeling in the crowd being the Open final efforts must have tired Rudi and Jojo and Mike as a pair were too strong. A quick start, all be it with long and high tempo rallies, the points went the way of Jojo and Mike and they kept Adam and Rudi quiet enough to take the first game.

Adam and Rudi in the second game started to match Jojo and Mike point for point. They had their chances too but it

was the Shean brothers once again who took the game. This looked over! Well, the Open final should have warned the crowd it's not over until it's over. Relentless rallies and quality play saw Adam and Rudi back in the final. The Shean brothers visibly frustrated, Adam and Rudi were back in this, taking the third game. Again, point for point the pairs traded blows and once more the frustration and errors were increasing from Jojo and Mike. Adam and Rudi took the fourth game. Game on!

It is fine margins and brilliance that can decide results. The fifth game had both and it went the way of the Shean brothers. Such high-quality squash and the crowd entertained once more on the evening. It was Jojo and Mike who won the fifth to retain their Open Doubles title.

**Handicap Singles**  
**Philipp Saumweber** beat Alex Tonge 3-0. 15/7, 15/13, 15/13.

Philipp and Alex, two newbie finalists and players who had quietly and steadily made their way through the draw. Philipp having to give Alex a nine shot start with the handicap had to keep the error count low and concentration levels high. Alex, who moves well and is still improving, had to use the advantage to apply pressure on Philipp. A very fast start from Philipp, combined with good court movement saw his close Alex lead and soon take the first game.

The second game saw Alex dig deep and scamper around the court getting most of Philipp's shots back. But Philipp had noticed if he kept the ball in the back left corner he had an advantage. He used this and kept his concentration to take the second game. Alex, cheered on by the crowd, continued to run for everything in the third game but was increasingly fatiguing and still getting caught out in the back left corner. A great battle in the third game and again, Philipp kept his cool to win another close game and take the title.







**O45 Singles Chris Dawson beat William Husband 3-0. 9/1, 10/8, 9/1.** Double reigning champion, Chris Dawson, who has never lost in the O45

Singles Club

Championship took on William Husband, who was in red hot form, having beaten Duncan Kynoch in the semi-final.

William's target of taking a game off Chris may have seemed lacking in belief he could win the title but after the first game it then looked like it would be a monumental achievement. Chris was soon in his stride hitting the ball cleanly and giving William no time to settle.

The second game was a lot closer with William seeming more settled and fighting his way to game ball and his target to take a game in sight. Sadly Chris had other ideas! Chris won the second game and came back on court in the third not letting up to take a third title in a row and remain unbeaten in the O45s.

**O55 Singles Cavin O'Driscoll beat Michael Hill 3-1.** Both finalists fresh from their O55s Doubles win 20 minutes earlier saw a repeat of the 2023 final. The Elite Vets



squash Sunday training camp reports (Michael informing everyone he never loses) had the match going the way of 2023 champion. The match once again had the hallmarks of a titanic battle.

As expected some long tough rallies and very red faces showed both were giving their all. Cheered on by a small crowd – for some reason most spectators wanted to watch the Open final, it was Cavin who took the match 3-1 to gain revenge for last year's defeat. Will there be a trilogy in 2025?

**Junior Open Sophie Evans beat Finn Vowles 3-0. 11/5, 11/8, 11/8.**

Another player looking to win a third title in a row was Sophie. Back to defend her title in a repeat of the 2023



final against Finn with both players having made good progress in their game over the year. In a near repeat of 2023, it was Sophie who settled quickest and stayed patient in the longer rallies to take the first game. Finn came back on with more belief in the second, and rightly so. His good drop shots and reverse boast catching Sophie unawares on occasions, but the error count was higher and Sophie remained calm to win a close second game.

The third game was another close battle and Finn fought for every point but he could not get the elusive lead as Sophie found some wonderful winning shots at just the right time. Sophie won the third game and with it, a third Junior Open title.

**Women's Singles**

**Kace Bartley beat Megan Thomas 3-0. 11/7, 11/9, 11/3.**

A first Women's final for both players.

A nervous Meg was up against Kace who on form was the favourite. Meg deserves credit for her performance against a very talented player and Meg made Kace work hard for both the first and second games. The efforts to do this also cost Meg as Kace used her impressive racket skills to move Meg around, keep her under constant pressure and break her resolve (and fitness) to see Kace win her first title.



**Open Singles Ben Coates beat Rudi Willemse 3-2. 9/11, 7/11, 11/6, 15/13, 11/8.**

An eagerly anticipated final and large crowd would see 2022 winner Ben take on first time finalist Rudi. Both players had been pushed previously and the crowd knew this could be an epic match in the making. There were questions over Rudi's fitness, could he keep up with Bens fast pace play and movement? Or Ben's focus, can he keep calm when Rudi moves the ball around all four corners of the court?

The match did not fail to deliver, and

it was Rudi who seemed to start the sharper of the two. World class shots and exquisite touch from both players saw them push hard from the



outset. Rudi was more clinical though and after opening up a couple of points lead, he did not let it slip to take the first game. The crowd expecting a response from Ben sat back in amazement of the quality of the second game. It was Rudi who was putting on a show, fighting for each point and hitting sublime winners. Ben could not keep up and soon Rudi was 2-0 up with a fist pump to show the importance of taking the game.

Ben started the third game with less errors and more structured squash. After getting a healthy lead it was combined with some suggesting Rudi was having a little rest to rest for the fourth game. Ben was now back in the final. The fourth game had everything from silly errors, amazing shots and pure effort whilst outside the court you could feel the excitement, nerves and tension.

Rudi raced ahead and Ben was looking like a beaten man, but he has matured and kept in each point after a poor start. Slowly clawing back Rudi's lead, it looked to be in vain as Rudi served for the match at 10-9. Somehow Ben managed to retrieve every shot as Rudi put him under ever increasing pressure. Ben finally won the point to save match ball. His focus remained to close out the game and take the match to a fifth game.

As Ben has managed to stay calm and focused, Rudi had not faded from the extreme efforts of the previous four games. This was two gladiators with rackets and a ball surrounded by four walls giving it everything. This is where, as a spectator you feel bad knowing there has to be a winner and loser, but neither player gave any indication on who this could be in the early exchanges of the fifth game.

As the points continued it was Ben who seemed to just have that 1% more at crucial times and he managed to close out the game 11/8 to win a hard-fought title.