

## **SUPER 60s NATIONAL TEAM LEAGUE – Report by Richard Hayes**

Last year Knighton Park won Division 2 of the inaugural Super 60s National team competition through Dave Gannon, Richard Hayes, Tony Smith and Paul Laverty from Cornwall.

As a result we moved into the top division - Division 1 this season - a competition played in Grantham. To strengthen the squad Chris Rogers agreed to join us and the event took place over the weekend of 13th - 14th January.

The competition contained 6 teams who all played each other and contained most of the top 30 over '60s players in the UK. We had a practice session the day before and it was evident that Dave would not be able to play having badly damaged his hand trying to keep up with his son in the gym earlier in the week !

Our first match was against TT News in a team which included the current England No 2 ( Steve Scowcroft ) and Richard Jermyn who is arguably a stronger player. Paul Laverty was beaten in straight sets by Steve Scowcroft before Chris played Richard Jermyn. At 2-0 down it looked somewhat bleak but Chris managed to turn it around to take the match in 5 sets. Richard then beat Andy Frain and Chris beat Steve Scowcroft - both in straight sets to take a 3-1 lead. Unfortunately Paul then lost to Andy Frain and Richard lost to Richard Jermyn to bring the match conclusion to a 3-3 draw.

The second game was against a very strong All Blades side who surprisingly left Ivan Lewis out of their line up. This game proved to be a little easier with two wins for Chris Rogers against Steve Horton and Tim Dyson, two for Paul Laverty against Steve Horton and Dave Ashwell and one for Richard against Dave Ashwell before losing 12-10 in the 5th to Tim Dyson.

Tony Smith replaced Paul in the 3rd match and we took another 2 points with a 5-1 victory over Smithy Green. Chris best Keith Deaville and Tony Worthington whilst Richard beat Keith Deaville and Paul Myatt. Tony had an excellent win over Paul Myatt but lost to Tony Worthington.

At the end of day one we were top of the league on sets difference from TT News.

We made a slow start on Sunday and lost 4-2 to Draycott. Chris won his customary 2 beating Trev Kerry and Mark Romano in straight sets but Richard and Paul each lost both matches - Richard had match points against Phil Causer but was unable to convert these and Paul also lost to Phil in 5 sets.

At the start of the last match against Northern Lights we still had a chance of winning the league depending on other results - the league was very tight with every team capable of beating each another. We needed to win and rely on Draycott to take a draw from their match with TT News.

Chris got us off to an excellent start with a straight sets win over former England international Paul Eckersley. Paul then lost to Dave Robson before Richard beat Paul Stead also in straight sets. Match 4 saw Chris come back from behind to defeat Dave Robson over 4 close games to take a 3-1 lead followed by Paul beating Paul Stead and an excellent win for Richard over Nigel Eckersley to seal a 5-1 win.

The match on the other table was tight and at 3-2 down, we needed Trev Kerry to defeat Manoj Gandhi for Draycott to stay up by taking a draw and for us to subsequently win the title. He took the first two sets 11-3, 11-3 and it looked ' in the bag ' but Manoj clawed his way back into the contest to win the game and give TT

News the match and therefore the title - the defeat relegated Draycott to the 2nd division next season.

A great weekend and so close ! It was Chris' first foray into the Over 60s (except for County matches which don't count for Over 60's rankings because of the ETTA / Vettes lack of coordination) and so he had no prior ranking - presumably he will move straight into the No 1 spot.

Chris Rogers - played 10 / won 10 - 100%

Richard - played 10 / won 6 - 60%

Tony - played 2 / won 1 - 50%

Paul - played 8 / won 3 - 37.5%