

GOLD, GOLD, GOLD for Australia! It's TWO to Australia.

The Women's 55+ in the Maureen Connolly Cup: Australia vs Italy in the FINAL, after the Aussies had soundly defeated the fancied USA team in the semi. With Ros Balodis (10 Senior titles) and Leanne Swaysland (5), Australia took the lead with a resounding win to Leanne against Francesca Ciardi. Leanne had only played Doubles, in the group matches and was called in at #2 Singles in Wednesday's semi final vs USA. In that match although Leanne lost her Singles, Ros Balodis won hers, and then teamed with Leanne to win the doubles decider.

In the Final, taking the opening set 7-4 in the Tiebreak, Leanne was challenged by an Italian fight-back, losing the second 63. She eventually wore down her opponent, taking the third 63, with a cracking forehand passing shot on match point to put Australia a point ahead.



"I'm so excited," said the Aussie No. 2 at having drawn first blood for her team. "I was happy with my movement and I had great support from my team members," she added.

Next up was World #1 Ros Balodis against Simonetta Bozzano, a daunting task for the Italian. Managing the court expertly with an almost metronomic rhythm, Ros took the first set comfortably 61, leaving Bozzano muttering under her breath and a very steep mountain to scale to get back in the match. After a gallant effort to break Ros in the eighth game, Bozzano was broken back straightaway giving Ros the win, 61 63, which sent her team into a bouncing group-huddle of joy on the side of the court.

"We've tried to win this competition and always fallen short, so this will be the first time we've captured the Maureen Connolly Cup," said Ros Balodis after the win. "It's fantastic." Italy chose not to play the doubles, handing the Australians a walkover in the final's last rubber.

Meanwhile, perennial champions, the USA, who won the cup every year from 2009 to 2014 managed to beat last year's winner France, despite the retirement of Diane Barker through injury in her match with Catherine Suire, 2-1 in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> play-off.

A second GOLD to Australia was in our defence of the Von Cramm Cup (M60). Facing Great Britain in the semi, Steve Packham gave Australia a 1-0 lead after holding his own again 61 75. Glenn Busby was then up against Paul French, who was a Finalist in 2015 Individuals. Glenn had a great win 64 61, and the Aussies were in the Final.

In the match for GOLD, Steve Packham continued his winning way at #2, defeating Chris Bennett 64 61 and Glenn Busby faced the USA #1 and current USA and World Champion, Daniel Waldman in the second rubber. First set 62 to Waldman, and Busby had to summon up some extraordinary form to win the second set 75 and the third in a Tie Breaker 7-3. The Americans took the Doubles 63 62, against Stephen Dance and John Henning. A satisfying win 2-1 to the Aussies!!!

In other events, Australia had mixed results, finishing as follows:

Maria Bueno Cup (W50) 7<sup>th</sup> – Australia def Sweden 3-0 with Jill Meggs winning #2 Singles and Bren Foster & Narelle Raftery taking the deciding Doubles.

Alice Marble Cup (W60) – 7<sup>th</sup> – Australia def Italy 3-0 with wins to Suzie Ellis 76 63, Judy Buzza 62 64 and Rosemary Davis & Sara Goddard 62 62.

Fred Perry Cup (M50) – 16<sup>th</sup>, losing to Latvia 2-1.

Austria Cup (M55) – 7<sup>th</sup> with a loss to Spain. Roger Spraggon lost 36 26 in #2 Singles, and then in the Doubles, with Jeff Trevarthen 06 46.

Robyn Castle, with acknowledgement to the ITF Seniors' writer, Jeff Kavanagh.

