

AUSTRALIAN CLAY COURT TITLES

Despite a wet beginning to the Australian Clay Court Championships, titles were decided in the winter sunshine at Dendy Park on Monday. Players were greeted to some traditional Melbourne weather over the four days with rain causing some delays early on then Sunday and Monday providing beautiful playing conditions.

Entries for the event were received from all parts of Australia as well as New Zealand, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, ACT and the host state, Victoria, made up the numbers from within Australia, with quality rather than quantity being the order of the day.

In the women events we saw some "new young stars" return to the game with **Marie Bailey** displaying some wonderful endurance in her semi-final match against **Juliet Drew** and **Michelle Leydin** causing the most problems for the eventual winner **Karen Kleverlaan**. Karen continued her dominance with a great display of tennis winning the 35/40+ event without dropping a set and only conceding 7 games along the way – 5 of those games to Michelle.

It was a familiar score-line in the ladies 45/50+ with **Kerrie Douglas** adding her 10th Australian Clay Court singles title to her impressive record conceding only 7 games along the way. Kerrie also won the doubles with the reigning world champion **Wanda Clothier** and the mixed doubles with **Bruce Osborne**.

In the 55-65+ event, un-seeded and unknown but talented Australian (returning from Canada) **Robin Walker** caused an upset after winning the singles without dropping a set, though **Judy Hancy**, having 5 set points, took her to a tie-break in the first set of their semi-final. This was a sterling performance from Judy as her 97 year old mother passed away on Friday. Our condolences go to Judy, Tom and the family.

Brett Patten (WA) showed absolute dominance over the 35+ field conceding only 3 games for the entire tournament. Brett then teamed with recent Australian representative **Jamie White** (Qld) to win the doubles defeating **Martin Richards** and **Bruce Osborne** in a tight and exciting 3 sets. Brett defeated his doubles partner Jamie in the singles final.

40+ singles winner **Martin Richards** (SA) defeated **Paul Kleverlaan** in the final with Paul retiring after the first set due to injury. Martin was also runner-up in the doubles and mixed doubles.

Simon Arms, currently ranked #7 in the world ITF rankings had little trouble on his way to winning his title. He defeated **Martin Warwick** in the final. Simon teamed with his twin brother Chris to lose an extremely close doubles final in a third set tie-breaker to good friend **Bruce Fergusson** and **Michael Russell** (Qld) – both ex-Australian representatives.

The match of the tournament was between **Steve Packham** and **Eddie Myers** with some brilliant tennis from both players before Steve triumphed 7/6, 3/6/ 7/5 giving him the 50+ title.

Another close contest was waged between **Bruce Osborne** and **Rodney Wurtz** in the 55+ men's singles final. Bruce eventually wore Rodney down winning 4/6, 7/6, 6/2. Bruce also won the mixed doubles and was runner-up in the 35+ doubles showing that age isn't always a restriction to performance.

Wayne Hassett – a relative newcomer to seniors tennis played some meticulous tennis to triumph over Turkey bound and Australian representative **Roger Davey** (SA) in straight sets. Wayne certainly showed he will be a force in any event he chooses to play in the future.

Lee Taylor (Qld) had little trouble in disposing of his opponents in the 65+ singles. Lee defeated **Pat Maloney** (ACT) in the final in straight sets. Lee also won the mixed doubles with **Judy Hancy**.

Young **Bob Howes** won the 70/75+ men's singles defeating fellow young gun **David Herring** 6/2, 6/2. This win adds to Bob's already impressive record.

Tennis Seniors Australia extends its appreciation to Barry Prior, Paul Kleverlaan and Andy Hutchison for their commitment in conducting another successful tournament.

The Australian ITF circuit now shifts to the Gold Coast for the Grade 2, Queensland State Championships to be held from July 2nd through until July 5th.