

ITF, SENIORS WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS, HELSINKI, FINLAND

AUSTRALIA WINS GOLD IN THE W55, MAUREEN CONNOLLY AND THE M60, VON CRAMM CUPS

At indoor centres in Helsinki, the ITF Seniors Team Championships were hosted by Finland. Australia was represented by teams in all age groups. Four out of the six teams received seeded positions.

By the end of the round robin sections at the end of day three, the Tuesday of the competition, three of our teams topped their Round Robin sections and so featured in the play-offs for the top positions in each age group. The M55, M60 and W55 age groups were the successful teams.

Having being seeded number 3, our W55, Maureen Connolly Cup team met the strong USA team in the semi final and produced a resounding victory with Ros Balodis winning her singles handsomely and combining with Leanne Swaysland to win the doubles in straight sets. Italy surprised France and became our team's opponents in the final. Leanne got away to a brilliant and determined start and won the first rubber. Ros won the second rubber in straight sets and so won the final. Leanne and Ros were well supported by Wanda Howes and Fiona Walker who played the early matches and gave help in preparing all players for the competition.



Leanne Swaysland, Ros Balodis (holding the Maureen Connolly Cup), Wanda Howes and Fiona Walker

From the outset, having been seeded number 2, the M60 Von Cramm Cup team were always going to be in contention for the finals. It, too, went through the early rounds undefeated with Glenn Busby and Stephen Packham paying the singles and John Henning and Stephen Dance combining in the doubles. It met Great Britain in the semi final and had a regulation win. Drawn against the number 1 seed in the final, the Aussies came out blazing with Steve winning the opening singles in straight sets. Glenn was then locked in a tense struggle with Dan Waldman, a past ITF Seniors World

Champion on several occasions, and lost the first set 2-6. He reversed the score in the second set and both Dan and Glenn went head to head in a tense third set. Down a break on two occasions, Glenn fought back to take the match 7-4 in a third set tie break and thus give Australia an unassailable hold on the Von Cramm trophy.



John Henning, Stephen Dance, Glen Busby (holding the Von Cramm Cup) and Steve Peckham

Our W50 team of Brenda Foster, Narelle Raftery, Jill Meggs and Di Cassel lost one match in their Round Robin section and thus were assigned to the second group who played for positions 7 through to 12. Our ladies performed admirably in this section of the competition and defeated Sweden 3-0 to take position 7 out of a total of 20 teams. Likewise, our W60 team had a similar fate finishing second in the Round Robin section of the competition. If did well in the play-off for the

second lot of teams and finished a creditable eight. Well done Susie Ellis, Judy Buzza, Sara Goddard and Rosemary Davis.

Mike Ford, Ian Jarman, Roger Spraggon and Jeff Trevarthen got away to a very good start by winning the top position in the Round Robin stage. However, M55 team encountered some very strong opposition in drawing Spain (seeded 2) early in the play-offs and so finished seventh out of a total of 22 teams: a most creditable performance.

The M50 team had an unfortunate start to the competition when David Evans strained a calf muscle and took no further part in the Team's competition. Michael Russell, Martin Warwick, and Mal Pearson battled hard to finish sixteenth (out of a total of 20 teams) in its age group.

As the competition for the week was held indoors, the organizers had little problem ensuring a successful completion of this tournament. The ITF and the Finnish Tennis Association is congratulated for conducting and hosting these highly successful Championships.

All the results can be found on <http://www.itftennis.com/seniors/home.aspx> Tom Hancy