

New Zealand and Australia create upsets at Seniors World Team Championships

The Seniors World Team Championships got underway in New Zealand today, and the host nation caused a big upset in the Tony Trabert Cup (men's 40) by beating the third seeded Dutch team. There was a second upset in the same event as Australia overcame fourth seed Spain 2-1. Martin Richards had a straight sets win 64 64, while Brett Patten took it to 3, with a nail-biting win 67 64 76. Unfortunately, Paul Kleverlaan and Chris O'Mara went down in the Doubles 36 46. It's early days, so here's hoping they can get the Doubles going in the next few matches.



Haka performed at the opening ceremony (photo courtesy of ITF)

Several other New Zealand teams came close to causing an upset, including the Margaret Court Cup (women's 45) team, who pushed second seeded France to the deciding doubles. Australia's team went down 1-2, with Narelle Raftery losing 26 06, while Brenda Foster kept our hopes alive with a win 64 64. However, when she paired with Wanda, they lost narrowly 46 67.

In the Dubler Cup (men's 45), Australia had a resounding 3-0 win against Canada. Martin Warwick won in straight sets 62 63, while Simon Arms was stretched to a third set, winning 26 64 63. Greg Westwood paired with Martin in the Doubles to take it 62 62. New Zealand posed a tough challenge to third seed Netherlands, going down in the Doubles decider.

In the Fred Perry (men's 50), Australia had a 3-0 win against Slovenia, Eddie Myers taking the #2 Singles 60 60, and Bruce Ferguson the #1, winning 62 61. The Doubles was a walkover. The local team came through a deciding doubles when New Zealand overcame South Africa in another nail-biting clash. The sixth seeds went 0-1 down when Duard Botha came back from behind to beat David Mustard, before #1 Peter Hampton levelled the scores and teamed up with Steve Harley to clinch the doubles win.

Another couple of upsets occurred in the Austria Cup (men's 55), as third seed France went down 2-1 to Canada and Great Britain defeated fifth seeded Netherlands 3-0. Our team, winner for the last six years, had an emphatic 3-0 win over Turkey, dropping just one game. The team is Glenn Busby, Gary Thoroughgood and Rodney Wurtz.

Our Italia Cup team (men's 35) had a BYE today, and will play GBR on Tuesday. Our women's 35s in the Susan Lenglen Cup were "thrown in at the deep end" today, having to face the crack USA team. Michelle Leyden played a creditable 46 57 in the #2 Singles, but Karen Kleverlaan had a tough time in hers, going down without taking a game. Karen paired with Juliann Jacobsen in the Doubles, and went down 26 26. Better luck tomorrow, girls!

The top seeds made it through in Ashburton, host venue for the Maria Esther Bueno (women's 50) and Maureen Connolly (women's 55) Cups. All four seeds in the Maria Esther Bueno Cup – USA, Australia, France and Great Britain – had 3-0 wins, with Ros Balodis doing it 60 60, while Kerrie Douglas had to come back from a set down, to win 26 63 63. Leanne Swaysland played with Ros in the Doubles which they won 60 61. In the Maureen Connolly Cup top seed USA, second seed Great Britain and third seed France all secured wins after the singles rubbers. Fourth seeded Australia was the only team to need the deciding doubles, beating Sweden 2-1. Robin Walker went down 16 36, Lyn Mortimer levelled with a 62 64 win and when Lyn paired with Sara Goddard in the Doubles it was 62 61.

A good start for our contingent, generally, we have high hopes for the rest of the week!

Robyn Castle