

## LIVERPOOL CLOSED 2010

The men's singles title in the 2010 Fawley Construction Liverpool Closed championships, produced an Eastern European champion for the second time in four years. After dismissing top seed Stewart Mudie in straight games in the last four, Poland's Tomasz Rzeszotko swept to victory against Jonathan Taylor (a beaten semi-finalist a year ago) in the final. The opening two games were tightly fought affairs, Tomasz winning both 11-9. Jonathan, also appearing in his first Closed men's final, having dismissed Mal McEvoy 3-1 in the semis, extended the contest, taking the third game 11-7. The contest ended, though, after the next game, the Wrexham based Polish man wrapping up the match in the fourth, 11-8 and the title following in the footsteps of his countryman Michael Rogala who lifted the trophy in 2007.

A disappointing women's singles entry forced the Referee to play the event as a five person 'round robin' competition. However, the draw was badly affected by the withdrawal just prior to the start of Fiona Dennett and Jasmin Yang. Not for the first time has the event suffered from the lack of competitors although there are 21 women registered in the League. This resulted in holder Cherith Graham and newcomer Janay Gibson, who both beat fifth division player Silke Lowe from Germany, facing each other in the final. Cherith, listed at 51 in England started as favourite against Janay, who stands 86 places below her. Following Cherith's opening game win, the youngster levelled matters via an 11-8 win in the next before slipping behind again in the third. The 14 year old Cheshire junior, though, wasn't giving up easily and forced a decider taking the fourth 11-8 to set up an exciting finale. It was a nip and tuck affair but, the experienced holder edged home 11-8 to claim the title for the fourth time in eight years, each against a different opponent.

Miss Gibson also reached the open junior final where she met up and coming star Michael Lunn who took the opening game 11-9 – Janay replying in the next 11-7. Michael stepped up the pace in the third dropping only two points and at 10-10 in the fourth Janay came close to forcing a decider but Michael grabbed the two points to take the title at the first attempt.

Mal McEvoy and his Ford team-mate Phil Luxon reached the open doubles final and faced Jasmin Yang and Miles Fong who if successful, would become the first ever mixed duo to take the title. The Harold House combination took an opening lead winning 11-6 - the Ford men hitting back in the next before squeezing home 12-10 in the third. The hard hitting underdogs who had disposed of Keith Bird/John Lau pairing and the Williams/Lunn combination, were not out of it and although making their opponents sweat in the fifth, the game and title went to the Ford duo 11-7. Luxon's win came 34 years after his last success in the Closed, having won the Restricted singles title in 1976 a longevity between titles record is one he shares with Keith Williams.

The veteran final was a repeat of the men's singles quarter-final contest between Tomasz Rzeszotko and Keith Williams when the Crosby High man ousted the ten times men's singles champion. Tomasz turned on a fine show, taking the opener 11-8 - Keith levelling in the second before clinching the title at the first time of asking winning 11-9, 11-7 to become only the second player (Keith being the other) to win the men's and vets' titles in the same season. The watching audience weren't aware that the holder had been unwell for a couple of days going into the final but, the modest, most successful Liverpool League player ever admitted he was beaten by a better player on the night.

A new champion would emerge from the Over 55's event when Ray Jackson took on Dave Harse in the final. Jackson had to recover from 2-1 down in the semi-final against Manchester's John Hope, taking the last two games 1-7, 11-6. Harse also had to fight back from a 2-1 deficit in the penultimate round against holder Dave Roberts, taking the fourth game 11-6 before edging home 12-10 in the decider. Harse eased through the opening game 11-6 while in the next game both players let games points slip away - Harse eventually taking it 16-14. With a 2-0 lead, he was in command and went on to win 11-7 and the title.

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