

Essex Tennis - Bryan Watts – Eddie Kirtland Singles Tournament Report

3rd & 4th October 2020

The Annual Bryan Watts – Eddie Kirtland Autumn Singles Tournament was organised and competed for by Essex's top Senior and invited Junior players at Redbridge Sports Centre, over the weekend of the 3rd & 4th October 2020. This year was unique in organisation due to the COVID situation we now find ourselves in. Like many other sports the restrictions on supporters of any event made was most unusual both for the Competitors & Organisers alike.

The standard of the event reached its normally high standard with both established Senior Players & promising Junior Players competing healthily in the event. This annually held Essex Tennis event at Redbridge, would, in normal circumstances, formed part of the overall team selection process for the forthcoming National LTA Senior Men's Inter-County Winter Singles Championships this year that would have been held in Bath University where the Essex Senior Men's Team would have been competing in Division 1. Because of the COVID situation this has been cancelled

Established Essex Tennis Senior Players competing included Marshall Tutu, David Wright, Joel Cannell, Kane Patience, Peter French, Edward Pudney & David Mould. There was a healthy inclusion of Essex Tennis's Junior Player contingent namely, Anthony Wright, Jamie Bixby, Henry Hammond, Adam Groves, Gene Swain, Anthony Weingarten, Toby Terrell, Sam Constantinou, Johnny Price & Josh Ratnage. This year's event did not attract the normal support from our many Junior Players which was unfortunate. To increase participation some players played on just a single day which allowed them to participate in some much needed Matchy Practice. This was well received by the players.

The Saturday play involved the majority of players completing 2 matches with ultimate progression into the Semi-Finals of the Main Event & Playback positions within the tournament draw. The Sunday meant that the Semi Finalists were Marshall Tutu up against Kane Patience with David Wright playing with the 100% fit again Joel Cannell.. Marshall Tutu in the 1st semi-final, won against Kane Patience to advance to the final, whilst in the 2nd semi-final Joel Cannell emerged the winner against David Wright. Both matches saw a high standard of play worthy of any semi-final. Marshall Tutu winning 6-3, 6-0 & in the other semi-final Joel Cannell was victorious with a score of 6-4, 6-2.

The Final was a memorable match between the Senior Team regulars, Marshall Tutu & Joel Cannell. A thrilling match which was played in a wonderful spirit, saw Marshall Tutu become the well deserved Winner, where the score reflected the closeness of the match, being 6-3, 6-7[5], [10-6].

Further Singles Events of this type are planned & subject to COVID restrictions already in the Tennis Calendar for February 2021.

This event again was well received by all the players & a tribute to the late Bryan Watts, a great supporter of Essex Tennis and fine player over the years, and current sponsor of Essex Tennis, Eddie Kirtland. There was again a degree of sadness in not having my dear friend Jamie Willson with me during the event. This absence was made up for by Tom Higgins who viewed with interest, the talent on show during the event. Tom is the current Essex Tennis Men's Senior Captain.

Graham Ray & Tom Higgins

4th October 2020