

Rain fails to dampen spirit of championships

Yesterday's patch of inclement weather was of little consequence to the competitors seeking gold and glory at Fendalton Bowls Club in this week's World Singles Champion of Champions. They simply donned their rainwear without the slightest hint of pique and continued on with the business at hand – staking their claim for a shot at a world title. This is serious stuff.

Mind you, dealing with adversity is nothing new to the people of this beautiful city and the players reacted accordingly with professionalism and patience as the second day of sectional rounds unfolded on schedule.

With the qualifying stanza of these championship approaching the halfway point there are six players undefeated; New Zealand's Ali Forsyth in men's section one, Aussie David Holt in section two and Lorna Smith representing Scotland in women's section one, while in section two the leader board shows three with an unblemished record – Saskia Schaft from Holland, Spain's Jan Dando and Petal Jones from Norfolk Island.

Forsyth is flying the New Zealand banner with pride and distinction as his surgical demolition of Scottish hopeful Iain McLean in yesterday's fifth round demonstrated. And while big Ali is performing at the height of his powers, Holt is less than brimming about his form so far – yesterday's two wins were both as a result of tense tiebreakers. But a warning, when David does hit top form – and he will – there are very few who can match it with him.

Because of byes in men's section two, spectators have only caught sporadic glimpses of David Kingdon from Wales and English champion Andy Walters. Both bring exquisite skills to Fendalton and are sure to have a major say here. This morning's encounter between Holt and Kingdon is certain to be a crackerjack affair, while Holt, who won a Commonwealth Games fours gold medal for England in 2002, meets the English southpaw on Friday morning in a match that may well decide the section's outcome.

As expected Lorna Smith has imposed her will – plus an abundance of experience and skill - on the matches already decided and her clash this afternoon with America's Kim Heiser, who lodged two fine wins yesterday, will be a lively affair.

Section two in the women's rates ten out of ten on the exhilaration scale with three unbeaten contenders at the head of the leader board. The fight for top honours in this section is destined to be a bona fide cat fight, while despite her untimely loss to Fijian great Litia Tikoisuva yesterday afternoon, local ace Helen King is still hot favourite to scoop the pool when preliminary round conclude on Friday.

Already there have been hundreds of highlights out on the Fendalton greens, not the least being yesterday afternoon's battle of the rookies between Argentina's Dicky Rubinat and Susil Ramanayake from Sri Lanka, which saw the popular South American prevail in straight sets.

There's thousands more bowls to go down in this fantastic event and nothing is a certainty in this sport, so sit back, enjoy the action and above all - expect the unexpected!

Reminder Fendalton BBQ Friday 5:00pm. Tickets from the office \$10



Helen King (New Zealand)



Saskia Schaft (Holland)



Iain McLean (Scotland)