

October 19-24, 2014

Links to media coverage of the 2014 Montreal Open:

<http://ici.radio-canada.ca/audio-video/media/2014/10/26/Un-joueur-de-squash-quebecois-chez-les-grands?externalId=7185904&appCode=medianet>

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<http://www.tvasports.ca/2014/10/22/du-squash-dans-lancien-forum-de-montreal>

Open de Squash Banque Nationale Groupe Financier 2012 - PSA

Open de Squash Banque Nationale Groupe Financier 2012 - PSA - March 18-23, 2012

Match write-ups – Qualifying 1st Round - 18-03-2012

Eric Galvez (MEX) beat Adrian Dudzicki (CAN) 11-6, 4-0 def.

This was a short affair, as the young Canadian Dudzicki was ill on the day, and had to default early in the match. This gave Galvez the easy win, 11-6, 4-0, def.

Cesar Salazar (MEX) beat Anthony Graham (ENG) 8-11, 11-7, 11-4, 12-14, 11-3

This promised to be a close match right from the start, with both players attacking at a high pace and moving the ball around to all 4 corners. After trading one game apiece, Graham grabbed his left quad at 3-1 in the 3rd. From there, Salazar took control, winning 11-4, while the Englishman started to look fatigued. But Graham was unexpectedly revived, perhaps by the force of the "Team Chichester" shirt he had switched into, and took a commanding lead in the 4th 8-2, only to let it slip away unforgivably to 9-8. At 10-9 for Salazar (match point), the Mexican made two theatrical dives that made me think that this fellow could have a bright future with Cirque du Soleil. Unfortunately, one of those great leaps was into the wall, causing his hand to bleed and take a medical time-out. He could not hold on, and Graham took the 4th, 14-12. Both players looked visibly tired in the 5th and it was clearly becoming a matter of who could hang on physically. Another bleeding stoppage from the Englishman, and in the end, Cesar's determination and reserve of energy shone through as he pulled away and won this exciting, blood-spattered duel in 1 hour and 45 minutes, 11-3 in the 5th.

Steve Finitis (AUS) beat David Baillargeon (CAN) 11-7, 11-3, 11-3

Bright up-and-comer and the Club MAA's own - David Baillargeon - started off well in the 1st, holding his own against the solid and imposing Australian, and hitting some wicked forehand winners. Though losing the first closely 11-7, the young 16-year-old was clearly out of his depths, being pushed around the court by the experienced Finitis and falling victim to a large volume of cross-court kills. While the Australian was clearly the stronger player, winning comfortably 11-7, 11-3, 11-2, this was a great experience for Baillargeon, a name that we will be hearing a lot more of in the years to come.

Arturo Salazar (MEX) beat David Phillips (CAN) 11-7, 11-13, 6-11, 11-7, 11-1

The dynamics of this match were quite different from the others, neither player looking too interested in carrying on long rallies, and both going for their shots. Phillips, another long-time member of the MAA and veteran of Canadian squash, retired from the tour in the last year, while Salazar was apparently playing with injury. The result was a very rapid 5-set match, with Phillips losing steam part-way into the 4th after being up 2-1, and not being able to hold off Salazar, who won 11-1 in the 5th game.

Chris Gordon (USA) beat Eric Dingle (CAN) 11-4, 11-3, 11-5

Dans la première partie, les échanges étaient très longs et joués surtout à l'arrière du terrain, Eric étant un peu plus en retard sur chaque balle. Gordon finissait généralement les échanges avec une longueur parfaite. Au début de la 2^e, le Canadien a ajusté sa stratégie en fermant un peu plus le jeu et en attaquant à l'avant avec de la déception, mais la pression constante de Gordon commençait à épuiser Dingle, qui fit plusieurs erreurs de suite à la fin de longs échanges. Dans la 3^e, l'Américain avait l'emprise du T et coupait toute balle légèrement décollée. Malgré un très bel effort d'Eric qui a fait les 4 coins à plusieurs reprises, Gordon a fini le match 11-4, 11-3, 11-5.

Andrew Schnell (CAN) beat Maxym Leclair (CAN) 11-1, 11-8, 11-4

Le début du match était à sens unique, Schnell dominant avec ses coups à l'avant du terrain et des balles collées et profondes. Au début de la 2^e, le Québécois a allongé les échanges et forcé Schnell à faire plusieurs erreurs et donné quelques « strokes », prenant une avance de 5-1 puis 7-2. Andrew a repris son calme et est revenu à des coups moins risqués, faisant une remontée de 8 points, pour gagner la 2^e 11-8. Dans la 3^e, Schnell dominait surtout le centre du terrain, empêchant Maxym d'établir sa longueur, et provoquant quelques erreurs non-forcées. Maxym a réussi quelques beaux « winners » à l'avant dans la 2^e moitié de la partie, mais ce n'était pas assez, et Schnell a remporté 11-1, 11-8, 11-4.

Dane Sharp (CAN) beat Graham Bassett (USA) 11-5, 11-5, 11-3

La première partie a été jouée à un rythme très élevé de la part des 2 joueurs, mais Sharp était plus précis à cette vitesse, Bassett retournant quelques balles sur lui-même. Au début de la 2^e, Sharp utilise beaucoup plus son jeu court et ses kills et déplace Bassett dans les 4 coins rapidement. Bassett ajuste son jeu vers le milieu de la partie, ajoutant des jobs et plusieurs kills, poussant un peu plus Sharp physiquement. Dans la 3^e, on a vu le plus long rally du match à 5-2, gagné sur un amorti parfait de Dane, après quoi Bassett semblait avoir perdu de la vitalité, et Sharp reste en contrôle pour le reste de la partie.

Raphael Kandra (GER) beat Fred Reid (CAN) 6-11, 11-5, 11-3, 11-5

Reid gagne la première alors que Kandra semble mal s'ajuster au style de Reid, qui utilise beaucoup de « holds » et de déception. Dans la 2^e, Kandra regarde mieux la balle et joue du squash moins risqué. A la 2^e moitié, Reid semble abandonner la partie et va moins chercher de balles. Les échanges sont toujours courts dans le début de la 3^e partie, les points finissant sur des « winners » rapides ou des erreurs non-provoquées. Fred semble dérangé par une blessure, alors qu'il ne court pas toutes les balles et essaie le coup gagnant rapide. La 4^e est à sens unique et ressemble en tout point à la 3^e.

Match write-ups – 19-03-2012

Steve Finitis (AUS) beats Chris Gordon (USA) 11-2, 9-11, 11-9, 13-11 (plays Koukal)

In the first of this evening's matches, Australian Steve Finitis started off quickly, having no trouble finding the nick on his attacking shots, while the American Chris Gordon looked as if he was just waking up from a nice nap, not able to find any penetrating shots to bother the Australian. Gordon slowed the game down in the second in order to get his length and Finitis obliged, which was not the best idea as he started making a number of errors at this slower pace, ultimately losing the 2nd. A slew of unnecessary errors from Gordon let the Australian run away with the lead 8-2 in the 3rd, and despite a valiant attempt at a comeback, Finitis held on 11-9. The 4th was neck and neck, but Finitis was able to return to a more authoritative attacking

pace, clinching the match 11-9 after two disappointing errors in the end by Gordon.

Raphael Kandra (GER) beats Arturo Salazar (MEX) 4-0 ret.

Nothing to report here as an injured Salazar defaulted 4 points into the match, allowing the German to waltz right into the main draw.

Andrew Schnell (CAN) beats Eric Galvez (MEX) 13-11, 8-11, 8-11, 11-8, 11-7 (plays Knight)

The young Canadian from out West started off the match showing maturity beyond his years, slowing down the pace against an opponent who much prefers a road-runner style of play. Keeping the ball tight and patiently waiting for his opportunities, Schnell took the first 13-11. The experienced Galvez forced his way into the second however, managing to dictate the pace and go for his attacking shots, while Schnell got distracted a bit by a number of calls not coming out in his favour; Galvez equalized in the process. This was an entertaining clash of styles as the stocky and explosive Mexican would score points on the attack, while the lanky and efficient-moving Canadian would respond on the counter-offense. Galvez proved a touch better in the 3rd, going up 2-1. In the 4th, Schnell looked fresh as a peach (and not only because of his complexion!) taking a quick 4-0 lead and backing up his own assertion that "I'm pretty quick" with some beautifully struck drop shots. He held on to level the match 2-all. The straight drop was certainly the featured shot of the match: Schnell hitting it softly and glued to the wall, while Galvez looked to carve it down sharply into the nick. The drop closed the court every time it was struck, and they knew this all too well, as they were now both taking it in at any given opportunity. Down 9-6 in the fifth, Galvez opened the door unexpectedly and gave the ref the middle finger. But only because it was bleeding. A few minutes later, he came back on, but couldn't hold on as the young Canadian continued to fire punishing drops that were a bit too much for the Mexican. So a smiling Schnell takes revenge on Galvez (after a punishing loss in the gold medal match of the Pan-Am Games) and qualifies into the main draw, after a highly entertaining and amicably contested match.

Cesar Salazar (MEX) beats Dane Sharp (CAN) 11-4, 12-10, 3-0 ret. (plays Clyne)

In the final match of the night, the slight and lightning fast Salazar came flying out of the gates (perhaps aided by a higher level of comfort with the court, after spending nearly 2 hours on it in yesterday's match!) taking the first 11-4 with few long rallies. Sharp looked hurried and out of sorts, but managed to dig his heels in early in the second. He managed to go up 10-8, but the cool Mexican calmly hit two dead rollers and then two cross-court flicks that sent Sharp the wrong way and gave Salazar the second 12-10. The third was anti-climatic, as the Canadian had to default early on due to a knee injury, giving Cesar Salazar the relatively easy win into the main draw.

Match write-ups – 20-03-2012

Mathieu Castagnet (FRA) beat Raphael Kandra (GER) 11-5, 8-11, 11-7, 11-5

Le 1^{er} match de la journée pouvait s'avérer long, comme les joueurs avaient les jambes reposées, Kandra ayant gagné son match de qualification par défaut hier. Dans la première partie, les échanges étaient très similaires de la part des deux joueurs, qui augmentaient la vitesse du jeu et utilisaient l'avant du court sans trop de risques. Castagnet s'en tire 11-5, avec des coups un peu plus précis en fin d'échanges. Dans la 2^e partie, on voit le même type d'échanges non risqués, mais cette fois c'est Kandra qui prend l'avance 4-0 avec un peu plus de déception de l'avant du terrain. Castagnet fait une remontée en gardant la balle en jeu, Kandra s'impatientant un peu. Kandra gagne la 2^e 11-8 avec des amortis parfaits, après des échanges où peu sépare les 2 joueurs.

Kandra part en force en prenant Castagnet à contre-pied sur 2 boasts flottant du Français. Castagnet se reprend et l'Allemand fait plusieurs erreurs pour donner une partie d'avance au Français, qui ne semble pas encore incommodé par la fatigue. Dans la quatrième, les deux jouent un style similaire et tentent de fatiguer l'autre en utilisant beaucoup plus l'avant du terrain, mais l'Allemand est visiblement frustré alors que Castagnet va tout chercher et ne fait aucune erreur. Castagnet gagne le match 11-5, 8-11, 11-7, 11-5.

Steve Finitis (AUS) beat Jan Koukal (CZE) 11-7, 11-8, 11-7

Le début de ce match contrastait avec le précédent. Les deux joueurs jouaient très serré et surtout en parallèle, chacun essayant d'ajuster sa longueur. Finitis gagne la 1^{er} 11-7 grâce à quelques « kills » gagnants dans le nick surtout de son coup droit. L'Australien part la 2^e en force, ralentissant bien le jeu lorsqu'il est en défensive et frappant de nombreux coups gagnants, prenant une avance de 6-0. Koukal s'ajuste en ajoutant plus d'amortis dans son jeu, enlevant l'Australien de sa zone de confort et remonte à 7-8. L'Australien réussit à fermer la partie 11-8 en faisant tourner le tchèque avec des coups forts et bas en croisé. Le début de la 3^e voit plusieurs points rapides jusqu'à 4-4, puis les rallies s'allongent, les 2 étant poussés physiquement plus que dans tout le reste du match. L'Australien prend 3 points rapides à 7-7 sur des coups gagnants après des balles décollées de Koukal. Il gagne le match 11-7, 11-8, 11-7 sur une erreur de Koukal.

Cesar Salazar (MEX) vs. Alan Clyne (SCO)

In the first game, the strong Scotsman worked the Mexican qualifier around the court, making him cover a lot of ground, particularly off of an effective, quickly-struck straight drop from both sides. After winning the first game comfortably, Clyne took the foot off the gas just slightly, while Salazar responded with a tight and nearly faultless game to level the match at 1-1. In the third, Salazar confirmed his high-altitude origins by showing that he could run. A lot. During a diving effort at 5-7, Salazar reopened a cut on his hand from a previous match, which – judging from the way he lay sprawled out in star formation on the floor – showed that the marathon man could finally use a breather. When he returned, Clyne found his range again and rattled off a string of points to take the 3rd. The Mexican finally started to wobble physically in the 4th, and the Scot took full advantage, closing out the match in just over an hour, and ending a fine run for the talented Cesar Salazar.

Andrew Schnell (CAN) vs. Martin Knight (NZL)

There was not that much between these two players, however, Knight was clearly the fresher of the two, and you could see this at the key points late in the first and second games, when Schnell (with two matches already under his belt) took some fatigued swipes at balls that ended up in the tin. The Kiwi was in clear control throughout the 3rd, as the Canadian didn't have anything left in the tank. And so Martin Knight advances safely to the 2nd round.

Julian Illingworth (USA) vs. Cameron Pillely (AUS)

This match-up featured two big men crunching the ball, in a dynamic that looked very different from any match until now. Illingworth, with his knee-high socks à la Lincou, got the better of Pillely in the first, mixing some nice winners with some very strange whiffs on the ball. The Australian didn't look bothered though, laughing at his opponent's uncharacteristically amateurish mistakes and slowly working his way into the match; he took the second comfortably. The American didn't seem to have the conditioning (or perhaps the interest) to build long rallies, choosing a high risk game, and succeeding only sporadically. In the end, Pillely was the more consistent and steady of the two, taking this rocky match, 3-1.

Mohammad Abbas (EGY) vs. Thierry Lincou (FRA)

This was a nice match-up between two veterans of the game, the former #1 against the former #13 in the world. The 35-year-old Frenchman – built like a gladiator and playing his signature technician style – was a bit too tight and consistent for the lanky, experienced 31-year-old Egyptian in the first. In the second, Lincou made several outright winners to take the game comfortably. Up until the third, Abbas was playing a straightforward up-and-down game, but changed tactics in the third throwing in more angles and deception helping him take a quick 5-0 lead. The mentally strong Lincou came back with consistent play, levelling at 10-all, and, to his great relief, hanging on to win in extra points and taking the match 3-0, having averted a dangerous first round opponent.

Shawn Delierre (CAN) vs. Tom Richards (ENG)

The crowd was excited to see local favorite Shawn Delierre match up against world #20 Tom Richards of England. The match started with Delierre attacking at seemingly every opportunity, making several winning shots as well as unforced errors, while Richards showed discomfort with the court. Richards found his consistent play in the second while Delierre tired, squaring the match at 1-1. Delierre came out strong in the third taking a 6-3 lead, but his fatigue was evident as Richards made 8 straight points to win the third and took the fourth with relative ease to finish the match 3-1.

Hisham Ashour (EGY) vs. Jonathan Kemp (ENG)

The last match of the night saw first seed and last year's winner Hisham Ashour take on world #38 Jonathan Kemp. Ashour was on his game right from the beginning making tricky shots and impressive gets, but Kemp followed suit with his own hard hitting and shot making. Ashour powered through a tight first, but couldn't come back from a 7-1 deficit in the second leaving the match in a 1-1 draw. The intense pace continued into the third with the players neck and neck at 8-8 when Kemp made two costly errors and Ashour a winner to finish the game. The Egyptian had a nearly flawless fourth while Kemp made several errors, and the game finished quickly leaving Ashour on top 3-1.

Match write-ups – 21-03-2012

Runa Reta and Eric Dingle report :

The quarter final night was a long affair in Montreal. The city is seeing record temperatures and the usually dead court became quite bouncy, and short rallies were scarce.

Mathieu Castagnet (FRA) beats Cameron Pillely (AUS) 8-11, 11-6, 11-4, 11-6

There was very little separating these two in the first game, despite the difference of nearly 30 ranking spots between them. The unassuming-looking Frenchman, with an unconventional technique and at least half a foot shorter than the Australian, managed not only to hang in, but to dictate play at many points of the game. But Pillely came up with some incredibly tight straight drop winners to take the first 11-8, to which the Frenchman was left to hack his racket against the wall in frustration. Castagnet started off quickly in the second, taking the ball early with impressive speed and reach, and hitting some tight winners that Pillely could only blame the cracks of the court on. A few loose points by the Australian was all that it took to give the second to the Frenchman, who ended the game with a perfect forehand drop and an energized pump fist. Castagnet continued with tight and aggressive play in the third completely dictating the rallies, while Pillely made a number of unforced errors that prompted some disquieted expletives to himself. At 8-1 down, the curly-haired Australian woke up a bit with some nicely-constructed rallies, but he

was too far behind, and the Frenchman took the 3rd 11-6. Not letting up in the fourth and smelling victory, Mathieu kept the pressure up and ended it 11-6.

Tom Richards (ENG) beats Martin Knight (NZL) 3-1

Richards had a much better start in this second round match compared to his first making several winners and almost toying with Knight as he coasted to an 11-3 win in the opening game. Knight fought back to win the second in what was likely the longest game of the tournament so far. However, Knight started to show fatigue in the third, winning after several rallies and taking an injury timeout midway through the game. After returning to the court, he changed tactics slightly with a few serves and crosscourts directly into his opponent's body, but Richards adapted and continued his consistent, tight play to beat the worn out Knight 3-1.

Hisham Ashour (EGY) beats Steve Finitsis (AUS) 7-11, 11-8, 11-7, 13-11

Qualifier Finitsis didn't appear to be intimidated by the 80 or so ranking difference between him and Ashour taking the early first game lead by several points and never giving it up. Ashour, frustrated by his slow start, increased the pace and the second turned into a game of who can end the rally the fastest, either by winner or by error. Similar to his first round match, Ashour got into a solid rhythm hitting several crowd pleasing winners and taking advantage of some untimely errors by Finitsis to take a 2-1 lead. Finitsis turned it around in the fourth, cutting out his errors and taking a 9-6 lead. The tenacious Ashour made it clear that he wasn't about to play a fifth game, though, forcing several long rallies, finishing them off with decisive winners and taking the fourth in extra points to win 3-1.

Thierry Lincou (FRA) beats Alan Clyne (SCO) 5-11, 11-6, 11-3, 11-5

The match started with an intense pace from both sides. Lincou looked strong with his technical play, but Clyne combined many good gets and almost no errors with a string of backhand drops into the nick to take the first game decisively 11-5. Lincou countered in the second with patient, tight squash, forcing Clyne to do most of the work and to make several errors scraping the ball off the wall. Two games in, Clyne still looked fresh never giving up on a ball and making several impressive returns, but Lincou's consistency was producing many forced errors from the Scotsman. A number of unforced errors didn't help him either as Lincou confidently took the third 11-3. The fourth continued in much the same way for the Frenchman as Clyne, sprawling all over the court, continued to make astounding gets but also a mixture of forced and unforced errors, leaving Lincou with the victory and a spot in the semis.

Match write-ups – Semi-final - 22-03-2012

Runa Reta reports

Air conditioning was turned on to the maximum to try and slow down the court and it shortened the matches. The front wall being quite receptive to short shots, the court became bigger and rallies more intense. In the end, the crowd was treated to a very high level of the game we love.

Tom Richards (ENG) beats Hisham Ashour (EGY) 11-8, 12-10, 10-12, 14-12

The first semi-final of the match started off at a blistering pace, with the Egyptian hitting a behind-the-back drop, followed by a cross-court dead roller, as a preview of what was to come (for anyone unfamiliar with his game). Ashour was hitting the ball with more sting than his calm English opponent, but a string of unforced errors kept it close in the first game. At 8-8, Ashour had a bit of a brain fart, as he went for another behind-the-back shot, which ended up in the bottom of the tin – a most inopportune time to go for such a fanciful shot. A tight point by Richards and another error by Ashour (his fifth of the game) allowed the Englishman to draw first blood. The pace didn't let up in the second, as both players continued to crack the ball with incredible velocity, the well-conditioned Richards looking more comfortable at this pace of the two, and Ashour continuing to bestow gifts upon Richards with unforced errors. At 8-5 down, Ashour remembered who he was, and played 3 rallies full of angles, holds and cut shots that were just too good. At 8-all Ashour smacked Richards in the face with the racquet which prompted a huge gasp from the crowd. How did the hardcore Englishman respond in the next rally? With a lovely fading cross-court drop that got everyone's appreciation, including Ashour. The two traded points from 9-all onwards, but two errors from the Egyptian at the front of the court (looking a tad sluggish moving forward) gave the Englishman the second game 12-10. In the third, the Egyptian showed that he was clearly not at his best, looking fatigued and continuing to hit an unholy number of unforced errors. All credit to Richards who executed his game plan with great calm and composure... take the ball early, keep the ball moving, don't give my opponent a chance to set up, and be patient. This effective strategy allowed Richards to get up 8-5, and it looked like he would take it in 3 games, but Ashour again came up with some flashes of brilliance, levelling at 9-all and showing that he wasn't ready to be sent home just yet. Some gutsy, sprawling efforts by both occurred in extra points, but an uncommon error from the Englishman cost him at 10-all, and Ashour hit a winning drop to take the third. Richards changed shirts in the fourth, and now dressed in all red, was perhaps subconsciously yelling out "DANGER!" as he came out flying, taking a 4-0 lead, then a 7-2 lead, attacking with ferocity and hitting some perfect dying length. At 9-5 down, Ashour – who had fallen behind in every game up til now – must have said to himself the Arabic equivalent of "screw this, I'm going for it!!!" and began an all-out attack. He hit some gutsy shots, including a sweet deceptive boast at 9-10, which ended in a yell and a deathly stare at his opponent. The points that followed were probably the most exciting of the tournament, with both hitting at the fastest pace of the match, each desperately trying to take the game and scrambling around the court in their efforts. Both decided it was now or never, and hit with a good measure of risk, but it was the insanely steady Richards who was able to hit some clincher drops and hold on, as Ashour ended the match with a volley drop error, to which Richards finally proved he had a pulse with a big pump fist and yell, knowing all too well that he had just earned himself a massive scalp.

So the reigning champion is deposed, and the Englishman Tom Richards is in impressive form heading into tomorrow's final.

Thierry Lincou (FRA) beats Mathieu Castagnet (FRA) 11-9, 13-11, 11-6

The second semi-final started off much more calmly than the first... the Frenchmen not feeling any need to get all hot and bothered early on. The two exchanged long rallies, feeling each other out and playing a fairly classical style. Once again, Mathieu Castagnet, in his basketball shorts - looking like he could easily be mistaken for someone working out in the gym behind which the centre court is erected - impressed with his quick court coverage and nice shot variety. But Lincou was a touch better, getting Castagnet to work a bit harder around the court, and forcing errors that allowed him to take the first game, 11-9. Castagnet tried to force the issue at the beginning of the second, quickening the pace and taking the straight drop in whenever he could. Unlike the previous match, there was a good amount of interference between the two players, and despite the player refs doing a fine job this whole week, there seemed an inordinate amount of calls that seemed to displease both players at the same time! The two remained close until 7-all, when Castagnet ripped a cross-court kill that got him fist-pumping, followed by a backhand drop winner that got Lincou doing the same (clearly, no love lost on the court between the countrymen). The poor ref was tested a bit more with some very difficult calls, as the two tangled up front, and Castagnet pleaded: "how can I play ze ball?" The points from 10-all onwards were among the longest of the match, with Castagnet trying to play through the interference and consequently hitting out at 11-all (to which he said with frustration: "je suis trop gentil!"). Another error at 12-11 gave Lincou the game, and Castagnet launched his racquet disgustedly on court... and then again off the court. At 2-0 in games, you could feel the psychological advantage on Lincou's side. But Castagnet continued to motor around the court, sticking close to Lincou until a backhand drop by Lincou at 5-all that was too good even for the speedy youngster. At 6-5, another punishing rally had Castagnet diving to hit a backwall shot, and then throwing his racquet across the court jokingly to get Lincou's straight drop. From this point on, Lincou pulled away to 9-5, and sensing the end of the line, Castagnet asked the crowd: "est-ce que je peux avoir des encouragements?" Lincou could smell victory and closed out the game 11-6, winning the match in 3 close games.

The experienced veteran Thierry Lincou moves efficiently into the finals, and will surely have a lot left in the tank to battle for the title.

Match write-ups – Final report

Yvon Provençal reports

Tom Richards beats Thierry Lincou 11-7, 8-11, 11-8, 5-11, 11-5

This was a classic battle between two classy players. They shared the first two with both players doing similar amounts of work. Lincou was moving the ball to the four corners as he usually does and Richards switching from the retrieving mode to attack whenever the opportunity was there. In game 3, Tom started to take the ball short on a regular basis with many outright winners. By then many thought Thierry was done, but a bad start from Tom in the fourth and solid play from the Frenchman got the crowd thinking the veteran could turn it around as he took the 4th by a significant margin. Age caught up with him as Richards still had a lot of gas in the tank, the 5th started with a few winners from Richards and a few mistakes by Thierry that gave the eventual winner a comfortable lead. He was able to close it out and earn his biggest title so far in his career.