

TENNIS Dundalk Tennis Club

Major battles at Easter tennis tournament

DUNDALK Tennis Club's Easter tournament took place last Thursday evening after being rearranged from Tuesday due to bad weather.

Major battles took place on the night with John O'Connor and Linda Fergus coming out on top in Section One, closely followed by Seamus Haughey and Elaine Tonna Barteth and Hakan Hjalmsers and Ursula Duffy.

On the next three courts Ronan MacRuairi and Sharon Hjalmsers took victory followed by Bernadette McCreanor, John Gogarty, John Farrell and Elizabeth Kenny in joint second place. Freda Laverty claimed the winners egg in the next section with Joanne Lavelle coming in second place.

The doubles league has completed week six

and with only one week left, tensions are rising to boiling point.

This is the first time the club have had a promotion and relegation system in practice. Players for the first time have an opportunity to move up the ranks based on merit.

The highest scores in the mens doubles this week with 13 points were shared between Stanley Wilson, Breffni Holihan, Hakan Hjalmsers and Ciaran Kinney. In the ladies doubles Vicky Spaight and Nicola Fee achieved a very creditable 18 points.

Dundalk's first ever Singles Open competition takes place over a period of two weekends, on Friday April 20-22 and Friday April 27-29. Closing date for entry is Friday April 13. This competition is kindly sponsored by Kevin Commins, KC Deli.



John O'Connor, Martin Bannon, Hakan Hjalmsers and Seamus Haughey who took part in the Easter tournament at Dundalk Tennis Club.

GREYHOUND RACING/ HORSES Dundalk Stadium

Ferdia Wilde impresses for Ardee's Kevin Commins

By Joe Carroll

A WEAK Easter Saturday card, the only one of the weekend at the track, underlined the paucity of Open racers on the Dundalk Stadium strength right now.

The 12 races catered for beginners and middle to low graders, and those who remained to see the last of them didn't exit the track until 11.15, the delay caused by a mechanical failure.

There will no doubt be a welcome among owners and regulars for the two benefit meetings coming up shortly. The first of them is in aid of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland, and as a prelude to the April 28 gathering, the preliminaries to a number of competitions are being run off, beginning this Saturday night with heats of the 24-runner A3 525, carrying a first prize of €1,000.

On the following Saturday, runners in an Open sprint competition and an A4/A5 will flex their muscles ahead of the big night.

The MDI meeting will be followed a fortnight later by the other benefit, this one in aid of the Mullaghbawn Graveyard Fund. Newry's Brendan Matthews, who needs know introduction to greyhound followers throughout the country, is lending his support to this one, which will also have a build-up in the form of competition heats and semi-finals.

It's ironic that the outstanding performances on Saturday night's card came in lower class races. Ferdia Wilde ran in 525 for A7/A8s, but won't ever again, and the same goes for Lazy Jess, whose win came in an A6 over the same distance.

Owned, bred and trained by Ardee's Kevin Commins, Ferdia Wilde (Head



Shanless Becky who won the Tynwald Stakes A2 600 at Dundalk Stadium.

Bound-Debbiee Lane) was having only his second race, the strapping 83-pounder having met with trouble on his debut back in February.

He removed all danger of a repeat by flashing out of trap two and immediately building a sizeable lead. None of the others got a look in, and it finished with the August '10 ten lengths in advance of Springlawn Sally in 28.89.

That time was lowered within about fifteen minutes, Lazy Jess doing the business for Craigavon owner, Eddie Rushe. The former Youghal tracker went around in 28.82, winning her fourth race on her sixth outing.

Sandwell Cooke, one three in the line-up with a previous outing, took the opening sprint for local owner, Peter McArdle. Sandwell was one of three in a line going to the bend. He came away from it best, chased by the odds-on Monleek Rocking, and stayed on well to win by a length in 21.72.

Marvada romps home

UNDER an enterprising ride from Shane Foley, the Ken Condon-trained Marvada romped to success in the four-runner Irish Stallion Farms Follies Race, scoring by three-quarters of a length.

Foley completed his double and earned high praise from his boss Michael Halford when Banna Boirche swooped late to foil the Johnny Murtagh-ridden front-runner Billyford by a head in the seven-furlong ww.dundalkstadium.com Handicap.

A major gamble on British raider Archers Road (10/1 to 3/1) came unstuck in the five-furlong Dundalk Apprentice Handicap, which opened the card. David Barron's charge trailed in last of the twelve runners behind Pencil Hill, a first winner of the season for Curragh trainer Tracy Collins.

Formerly trained by Jim Bolger and having only her second outing for local handler George

Kingston, Gan Loch proved a shock winner of the bookings@dundalkstadium.com Handicap, getting the better of Daytime Dreamer by a neck.

Trainer Maurice Phelan, who enjoyed his biggest success when Portrait King won the Eider Chase in Newcastle, recorded a rare flat success when Kevin Manning partnered 14/1 shot Alhellal to victory in the Dundalk Stadium On Facebook Maiden at the expense of Mundher and Roe Deer.

The biggest shock of the night came in the seven-furlong Dundalk Stadium On Facebook Handicap when 25/1 shot Give Me Shelter, ridden by apprentice Sam James, landed the spoils, giving trainer Bernard Heffernan his first winner at Dundalk.

After a succession of near misses, Johnny Murtagh belatedly hit the target in the Fund Raising Made Easy At Dundalk Maiden, when Ursa Major stayed on dourly to outpoint Voleuse De Coeurs by a neck.

Racing resumes on Wednesday April 11 and Friday April 13 from 6.20pm.

The Chequered Flag



A Formula One blog by Stephen English
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Lorenzo waits until five minutes to midnight to claim desert spoils

THE new MotoGP season opened with Jorge Lorenzo claiming a superb victory under Qatar night sky at the Losail International Circuit.

The Spaniard, riding for Yamaha, took a hard fought win after a race long battle with the Repsol Hondas of Casey Stoner and Dani Pedrosa. Even though Lorenzo converted his pole position into an early lead it was not long until Stoner asserted himself on the race.

The Australian fell behind his quick starting teammate, who moved from the third row of the grid to second at the first corner, but by lap three the Australian had made his way past and focused his attention on Lorenzo.

Coming down the pit straight at the end of lap three Stoner forced his way through an ever narrowing gap and took the lead. With the reigning world champion able to pull away comfortably it seemed that the battle was for second place.

Stoner quickly opened a two seconds lead ahead Lorenzo and settled into a consistent pace. With Pedrosa eager to move ahead of Lorenzo a thrilling battle for second looked set to be the focus of attention in the closing stages but suddenly Stoner's commanding lead was reduced to nothing.

With Bridgestone having developed a new, less durable control tyre, that reacts similar to the Pirelli Formula 1 tyres, it was initially thought that Stoner had simply gone too hard, too soon and was now being punished by excess tyre wear.

Arm pump however was the real reason for his sudden loss of pace. The problem began in the early laps of the race and became progressively worse as the race progressed before becoming so bad that Stoner was defenseless to the attacks of his pursuers and ultimately fell back to third at the chequered flag.

When asked after the race about the cause of his arm pump Stoner was clearly surprised to have suffered from the condition which causes the arm to feel numb and the rider lose the ability to accelerate and brake hard.

"It's the second time I've had arm pump," said the reigning world champion. "I had it once in 2010 with Ducati at Silverstone and we managed to get rid of it then so hopefully we can get rid of it before the next race."

Even with the issue it was clear that Stoner had the pace to win the race but the condition was so bad that for the closing stages the heavy effort of accelerating and braking made it impossible for him to ride the bike to the limit.

With Stoner hamstrung by his condition the race for second was suddenly re-energised into a fight for the win.

With Lorenzo closing on Stoner Pedrosa instinctively knew that this was his chance to win the race. He moved past Lorenzo into turn one but the ever crafty Lorenzo knew that it was imperative to keep the Honda behind him and within a lap he was back ahead and putting pressure on Stoner.

With four laps to go under the heavy braking into the first turn Lorenzo moved into the lead. There was nothing that Stoner could do to defend and with Pedrosa having endured a nightmare weekend finishing second was a good result for the diminutive Spaniard.

For Lorenzo however the weekend could not have been better with the former world champion claiming a first premier class victory in Qatar and starting the season in perfect style.

Speaking after the race it was clear that Lorenzo had enjoyed the hard fought race but also that the upcoming season will be very difficult against the exceptionally strong Honda riders.

"In the middle of the race I didn't think I was going to make it," said Lorenzo afterwards. "But I never gave up, I always kept pushing, always believing that I could make it always at the same pace for or less. As for Casey he lost a little bit of his pace so I take profit from him. Also it was not Casey that was the big problem. I wasn't able to open a gap to Dani."

The consistency of the leading trio flew in the face of what was expected to occur with the new tyres with each rider setting consistent pace and Pedrosa even setting a lap time almost as fast on the final lap of the race as his first flying lap.

The new tyres have promoted a more spectacular style of riding and in Qatar it was also clear that the new regulations, such as the introduction of 1000cc engines, will play a key role in helping to create more excitement races than those which blighted the 800cc.

The battle for sixth was a case in point with Nicky Hayden ultimately coming out on top after a race long battle with Alvaro Bautista, Stefan Bradl and Hector Barbera. For Bradl the race was bitter sweet with the reigning Moto2 champion holding sixth for much of the race before fading in the final laps.

Hayden however showed that his style of riding, which has always seen him at his most comfortable when the rear is sliding, should be well suited to the new tyres.

His teammate, nine times world champion Valentino Rossi, however struggled for much of the weekend and was relegated to a bit part player in the race. The Italian clashed with Barbera in the early stages but lacked pace all weekend and finished in tenth.

For a rider of Rossi's class to admit to such struggles shows just how difficult a season he is set to endure in the coming months."

MARTIAL ARTS Martial Arts School of Fitness

More success for MAS-F youngsters

MAS-F wrapped up March in fantastic style with two junior members competing in the second 'Best of the Best' competition of 2012. Darren O'Donogh competed in the musical forms division with five opponents and, true to his abilities, impressed the three independent judges to be awarded the gold medal. Immediately after this section

Darren once more took to the mats against four other clubs in his weapons division. Again Darren's superior technique with the Kamas won out, with him claiming his second gold medal of the morning. Tomás Flanagan debuted in continuous sparring, entering the intermediate division for his age category. Tomás dominated the fighter for the full time and achieved a place in the final. The final was hotly contested with Tomás volleying jabs and round kicks on his opponent to be awarded his first ever competition gold medal by

unanimous decision from the three judges. The two junior members achieved three gold medals on the day and did themselves and the club proud. Training now continues for the Leinster Championships which take place in two weeks time where the two boys, along with other members of their club, compete for regional titles and a place in the National Championships.

Right: MAS-F's Darren O'Donogh and Tomás Flanagan who both won gold medals at the Best of the Best competitions recently.

