

KENT OPEN FIRST ROUND:

## **Alex Smith and Will Salter battle back to knock out seeds on day one of the Colin Payne Kent Open**

**By ALAN THATCHER**

Ireland's Alex Smith and England's Will Salter produced storming comeback wins against seeded opponents to win through to the quarter-finals of the Colin Payne Kent Open sponsored by 501 Fun at Tunbridge Wells Squash Club.

The 19-year-old Dubliner Smith trailed by two games to No.6 seed Lewis Doughty before raising his game to power home 9-11, 9-11, 11-4, 12-10, 11-8.

Smith said: "The first two games didn't go well but in the third I started hitting my targets and things picked up from there."

Doughty appeared to have the upper hand in multiple rallies in the final two games but Smith's phenomenal retrieving, coupled with accurate hitting while under pressure, saw him win through to a last-eight clash with top seed Valentin Rapp of Germany, who eased past Poland's Dariusz Filipowski in straight games.

Salter faces No.2 seed Owain Taylor after fighting back from 7-3 down in the fifth to beat No.7 seed David Zeman of the Czech Republic.

It was a high quality match throughout, with the lead seesawing from game to game. Zeman roared through the fourth, dropping only three points, and seemed to have the upper hand in the fifth before Salter tightened up to win 11-8, 6-11, 11-8, 3-11, 11-9 in 72 minutes, the longest match of a busy day in front of a packed gallery at the Tunbridge Wells club.

Welsh international Taylor produced a solid display to halt the hopes of Jonah Bryant, who finished runner-up in Sunday's British Junior Open Under-19 final.

Bryant squandered an 8-5 lead in the opening game and the second was a brutal affair before Taylor won a long tiebreak. The third was almost as long but Taylor finished strongly in each game to win 11-8, 17-15, 14-12 in 54 minutes.

Local hero Noah Meredith, the Tunbridge Wells No.1, played superbly to beat Lowie Delbeke of Belgium 11-5, 11-6, 11-13, 11-7.

His reward is a quarter-final tie against No.3 seed Temwa Chileshe of New Zealand, who produced a consistently accurate display of powerful squash to beat Filip Jarota of Poland 11-3, 11-7, 11-2.

No.4 seed Aqeel Rehman scrapped his way through a fractious encounter with Egypt's Abdelrahman Abdelkhalek before winning 9-11, 12-10, 11-4, 9-11, 11-5. The Austrian No.1 now meets England's Perry Malik, who beat his younger brother Bailey Malik 5-11, 11-4, 11-0, 11-8.

Their sister, women's top seed Torrie Malik, was made to work hard by Kent's rapidly improving Isabel McCullough before winning in four games. She now meets No.8 seed Polly Clark, who overcame Phoebe Colman, one of the junior coaches at Tunbridge Wells, in 15 minutes.

Ella Galova (France) and Yasshmita Jadishkumar (Malaysia) meet in the quarter-finals after enjoying similarly rapid results against Mariana Ventura Martins (Portugal) and Juliette Permentier (Netherlands).

In the bottom half of the draw, Scots Alison Thomson and Katriona Allen, seeded five and seven, both looked in strong form as they battled past Katie Wells (England) and Sanne Veldkamp (Netherlands) respectively.

Thomson meets France's No.2 seed Elise Romba, who beat Leia Lee Zi Fang of Singapore in straight games. Allen tackles No.3 seed Ali Loke of Wales, who was taken the distance by Portugal's Sofia Pita before winning 6-11, 11-7, 16-18, 11-6, 11-9.

### **Colin Payne Kent Open, Tunbridge Wells Squash Club, Kent, England.**

#### **Men's First Round:**

(1) Valentin Rapp (GER) beat Dariusz Filipowski (POL) 11-1, 11-3, 11-2 (24m)

Alex Smith (IRE) beat (6) Lewis Doughty (ENG) 9-11, 9-11, 11-4, 12-10, 11-8 (62m)

(8) Noah Meredith (ENG) beat Lowie Delbeke (BEL) 11-5, 11-6, 11-13, 11-7 (32m)

(3) Temwa Chileshe (NZL) beat Filip Jarota (POL) 11-3, 11-7, 11-2 (25m)

(4) Aqeel Rehman (AUT) beat Abdelrahman Abdelkhalek (EGY) 9-11, 12-10, 11-4, 9-11, 11-5 (63m)

(5) Perry Malik (ENG) beat (WC) Bailey Malik (ENG) 5-11, 11-4, 11-0, 11-8 (26m)

Will Salter (ENG) beat (7) David Zeman (CZE) 11-8, 6-11, 11-8, 3-11, 11-9 in (72m)

(2) Owain Taylor (WAL) beat Jonah Bryant (ENG) 11-8, 17-15, 14-12 (54m)

#### **Men's Quarter-Finals:**

(1) Valentin Rapp (GER) v Alex Smith (IRE)

(8) Noah Meredith (ENG) v (3) Temwa Chileshe (NZL)

(4) Aqeel Rehman (AUT) v (5) Perry Malik (ENG)

Will Salter (ENG) v (2) Owain Taylor (WAL)

#### **Women's First Round:**

(1) Torrie Malik (ENG) beat Isabel McCullough (ENG) 10-12, 11-8, 11-5, 11-7 (32m)

(8) Polly Clark (ENG) beat Phoebe Colman (ENG) 11-8, 11-6, 11-3 (15m)

(6) Ella Galova (FRA) beat Mariana Ventura Martins (POR) 11-7, 11-5, 11-4 (18m)

(4) Yasshmita Jadishkumar (MAL) beat Juliette Permentier (NED) 11-7, 11-3, 11-2 (15m)

(3) Ali Loke (WAL) beat Sofia Aveiro Pita (POR) 6-11, 11-7, 16-18, 11-6, 11-9 (43m)

(7) Katriona Allen (SC) beat Sanne Veldkamp (NED) 9-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-7 (40m)

(5) Alison Thomson (SCO) beat Katie Wells (ENG) 11-7, 12-10, 11-5 (36m)

(2) Elise Romba (FRA) beat Leaia Lee Zi Fang (SGP) 11-2, 11-4, 11-8 (22m)

### **Women's Quarter-Finals:**

(1) Torrie Malik (ENG) v (8) Polly Clark (ENG)

(6) Ella Galova (FRA) v (4) Yasshmita Jadishkumar (MAL)

(3) Ali Loke (WAL) v (7) Katriona Allen (SC)

(5) Alison Thomson (SCO) v (2) Elise Romba (FRA)



IT'S A RAPP! Top seed Valentin Rapp is all smiles after winning



Women's top seed Torrie Malik fights off a strong challenge from Isabel McCullough



No.2 seed Owain Taylor squeezes past Jonah Bryant



British Junior Open finalist Jonah Bryant at Tunbridge Wells

PICTURES BY ARTYOM LISS AND MARK NICHOLSON

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