



Ladies Champion Ana Munos  
Men's champion Conor Moran



Roisin O'Shea and Jasmin Kalar



Men's Open Final Neal Murphy, Brian Lator

## Club event proves very popular with fans and players alike

Alongside the PSA event a full entry for club players from around Ireland was in full swing and pulling even bigger crowds than some of the PSA matches.

Tournament organiser Neal 'Let Please' Murphy from Naas was looking to overcome life long rivals David 'Tendonitis' Cassidy and Gann 'Ta' Hurling Macaogain.

On the other side of the draw Brian 'pop socks' Lator, Shane 'Tricky' Hickey from Dublin and local player Liam 'I Love Squash' Harnett would battle out for a finals place. Brian Lator recently returned from the over 50 European championships in Hamburg was showing great form and beat all comers to get to the final.

Lator and Murphy having played Junior and Senior squash together for many years were both eager for a win. Lator is known for a very technically strong game and good front court play and fancied his chances against the younger and 'more handsome' Murphy.

With plenty of sweat and aged joints on show the two old lads were delighted to be back on court and relive their youth and rivalry. Needless to say the winner was the good looking one!!

Thank you to all who came to support and play squash with us in The Curragh Squash Club.

—Neal Murphy

For anyone interested in playing squash please contact Neal Murphy on 087 9524470 or nealmurphy1@gmail.com.

# Parisien wins through at Curragh Pro Open Squash

Neal Murphy reports from the Curragh Squash Club where the very best of European squash talent show their skills

Much to the delight of Kildare squash talent arrived in the Curragh Club last weekend. What evolved was the highest standard of squash ever played in the club and a very worthy 4 day battle for the Anthony Frail Cup.

Sponsored by Innoemia Café Naas, The Curragh PSA was honoured to host the largest contingent of international squash players ever for this event.

The ladies event boasted international flair with Parisienne Ana Munos newly entered into the professional playing ranks joining Dutch International Juliette Permentier and Portuguese player Mariana Martins.

Returning UK favourites Sofia Avorio Pita and last year's

proceedings ex world number 128 Carlota's Brian Byrne came out of retirement and was joined by Carlow club mate Irish International Sam O'Neill in the men's professional draw. Dublin's Scott Gillanders flew in from Amsterdam and Sutton young guns Michael Crevan and Kevin Dawey entered last minute.

The ladies event saw most of the seeds progress to the quarter final. However Irish pride was shining with Cork's Sophie O'Rourke showing great strength and power to best number 4 seed Jasmin Kalar from London to go through to the semi final showdown.

This was a really great win for the Irish international over the highly ranked professional player from London who was runner-up in this event last year.

Galway's Roisin O'Shea was over powered by Cambridge's Sofia Avorio Pita but is showing great early season form in a push for the Irish ladies International team.

**Largest contingent of international squash players ever for this event**

Sophie was drawn against French number 1 seed Ana Munos in the semi final and looked very strong and confident winning the first game. However the French player's orthodox forehand created lots of winning opportunities and she powered through to the final with a 3-1 win over the Munster number 1.

Considering this is Sophie's return to the PSA she has shown huge promise and we all look forward to her season ahead.

Cambridge's Sofia Avorio Pita had a comfortable win over the Dutch lady Juliette Permentier in the other semi final setting up a seriously high calibre shoot out for the 2023 Anthony Frail Cup.

The final was a very nervous affair with Sofia Avorio Pita storming into an early lead. However the Parisienne young gun Ana Munos showed great Gallic flair to hold her nerve at 6-0 down in the first and claw her way back into the game.

For the younger professional to hold off this

**MEN'S EVENT**

The men's event was very hotly contested with some serious early upsets.

The first real dog fight came with local favourite Brian Byrne against the Dublin top 300 in the world Michael Crevan from the Sutton squash club.

In a 90 minute epic Michael Crevan finally ran Brian Byrne into the ground,

slipping a huge early upset and showing the quality of Irish squash talent on show. Early exits for the USA player Ben Gemma and Scottish touring professional Fraser Stevens had both players seriously upset.

Fraser Stevens decided to go home early rather than play on after being soundly thrashed by the talented Carlow man Sam O'Neill.

Not expecting much from Sam O'Neill cost the Scottish man dearly.

O'Neill had him doing court sprints using superb racket control and court positioning to outplay the Scottish professional. Sam is not known for early season form but we could be seeing an Indian summer from the Carlow man as he refuses to age gracefully.

On the other side of the draw English professional Ben Eberington and Number one seed Gann Moran played out an ultra physical quarter final match highlighting the commitment levels from these players.

Top seed Moran progressed with a win leaving Eberington to rue some mistakes in the 3rd game. Elsewhere in the mens draw all bets were off with the professional players in general getting soundly beaten by local Irish players.

Scott Gillanders from Dublin beating Ulsters Thomas Abrahams and then playing a great match to beat Dublin's



Sam O'Neill and Jack Walker

Dean Dromgoole to reach the semi final.

The big surprise was the bottom half of the draw seeing Ulsters prodigal son Stephen Hearnst returning home from Manchester and going on a superb run into the final beating upcoming players Jack Serritt and Walsley's Deise man Jack Walker.

Hearnst is the son of Irish squash legend Geoff Hearnst and has the skill of his Dad in abundance. Gradually climbing the pro ranks playing semi pro out of Manchester he will be pushing hard for the Irish senior team in the near future.

To have two Irish players win through to the final considering such a high quality international field was great for the local crowd to see.

Moran with much higher world ranking than Hearnst was expected to win and duly obliged with a show of strength and hard hitting in the final that over powered the Ulsterman Hearnst.

Moran's game is based on putting huge physical and technical pressure on opponents and is a step ahead of most Irish players at this stage.

However Hearnst showed great commitment and no shortage of squash playing talent to keep the match high.

Moran went one step further than last year to become the Curragh PSA Open men's champion 2023.



Men's PSA Final Stephen Hearnst and Gann Moran



Mariana Martins, Sofia Avorio Pita, Jasmin Kalar, Juliette Permentier



Right: Ladies Final Ana Munos V Sofia Avorio Pita