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Title hat-trickster Powell puts success down to the emergence of Dodd

by Rob Batiste

LIONS A have wrapped up another Division One title, beating Whistlers C 7-3 to clinch the trophy with four matches to spare.

The Lions A trio of Scott Romeril, Garry Dodd and Jez Powell have been streets ahead all season and have dropped only one point.

Powell, who has now won the title for three seasons in a row, put the success down to the emergence of young Dodd.

'Garry's average is much higher than we expected.

'We thought it might be around 40% and it's up in the 70s.

'We've cruised it because of him really.'

Lions were made to work hard for their title-clinching win, though, as Whistlers C put up a good fight even without Joe Clancy who was ill and had to be replaced by Alice Loveridge.

Dodd played the opener against Matthew Stubbington and ran out a fairly comfortable winner by three games to one.

The second rubber saw Powell take on Phil Hunkin, another man in form.

Powell started off the better and quickly established a 2-0 lead but the match changed in the third set with Hunkin gaining the upper hand, winning the next two games 11-6, 11-5 and seemingly cruising at 9-5 up in the deciding fifth.

But Powell went for broke and managed to keep the game alive at 10-10.

The Lions man looked the more likely to win at this stage and with some good serving, won the game 13-11. Lions A then went 3-0 up with a straight-forward 3-0 victory for Romeril over Loveridge.

Hunkin got Whistlers back into the match with a convincing 3-0 victory over Dodd and he then combined with Stubbington for an equally convincing doubles win by the same score over

Romeril and Powell.

Whistlers were right back in the match.

Romeril then blasted past Stubbington to restore the two-rubber cushion, but with the performance of the night, Loveridge sensationally beat island Green Trophy hopeful Powell.

In an entertaining match the 11-year-old opened up a 2-0 lead, the youngster playing consistently while her opponent made unforced errors.

Powell stepped up his game to level the match 2-2, but Loveridge came good again and in a very tight last leg she held her nerve to edge it 11-9 and probably record her best win of her career so far.

Powell paid tribute to the youngster.

‘She played very well.

‘If you underestimate them [the youngsters], they can get a few points up, find enthusiasm and give you a good kicking.’

With the match poised at 4-3, Whistlers’ last hope of success was for Hunkin to beat Romeril, which he very nearly achieved.

Games were exchanged and with the rubber poised at 2-2, it went to the deciding leg.

As he had done against Powell, Hunkin edged ahead to lead 9-7, but was never really convincing and Romeril showed his quality by reeling off four points in a row to win the match and guarantee the title. Dodd beat Loveridge and Powell saw off Stubbington to wrap up the victory.