U21 GC Worlds – Day 5

The final day of the 2017 U21 GC World Champs was hot and breezy. There were three main matches. Edmund Fordyce played very well against Angus to win the Bowl 7-2, 7-3. Regrettably, yet again the WCF failed to provide a trophy for the winner of the Bowl.

The Plate final was between Jason Hodgett and Hemi McClaren. Hemi has been improving after his disappointing start to the event and won 7-4, 7-3.

The Final started at 11am. The lawns were about a second faster than yesterday and the players struggled to position their balls for the first half hour. They reached 3-3 before George rush peeled Felix through hoop 7 and then shortly afterwards, through hoop 8. This was enough for Felix to take the first 7-3.

In the second game, George got an in-off at hoop 1 and after Felix failed to jaws hoop 2, George ran a 6 yard hoop 2 with his other ball onside 7 yards in front of hoop 3. He then ran this with no wire and took a 4-0 lead. Felix remained patient and made each hoop a battle and ran a good hoop 7 and then 8 to equalise at 4-4. Both players had chances at hoop 9, but Felix was the first to succeed. George then took good wired position at 10 to make it 5-5 and hit a good mid-pace clearance at 11 which forced Felix to go deep. After Felix failed a long 11, George took a 6-5 lead, but Felix always had control at 12 and it was quickly 6-6. George played from the South boundary to 13 and overhit it so it finished off the North boundary. Felix then played the best positional shot of the match to take 1 foot straight position at 13, blocking the ball on the North boundary. George shot with his other ball, just flicking the hoop and missing. After Felix had played his other ball in, George took on the 7 yard jump, but failed allowing Felix to recover from 0-4 and take a 2-0 game lead.

The third game saw the players trade the first 4 hoops. Felix played a great quarter ball 4 yard clearance at 5 to take the lead, but George ran hoop 6 from long range to equalise. Felix had control of hoop 7 forcing George to take on another long range jump which hit the hoop, but didn’t go through. Felix took advantage to take a 5-3 lead. This was soon extended to 6-4, but George controlled 11 with a good centred clearance which was enough to soon make it 6-5 to Felix. At 12, after George had taken on a long hoop, Felix positioned both his balls in close running position forcing George to hit from the South boundary. George missed and Felix had the easy task of a 1 foot straight hoop 12 to take the World title, which he duly did.

George has had an excellent event and should be proud of his achievement. Felix has been excellent all event, showed huge maturity in his shot choices and how he handled being behind in game two. He will make a very worthy world champion. In his acceptance speech he thanked the VCA and ACA for hosting the event and the manager and referees.

Now is probably the best time for me to thank several people who haven’t been mentioned so far. Firstly, the parents who have funded and supported their children so well – without their support, this event could not take place. Secondly, Greg Bryant, who has done so much to bring all of the NZ players on over the past two years. Thirdly, CNZ, who have supported a Youth program for over a decade now.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to thank the players. They were a group of absolutely delightful young men and women and they each represented, themselves, their parents and their countries with distinction.

Chris