U21 GC Worlds – Day 3

It was cold once again – I was shivering in my shelter. The first match of interest was George Coulter v Mohamed Rashad. In the first, Mohamed failed a long hoop 13 and George ran a 3 foot hoop 13 to seemingly take the first…..but no…..he had caused damage to the lawn and Mohamed ended up taking the first. After this disaster, George came back very positively to take the second 7-6 and won the decider more easily 7-4 to win the block.

This left Mohamed in a winner takes all match with the experienced Lachy Hughes. It was a high quality match with the first two games shared. The turning point came at hoop 5 in the decider when at 2-2, Lachy jumped through the hoop from 4 yards 30 degrees and ended up a 7-3 winner to make the knockout and eliminate the Egyptian number one who had played some very good croquet.

In block 2, Felix Webby had a critical match against Ahmed El Nahas. Felix was in good form and Ahmed failed to replicate his good form from the previous afternoon, allowing Felix to take a comfortable 7-2, 7-2 win and second place in the block. Edward Wilson completed his unbeaten match run to take top spot.

In block 1, Josh Freeth finished comfortably at the head of the block having won all his games. Angus Coulter was the star of the day beating Australian U21 Champion Jack Williams 7-6, 6-7, 7-3. He then followed that up with a win against Omar El Said to take the second qualifying spot – an incredibly impressive debut.

In block 3, Edmund Fordyce came back from game down to beat Nadine El Menoufi 6-7, 7-2, 7-4 to win the block. This left Nadine to play Connell Leahy. The loser would be eliminated and the winner would probably get a play-off match against Jason Hodgett if he could beat Jakob Smith. Nadine played some very good positional strokes and Connell didn’t quite manage to do enough to prevent a 7-3, 7-5 win for Nadine. Jason beat Jakob in 3 to set up the only block play-off.

Nadine took a 2-0 lead, but Jason came back and looked like he might square it at 2-2, but Nadine’s positional play had Jason under constant pressure and was enough to take a well deserved place in the knockout.

The eight players in the knockout are 6 Kiwis, 1 Aussie and 1 Egyptian.

The knockout draw posted on croquetscores is shown below

Joshua Freeth

Edward Wilson

George Coulter

Nadine El Menoufi

Edmund Fordyce

Angus Coulter

Lachlan Hughes

Felix Webby

This appears to be a draw seeded by grade since it has block winners Josh Freeth and Edward Wilson playing each other. This is contrary to how all other recent GC Worlds have been seeded, however, we have never had a knockout of 8 players before.

I hope we get some good matches tomorrow and better weather.

Chris