

McDonnell and Cullen Victorious on Rocks Return

Alan McDonnell and Ann Cullen came out on top in the scratch and handicap sections respectively as the Rocks Jewellers Singles returned for its first tournament of the new season.

The event, which will be held exclusively in Leisureplex Stillorgan this season and will have varying patterns for the first time, looks like being even more successful than ever, with a total of 50 competitors taking to the lanes last Sunday.

Kegel Main Street was this month's pattern, and there was some surprisingly mixed scoring as many bowlers struggled to put together a consistent five-game set.

McDonnell started brilliantly with a game of 277, but that was bettered by Keith Rynhart, who opened his set with a 278.

Rynhart showed just how difficult players found it to have a consistent set, with his day slowing to a slightly disappointing set of 1016.

Working the other way round was Bob Daly, who opened with a 159 before games of 238, 259, 246, 233. His set of 1135 saw him finish qualifying in 2nd place in the scratch section.

In the scratch section, Matthew Kestell overcame a 179 in game three to qualify 3rd with 1129, while Colm Cloake qualified 4th on his return to competitive bowling with a set of 1119, which included a game of 287.

In the handicap section, Kevin Bennett, playing his first Rocks event, shot 1204 to qualify in 1st place. In second spot was Ann Cullen (1173), with 3rd going to Gavin Fox (1157) and the final spot was taken by John Wilson (1135).

So the finals began, and this year saw a change in the finals format, with a match-play style format seeing 1st place playing 4th place and 2nd place playing 3rd in a one-game match. The winners would then meet in another one-game match to determine the winner.

None of the scratch qualifiers really got to grips with the lane condition in final step one, and it became a case of who could grind out a score good enough to survive. Though scores were low, the games were still very close and made for exciting matches. In the end Alan McDonnell (209) beat Colm Cloake (186) and Matthew Kestell (191) beat Bob Daly (184).

The final match promised much, but in the end it turned out not to be as close as the semi-finals had been, with Alan McDonnell proving simply too strong for Matthew Kestell, winning the match 200-170 to take the first Scratch Rocks Jewellers Singles title of the season.

In the handicap section, top seed Kevin Bennett came close to using his handicap advantage against John Wilson, but in the end Wilson did enough, winning the match 220-212 to advance.

The second semi-final was not such a close contest, with Ann Cullen taking advantage of her 36-pin handicap advantage over Gavin Fox to win the match 204-180.

Cullen then produced a stunning performance in the final, beating a helpless Wilson to the title 259-229.

Congratulations to both Alan McDonnell and Ann Cullen on becoming the first Rock Jewellers Singles champions this season.

The next event takes place on October 5th. Full results can be found in the Results tab.