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## TODAY in Edinburgh: Day Two, Sat 28th Jan 2012

Steve at ESC

### Semi-Finals:

### Quarter-Final reports

#### Women's:

- [1] **Lauren Briggs** (Eng) bt [3] Birgit Coufal (Aut)  
11/7, 11/6, 11/5 (28m)  
[2] **Orla Noom** (Ned) bt [6] Zephanie Curgenven (Eng)  
11/7, 12/10, 11/3 (22m)

#### Men's:

- [3/4] **Shaun Le Roux** (Rsa) bt [1] Joel Hinds (Eng)  
11/7, 11/7, 11/7 (49m)  
[2] **Andy Whipp** (Eng) bt [3/4] Kashif Shuja (Nzl)  
11/5, 11/9, 11/9 (41m)



### Top two survive different test to reach women's final ...

Well, the women's final will be between the top two seeds, who both won in straight games but were nevertheless presented with tricky, if different, problems to solve by their opponents.

**Lauren Briggs** made great starts against **Birgit Coufal**, going 7/1 up in the opening game, but the Austrian brought herself back into contention, coming as close as 7/9 before the top seed took it 11/7.

A 5/1 lead in the second and 4/0 on the third were good enough to settle any nerves, but again Birgit didn't buckle, and although she never really got back on terms in the second, at 4/6 in the third she was well in contention in a match featuring steady, well worked rallies.

But then Briggs decided to unleash some previously unseen weapons, three crisp winners took her to match ball and although she needed two bites at the cherry, she was through to the final soon enough.

*"Well I made a better start than in the last two matches at least, but I felt quite constrained on there for a while,"* admitted Briggs afterwards.





*"I opened up in the last few points and went for some shots - maybe I could or should have done that earlier but she slows the pace down well and I just couldn't seem to find opportunities to attack, and it's never easy when you're trying to generate your own pace."*

*"That's one better than last year, so I'm looking forward to the final now, and I think I'll try the Veggie Haggis tonight!"*

For **Orla Noom**, the second seed, there was a very different test as Zephaniae Curgenvan, fresh from creating the only upset of the day in the morning's quarter-finals, came out at a lightning fast pace, which the Dutchwoman had no choice but to try to match.



There wasn't a point between them until 6-all, and few of the rallies had gone beyond a handful of strokes either, not through mistakes but through low, hard hit winners.

Noom finally edged ahead, taking the lead 11/7, and quickly went 8/2 up in the second. The momentum didn't last though, as Curgenvan started to find winners again, getting particular joy from her backhand crosscourt volley which she played at every opportunity.

Some crisp winners took the Englishwoman to game ball 10/9 but Noom then found three of her own to sneak the game 12/10, much to her own relief.

The third was over quickly, 4/0, then 6/3, and Orla took the final five points to win 11/3 in 22 minutes and reach a second successive Artemis final.

*"The first was so fast, and still in the second she was putting those volleys away," said Noom. "I had to try to keep it off her volley by hitting it low and hard but I couldn't always do that."*

*"I'm not sure she believed she could win, and once I got ahead I felt more comfortable, but it was tight at the end, I'm happy to have finished off that third."*

*"It's good to be back in the final, you always feel more pressure when you're seeded to win, so now I've got to where I'm supposed to be so I can relax a bit."*

*"Playing Lauren should be a good test for me before our Nationals, I haven't played her since the Swiss final in 2007, but you know you're going to get good rallies and a tough match. Looking forward to it, but I think I'll give the Haggis a miss!"*



## Sean stops Joel but Whippy won't be denied

If we have a repeat finalist in the women's event it's a different story in the men's, after **Sean Le Roux** put out top seed **Joel Hinds** in straight games, but **Andy Whipp** made sure the ESC crowd will see a familiar face tomorrow as he ended **Kashif Shuja's** first BSPA adventure, also in straight games.

Le Roux, seeded 3/4, took on Hinds in a fast-paced, hard-hitting encounter which went to 7-all in the first, then 7-all in the second, with the South African taking the final few points of both to lead 11/7, 11/7.

The third was tight too, but from 4-all Le Roux established that all-important cushion of a couple of points, then extended it to 10/6 with Hinds struggling to keep with the consistent pace that his opponent was applying.

That finished 11/7 too, and after 49 minutes Sean was into the final.



*"I knew that Joel maybe wasn't 100% and that if I could keep the pace high it would be to my advantage," shared Sean afterwards. "It felt like a bit of a hack at times but he was struggling with it and I knew it was what I needed to do."*

*"It's good to finish in three, even though we played two games today they weren't too long so it's just like a training day really. I'm looking forward to the final, I've been in a couple but haven't won one yet ..."*

Whipp, of course, has been in more BSPA finals than anyone, and has won more than his fair share, but never the Artemis.

He's usually a slow-ish starter, but after going 0-3 down in the first, he joined in with the slower, more accurate, more varied pattern of play that Shuja was imposing, but was able to inject more pace when needed and went 10/4

ahead before taking the lead 11/5.

At 5/3 in the second Andy needed to ask the crowd if anyone had a pair of size 8 1/2 or 9 shoes as he'd just split his second of the day! At 7/3 down Kashif seemed to realise that that plan wasn't working, played much more length and started to reap the rewards, getting back to 8-all.

Working very hard, Andy managed to fend off the challenge, doubling his lead 11/9 with a lovely volley into the nick.



The third was just as close, and just as much hard work, Andy ahead but Kashif closing to 9/8 on a stroke. A drop that just clipped the tin gave Andy matchball, and a drive deep into the corner gave him the match 11/9 and another chance at the only current BSPA title he hasn't won (I need to check that fact, but it sounds right!)

*"It's unlike me to have a good start, well only going 3-0 down is good for me," admitted Andy. "I'm quite good at getting through the early rounds without too much bother and then I play better against better players and that's what it felt like tonight."*

*"He made a few more errors than me, just clipping the tin with a lot of those soft dropshots of his, but I started doing that as well in the third."*

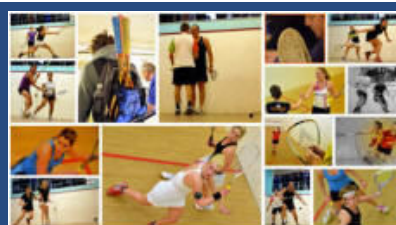
*"I was pleased to win that though, I gave a little fistpump at the end (you can just spot it) and I never do that, but after a tough game at lunchtime I was pleased to play well and beat a*

good player."

Before the final though he'll be going on a little shopping trip (to the club shop, hopefully): "I thought I was being quite professional bringing two pairs of shoes, but I'll have to buy some new ones anyway!"



## Quarter-Finals:



### Photo Galleries

Not quite so hectic today, but there's still two rounds to play in both the women's and men's events. There's home interest in both, and although Frania and Greg will start as the underdogs, there will be no shortage of home support.

#### Women's Quarters:

#### [quarters as a pdf](#)

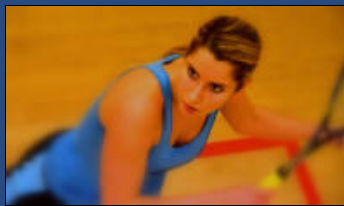
[1] **Lauren Briggs** (Eng) bt [5] Laura Pomportes (Fra)

11/7, 11/7, 12/10 (31m)

[3] **Birgit Coufal** (Aut) bt Julia Lecoq (Fra)

11/5, 11/7, 12/10 (27m)

[6] **Zephanie Curgenv** (Eng) bt [4] Maud Duplomb (Fra)



6/11, 12/10, 11/3, 11/6 (30m)

[2] **Orla Noom** (Ned) bt [Q] Frania Gillen-Buchert (Sco)  
8/11, 11/6, 12/10, 11/8 (43m)

**Men's Quarters:**

[3/4] **Shaun Le Roux** (Rsa) bt [5/8] Eddie Charlton (Eng)  
11/6, 4/11, 11/4, 11/7 (54m)

[1] **Joel Hinds** (Eng) bt [5/8] Simon Parke (Eng)  
11/5, 14/12, 11/6 (42m)

[2] **Andy Whipp** (Eng) bt Greg Lobban (Sco)  
7/11, 11/5, 11/5, 11/8 (43m)

[3/4] **Kashif Shuja** (Nzl) bt Paul Rawden (Eng)  
11/9, 11/4, 11/4 (25m)



**French thwarted as Frania bows out in quarters**

Quarter-finals of the women's event saw all three French players fall, but there was no good news for the home contingent either as lone Scot Frania Gillen-Buchert also exited.



Top seed **Lauren Briggs** was first through, pulling away from 5-4 in each of the opening two games against Laura Pomportes to lead 11/7, 11/7. The third looked like being a similar story, but the French girl hung in well this time, earning a solitary game ball before Briggs closed it out 12/10.

*"The last one became a bit of a battle," admitted Briggs, "I think I stopped volleying so much and she played better, she found a good length on her forehand and put me under a lot of pressure.*

*"There were some really tough rallies, I was very glad to win one really long one towards the end [to go 9-7 up]. She played well, but it's nice to get another one under the belt."*

In the semis Briggs will meet **Birgit Coufal**, after the third-seeded Austrian beat Julia Lecoq in a similar scoreline, 11/5, 11/7, 12/10, although she had to come from 9/3 down in the third, also saving a game ball before taking it, helped by numerous unforced errors from Lecoq.



*"I was taking the pace off the ball and lobbing well in the first two games," revealed Coufal, "but in the third she was getting used to it and was waiting for it. It took me a little time to work it out, but it all came good in the end.*

*"It's good to finish it in three, especially with another match coming up tonight."*

The third French to fall was Maud Duplomb, the fourth seed, although after she had taken the first 11/6 against **Zephanie Curgenven**, seeded two places lower, and upset didn't look on the cards.

The Englishwoman stormed back though, taking a tough and ultimately crucial second game 12/10, after which in the words of one seasoned observer, Maud's game "just fell apart". Curgenven's improvement had a lot to do with it too of course as she took the last two games 11/3 11/6, but you get the idea.



*"I had trouble finding my feet in the first, I was taking it in short too early, going for cheap winners," said Zephanie. "I needed to change my game plan and make the rallies longer. The second was pretty brutal, and after I won that I think it took something out of her, the third was pretty comfortable and I was able to build a big enough lead in the fourth too.*

*"I'm pleased to make the quarters, it's good to be back in tournament action again, and I don't mind who I play as I'm friends with Frania and Orla!"*



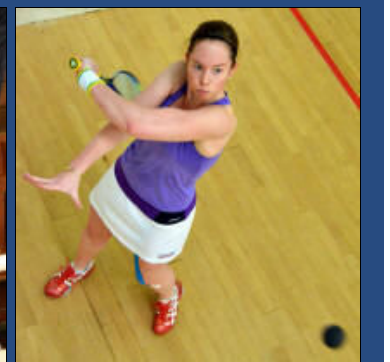


In the semis it will be **Orla Noom** who she faces, the second seed ended home interest with a 3/1 win over Frania, but it was at no point easy as the Scot battled every minute of the 43-minute 8/11, 11/6, 12/10, 11/8 scoreline.

"I didn't know what to expect," said the Dutchwoman, "but she really took me by surprise in the first with her lob serves and I found it difficult to get involved in rallies. Once I managed to get some going I felt more comfortable, but I still thought I was getting dragged into playing her type of game too much rather than my own.

"She stuck in well though, and I'm glad it didn't go to five, especially as we were running late on that court anyway."

The ladies have a few hours - not many - to prepare for the semis which start at 17.00.



### Top seeds through to men's semis

No upsets to report in the men's quarter-finals, and no gruelling marathons either which should lead to some comparatively fresh legs in tonight's semi-finals.

**Shaun Le Roux** was first through, beating Eddie Charlton 11/6, 4/11, 11/4, 11/7 in the longest of the four matches at 54m. To be fair I only saw the last game, which seemed to be pretty even in the rallies, but Eddie suffered from a few too many errors, much to his own frustration.

"I wasn't patient enough," said the Nottingham man, "plus I'm usually pretty good at using height to break up and slow down the play, but with the low roof on this court you can't do that, I must have hit it at least seven times.

"He played well and didn't give me a lot, but I'm still really disappointed," concluded Charlton.

"He made a few errors which helped me," admitted Le Roux. "We play a similar sort of game and we've both been playing well and getting some good results so it was always going to be tight, the scoreline doesn't really reflect that.

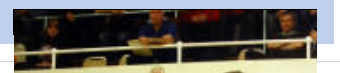
"But he beat me 3/0 last time out so I'm happy to get the win and looking forward to the semis."

His opponent there will be top seed **Joel Hinds** who overcame former Artemis champion Simon Parke in straight games 11/5, 14/12, 11/6, although the middle one was a real tussle.

"It's great to be able to play against someone of Simon's experience," said Hinds, who lost out in last year's 89-minute final. "He had a lot of support just like Darren did yesterday, I'm not sure they like me up here," he quipped.

In the other half of the draw Mr BSPA **Andy Whipp** shrugged off losing the first game against young Scot Greg Lobban to record a 7/11, 11/5, 11/5, 11/8 win.

"It wasn't too tough physically, but he's quite





awkward to play and he came out firing in the first," admitted Whipp. "I wasn't too worried about losing the first and felt pretty comfortable for two games although he made the fourth quite tough."

The record BSPA title holder faces a BSPA baby in the semis as **Kashif Shuja** continued to enjoy himself in his first event, beating surprise quarter-finalist Paul Rawden with increasing authority, 11/9, 11/4, 11/4 in the shortest of all the quarter-finals.



## *TODAY in Edinburgh: Day One, Fri 27th Jan 2012*

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