

MacRobertson Shield 2010

Australia v United States of America

12-16 August 2010

Roehampton Croquet Club, London

Day One

The 2nd Test began at 10am on the lush green lawns of Roehampton today some 85 years after the first MacRobertson Shield was played here. The weather was broken cloud and cool, and a recent shower had fallen. The lawns were rather slow at about 11 seconds but the surface and general flatness was excellent. Most of the borders slope into the court, some very significantly. USA won the start in 2 of the 3 doubles but Robert hit with the 3rd ball and made 9 with a Dream Leave (3 balls on the West boundary in a line pointing towards the peg). The quality of play was high and after an hour, only 1 mistake had been made (by USA). A good hit and tpo by Danny Huneycutt lead to USA taking the first game of the Test match, but Australia were doing well in the other 2 games. Just before lunch there was a rather nice moment when Robert & Marty were both taking the "short" lift on adjacent courts, almost simultaneously – and both players hit to once again restore 3 Aussies to the courts. At lunch, the score was 2 games to 1 in USA's favour.

Soon after lunch, however, USA went 1-0 up when Jim Bast completed a 3-ball break in fine style from Robert's tpo. Later, the Americans doubles their score when Ben Rothman tripled after Kevin had made a good break. This left Stephen and Marty with a tense match which by this time had reached 1-1. However, the pair played a fine last game with Stephen coming home with a well-deserved triple.

In the other Test, Great Britain lead New Zealand 2-1.

Results

Stephen Forster & Marty Clarke v Jeff Soo & Rich Lamm 26-23, 16-26, 26-0 tp (SF)

Robert Fletcher & Ian Dumergue v Jim Bast & Danny Huneycutt 13-26 tpo (DH), 14-26 otp (RF)

Pete Landrebe & Kevin Beard v Ben Rothman & Doug Grimsley 22-26 tp (BR), 9-26 tp (BR)

Day 2

Australia had a better start on a chilly morning threatening rain here at Roehampton. Three good early hits by Marty, Kevin and Ian secured good starts for 2 of the games. By 10.40, all 3 Aussies were on court, and in 2 games were in their 2nd breaks. The rain started at 11am, but by quarter past, 3 Aussie triples had been completed almost simultaneously – a treat to watch. Stephen and Marty's tpo'd first game continued slowly but the other two were soon in Aussies hands again, the team having been in control on the lawns continuously for nearly two hours without a single hoop made by the Americans. However, an error gave US the tpo'd game against the run of play while Robert missed his quadruple for once (having completed one in the first game). But Australia did not take long to hit back, and by lunch had taken the lead in the Test Match 3-2 including another Landrebe triple.

Although the other match slipped away, this was a much improved and very creditable performance by Australia today and they now realize that they are not here just to participate. GB lead NZ by 4-2 in the other Test.

Results

Stephen Forster & Marty Clarke v Jim Bast & Danny Huneycutt 18-26 otp (SF), 9-26 tp (DH)

Robert Fletcher & Ian Dumergue v Ben Rothman & Doug Grimsley 26-0 qp (RF), 26-9

Pete Landrebe & Kevin Beard v Jeff Soo & Rich Lamm 26-0 tp (PL), 26-0 tp (PL)

Day 3

The Great British Summer continued today with grey skies and damp conditions on Day 3 of the Test – the first singles day. Grey times for Australia too as USA won 3 of the opening 4 games. Even Robert was not his usual self succumbing to 2 Ben Rothman triples on faraway court 4. Marty was the savior, however, with solid triples in the first and second games against Jeff Soo. His 2nd game finish was superb when he bombarded the peelee through rover, and then bombarded it on to the peg from a fine angle. At lunch, the score was 1-1 with 4 still to finish.

By mid-afternoon, however, Australia was staring a scoreline of 1-5 in the face but Ian and Kevin ploughed on, never giving up. Ian's first game was a "hairy" one but ended in a triple very late in the 6th turn after delaying the first peel until he was going to 3-back. Kevin tripled in the 2nd but lost the start in the 3rd as did Ian. The rain came again as did USA, but in the end Kevin and Ian both prevailed with magnificent tripling turns in their 3rd games to salvage 3-3 on the day and 6-6 for the match.

GB extended their lead to a very healthy 8-4 against NZ at Nottingham today.

Results

Robert Fletcher v Ben Rothman 0-26 tp, 0-26 tp

Stephen Forster v Danny Huneycutt 8-26 tp, 23-26 tp

Ian Dumergue v Doug Grimsley 26-0 tp, 16-26, 26-11 tp

Pete Landrebe v Rich Lamm 0-26 tp, 26-11 tp, 0-26 tp

Martin Clarke v Jeff Soo 26-0 tp, 26-9 tp

Kevin Beard v Jim Bast 0-26 tp, 26-9 tp, 26-9 tp

Day 4

A hazy sun adorned the start of play today and once again, the Australian team came out of the blocks in second place. While the starts themselves were evenly contested, the outcomes were disappointing for Australia. Robert made a valiant attempt on the second turn but missed after hoop 3, and then it was hoops a-plenty for the Americans on all 3 courts. There was to be no fight back in 2 of the games and by noon, Australia found themselves 2 matches down. Disaster – yes, but Robert and Ian fought back to level their match before lunch. After the break, Australia took control and Ian was in a tripling turn. He relinquished this advantage with an unfortunate shot leading up to 2-back, and the match was again in the balance when Rich Lamm pegged out Robert's ball. At this stage, Ian was for 2-back and Jeff Soo and Lamm for 1 and peg. Sadly, Ian never made another hoop and Australia slipped to a 0-3 defeat on the day. They will need to secure 5 of the 6 singles tomorrow to win the Test.

In the other Test, a mini-comeback by NZ was unlikely to be enough for them to challenge GB, with the match score standing at 10-5.

Results

Stephen Forster & Marty Clarke v Ben Rothman & Doug Grimsley 0-26 tp (BR), 0-26 tp (BR)

Robert Fletcher & Ian Dumergue v Jeff Soo & Rich Lamm 9-26, 26-1 tp (RF),

Pete Landrebe & Kevin Beard v Jim Bast & Danny Huneycutt 0-26 tp (DH), 0-26 tp (JB)

Day 5

Australia's MacRobertson Shield aspirations rest on the result of today's singles games. The morning began cold and blustery but dry with some blue sky that increased during the afternoon. The starts were evenly split between the 2 countries, with Ian and Marty gaining good breaks to 4-back. Three lift shots went against Australia but Kevin hit his to keep the lawn 4 flag flying. An exciting finish occurred in one game after Pete had tpo'd leaving his ball on 1-ball and pegging out 2 balls. Both players found themselves on 4-back and an impasse beckoned. The American broke it, Pete hit, but eventually Grimsley prevailed. At about noon, Australia made a surge when all 4 players hit a long shot or lift one after the other. By lunchtime, however, Pete's match was lost but 2 others had won their second games with Kevin looking good in his 2nd. At 3pm, however, Jim Bast completed his match against Marty to give USA victory for only the second time in the competition. The final score was 7-14. While the Shield is gone, the prize of a GB scalp still looms as a big incentive.

In the GB v NZ Test, NZ almost achieved the impossible of winning all 6 singles but Keith Aiton saved the day for GB posting their only win of the day. The final score was 11-10 to GB.

Results

Robert Fletcher v Danny Huneycutt 23-26, 0-26 tp

Stephen Forster v Ben Rothman 0-26 tp 5th turn, 0-26 tp

Ian Dumergue v Rich Lamm 13-26 tpo, 26-13 otp, 26-0 tp 5th turn

Pete Landrebe v Doug Grimsley 22-26 otp, 0-26 tp

Martin Clarke v Jim Bast 9-26 tp, 26-10, 9-26 tp

Kevin Beard v Jeff Soo 9-26 tp, 23-26

Match Score: AU 7 USA 14