

# “The tide is rising higher!”

## 2015 MASSACHUSETTS STATE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Tom Poor

Last year saw the emergence of several junior players as they made their mark in almost every division. The **Spahr** kids, **Deven Kanwal**, **Timmy Brownell**, etc. presented problems for their elders. Those 2014 problems became 2015 obstacles as the junior ranks were swelled by the addition of the **Koeppel brothers**, **Ellie & Graham Gozigian**, and others, complimenting the continued success of the above as another year added strength and experience to these youngsters.



2015 State B Doubles: Finalists - Charlie Humber & Cole Koeppel; Champions - Deven Kanwal & Amrit Kanwal

Some guys caught on. **Charlie Humber** and **Amrit Kanwal**, who won the **B's** last year and hence were ineligible this year, reached into the junior ranks for partners. **Charlie & Cole Koeppel**, seeded first in the 43-team draw, had only minor bumps reaching the final, dispatching **Matt Silver & Nabil Uddin** in the quarters and **Rob Dewees & Josh Horwitz** in the semis, both in three straight. Matt & Nabil had arrived with a win over **Bobby Harkins & Errin Siagel** who had pulled perhaps the event's biggest upset with a five game over **Tom Poor & Glenn Prichett**. Dewees & Horwitz had their own upset win over 4th seeded **Andrew Matuch & Fernanda Rocha**, both required to play backhand, in five games as well. In the lower half, **Amrit** and prodigy son Deven, moved easily along until the quarters where **Timmy Brownell & Mac Caplan**, leading 14-5 in the fourth, incredibly lost the next 10 points and the match. In the semis, **Ryan Mulaney & Graham Gozigian** surrendered by an identical score in the fourth game. The finals was a superb test of the adults as Cole's power and speed often pinned Amrit in his back corner while Deven's short game tested Charlie's ability to reach the front. In a battle close to two hours, the Kanwals pulled the 5th game out at 13, thereby moving from winning the C title last year to the B crown this year, the first time in the annals of the States this progression has been done!

**Cole** is 14 years old, stands 6'4", throws a baseball 78 mph and hits a squash ball twice as fast. A good partner for Charlie and an even better one for his dad **Seth** in the **C's**. This draw, almost always the largest – 39 teams this year – and certainly the hardest to predict, held true to upset form. In the top half, 1st seeded **Greg Jannetta & Tucker Jones** were gone in the round of 16, beaten in four by **Adam Brinch & Mike Griffin** who in turn were sent to the showers in the quarters by **Neil Paterson & Mike McKee**, champions in 2006. They in the semis were hammered in three by **Curt Lefebvre & Josh Grodin** who had eliminated 4th seeded **Ian Walker & Will Hearty**. Meanwhile, in the lower half, Cole's little brother **Jacob** (12) and new club pro **Justin Singh** were moving easily along to the quarters as the 3rd seed. There a roadblock named **Koeppel, Cole and his dad Seth**, stood. Well, maybe wobbled a bit from their four game win over **Nabil Uddin & John Hailer** - 13, (14), 13, 14. The family clash was equally close with the elder Koeppels winning the last two games of four at 14. Their semis win over 2nd seed **Marc Wolpaw & Dicken Chaplin** was a bit easier. The finals featured Cole almost everywhere, bludgeoning winners interspersed with the errors of youth, but eventually prevailing over Curt & Josh in four tight games.

The brothers joined forces in the **Siblings** but the sledding was not easy. Unseeded, they ran into an opening round problem named **Mumanachit**, sisters Sandra and Sarah, recent college graduates and excellent singles players. The ladies concentrated on Jacob, evened the match at two games apiece, then let Cole get one too many in the fifth to end it at 12. The brothers then edged three time champions **Carson & Caroline Spahr** in four. This may be Carson's last hurrah in the States for a while as he enters Dartmouth for the next four years. In the bottom half, **Ellie & Graham Gozigian** shut out **Jesse & Timmy Brownell**, then lost a five game duel with **Will & JJ Hearty**. The Koeppels were given the title when JJ had to make a last minute business trip.



2015 State Parent-Child Doubles: Champions - Chris Spahr & Caroline Spahr; Finalists - Deven Kanwal & Amrit Kanwal

**Timmy Brownell** is the nation's #1 junior in the BU19 age group and won the US Junior Open in December – that's against Egyptians, South Americans and other top juniors in the world. He also happens to be a superb doubles player. He teamed with his coach and mother **Chris** in the **Parent-Child** to crush the **Koeppels** in the quarters then put up a stern front before bowing to **Chris & Caroline Spahr** in the semis. Top-seeded **Deven & Amrit Kanwal** cruised in the upper half to the finals. That final match, however, followed the exhausting B division Kanwal win noted above which took its toll, particularly on Amrit. The Spahrs showed no mercy as after all, these are the States, and won in four, returning the family to the winners circle as **Chris and Carson** had won 2010-12.

**Timmy's** presence was plenty noticeable in the **A's**, a 24-team draw, the largest ever for this division. He teamed with his dad **Bob**, coach at Belmont Hill, to eliminate **Josh Grodin & David Hall** in four, then met the nationally ranked team of **Charlie Humber & Chris O'Brien** in the 16's. With Bob steady on the right, Timmy quick and great shots on the left, they escaped by one point in the fourth and took the fifth at 11 in one of the best matches of the tournament. In the quarters, 2nd seeded **Doug Lifford & Max Montgelas** ended their run in three. Another great match was the opening round, five game victory of the **Kanwals** over **John Nimick & Glenn Prichett** by the strange scores of 14, (14), 14, (14), 2. And the best match of all was the meeting of the world's #10 singles player, Harvard graduate **Amanda Sobhy** & the University Club's pro **Fernanda Rocha** against **Sandy Tierney & Pat Malloy**, champions of this division in 2007-08. Watched by a packed gallery, Sandy & Pat jumped to an expected two game lead but lost the third and missed a match point when Sandy tinned a sure winning drop shot at 14-all in the fourth. The ladies pulled away in the fifth with Fernanda steady on the right and Amanda simply amazing in shooting and retrieving on the left wall. The winners' run ended in a quarter-final shutout by pro **Graham Basset & Jon Hyett** who received the same treatment from Doug & Max in the semis.

The top half of the **A's** was less scintillating. Top seeds **Dan & John Roberts**, two time defending champions, rolled into the finals with only minor hitches, principally at the hands of **Ryan Mulaney**, fresh out of Franklin & Marshall, & **Brendan McLaughlin**, equally fresh from Harvard, in



2015 State A Doubles: Finalists - Doug Lifford & Max Montgelas; Champions - Dan Roberts & John Roberts

a four game quarter. The brothers, however, had their hands full in the finals with **Doug & Max**, the latter causing serious damage with his sling-shot-like forehands and terrific speed. With the help of two one point games, Doug & Max led at the end of the third, then faltered in the last two games as the brothers played Doug as much as possible, capturing their third straight title.



2015 State 60+ Doubles: Finalists - Joe Duffey & Sandy Tierney; Champions - Tom Poor & Malcolm Davidson

**Tierney** was not having a good time. Losing to the ladies was one thing – after all, we’re talking top caliber women professionals. Losing in the **60’s** to two players older than him and failing to defend his title was seriously another. With partner **Joe Duffey**, they awaited the final after dusting off **Rob Dewees & Mat Sibble** in the semis of the top half. Below, **Tom Poor & Mac Davidson** had their hands full with **John Brazilian**, newly crowned US national 65+ champion, & **Len Zide**, a heavy pounder on the right. Down 2-1, Poor & Davidson reached for some of the magic that enabled them to win this event in 2011 & 2012 and took the last two games at 8. The final was a very close affair with Tom & Mac winning two games at 14 and closing it out in the fourth. Tierney was placed on suicide watch and surfaced long enough to say only heavy medication.

**Mac Davidson** was having a good time, especially against Sandy. In the **50’s**, **Mac & Court Chilton** dominated **Tierney & Fagan** in three in the quarters, marking the second year in a row the latter team failed to win a match. A semi-final problem arose, however, for Mac & Court in the new team of **Chris Spahr & Scott Poirier**, both



2015 State 50+ Doubles: Champions - Andrew Slater & Greg Zaff; Finalists - Chris Spahr & Scott Poirier

turning 50 this year. The rookies won in three. The upset of the division happened in another quarter where former national singles champion and Hall of Famer **John Nimick & Jeff Rodman** lost in three quick games to **Dean Williams & Robert Alonso**, an unknown quantity newly moved from New York. Defending champions **Greg Zaff & Andrew Slater** brought them back to earth in a quick semi, advancing to the finals. Although somewhat slower than in his youth, Greg is a sharpshooter, and Andrew is a steady and opportunistic shotmaker on the right. That combination was enough to handle Chris & Scott in four and their third straight title.



2015 State Mixed Doubles: Finalists - John Roberts & Sharon Bradey; Champions - Fernanda Rocha Maturi & Graham Bassett

Top notch men and women professionals dominated the **Mixed** division, enlarged to 23 teams this year by a number of new women entries. Perhaps the most notable was **Alli Rubin**, a recent Williams graduate, who paired with **Max Montgelas** to gain the quarters with a close win over **Caroline Spahr & Deven Kanwal** who had taken the measure of **Bry Roskoz & Scott Poirier** in the opening round. Alli & Max split the first two games with 2nd seeded **Fernanda Rocha & Graham Bassett**, then yielded to experience in the last two. Their semi-final opponents were **Mary McKee & Doug Lifford**, three time winners this event, the last in 2007 before Mary moved to France with her family for the next five years. The semi was simply a measure of solid, hard shotmaking by Fernanda & Graham overcoming the inevitability of age. Age is one thing, young partners another, a combination that top-seeded and defending champions **Sharon Bradey & John Roberts** employed to move

easily into the finals, marred only by a single game loss in the semis to **Chris Spahr & Hope Crosier**. The finals went for over an hour as Fernanda & Graham concentrated on Sharon, were behind after three games when two were lost by one point, then squeezed out the last two by winning a several key points down the middle.



2015 State Womens Doubles: Finalists - Hope Crosier & Mary McKee; Champions - Sharon Bradey & Fernanda Rocha Maturi

Adversaries in the Mixed, partners in the **Womens**, **Sharon & Fernanda** dominated the draw with the loss of only a single game to **Alli Rubin & Caroline Spahr** in the semis. Their finals’ opponents, **Hope Crosier & Mary McKee**, were also dominant in their half, erasing last year’s finalists, **Sue Greene & Hope Prockop**, in four games in the semis. The latter were fortunate to reach that point as they lost the first two games to **Lori Stump & Madeline Dufour** before recovering to win the next three. Fernanda & Sharon efficiently took care of business in the finals, winning in three. This victory marks the fifth year in a row Fernanda has won the Womens with three different partners.

The 2015 State Doubles had 190 players comprising 179 teams. The tournament is now perhaps the largest national doubles event outside the U.S. national championships. The increasing presence of juniors and more club members from places like Marblehead, Cross Courts and the Union Boat Club is both a testament to the attraction of the doubles game and the foundation for even larger tournaments and play in the future.

Full draws, pictures and past champions are on the Mass Squash web site.  
<http://ma-squash.org/>



2015 State C Doubles: Finalists - Curt Lefebvre & Josh Grodin; Champions - Cole Koeppel & Seth Koeppel