

**W**e keep thinking Father Time spares no one. Somehow, he's overlooked 62- year old Sandy Tierney who for the umpteenth time corralled another Pro-Am title with a display of shots that have never looked better and a small measure of help from partner Thomas Brinkman in a three game finals' conquest of Morgan Poor & Carl Baglio. And he does it with a humorous smile that makes you think he enjoys demolishing all comers.

The Putnam Pro-Am Doubles, with a Pro and Pro-Am division, was staged over the second week-end in January. For the sixth year Putnam Investments was the title sponsor, using their marketing department to take full advantage of the opportunity with signage, publicity and very attractive blue monogrammed shirts included in packages for amateurs and patrons. The University Club again shone as the host of dinner on Friday, a Sunday brunch and all the creature comforts fitting for professional athletes at the pinnacle of their sport.

The Pro Doubles Championship and its accompanying tournament, the Pro-Am Doubles Championship, is a mid-January fixture on the newly formed SDA Professional Doubles Tour. With Putnam, 74 patrons and 20 amateur players providing financial support for the event, the professionals competed in a mini Pro-Am for Super patrons and in both divisions for over \$40,000 in prize money. A chance to see the top professionals in the world brought out standing room only galleries throughout the weekend. The professionals' power, speed afoot and stunning shots were the stuff of wishful thinking for the rest of us. The finals of both tournaments were played on Sunday with five Pro-Am finals followed by the Professional final. The latter was a decisive three game shutout by former Trinity teammates Manek Mathur (India) & Yvain Madan (Switzerland) over many time winner Damien Mudge (Australia) and current partner Viktor Berg (Canada) who takes the place of Damien's partner for many years and now retired, Ben Gould (Australia).

### **EAST DRAW - Championship draw**

Hopes were bright as 20 amateur players teamed with professionals at the starting gate of what was the toughest draw yet in the Pro-Am. Defending champion Jon Hyett, past winners Amrit Kanwal, Tom Poor, Malcolm Davidson & Sandy Tierney and the addition of top players Julian Kirby and Scott Poirier all were on hand. Add the unknowns of pairings, handicaps and other new players and anything can happen... and did!

The opening round of 32 featured four matches. Graham Bassett (Boston) & Bobby Harkins (filling in for Nabil Uddin), slipped by Will Hearty & Viktor Berg (Scottsdale) in four. Carl Baglio (New York) & Morgan Poor shut out Robin Clarke (Toronto) & Court Chilton, taking advantage of the latter's MIT teaching hangover. Damien Mudge (New York), favoring a sore ankle, & John Hailer fell in four to Matt Jenson (Denver) & newcomer Ben Thorndike. Another injury prevented Bill Keravuori from playing, hence JP Morais joined Yvain Badan (New Canaan), defaulting on the last point to Jonny Smith (New York) & Chandler Willett.

Onward to the round of 16. Jon Hyett, winner in 2014 & 2015, paired with Fred Reid (Toronto) and opened his defense with a shaky five game survival over Bassett & Uddin, the last game at 15-13. Close games were going to be the order of the day as Tom Poor & Shaun Johnstone (Long Island) suffered in a 14, 13, 13 loss to Matt Domenick (Philadelphia) & Chris O'Brien. Len Zide & Scott Arnold (Toronto) were next to survive in five over John Brazilian, U.S. national 65+ champion, & Andres Vargas (New York). Another five gamer saw Morgan Poor & Carl Baglio (New York) avoid a match point in the fourth and take the fifth in an upset victory over Scott Poirier & Hamed Anvari (New York).

# **"SAME OLD, 2016 PUTNAM**

In the lower half, rookie Julian Kirby, a top-notch singles player and 2015 Harvard graduate, teamed with an almost as young Will Hartigan (New York) to form the tournament's dark horse team. They crushed Jenson & Thorndike in three and looked every bit as good as their expectations. Manek Mathur (New York) & Jamie Fagan pulled the next upset in four over Dave Hall & Greg Park (Atlantic City) as Jamie returned enough cross courts to give Manek a chance to hit the hardest ball of any of the professionals. Malcolm Davidson & Clive Leach (Mamaroneck) had a surprisingly rugged time with Amrit Kanwal & Will Mariani (Toronto), trading games to a final game win at 12. Then, Tierney & Brinkman (Toronto) gave a glimpse of things to come in a shutout destruction of Smith & Willett.

After the upsets on Friday afternoon (and a big dinner in the evening), the cream rose to the top in the Saturday morning quarter-finals. Reid & Hyett were in reasonable control during a four game conquest of Domenick & O'Brien, the last game tense at 14. Baglio and Morgan had little trouble in three with Arnold & Zide. Kirby & Hartigan faced Mathur & Fagan, lost the first, survived the second at 14 and then decided Mathur should see no more balls...period. That worked as the youngsters won the last two games. The last match was the highly anticipated duel between Tierney & Brinkman vs Davidson & Leach. It did not disappoint. Tierney's reverse corners were the difference in four games, each by a narrow margin and a preview of more to come.

The semi-finals on Saturday afternoon opened with Hyett & Reid, aided considerably by Jon's wife Monica's shouts of encouragement, facing Baglio & Morgan Poor. Morgan is a former Montana ski patroller and a very athletic player, but not long on doubles experience. He didn't, however, wither under the repeated blasts from his opponents and managed just enough to oust the defending champion 14, (14), 14, (7), and 12. The second semi ushered Kirby & Hartigan into the rarified atmosphere of the Tierney reverse.

Although Will fired repeated cross courts at Sandy, too often the response was a reverse bouncing twice in front of Julian. That was discouraging, and the youngsters went down in four. The finals was routine. Morgan had a great win in the semis, was blown away on Sunday morning in another match onlookers felt was among Sandy's top performances.



*Southwest Draw: Finalists - Graham Bassett (Boston) & Nabil Uddin; Champions - Ben Thorndike & Matt Jenson (Australia)*

# SAME OLD..."

## PRO-AM DOUBLES



East Draw: Finalists - Carl Baglio (Canada) & Morgan Poor;  
Champions - Sandy Tierney & Thomas Brinkman (Canada)

### NORTHEAST DRAW - round of 32 losers

Not happy with losing, four teams went to the limit of five games on Saturday morning. Hearty & Berg traded games/winners with Clarke & Chilton before winning the fifth at 13. John Frantzis, subbing for Keravuori, brought his own unique style of overhead, backhand reverses and short drops to help Yvain in another five game over Hailer & Justin Todd (Vancouver).

The music stopped for John in the final as Hearty & Berg won in four. All was not lost for Court, however, as he took consolation with a five game triumph over JJ Hearty (replacing Hailer) & Todd for 3rd place.

### WEST DRAW - East Draw round of 16 losers

Vanquished in the round of 16, eight teams faced off Saturday morning, still smarting from their early dismissal the day before. Rookie Nabil Uddin, joining partner Graham Bassett, immediately came under fire against Poor & Johnstone and held up, winning the first two games at 14. The next three games were close but no cigar, sending the latter pair into the semis. Their opponents were Poirier & Anvari who started slowly in dropping the first two games to Brazilian & Vargas, then rebounded to win the next three easily. They then went on to dismiss Poor & Johnstone in three. Another rookie, Ben Thorndike, was rudely introduced to the big leagues as he and Jenson were crushed by Hall & Park in three single digit games. With partner Mariani operating on a recent surgically repaired leg, Amrit Kanwal carried the burden of the match almost successfully before going down in the fifth to Willett & Smith. That effort from the latter pair took its toll in a three game surrender to Hall & Park. Dave looked tired in the final against Poirier & Anvari who showed no mercy in sending him on wind sprints throughout their four game victory.

### SOUTHWEST DRAW - West Draw quarter final losers

Remember every team has at least three matches in this event and so the entrants in this draw were really smarting from two consecutive losses. One more loss leads to the sideline. Bassett & Nabil, specializing in 15-14 games, took two more in a three game win over Brazilian & Vargas. Jenson & Thorndike lost the first game, decided to make Amrit work even harder and successfully finished the match in four. The two rookies squared off in the final. Unbelievably, out of the thirteen games Bassett & Uddin played, seven ended at 14. It was fitting that the fifth game in the final also ended

### SOUTHEAST DRAW - East Draw quarter final losers

Here dwelt the teams, winners of their first match but losers of their second, of dashed promise. Chris O'Brien has done periodic training at Train Boston regain some promise, and it worked in a four game victory over Arnold & Zide. Davidson & Leach had the same problem with Mathur & Fagan that everyone else had who let Manek get too many chances. Down 2-1 in games, they were finally able to send more balls Jamie's way, coax some errors, and pull out the match. The final was a three game afterthought as Mac & Clive sent Chris to the showers and the prospect of more training.

This year's event was especially successful with Putnam's presence, the addition of three rookie amateurs, spirited play and full galleries supplemented by a delicious dinner Friday evening and brunch Sunday. The Pro-Am has increased the interest in doubles in general and in particular, afforded all the chance to see great athletes (the professionals!) in action. The doubles league enters its fifth season which along with events such as this has spurred doubles at the University Club and Boston in general. The States, which begin in early March, will provide wide ranging competition for close to 200 players this spring, an indication that doubles continues to grow in Boston.



West Draw: Finalists - Greg Park (Ocean City, NJ) &  
David Hall; Hamed Anvari (New York) & Scott Poirier



Southeast Draw: Champions - Malcolm Davidson & Clive Leach  
(England); Finalists - Matt Domenick (Philadelphia) & Chris O'Brien



Northeast Draw: Finalists - John Frantzis & Yvain Badan  
(Switzerland); Champions - JJ Hearty & Viktor Berg (Canada)