



The 2017 Scottish Junior Open & 2018 British Junior Open...

...my personal account – Dom Wren



Our small team of Dad, Mateo Buitrago (travelling squash mate and best friend from Saskatoon, via Gatineau but originally from Colombia, who started his squash with me at Sporthèque) and I, started our trip on December 25th at the Ottawa Airport. We arrived in Scotland

on the 26th and I was as pumped as ever for this first event. After a long travel day, Mateo and I were eager to get our legs activated again, knowing that we were only 2 days away from the Scottish Junior Open. So as we were waiting for our hotel room to be available, we took a little walk around Edinburgh. After always looking the wrong way when crossing the street and walking on the wrong side of the road, we came back to find Dad asleep on the couch in the lobby of the hotel still waiting for our room, absolutely exhausted from the jet lag. By then we were expecting my brother



Calvin to arrive soon. He'd been living in France for the past 6 months and decided to come up and join us for this adventure, so it became an absolute "Boyz" trip. Before his arrival, I was a bit nervous to see him again but from the moment we hugged, it was just like old times.



My first match of the Scottish Junior Open wasn't an easy one. The U19 draw was a mixture of international players from a dozen + countries, and really I knew none of them. I was slotted in as 9/16 seed in a draw of 37 players, which was reasonable, but I was lacking results against any of these players to expect to get a better draw perhaps. To begin, I played the Scottish #6, Tino Mackay. It was a hard 4 setter and I really had to think through this player. Next, in the round of 16, I was up against the ¼

seed Englishman, Keane Appleton. He was/is a very talented shooter and could hit the ball very VERY hard. Fortunately for me, I caught him on an off day so it opened up the doors for me for a spot in the quarter finals. Once I reached the quarter finals, I was feeling really good about my game and I had plans to keep advancing. By then, all of the top 8 seeds crumbled but one, the first seed and defending champ, Michael Andrews.

My quarter final match was a 90 minute battle against a Pakistani, Uzair Rasheed. It was a real Dominic Wren grind with a touch of Calvin Wren blocking. I squeaked in by the narrowest margin in 5 sets, after being down 1-2 and matchpoints in the 4th to Uzair. It was a huge relief to win this match, and I really felt now that the tournament was opening up for me...with 1 match between now and the final. I was already doing well but wanted to do better.



That same night I played the semifinals against the Scottish #1, Chris Murphy, who previously beat the Dutch #2 seed. It wasn't the cleanest of matches but after noticing that he was getting frustrated at just 2-0 in the first game because I asked for a let, I thought to myself "Well... I guess lets won't hurt me". Chris got bit unsteady, and I kept really good pressure on him. However it all got surprising when his coach lost his cool also, and called out to Chris down on court during the third game, and shouted "just hit him"! I ended up coming out with a solid 3-0 win. By then I was playing some of the best squash of my life and gave myself every chance in the final the next day.

Just before my final match, I had no or very little pressure on my shoulders because I wasn't expected to win this match and yet I was still incredibly nervous. My opponent, Michael Andrews, the #1 seed, was ranked 3rd in England and had rolled to the final with ease. With him not dropping a game throughout the whole event and my much lower seeding, I was the complete underdog. Getting on court, seeing the massive crowd and spinning the racquet for the serve gave me an incredible rush. My game held together from the previous days and I found myself up ahead by

2 close games to 0. But Michael came back at me hard and while I clung on to keep it close, we inevitably ended up at 2-2 in games, going into a decider for the title. But in the 5th, his game fell off and I held good





leads to get to 10-7 matchpoint... and then I froze. So nervous that I couldn't hold my racquet right, and it was only instinct that kept me chasing the ball. Michael pegged me back again...I squandered 3 matchpoints, and just couldn't believe the missed chances. But today was my day...and 2 clutch rallies that I won by forcing a couple

of errors from Michael, won me this unforgettable match, 12-10 in the 5th.



Scottish Squash @Scottish_Squash · 2 min

What a way to conclude this year's JC Lindsay Scottish Junior Open, Canada's Dominic Wren (below) defeating defending champion Michael Andrews in an epic BU19 Final, 11-8, 11-9, 7-11, 10-12, 12-10. Congratulations to both players.



À l'origine en anglais



I can't actually tell you how I felt because it all happened so fast and every emotion possible rushed through my body at once. I can say that I was truly relieved. Not only did my brother, my Dad and my best mate get to be part of this with me but my close cousin, Zan Prier, from New Zealand also got to be part of this moment, by coming to the club on finals day while on vacation in the

UK. I wished that my prize giving speech could've been recorded so I could share it with you all, because it was important that mentioned to the audience of the fantastic support I received from my friends and community in Canada to help me accomplish this trip to the UK. In summary, I couldn't thank my parents and sponsors enough for the support but most importantly, I did a massive shout out to everyone who contributed to my season and I was incredibly happy to bring something back to you all.

The next morning, we had to check out of the hotel and Dad had rented a car. Steve thinking that he's a comedian had the "great" idea of pranking us by saying he got downgraded to a very small Fiat. Mateo, Cal and I were thinking hard on how we were going to fit our entire luggage in this car while Dad just stared at us. We were planning on





putting our bags that were literally bigger than the vehicle on our laps. We were mentally getting ready for a 6 hour drive like this until Dad decided to tell us that he actually got an upgrade to the great looking Peugeot SUV behind us...that was our real car for the haul! We were now on way to “beautiful”



Birmingham for the most prestigious junior title on the WSF junior circuit outside of the World’s, the British Junior Open. After a couple stops to see some family along the way, the moment we got there, Mateo and I wanted to hit the courts for a practice.



The day before the BJO started; there was an exhibition match between Declan James and Nick Matthew on the beautiful glass court that set up in the gym at the University of Birmingham. The Danger Boys managed to find a way to get a seat and watch this highly anticipated match. On the 3rd of January, the tournament started and Mateo and I were incredibly excited to finally take part of this event. Mateo got the wonderful chance of playing on the bright blue court for his first round and it was really fun to watch. I was playing on the regular court against a tough #3 American, but by then, I was really starting to feel the fatigue from the 3 previous tournaments that I played in the same month. My first round loss tumbled me into the bottom half of a 128 draw...a tough place to dig through for the following

matches. Throughout the whole event, I got to play an Egyptian, a handful of Brits and a Belgian, finishing with a 3 win, 2 loss record. The players at this tournament were of the best quality. Some are definitely future world #1s. You could just see it as they would hit the ball. Unfortunately I didn’t have the chance to match up against any of the top players there but this season isn’t over yet and I hope to see what I can do against these guys again soon.



It was an amazing facility, amazing atmosphere and some amazing squash. Birmingham was an “um”, interesting city. With a population of 1.2 million, I think we might’ve seen a total of about 10 people walking the main streets during our stay. Not much to say this place but I can tell



you that it’s not known for their tourist attractions and wonderful sights. Once the BJO was finalized, the band misfits took off to London for some more Wren family meet ups and seeing one of Dad’s old



squash mates, Michael Penman from NZ, and his lovely wife Ruth. The trip wrapped up with us leaving Calvin with his backpack, or as he would call it “his house”, at the Heathrow Airport, to carry on his tour through many countries on his way to Asia, then Oz and NZ. I find it extraordinary that a group of 4 guys who literally stayed by each other’s side 24/7 for over 2 weeks and no one got tired of one another. Except Cal, he gets annoying after the first 5 minutes but we managed to get used to it. And Dad’s jokes, well they could do with a refresh.

This was truly a special experience for me and what I could bring back from Scotland was an absolute honour. This tour is something that I truly recommend for all of the ODSA juniors that are coming through. There are costs to bare, but there are ways to make it a reality for all juniors that are keen enough to put the effort in, play good squash, and stay motivated to raise money through fundraising. It’s a massive pay off in personal experience, and hopefully another Ottawa junior can get their name on one of these trophies on the other side there. For now, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to my season and my objectives. It really means a lot to me and I like that we can share a piece together of that Scottish title, and a massive shout out to the two and only, Mum and Dad, for the non-stop support, even when times get hard. Also, a big thank you to all my sponsors Squash Outaouais, Cedale Electric, Karakal, Ionik and Compressport! I owe everyone who’s helped out at least a pint of Scottish Bitter.

Merci & Cheers,

Dom! **DOMINIC WREN**

