



2023/24 SA State Doubles Championships

at: *Prospect Pétanque Club*

29 October, 2023

<u>Open Doubles Champions:</u>	Alexi Alexi & Van Nguyen
Runners-Up:	Arwed Turon & Raja Jamaledine
Semi-Finalists:	Iskender Maski & Ali Toutounji Jean-Luc Gonnet & Dominique Pierre
Consolante Winners:	Mike Read & Peter Davies
Consolante Runners-Up:	Melissa Scott & Gavin Scott
KO Challenge Winners:	Vincent Bulone & Peter Masri
KO Challenge Runners-Up:	Bruce Lucas & Anthony Pietsch
Conviviale Winners:	Iliano Puccini & Christian Puccini

Womens Doubles Champions: **Deb Rodda & Selina Dally**

Runners-Up:	Sandy Shaw & Tina Stockley
Semi-Finalists:	Heike Whitehorn & Haejung Jang Giselle Whiteaker & Ha Nguyen
Consolante Winners:	Sue Matthews & Miriam Peik
Consolante Runners-Up:	Dee Greenslade & Sandy Tilburgs

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This year's State Doubles Championships were held at the Prospect Pétanque Club in ideal conditions. The 62 players taking part were all rewarded with some perfect Adelaide spring weather.

In the Women's competition, the two teams who went undefeated in the preliminary rounds both maintained their form after lunch and progressed to the final.

The result was a victory to Deb Rodda & Selina Dally. These two could be called the 'golden girls' of the annual SA State Doubles. This is the fourth time they have played it together as a team and they have won all four. Hard to top that! However, Selina has also won another four playing with other partners, for an awesome tally of eight championships in ten years. Similarly, Deb has another three titles to her name, with the first coming in 2007.

Congrats must also go to the runners up, Sandy Shaw & Tina Stockley. It was a well-deserved personal best result for Sandy in state level competition, whilst Tina, the 2003 champion in this event (and several times runner-up), showed she hasn't lost her touch.

The Open competition was another where the tried and true rose to the fore. Five of the players competing in the semi-finals were players who already had more than one State Doubles gong in their trophy cabinet, including at least one from ten or more years ago in each case. Three of them progressed to the final. In the end, it came down to a contest pitting last year's runners-up, Alexi Alexi & Van Nguyen, against one of the reigning champions, Raja Jamaledine, teamed with another twice former champion, Arwed Turon. The latter pair have played together before and won the title in 2014.

The final was a tense and enthralling contest. Arwed & Raja got the early ascendancy, moving to a commanding 7-0 lead. But then, a dramatic mid-game momentum shift saw Alexi & Van gain control of the cochonnet and from there they never gave it up, for a 13-7 win.

The victory gives Alexi his third State Doubles title in four years and his fourth overall. But, in contrast to all those previous winners we've talked about, this was a championship which had so far eluded Van, leaving a glaring hole in his trophy collection. That has now been rectified, and he joins the elite group to have won SA state titles in Singles, Doubles and Triples – a group that also includes Alexi and Raja.

This result also elevates the victors to an even more elite level in the record books. Van is now the concurrent reigning state champion in three different formats – Triples, Mixed Doubles and Open Doubles. The only other player to have matched that previously (twice) is Selina (in Open Trpls, Mixed Dbls and Women's Dbls). Meanwhile, Alexi also becomes a triple reigning champion in Singles, Doubles and Triples. With the singles title being the most elusive, no one has ever achieved that feat before! The only thing that could possibly better it would be to add the Mixed Doubles to the list and make it a perfect four out of four. As it happens, the next state title to be contested is the Mixed Doubles, so we shall await that result with interest.

Congratulations to all the winners, including the consolation divisions. Thanks to Brett Williams and Roland Peik for taking on the umpiring duties and to the Prospect club for doing another excellent job of hosting the day.