

1. Internationaler Squashpokal der Großregion

1ère Coupe de Squash international de la Grande Région

7 Teams competed on July 18th 2015 in Saarbrücken. After 60 matches on a hot and busy day of action the winner of the first edition was the team of Luxemburg: Congratulations to Danny Hutchins, Guillaume Plancke, Eric Pécheur, Timo Rinne and Jérémy Kocan!



The idea for the tournament was already born two years ago, but not put into action until this early summer. The Saar Squash & Racket Verband was finally aiming to establish the first international squash tournament in the Saarland for nearly two decades. Although the borders to France and Luxemburg are so close, there was only little interaction between players from our region. A fact we wanted to change with this event.

The reactions from all associations, leagues and clubs were very positive, after we asked them what they think about our plans. The result: 7 teams from 5 different regions signed up and confirmed the high interest!

Starting at 9.30 am this Saturday, all teams were ready to fight for the big challenge cup. The teams were drawn into two groups: group A with four teams and group B with three teams. The best two teams of each group advanced to the semi-final, while the other teams played the plate. A win was worth three points, a draw one point.

In group A, Luxemburg started off strong. They won 4:0 against Lorraine without dropping a single game, whereas Rheinland-Pfalz I won their encounter against Saarland II 3:1. Another 4:0, this time against the home team Saarland II, saw Luxemburg already securing their place in the semi-final. The match of Lorraine and Rheinland-Pfalz I ended in a 2:2-draw – just like the last two

matches of the group. Rheinland-Pfalz I drew with Luxemburg as well as Lorraine with Saarland II.

With two draws and one win, Rheinland-Pfalz I was the second semi-finalist of group A, while Lorraine and Saarland II were going to play for 5th place.

	LUX	RPF I	LOR	SAAR II	Points	Place
LUX		2:2	4:0	4:0	7	1
RPF I	2:2		2:2	3:1	5	2
LOR	0:4	2:2		2:2	2	3
SAAR II	0:4	1:3	2:2		1	4

Group B lacked a fourth team, but the fight for the semi-final spots was nevertheless exciting. The match between Saarland I and Rheinland-Pfalz II saw no winner: they drew 2:2 with a little advantage for the latter, as they had won one more game. The third team of the group, Alsace, could only compete with three players, but thanks to Detlef “Dede” Keffer from the organization committee, the team was complete. Although Dede managed to sneak a win against his very own home team – Saarland I – Alsace lost both matches 1:3.

	SAAR I	ALS	RPF II	Games	Points	Place
SAAR I		3:1	2:2	17:10	4	1
ALS	1:3		1:3	11:20	0	3
RPF II	2:2	3:1		16:12	4	2

While the French team advanced to the plate round, Saarland I and Rheinland-Pfalz II qualified for the semi-final. Due to the better game won/lost-ratio, Saarland I

finished the group at the top with Rheinland-Pfalz II as runner-up.

Alsace, Lorraine and Saarland II, the teams that missed the semi-final, met in another group. The result of the Lorraine vs. Saarland II match was taken to the next round, so they both only had to play Alsace, but not again each other. While Alsace had lost both matches in the preliminary round 1:3, they managed to win both their matches this time 3:1 and secured the 5th place.

Since Lorraine had won more games than Saarland II in their preliminary round match, Lorraine finished 6th and Saarland II 7th.

	LOR	SAAR II	ALS	Games	Points	Place
LOR		2:2*	1:3	13:15	1	6
SAAR II	2:2*		1:3	12:17	1	7
ALS	3:1	3:1		19:12	6	5

Luxemburg and Rheinland-Pfalz II contested the first semi-final. Although it ended 4:0 for Luxemburg, no match was decided in three games. The match also saw the only visible injury of the day (sore legs not counting!), as Rheinland-Pfalz II number four player Benjamin Göttlich received a little cut between the eyebrows after racket contact. But after a short cooling break, he could continue without a problem.

The second semi-final was a close call. Rheinland-Pfalz I number two player Kim Müller-Steinbrech was already 2:0 in the lead against Stefan Alt, before Stefan could fight back and level the score. In the fifth game, Stefan raced to victory and put the home team 2:1 in front. The match between the top players ended with another win for Saarland I: a bit surprising for the players themselves, they reached the final!

The match for the 3rd place was a clash of the Rheinland-Pfalz teams. The second team was 2:0 in front after the first two matches, before the first team equalized with two wins on position one and two. Counting games again: 7:6 in favor of Rheinland-Pfalz II. Well, we guess everybody will be curious about next year's line-ups!

The final matches between home team Saarland I and the strong Luxemburg squad were exciting until the last rallies. Timo Rinne put Luxemburg in front with a 3:0 win against Yannick Ney, but Frank Skowronek equalized with an own 3:0-win against Eric Pécheur. The next matches on position 2 – Guillaume Plancke versus Stefan Alt – and position 1 – Danny Hutchins versus Tobias Baab – were played at the same time then. As Guillaume didn't drop a game against Stefan (although it was close in the second game with 13:11) and the match of Danny and Tobias was 1:1 game score at the time Guillaume and Stefan were finished, Luxemburg was already the winner of the match. Danny and Tobias agreed to play one final game, which Tobias won 12:10.

End result

1st	Luxemburg
2nd	Saarland I
3rd	Rheinland-Pfalz II
4th	Rheinland-Pfalz I
5th	Alsace
6th	Lorraine
7th	Saarland II

Luxemburg was the well-deserved winner, having won three of their five matches and another two draws. Most efficient players of the team were Jérémy Kocan and Guillaume Plancke, who won all of their three matches respectively.

A big thank you to everybody who helped making this tournament possible: from organizing the event to providing us with all the complimentary cake, fruits, pretzels, coffee and water – the players appreciated it!

Some things that make the tournament director happy should be mentioned as well: nobody was seriously injured (come on Benni, it's just a scratch...) and the last match ended, just like it was planned, at 7.30 pm sharp (this happens never!), so the dinner could start on time. Credit goes to all players, as they made everything so easy for the tournament directors.

We hope you all enjoyed the tournament and will come again next year for the second edition – there will be one for sure and we will inform you way sooner than this year. Spread the word in your club, association, region or league, if you like!

Impressions of the day can be seen on the picture gallery (see eMail for the link).

Best regards,

Tobias

Tournament Organization
Saar Squash & Racket Verband e.V.