



Masters Day 2: Barrington is out! Martin Bronstein Reports from Sheffield

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SquashTalk News

Martin Bronstein reports from the Fifth World Masters tournament in Sheffield, England. Aug 24, 1999

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THE TWO LEGENDS DISMISSED

Hashim Khan and Jonah Barrington were both knocked out of the Fifth World Masters Squash championships in Sheffield. Two unknowns, one 57 and one 70 year old, had their moments of glory by notching up two of the greatest scalps in squash.

Adrian Wright, a 57 year old Yorkshireman who had never heard of squash until his mid-thirties, took a portly frame and a strong arm on to the court and beat Barrington who was but a shadow of his former self. His movement, as we suspected from his 15 years of problems with his left leg, was bad. But, unlike Hashim, Jonah has lost some of his touch. He was hitting loose shots when there was no pressure and Wright gratefully put them away.

STILL A BIG DRAW.

The seats at Abbeydale's show court were filling for the match 30 minutes before it was due to begin, which shows just how much of a legend Barrington is. It was on the very same court that Barrington played one of the greatest matches of his career when beating Geoff Hunt in a battle that lasted over two hours. But in order to get to that exalted level, Barrington put his body through endless torture and now he is paying the price. He lost in three in a match that lasted 30 minutes.

Despite the result there was prolonged applause from people who were just happy to see the man play. And that included me: yes, I had never seen the great Jonah Barrington in action before.

THE EGYPTIANS ARE STILL HERE

Even if Jonah had won, there was still the number one seed, Mo Khalifa, to deal with and that would have been unkind. Khalifa now lives in England and is as spritely as any 30 year old. His long white hair is in ringlets and with his constant smile he comes across as an aging male Shirley Temple. He has the magic touch of all Egyptian players and will be hard to stop in his defense of the title.

BIG BELLY, GREAT TOUCH.