



SKILLS NIGHT

Wednesday 1 March, 2023



The Winners - Three Dog Night



The Highly Coveted Hinds Trophy - Three Coins in a Fountain

Some say it isn't really Skills Night without the chap who devised the game, Johnny Whiting, just as some say it isn't really Desert Island Discs without Roy Plomley. I'm no Sue Lawley nor Lauren Laverne, but the show must go on and I now host Skills Night.

Instead of eight gramophone records, Skills Night participants try, in teams, to master eight real tennis skills. We had 12 keen competitors again this time, in four teams of three. After three skills, *The Funboy Three* (Stephen Bough, Sebastian Wood and Barry Nathan) were way out in front, having hit the winning gallery, the dedans gallery off the main wall and the grille more effectively than any other team.

But the next skill, backhand into a gallery, was best performed by *The Three Tenors* (Tod Yeomans, John Newton & Sam Walker). The fun seemed suddenly to sap from *The Funboy Three*. Some say the ghost of HD Johns was seen in the dedans gallery sledging the front-runners. Others swear that the apparition was Mark Ryan.

Soon *Three Dog Night* (Tony Friend, Andrew Hinds & Piers Vacher) scored tops on target serve, chase <2 and backhand tambour skills. *Three Coins In A Fountain* (Brandon Bradkin, Richard Boys-Stones & Fergus Boyd) put in a late surge on those disciplines, but in the end landed the coveted Hinds (Wooden Spoon) Trophy.

Going into the final round, all three of the other teams were tied on points. *Three Dog Night* prevailed in the end, playing their joker and topping the dedans direct skill with 17 hits in 2 minutes. Following the prize giving ceremony with an array of vast and "valuable" prizes, the throng enjoyed a curry meal and libations aplenty.

IAN HARRIS

(WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS BRAY & TONY FRIEND)