

## YONEX DUTCH OPEN 2015

The tournament venue is still located in Almere, approximately 30 minutes trip from Amsterdam by train. I was lucky enough to arrive at the same time as Michael who was the referee so I didn't have to worry about the transport from Schiphol airport to Almere. Since I had an earlier flight I was supposed to come back with the train (the station is in a walking distance from the hall) but due to construction work on the railway I had to improvise a bit on my way back, and found a solution of going with the intercity train that goes directly from another stop (Almere Centre) to Schiphol.

All umpires were booked into the official tournament hotel at the NH Naarden Hotel, but due to late booking (I presume) some of us had to change rooms and even hotels so I got to change three different rooms. The hotel itself was ok I was lucky to have a roommate for only three nights which is always a luxury. Organization of transport from the hotel to the hall was generally ok, but was not always in tune with umpires' duties.

The tournament itself was running smoothly, and the atmosphere was quite relaxed. We played on 4 courts (reducing to 2 for the QF and SF and one for the finals), and were accompanied with a group of professional line judges. None of the foreign umpires were involved in the Qualifying rounds but since they haven't informed me in time I was the only one arriving on Monday and having Tuesday off for sightseeing.



Almere



Naarden

For the first two days of the main draw we worked in three shifts, with 12 umpires on duty at each shift, every umpire officiating 2 shifts per day. Wednesday was especially long day, starting at 9 am and finishing around midnight.

Second member of referee's team alongside Michael was Chris Lawrence from USA and the two of them have functioned quite well as a team and their calmness and reasonableness greatly contributed to the smoothness of the tournament. International umpires were from Belgium, France, England, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Austria and Mauritius and were accompanied by 10 Dutch umpires.

I had a total of 23 duties, including 2 thrilling semi-finals, umpiring XD in which local favourites lost in a tight match 30-29, 21-18, and service judging the longest match of the tournament with Stoeva

sisters celebrating after 89 minutes. To round this up, a very good experience in the finals, umpiring the ladies doubles, the only match that included the host nation.

All in all, a very well organized tournament with good quality players.

The only criticism of the tournament itself is the lack of organized sightseeing tour or any kind of activities for the umpires which is quite unfortunate because I'm positive that every Dutch umpire when he goes abroad would love to visit and hear something about a town that has existed since the 14th century and is in the walking distance from the hotel and a new, modern city, with impressive architecture that is full of life, especially on Friday and Saturday and is situated 10 minutes from the venue.

So if you are going there do your research in advance, and do not rely on the organizers. If you ask them they will explain to you how to get wherever you want, but don't count on them to organize it. Since I was lucky to be free on Tuesday, I took a train to Amsterdam and had a nice time there followed by the dinner in the old-town of Naarden, and I even grabbed a chance to visit the city centre of Almere on Friday evening so if you need some tips send me an email.

Report by Katarina Itrić, October 2015