Last Tuesday and Wednesday, the Open was down to just a few players. No surprises, the results followed the seeding, with the exception of Matt Ronaldson and Claire Fahey making it to the semis after a walkover against Lumley and Chapman, who had concussed himself a couple days prior when he ran into a wall head first.

The first semifinal matchup was a familiar one, Rob Fahey vs. Tim Chisholm. These two have faced off more times than I can count, but most notably in three straight World Championships. Since the last one of those matches, Rob has retained his title while reducing his tournament schedule a bit. Tim, on the other hand, had all but left the game for a while and has been back long enough now to have his skills sharpened for events like this.

Tim came out very strong in the first set, while Fahey appeared to be warming up and refining his strategy. Tim took it 6/3. Once Rob was warmed up he reversed the trend, taking the second set 6/3. The third set was an epic battle that could easily have gone either way; they traded games up to 5-5. A couple loose serves from Tim allowed Rob to finish it off.

The fourth set saw Tim really apply the pressure and saw Rob’s first serve percentage drop quickly. This allowed Tim to go ahead to 5/1. During what would be the last game, Rob was down 30-love. Perhaps to conserve energy, perhaps to maintain the serve in the next set, he intentionally served four faults into the ground. Set to Chisholm and all tied up. The last set was a 45-minute contest of wills. Both players served mostly high sidewalls and almost no railroads—T&R members take note! After more than three hours, Rob took the last set 6-4. In my estimation, this grueling match was the best of the tournament so far!

The other semifinal was not as close. Cam and Steve have met on the field of tennis battle many times. But, with Cam going for the Grand Slam this year, this would be an especially tenacious match for the ginger southpaw. Cam came out so strong in the first set (6/0) that it was surprising that Steve ever took a game in the match. Cam’s effort was just so obvious. He tore around the court, giving up as few points as possible. Both of these guys are such tremendous athletes that conserving energy does not appear to occur to them.

The final two sets were similar in that Cam and Steve traded games for a bit and then Cam poured on even more energy and closed each one 6-3. The sets were quite intense, with Cam muttering to himself on court “Every point, every point.”

Next up: the doubles semifinals. The first match saw Virgona and Kieran Booth cruise to an easy victory. There were some quite long rallies interspersed with short, hard-driving points. The match was almost over in an hour.

Next up was the long-time team of Riviere and Chisholm against Ben Matthews and James Stout. It’s obvious that Tim and Cam have a blast playing together. And there is a vaudevillian element to their show—kidding with the spectators and each other. They started out strong, slipped a bit and then took the first set 6/3. They breezed through the second set 6/0. Stout and Matthews came to life a bit in the third set, pulling ahead at one point, but Cam and Tim were too much for them. They closed it out 6/4.

The singles finals are on Thursday and the doubles on Friday. Both finals should be excellent. Cam vs. Rob: will Cam avenge his World Championship loss? Cam and Tim vs. Steve and Kieran: will Cam and Tim give us a taste of what we can expect to see in World Doubles later this year?