

Knight takes the title, Spink takes the plaudits

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✘ England no. four and second seed Darius Knight was the winner of the first BATTs Super-League of the Season played at the BATTs Club in Old Harlow on Friday 29 October 2010. Darius walked away with a cheque for £ 300.00 after beating fellow Barrow Table Tennis Club British League player and Scottish no. one Gavin Rumgay in the final 11-13, 11-7, 11-8, 11-4.

The final did not finish until well after mid-night and it says a lot for the excitement that this event generated that a sizeable audience stayed to watch. "If you are going to get home at 01.00 hours on a Saturday morning then what difference does half an hour make" seemed to be the relaxed atmosphere that many people took.

There were shocks galore, and England no. seven lady Lauren Spink featured in the biggest one of all. Playing superbly she ousted Scottish international Niall Cameron, winning a spell-binding game 11-5, 12-14, 12-10, 7-11, 14-12. She then took a 2-1 lead against third seed Kazeen Adisa Adekeke and an even bigger shock appeared on the cards. Lauren eventually succumbed 9-11, 11-6, 11-9, 7-11, 4-11. Adekeke eventually missed out to Darius Knight in a close semi-final 12-14, 8-11, 9-11 : further proof if any was needed, of just how well Lauren had played.

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The story of the top half of the draw was the ridiculous ease with which Gareth Herbert had cruised through to the semi-final. He wasn't stretched in the slightest, powering his way past Zayd Mauthoor (11-2, 11-4, 11-3), Martin Kubrt (11-2, 11-5, 11-8) and Tommy Cutler (11-5, 11-3, 11-5). Here he met Gavin Rumgay who had looked far less comfortable after he had been extended by John Dennison (11-9, 9-11, 11-7, 11-6), Costas Papantoniou (11-8, 11-8, 11-9) and Neil Charles (7-11, 15-13, 11-4, 13-11). Surely, this was going to be Gareth's day ?. Gavin was having none of it – returning the dreaded Herbert serves with confidence, conviction and panache he edged home 11-9, 11-9, 14-12.

Other results that caught the eye included a fine four game win for Neil Charles over Emran Hussain (11-7, 12-10, 8-11, 11-2) as well as a hard fought success for Tommy Cutler against Zak Zilesnick (14-12, 12-10, 12-10). Anthony Kent impressed by beating the elder statesman of the event – Paul Beck (6-11, 11-4, 6-11, 11-6, 11-8) whilst Zayd Mauthoor did well to beat the higher ranked Didier Ngoma 6-11, 11-8, 17-15, 11-9.

Niall Cameron's loss to Lauren Spink pitted him against Eli Baraty and Niall again missed out by an agonising two points in the fifth game. Eli won a nail-biting encounter 11-7, 8-11, 8-11, 11-9, 14-12. Dave Langham excelled by beating Didier Ngoma 9-11, 11-6, 4-11, 11-4, 11-8, a truly outstanding win in anyone's book.

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As always in this type of event there are a few near misses which make fascinating reading as well. Tom Hughes' games twice fell into this category. Mark Richard Smith (the ETTA Ranking List has him recorded this way just in case you are wondering !) edged Tom out 11-8, 12-10, 11-13, 9-11, 11-9 and Tom came equally close against Christopher Bush before losing 11-6, 6-11, 13-11, 9-11, 11-13. There was never much in it between Martin Kubrt and Costas Papantoniou and Costas eventually scraped home 11-6, 4-11, 12-10, 7-11, 11-9.

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