



Cippenham Vets Open: Gehlot outguns team-mate

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Another full house of 48 players contested the ninth Cippenham Super 6 Veterans' Open tournament on Sunday. Perennial winner for the last three years, the top seeded Martin Gunn, however, had to settle for the runner-up award when beaten by his Cookham Social team-mate from the High Wycombe League, Hari Gehlot.

However, this also counts as a home win for Cippenham as Gehlot represents the host Slough club in the Veterans' British League. The final was a see-saw affair with Gehlot taking the first game only for Gunn to fire back with the next two.

Both Gehlot and Gunn are exciting attacking players but very different in style. The left-handed Gehlot uses a big looping fast forehand whereas Gunn, one of a rare breed of players who favours the old-style hard rubber bat, uses his superb technique to control the ball and unleash hard, fast, bullet-like shots.



Finalists Hari Gehlot and Martin Gunn

Of the two finalists, Gunn made lightest work of his progress to the final. Both won all five of their group matches, Gunn dropping just a solitary leg to Vadym Krevs, while Gehlot was made to fight all the way through five games with Thamal Udamulla.

Gehlot also needed five games to defeat the long-range topspin defence of Kevin Nicholls in the semi-final and was extended to four games by Paul Martindill before a 3-0 quarter-final win over David Page.

Samson Bekele, who also plays for Cippenham in the Veterans' British League, had a good event, having finished second in his group, he then eliminated fifth seed Steve Davis to reach the quarter-final. There he took a game off Gunn, who went on to beat third seed Phil Smith in the semi-final, also 3-1.

It was refreshing that the field included six female players and all acquitted themselves well. Cippenham's Denise Weller had good wins over Jonathon Chernett and Roger Harris in the preliminary round group and then won two more games in the consolation knock-out before losing narrowly to John Hope.

Diane McLellan went one better, reaching the semi-final of the consolation and this included wins over Wim Faassen and reigning European over-80 champion Ramesh Bhalla. Celia Hooker beat Steve Leven in the group stage and then also progressed to the quarters of the consolation, while Lynne Trussell was the one woman to make it through to the main event after a great win over Gerry Hawkins.

Vadym Krevs was the eventual winner of the consolation, defeating the impressive Minesh Pitamber in the final.

The tournament was organised by Graham Trimming and refereed by Wendy Porter.



Consolation finalists Vadym Krevs and Minesh Pitamber

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