



Chelmsford & District: Whiteley takes top title

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The preliminary weekend of the M&G Investments Chelmsford & District Table Tennis Championships played at Hylands School produced no shortage of shocks as well as some superb play.

With top seed Duncan Taylor having to withdraw from the Men's Singles through injury the top quarter took on a very open look and it was 67 years old Steve Whiteley who took full advantage.

Men's Singles champion in 1974 and 1975 and absent from the Sport for 31 years, Whiteley has been playing again for five years. He produced the finest moment of his comeback, beating Peter Barrett 3-0 (11-3, 14-12, 11-8) and then in what was a real shock the seeded Paul Davison 3-2 (2-11, 11-9, 17-15, 5-11, 11-8). Davison had also impressed by defeating Scott Dowsett 3-0 (11-8, 11-9, 11-8).

In his quarter-final, Whiteley faced Robert Shrimpton who had ousted Ciaran Whelan 3-2 (11-9, 8-11, 8-11, 11-9, 11-5). A thrilling match went to the wire and it was Whiteley who emerged victorious 3-2 (5-11, 6-11, 12-10, 11-3, 14-12).

Whiteley will meet Wale Bada in his semi-final on finals Night an amazing 44 years after he last won the title.

Lee McHugh, a shock winner over Paul Lucas in his group ousted Gary Cattermole 3-0 (11-8, 12-10, 11-8) and then brilliantly Daniel Young 3-2 (7-11, 11-8, 11-4, 10-12, 11-6). McHugh pushed Bada to the brink in his quarter-final before Bada came through a nail biting fourth end and a tense decider. Bada won 3-2 (11-6, 8-11, 8-11, 15-13, 11-7).

In the third quarter it was David Cole who prevailed. Eyebrows were raised that the four times champion wasn't seeded in the top eight and he seemingly had a point to prove. Cole beat David Gatheral 11-6, 11-7, 11-6 and then with a superb display he defeated last year's runner-up Trevor Lloyd 11-3, 11-6, 11-7 – the most powerful showing of the weekend.

Cole had to battle hard to defeat top notch newcomer 19-year-old Liam Squirrell 3-1 (11-7, 10-12, 11-8, 14-12) in the quarter final. Squirrell had made his mark by beating Charles Sweeny 3-1 (11-7, 12-14, 11-5, 11-2) and Reece

Seddon 3-1 (11-8, 11-7, 7-11, 11-7).

Cole will face Ugur Saglik – many people's favourite to win the title. Saglik had a tough examination in the second round. Paul Lucas – a victim of not winning his group had to face a top seed much earlier than expected. Saglik was pushed hard – very hard before he won 3-0 (13-11, 13-11, 15-13) and in his quarter-final Saglik turned on the style by beating Gary Young 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 11-8). Young had also impressed by defeating Casey Cross 3-2 (5-11, 11-8, 11-8, 9-11, 11-9) and Wudong Liu (11-8, 11-8, 11-7).

Other results of interest had included a fine Group win for Daniel Young who beat Casey Cross (3-1), Simon Jarvis (3-1) and Daniel Anderson (3-0). Victor Chan scored a superb 3-1 (11-9, 11-5, 10-12, 13-11) victory over Paul Davison but it was Paul who went through as group winner as Victor lost 3-1 (8-11, 9-11, 11-6, 8-11) to Gareth Joice. Wudong Liu also excelled and he defeated Scott Dowsett 3-1 (11-6, 14-12, 6-11, 11-8).

The new M&G Investments Chelmsford Ladies Singles Champion is Tulay Dundar. Tulay fought her way through to the final with wins over Nyree Marsh (11-2, 11-7, 11-5) and Lin Roff (11-6, 11-7, 14-12).

In the top half of the draw top seed Julie Johnson defeated the improving Sarah Austin 3-1 (12-10, 10-12, 11-9, 11-7) but she met her match in the semi-final against old rival Jan Fuller who prevailed in five hard fought ends (11-8, 7-11, 8-11, 11-7, 11-7).

Tulay – a newcomer to the League had not been aware that the League hold a separate finals Night. Jan therefore had every right to claim the title by default but with great magnanimity she agreed to play the final. However it was Tulay who dominated and she ran out a comfortable 3-0 (11-6, 11-0, 11-6) winner.

The Men's Doubles final will be between David Cole & Gary Cattermole and Liam Squirrell & Reece Seddon. Cole & Cattermole dominated the top half of the draw with wins over Simon Jarvis & Robert Shrimpton 3-0 (11-6, 11-9, 11-3) and then the seeded Trevor Lloyd & Casey Cross 3-1 (11-6, 11-3, 5-11, 11-9) and they beat Paul Davison & Steve Kerns 3-0 (11-7, 11-8, 11-8) in the semi-final.

In the bottom half Liam Squirrell & Reece Seddon impressed by beating the third seeded Paul Lucas & Scott Dowsett 3-1 (7-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-8) and they beat the second seeds Ugur Saglik & Wale Bada 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-7) with a top-class display in the semi-final.

Both pairs look well drilled and David Cole will be bidding to win the title with a fifth different partner having previously been successful with Rik James (seven times), brother Martin, Mathew Staines and John Holland.

Jan Fuller & Julie Johnson won the Ladies' Double title for the third year in a row but they were pushed to the brink. The Press Officer had suggested that they were in a class of their own. Clearly Lin Roff & Sarah Austin hadn't read the script. With the scores poised at 2-2 Lin & Sarah surged ahead to 8-1 in the fifth end. Surely there was going to be a new pairing on the trophy? The answer was no and it was Julie & Jan who levelled at 9-9 and they finally won a fantastic match 3-2 (3-11, 11-5, 7-11, 11-6, 13-11).

The Mixed Doubles saw a lot of reshuffling of partners and the final will be between Gary Young & Lin Roff and Wal Bada and Jan Fuller. Jan & Wal beat Scott Dowsett & Julie Johnson 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 11-9) in their semi-final although they had been pushed to the brink a round earlier.

Wudong Liu and Nyree Marsh held a match point in the fourth end before they finally succumbed 3-2 (11-9, 1-11, 11-9, 10-12, 5-11). Gary Young & Lin Roff booked their Finals Night appearance by beating Steve Whiteley & Dawn Baldry 3-1 (11-8, 8-11, 11-9, 11-6).

The Under-21 Singles final will be between the favourite Ugur Saglik and Daniel Young. Considering how well Liam Squirrel played in the Men's events you have got to credit Young for beating him here and Daniel came through in four ends 11-7, 6-11, 11-8, 11-9 – a superb performance. This event was marred by walkovers and for many players it proved to be one event too many.

The Veterans' events were dominated by Trevor Lloyd. His real test came in the Over-40s Singles where he battled his way to the final with wins over Robin Armstrong (9-11, 11-4, 11-5, 11-8), Eric Green (11-5, 13-11, 11-9) and, in a furious and tense semi-final, Gary Young 3-2 (12-10, 9-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-7). Young had beaten David Cole 11-8,

11-5, 5-11, 5-11, 11-5 after trailing 5-2 in the fifth end at the change of ends.

Lloyd will face Wal Bada in the final. The hard hitting Bada had beaten Peter Barrett 3-1 (3-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-9) and then Paul Davison 3-2 (5-11, 12-10, 11-7, 10-12, 11-7) and he saw off Tulay Dundar 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 11-7) in his semi-final. Tulay beat Victor Chan 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-6) and Wudong Liu 3-1 (2-11, 12-10, 11-5, 11-4) to fight her way through to the last four.

The 2019 Veterans Doubles winners are Wal Bada & Trevor Lloyd. They had to pull out all the stops to beat David Cole & Gary Cattermole 3-2 (11-3, 8-11, 11-5, 11-13, 12-10) in a thrilling semi-final and they defeated Gary Young & Paul Davison 3-0 (11-6, 9-11, 11-8, 11-7) in the final.

Trevor Lloyd annexed the Over-50s Singles without dropping an end. He raced to wins over David Parker (11-6, 11-3, 11-4), Gareth Joice (11-2, 11-8, 11-9), Julie Johnson (11-5, 11-3, 11-2) and, in the final, Steve Whiteley 11-5, 11-5, 11-6.

Whiteley had to battle hard to see off Colin Napper 3-1 (12-10, 11-4, 10-12, 12-10), Steve Kerns 3-2 (6-11, 10-12, 11-6, 11-8, 11-7) and Eric Green 3-1 (9-11, 11-3, 11-5, 13-11).

There was another Trevor Lloyd master-class in the Over-60s Singles and Lloyd again won the event with a series of straight set wins. He beat Lin Roff (11-5, 11-1, 11-5), Steve Whiteley (11-9, 11-6, 11-8) and, in the final, Eric Green (11-2, 11-6, 11-9).

Daniel Young dominated the Junior events as expected. In the Junior Boys he fought his way to the final without dropping an end with 3-0 wins over Joachin Mapes, Ben Porter and Sam Mortimer-Ford and he beat Thomas Page 11-6, 11-8, 12-10 in the final.

Page saw off the challenges of Jensen Davis (11-7, 11-4, 11-7), Luca Bailey (11-6, 11-9, 11-8) and Harry Buckle (11-7, 11-7, 10-12, 11-5) to battle his way to the final.

It was Daniel Young who emerged victorious in the Under-16 Singles as well. He beat Saul Chivers 3-0 (11-3, 11-2, 11-4) and then Ben Porter after a real struggle 3-1 (11-4, 7-11, 11-5, 15-13) and Thomas Page 3-0 (11-5, 11-9, 11-4). He beat James Donald 3-0 (11-8, 11-6, 11-6) in the final.

Donald booked his final appearance only after a last gasp win over Luca Bailey 3-2 (10-12, 11-8, 14-12, 4-11, 11-9) in a really hard fought semi-final. Donald had battled his way past Harry Buckle 3-2 (13-15, 11-4, 11-6, 3-11, 11-5) a round earlier.

James Donald impressed again in the Under-14 Singles. From the No 3 seeded spot he beat Aidan Turner (3-0), Cleon Fernandez (3-0) and second seed Ben Porter 3-1 (11-7, 6-11, 11-5, 14-12) and in the final he secured victory with a widely fluctuating 3-2 (8-11, 11-3, 11-6, 6-11, 11-1) win over Ewan Hynd.

In his semi-final, Hynd beat Sudheep Kamma 3-0 (11-3, 15-13, 11-6) having previously enjoyed 3-0 wins over Ben Chivers and Joshua Bickles.

Nyree Marsh is the 2019 Junior Girls' Singles champion. She beat Annabel Sweeney 3-2 (11-7, 11-9, 3-11, 6-11, 11-8) in the final having beaten Melinda Abraham Victor 3-0 (11-4, 11-3, 11-9) a round earlier. Annabel defeated Aleshia Ellis-Austin 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 12-10) at the same stage.

The Daniel Young & Aidan Noguchi pairing walked tall in the Junior Doubles and they powered their way to the title with 3-0 wins over Nyree Marsh & James Donald (11-8, 11-8, 11-7), Luca Bailey & Vineeth Kamma (11-4, 11-7, 11-6) and, in the final, Ben Porter & Sam Mortimer-Ford (11-2, 11-3, 11-7).

Porter & Mortimer-Ford came through their semi-final 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-4) against Joachin Mapes & Saul Chivers. In the closest match of the event Mapes & Chivers had seen off Noah Sage & Oliver Wylie 3-2 (8-11, 11-6, 11-3, 6-11, 11-9).

The Junior Handicap Singles final was played at the weekend although the earlier rounds had been played at Melbourne Stadium a week earlier. It was James Donald who emerged victorious 3-2 (11-8, 7-11, 12-10, 9-11, 11-8)

against Noah Sage in a final which was played off scratch.

Sage battled his way through to the final with wins over Isabella Borgia, Harry Buckle, Annabel Sweeney and Alan Jiang, whilst Donald left Dion Fernandes, Melinda Abraham-Victor, Sam Mortimer-Ford and Cleon Fernandes trailing in his march to the final.

Sunday's play was dominated by the Divisional Singles and it was top seed Ciaran Whelan who won the Division Two title. He was tested by Dan Anderson where he won 3-1 (11-5, 5-11, 11-4, 12-10) and the much improved Charles Yeung where he prevailed 3-2 (7-11, 11-7, 7-11, 11-9, 11-8). He shut down Trevor Collin 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-5) in the final.

Collin had excelled to win three tough five-enders, beating Steve Scholz (7-11, 11-6, 11-7, 8-11, 11-4) and Wiktor Delimat (2-11, 11-7, 11-5, 9-11, 11-9) and finally Neil Freeman (8-11, 11-8, 8-11, 11-6, 11-6).

Trevor Collin was favourite for the Division Three singles and he reached the semi-final stage where he met his match in Nick Duce who beat him 3-1 (11-4, 4-11, 11-7, 11-8). It was Thomas Page, the runner-up in the Junior Boys' Singles on the Saturday, who prevailed in the final. Page ran out a 3-1 (11-9, 11-5, 8-11, 11-7) winner over Duce having defeated Mervyn Perriman 3-1 (11-8, 5-11, 12-10, 11-7) in the penultimate round.

Nick Duce was the strong favourite for the Division Four singles title and he didn't disappoint. He cruised to the title with 3-0 wins over Adi Kamma (11-5, 11-7, 11-2), Andy Swales (11-5, 11-7, 11-6) and Mark Glenister (11-4, 11-6, 11-4). Glenister booked his final appearance by beating Denis Crapnell in three (11-7, 13-11, 11-7).

Mark Glenister also made it through to the final of the Division Five singles but this time he met his match in Denis Crapnell. It was Crapnell who dominated and he won 3-1 (11-9, 11-8, 6-11, 11-6). Crapnell beat Jamie Dowsett 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 11-5) in his semi-final whilst Glenister ousted Andy Swales 3-1 (11-5, 8-11, 11-6, 11-9).

The Handicap Singles was last won by a first Division player in 1997 – Steve Kerns. Liam Squirrell set about putting that record right with relish and he powered his past Simon Jarvis (21-13, 21-16), Steve Whiteley (21-13, 21-9), Vineeth Kamma (22-20, 21-17) and Ciaran Whelan (21-15, 18-21, 21-15).

He met Luca Bailey in the final after Bailey had battled his way past Charles Yeung (21-14, 22-20), Thomas Page (15-21, 28-26, 21-18), Mark Glenister (21-8, 21-18), Gareth Joice (21-14, 16-2, 21-

10) and Neil Freeman (21-13, 21-12).

The final was a thriller, with Squirrel easing through the first end 21-12. He looked in control and at 20-16 in the second end everyone assumed that it was his title for the taking. Bailey had other ideas and playing superbly he matched Squirrell's power and guile with his own class. He amazingly edged the game 23-21 and he matched his opponent all the way in a brilliant deciding leg before succumbing 26-24 – a first Chelmsford title for Liam Squirell.

Luca Bailey didn't leave empty handed and paired with Vineeth Kamma they turned in a sparkling display to win the Handicap Doubles. Their final opponents – Wiktor Delimat & Dan Anderson – put up a fine showing but despite taking the match to a third end their younger opponents showed no sign of being denied. Luc and Vineeth powered to a 11-7, 18-21, 21-8 victory.

The M&G Investments Chelmsford League finals Night takes place at Old Chelmsfordians Association, Lawford Lane on Monday 11 February 2019 at 7.30pm. Admission is free.

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