



Cippenham titles for Kaye and Gehlot

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Cippenham Table Tennis Club held another of its annual open tournaments on Saturday. Styled as the Cippenham Five by Two Senior and Veterans' 1-Star Open, the day included two separate events: veterans in the morning and open age group in the afternoon.

Surprisingly, the veterans' event was stronger in standard than the latter competition and this was the event that provided most of the joy for Cippenham players. In fact, three of the four semi-finalists were current or former Cippenham players.

The Veterans' Singles commenced with the 32 competitors arranged into six groups with the top three in each group progressing to the championship knock-out event and the remainder taking their place in the consolation event. The top three seeds all made it through in first place in their groups with the top two, Hari Gehlot and Phil Smith, winning all their matches. Third seed Mark Banks, however, lost his opening match to Sanjiv Malhotra but Malhotra lost to both Paul Martindill and Alan Papier and so Banks won the group anyway. Fourth seed Kevin Nicholls emerged second in his group, having been defeated by former champion Steve Davis. The other group winners were Dutchman Olawale Bada and Steve Buck.

Two current members of the Cippenham first team in the Veterans' British League, Gehlot and Banks, then carved their way through the draw and met each other in the semi-final. In the round of 16, Gehlot beat Paul Martindill while Banks had a comfortable win over David Page. Both faced greater tests in their quarter-final matches with Gehlot beating Bada 3-1 while Banks had a narrow five-game win over master topspin defender from Devon, Kevin Nicholls. Gehlot was the winner of the all-Cippenham semi-final encounter 3-1.

In the bottom half of the draw second seed Phil Smith made it through to the semi beating tournament organiser Paul Baker and then Alex Aston. In the other quarter, group winner Steve Davis was well beaten by Dean Rose, one of the players of the tournament, but he then lost out to Steve Buck in the quarters. Buck came from behind to beat Smith over five games in their semi-final.

The final was then between current Cippenham player Hari Gehlot and former Cippenham player Steve Buck.

Buck had performed remarkably well, having had a plaster cast on his playing hand, following a wrist fracture, removed just two days earlier. However, Gehlot, the higher ranked player, proved to be just too consistent and ran out a winner in four games.

Another Cippenham member, Graham Trimming, reached the final of the consolation event but was beaten over four games by Sanjiv Malhotra.

The senior event in the afternoon was numerically larger with 41 contestants but, with the top three veterans' event seeds not playing, was weaker in standard. Indeed, the second seed was Steve Davis, who played in the morning event unseeded. Davis, though, lost to Vadym Krevs in his preliminary round group. Group winners were top seed David Ramsey, Krevs, David Page, Kevin Nicholls, Sammy Kaye, Olawale Bada, Damien Gray and Alex Aston.

Second seed Davis, having been displaced in his opening group, then found himself pitched against top seed David Ramsey in the round of 16. It was Ramsey who prevailed and this set him up for a quarter-final match with Sammy Kaye which Kaye won 3-1. Kevin Nicholls, having beaten brothers Ollie and Damien Gray, was Kaye's opponent in the semi-final but the younger man won 3-0.

In the bottom half, Dean Rose was tearing up the draw, beating Alex Aston and Vadym Krevs to set up a semi-final meeting with Olawale Bada, victor over Thamal Udumulla and David Page. That signalled the end of the road, however, for Rose and Bada took his place in the final but, despite taking the first game, ultimately could not quite match the power and consistency of Sammy Kaye who took the winner's trophy 3-1.

The consolation event was won by Patrick Garlick.



Senior Singles: Olawale Bada (left) and Sammy Kaye

The tournament was organised by Paul Baker and refereed by Sue Hayes.

Results:

	Winner:	Runner-up:
Senior Singles	Sammy Kaye (Middx)	Olawale Bada (Netherlands)
Senior Consolation	Patrick Garlick (Hants)	Minesh Pitamber (Beds)
Veterans' Singles	Hari Gehlot (Berks)	Steve Buck (Bucks)
Veterans' Consolation	Sanjiv Malhotra (Essex)	Graham Trimming (Bucks)

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