



Rayner and Baldwin are just champion!

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It was a case of may the fourths be with you as both Cadet Boys' and Girls' Singles titles were won by the fourth seeds on the second day of the PG Mutual Cadet & Junior Nationals.

Thomas Rayner and Mari Baldwin were the champions, seizing the initiative in their finals to bring up the biggest achievements of their careers to date.

To continue the theme, fourth seeds Erin Green & Helena Dicken took the Cadet Girls' Doubles title – Green completed a triumvirate of national champions in her family as her younger twin siblings Connor and Anna had won titles in previous years.

The only competition won by the top seeds was the Cadet Boys' Doubles, in which Boonyaprapa & Rhys Davies claimed the trophy.

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Boys' Singles



Thomas Rayner

Fourth seed Thomas Rayner imposed his game on top seed Naphong Boonyaprapa to win the title.

Rayner looked determined from the outset and although Boonyaprapa fought hard, the Ormesby player ultimately closed out a 4-2 (11-9, 12-10, 5-11, 11-9, 3-11, 11-7) victory.

The champion's verdict was: "I'm really happy because all the effort and training I've done has paid off – all the stuff I'm doing, all the hours I'm doing, is worth it. I'll keep working hard.

"I wanted to play my game and not let him play his, to get in first and move him around, and also to keep my head and if I went down, to reset."

Boonyaprapa overcame National Cup champion and his doubles partner Rhys Davies in four straight in his semi-final (6, 7, 10, 13), while Rayner battled past second seed Louis Price in six, game five the key one in a 4-2 (11-7, 7-11, 10-12, 11-9, 12-10, 11-5) victory.

All the eight seeded players made it through to the quarter-finals, and only three of them dropped any games.

One of them was yesterday's Junior singles hero Ben Piggott, who looked to be coasting at 3-0 up against Bertie Kelly, only for his opponent to battle back in the next two. Sixth seed Piggott eventually closed it out 4-2 (11-3, 11-7, 11-6, 4-11, 11-13, 11-6).

Seventh seed Jie Fu Tham also ran into a doughty opponent in the shape of Joshua Bruce, who won two deuce games before going down 4-2 (11-2, 11-9, 10-12, 11-7, 13-15, 11-8).

Second seed Price needed five against Henry Maric-Murray, who was stubborn in the face of a potential 4-0 defeat, winning the fourth 15-13.

The top four seeds then advanced to the semis, though only Rayner managed it in four straight, against Connor Green (3, 12, 4, 9).

It was six games all round in the other three ties. Top seed Boonyaprapa withstood a Piggott comeback to

prevail 11-9, 11-8, 12-10, 13-15, 5-11, 11-7) and Davies shook off Tham 11-6, 11-9, 7-11, 11-9, 15-17, 11-7).

The battle of the left-handers saw Price come through against Felix Thomis 7-11, 11-3, 11-9, 6-11, 11-2, 13-11.

Group stage

Two top-ranked players came a cropper in the groups, and it was Group 8 which featured the closest collection of matches.

Second-ranked Toby Ellis started by defeating the player below him, Joseph Cooper, in a match which went the distance. The final scoreline was 3-2 (6-11, 11-7, 11-8, 6-11, 11-3) in Ellis' favour.

Cooper then defeated top-ranked James Hamblett in an even closer five-setter, sealing it 11-5, 7-11, 13-11, 6-11, 12-10. Ellis' 3-1 (5-11, 11-7, 12-10, 11-6) victory over Hamblett then clinched top spot and a place in the main draw.

The other surprise group winner was in Group 6, won by Henry Maric-Murray, who took out the top-ranked Che Goulbourne 3-1 (11-8, 8-11, 11-6, 11-1).

Adam Dennison beat Harry Yip in three close games (9, 9, 10) to get above him into second place in Group 7, which was won by Ollie Maric-Murray. There was a similar story in Group 1, where No 3 Barney Mindlin defeated No 2 Nathaniel Saunders (9, 10, 9) – Joshua Bruce won the group as expected.

In Group 4, Jake Grayson finished second behind Oliver Cornish thanks to a 3-2 (17-15, 7-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-5) victory over Daniel Watkinson – who also lost 3-2 (13-15, 11-2, 8-11, 11-8, 13-11) to Cornish.

In Group 3, Bertie Kelly was the expected winner but Toby Crawcour beat Nicholas Miller 3-1 (5-11, 11-8, 13-11, 11-5) to take second place.

And in Group 5, top-ranked Jakub Piwowar had to hold off Dylan Tynan to confirm top spot, prevailing 3-2 (11-9, 11-9, 7-11, 9-11, 11-7). Tynan's victory over Todd Stanmore saw him climb from third to second in the group.

Consolation



Jake Grayson

Jake Grayson won gold with a remarkable victory over James Hamblett, who three times clawed back after Grayson pulled ahead.

The fourth time Grayson took the lead was, of course, decisive and the final score shows what a back-and-forth tussle it was – 4-3 (11-8, 7-11, 11-8, 10-12, 11-6, 7-11, 11-7).

14-year-old Grayson said: "It feels good. I didn't come in with any expectations for the tournament. When I ended up in the consolation event, I still thought it was a good challenge and I'm pleased with myself for winning it."

Hamblett had some battles on his way to the final too, holding off a Toby Crawcour comeback in the first round to win in seven and then himself coming from 3-1 down to defeat Daniel Watkinson in the quarter-finals. His semi-final was a more routine five-setter against Jarvis Lee.

Grayson's path to the final was smoother, culminating in a five-game victory over Barney Mindlin

Also noteworthy was Lee's fightback from 3-0 down to beat Todd Stanmore 11-9 in the decider in the first round.

Girls' Singles



Mari Baldwin

Fourth seed Mari Baldwin came from behind to defeat second seed Anaya Patel in the final to make up for missing out in the doubles earlier in the day.

Patel would have been favourite after the early exit of top seed Ruby Chan, but Baldwin was having none of that as she triumphed 4-2 (11-9, 7-11, 3-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-8).

Baldwin said: "The draw didn't go to plan – it shows what can happen on the day – and I just really wanted it, I guess. It's my biggest achievement so far."

Patel had ended the challenge of third seed Millie Rogove in the semi-finals, twice seeing her opponent level the match before pulling clear and ultimately showing her class in an 11-0 sixth game. The final reckoning was 4-2 (11-8, 5-11, 11-7, 10-12, 11-9, 11-0).

Baldwin's semi was a 4-1 (11-8, 7-11, 11-8, 13-11, 11-5) success against sixth seed Amy Marriott, who had blown the competition wide open by sinking top seed Ruby Chan in the quarter-finals – and how! It was four straight as Marriott never allowed Chan to lay a glove on her, winning it 8, 9, 3, 8.

Seeds 2, 3, and 4 went safely through – it was also four straight for Patel against Lauren Loosemore and for Rogove against Samadhi Udamulla, while Baldwin beat Erin Green in five.

Earlier, the girls' competition had almost mirrored the boys' in terms of all the seeds going through to the quarter-finals. Almost but not quite as, in the last match to finish, Loosemore knocked out seventh seed Kirsty Maull.

It was a fine comeback too as Loosemore recovered from 3-1 down and took the decider 12-10 on her third match point. The final scoreline was 4-3 (8-11, 11-4, 10-12, 5-11, 11-9, 11-8, 12-10).

Sixth seed Marriott looked as if she might head out of the competition as well when she trailed Amy Mold 2-0, but Marriott turned it around to win 4-2 (6-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-4, 11-3, 11-9).

The only other seed to be pushed beyond five games was Baldwin, the fourth-ranked player twice trailing Rebecca Savage but finding her game in time to win it 4-2 (9-11, 11-6, 9-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-7).

Group stage

Three top seeds made an earlier than expected exit, with Anna Green in Group 2 on the wrong end of two 3-2 scorelines.

Her defeat to third-ranked Amy Mold, who came from 2-0 down to win 3-2 (6-11, 10-12, 11-8, 11-4, 11-9) ensured Mold, who had earlier beaten Eve Witterick 3-0 (8, 6, 8) took top spot. Witterick then claimed second spot with a 3-2 (2-11, 11-7, 13-11, 6-11, 11-6) win over Green.

In Group 6, top-ranked Megan Jones was defeated by both third-ranked Isobel McGerty and second-ranked Rebecca Savage – it was 3-2 (6-11, 11-3, 11-8, 8-11, 11-9) to the former and 3-1 (11-8, 6-11, 11-9, 12-10) to the latter. That meant that Savage's 3-0 (3, 4, 8) victory over McGerty in the group's first match turned out to be the key result as Savage went through.

Angharad Beman was an unexpected winner of Group 8 as she defeated higher-ranked Niamh Scarborough 3-0 (14-12, 11-6, 11-5).

Group 3 went to countback before it ended according to ranking order. Top-ranked player Amillia Baker was defeated 3-2 (11-9, 8-11, 7-11, 11-7, 12-10) by third-ranked Abbie Hurley, who had earlier lost 3-0 (8, 11, 4) to second-ranked Anya Milne. It meant Baker needed to beat Milne in order to win the group, which she did 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 11-4).

As expected, Sophie Rinnhofer won Group 8, but Connie Dumelow climbed above Stefania Popa in runners-up spot thanks to a 3-0 (8, 3, 6) victory.

Lauren Loosemore took Group 1 but had to be alert against the group's No 2 Isabelle Lacorte, who she beat 3-1 (11-5, 12-10, 12-14, 11-6). It was similar in Group 4, where Scarlett O'Neil rubber-stamped top spot by defeating Lucy Vernon 3-1 (11-3, 12-10, 11-13, 12-10).

Group 5 also finished in the expected order but only after the second-ranked player Ella Barnard overcame third-ranked Saskia Key 3-2 (11-0, 7-11, 6-11, 11-8, 11-6).

Consolation



Megan Jones

Megan Jones took the consolation gold with a 4-2 (11-13, 12-10, 11-5, 5-11, 11-7, 11-7) victory over Anna Green.

Jones, 13, said: "I didn't play very well in the groups but I got better as the day went on. When I ended up in the consolation event I didn't just want to play for no reason, so I did want to win it."

Green defeated Lucy Vernon in the semis, finally clinching it 13-11 in the sixth, while Jones' clash with Connie Dumelow was done in four straight.

Boys' Doubles



Naphong Boonyaprapa & Rhys Davies

Top seeds Naphong Boonyaprapa & Rhys Davies justified their billing as they took the title in a tight final against Thomas Rayner & Ben Piggott.

Twice the Ormesby duo led, but could not convert it into victory as Boonyaprapa & Davies clinched it 3-2 (5-11, 11-2, 9-11, 12-10, 11-9).

Davies said: "I was very happy at the end and I thought we played quite a clever game," while Boonyaprapa added: "We kept our cool even in the hardest fight."

Rayner & Piggott beat second seeds Louis Price & Connor Green in the semi-finals, recovering from losing the first game to record a 3-1 (11-13, 11-8, 11-8, 11-6) victory.

The top seeds got through at the expense of Joshua Bruce & Olly Cornish and again it was in four (11-5, 8-11, 11-5, 11-9).

Fourth seeds Jie Fu Tham & Felix Thomis exited in the first round, despite appearing to have staved off a crisis when they fought back from 2-0 down to level the match against Harry Yip & Todd Stanmore. But it was the lower-ranked pair who took the decider to complete a 3-2 (11-8, 12-10, 5-11, 4-11, 11-7) victory.

One comeback which did stick was that by Bertie Kelly & Jakub Piwowar, who defeated Che Goulbourne & Jarvis Lee 3-2 (3-11, 9-11, 11-7, 11-2, 11-6) to set up a quarter-final against the top seeds.

It was the top seeds who prevailed in three straight, while Yip & Stanmore went out in four to Bruce & Cornish.

The other two quarters saw second seeds Price & Green go through in four against Joseph Hunter & James Hamblett and a three-straight win for Rayner & Piggott over the Maric-Murray brothers, Henry & Ollie.

Girls' Doubles



Erin Green & Helena Dicken

It was third time's a charm for Erin Green & Helena Dicken, who missed match points in both the third and fourth games before finally clinching the title in the fifth.

After Green & Dicken won the first two games, opponents Mari Baldwin & Scarlett O'Neil fought back from 10-8 down in both the next two games to level the score. When it reached 10-8 in the fifth, it was a case of déjà vu for the scoreline but not the outcome as the fourth seeds finally got over the line 3-2 (14-12, 11-3, 11-13, 13-15, 11-8).

Both semi-finals went to five and saw the lower-ranked pairs get through. Green & Dicken ended the competition for top seeds Ruby Chan & Anaya Patel (9-11, 11-4, 11-7, 6-11, 11-7), while third seeds Baldwin & O'Neil sunk second seeds Millie Rogove & Samadhi Udamulla (6-11, 12-10, 11-4, 6-11, 11-9).

Green said: "It's amazing, I'm so happy. At the start of the day we knew we would have a tough match against Ruby and Anaya but after that we knew there was a chance.

"The final was a bit frustrating but we took a timeout in the fifth and I decided to just go for the open-ups or we weren't going to win."

Dicken added: "At the start of the competition we knew we could have a chance. The final was tough and hard work but the key was just to believe that you can win. It's my biggest achievement by far."

The three first-round ties produced one match which went the distance and saw a comeback nipped in the bud by Rebecca Savage & Eve Witterick, who defeated Anna Green & Isabelle Lacorte 3-2 (12-10, 11-4, 10-12, 8-11, 12-10).

Savage & Witterick went out in the quarters in four games to Baldwin & O'Neil, while it was three straight for top seeds Chan & Patel against Amillia Baker & Kirsty Maull, and for fourth seeds Green & Dicken against Megan Jones & Anya Milne.

Completing the set of the top four pairings getting through to the semi-finals were second seeds Rogove & Udamulla, but it took an impressive comeback against Amy Marriot & Angharad Beman, who led 2-0 before the higher-ranked pair made it through 3-2 (8-11, 8-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-6).

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