



## Chelmsford & Dist: Gozcu is top man

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Top seed Eren Gozcu is the 2020 Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League Men's Singles champion.

A former top 12 England ranked Junior, the 19-year-old Colchester University student was many people's tip to take the title and he delivered at the Chelmsford League Finals Night which was played at the Old Chelmsfordians Association on Monday February 10.

Gozcu was in action first and he beat Paul Davison 3-1 in the first semi-final. Davison came into his own in the third game and did well to steal it 12-10 after being 10-8 down. Davison made a promising start to the fourth game and led 4-1 but Eren Gozcu reasserted himself to win 3-1 (11-4, 11-7, 10-12, 11-6).

The second semi-final featured two players who are very strong on the back hand wing. Daniel Young – who has an excellent counter punch and Liam Squirrell whose spinny back hand “opener” wins him countless points. Young started the stronger and won the first end 11-8 but it was Squirrell who took control and he won 3-1 (8-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-8).

There were first Finals Night appearances in the Mixed Doubles final for Weronika Bozek and Lee McHugh and they were always ahead against another new pairing, Sarah Austin and Steve Kerns, who never gave up and actually led 9-6 in the third end before succumbing in three (8-11, 3-11, 9-11).

Daniel Young was favourite for the Under-21 Singles title and despite getting off to a slow start he came through to win 3-0 (11-8, 11-6, 11-6) against Thomas Page. Thomas impressed with his positive approach and rangy powerful forehand.

The action resumed after the interval with the hotly anticipated Veterans' Singles final. This match didn't disappoint. Gary Young was the quicker into his stride and he raced into a 7-1 lead against Trevor Lloyd but thereafter the game ebbed one way and then the other. At 7-3 in the fifth end it looked as if Gary Young had done enough but at 9-7 it wasn't quite so clear. However at 9-7 Young hit a rasping powerful forehand crosscourt winner to give himself championship point. He took it at the first time of asking to win 3-2 (11-7, 7-11,

12-10, 7-11, 11-7).

Duncan Taylor / Charles Sweeny, the Men's Doubles Champions in 2018, are this year's winners. They prevailed over five thrilling ends against Eren Gozcu / Lee McHugh. Having won the first two ends they led 7-4 in the third end only to succumb 11-9, whilst they led 10-8, in the fourth end only to miss out 12-10. A lesser pair might have fallen apart. They were having none of it. With Sweeny's reliable backhand featuring a lot they sneaked ahead late on in the fifth end to win a superb final 3-2 (11-6, 11-7, 9-11, 10-12, 11-7).

19-year-old Weronika Bozek, new to the league, was a heavy favourite to win the Ladies' Singles title, and she duly beat Chelmsford Junior Girls' champion Nyree Marsh 3-0 (11-5, 11-7, 11-8) in the Final to give herself a hat-trick of successes. Nyree did very well to trade numerous quick-fire trade rallies with her experienced opponent who was ranked top 12 in Poland at Under-15 level. Again, it was the backhand wing of Weronika that impressed and she showed great variety on that side.

And so to the big one – the Men's Singles final. For lovers of extra long rallies this might not have been the game they will have savoured as both Gozcu and Squirrell produce such powerful opening shots that rallies are often over in a flash. Occasionally the play did venture away from the table and at no time was there ever more than a few points between the two players.

It was Gozcu who finally sealed victory in four pulsating ends (12-10, 10-12, 15-13, 16-14). Eren follows Ugur Saglik in being the second successive winner from Colchester University.

The Chelmsford League committee were delighted that the Deputy Mayor – Councillor Janette Potter was in attendance together with her Escort, Mrs Gillian Smith.

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