

Cameron takes BATTs Super-League title

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Experienced Scottish no. four Niall Cameron won the latest round of the BATTs Super League played on Friday 21 January 2011 at the BATTs Club, Old Harlow. The event reverted to its traditional format of 32 players – the monster entry of 48 players in November having been a one-off to account for the British League Premier division weekend.

Cameron, one of the fittest players on the circuit looked sharp throughout, recording four 3-0 victories on the way to the Final. He accounted for Luke Walsh (11-4, 12-10, 11-9), John Dennison (11-6, 11-7, 11-6), Martin Kubrt (11-8, 11-2, 11-4) and in the Semi-Final England no. eight lady Lauren Spink (11-4, 11-9, 11-8). Would he be able to repeat the feat in the Final against England no. six Junior Lewis Gray? The answer was “no” and in the end Niall pulled through in the fifth end. The real drama took place in the fourth game. Niall led 9-6 and surely it was only a matter of time before he delivered the “fait accompli”. Lewis was having none of it. He responded with his best sustained spell of play of the evening to pinch the next five points. Against a less experienced player this may have been enough. Not against Niall. He went on to win what was a superb match 11-4, 8-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-7.

Lauren Spink, who had beaten Cameron earlier in the Season in the BATTs Super-League had another fine evening. She beat Dave Langham (11-6, 11-4, 11-8) and Tony Halling (6-11, 11-9, 11-4, 12-14, 11-9) and then she pulled off one of the best wins of the night. She beat the redoubtable England no. eight Veteran Nigel Eckersley (still battling away as determinedly as ever in his 59th year) 11-9, 11-6, 12-14, 11-5. With a place in the Final gone Lauren nevertheless finished strongly defeating England no. 21 Veteran Costas Papantoniou 11-4, 11-9, 11-1 to come a marvellous third.

Round one saw the “old warrior” Ian McLean prevail in the longest match of the night, a five set thriller against Maciej “Magic” Nakielski 11-4, 11-4, 7-11, 9-11, 16-14. However, McLean didn’t progress any further. He was beaten by improving Fellows Cranleigh British League player Anthony Kent (England no.299) in another five set thriller. Anthony won 11-7, 7-11, 12-10, 5-11, 13-11 a magnificent win in anyone’s book. Kent missed out against the free-flowing Lewis Gray 7-11, 2-11, 3-11 but he scored another superb win in the play-off games, defeating England no. 18 Veteran Jimmy Walsh 11-6, 13-11, 11-7. He eventually lost to Martin Kubrt 7-11, 12-10, 11-4, 11-6 in round five to finish an excellent sixth.

Round two saw Lewis Gray having to save two match points to avoid a 3-1 defeat against England no. 72 Veteran Tony West. Tony led 2-1 and had his chances in a tense fourth game. A mightily relieved Lewis eventually pulled through 9-11, 11-7, 11-6, 14-12, 11-5.

In another upset no. three seed John Nilsson departed in the second round. He missed out 10-12, 8-11, 14-12, 10-12 to fellow BATTs British League team-mate Jimmy Walsh. Jimmy had his chances against no. five seed Costas Papantoniou in the Quarter-Final. He led 2-1 before Costas pinched it, sneaking home 11-5, 7-11, 6-11, 11-5, 12-10.

Round three produced some close games featuring those players competing for the minor placings. Maciej Nakielski had to pull out all the stops to get the better of Ilin Russev Pylpiw 7-11, 8-11, 11-5, 11-4, 11-9 whilst Tom Baines did well to fight back from 2-0 down to beat Vincent Stacey 10-12, 10-12, 11-6, 11-6, 11-9. England no. 94 Mindaugas Sinkus didn’t have a good night. He struggled against Dave Langham losing 6-11, 6-11, 11-5, 5-11. Andy Doshier was a fine five game winner, beating Paul Beck 11-7, 9-11, 11-7, 3-11, 11-3 whilst Luke Walsh confirmed his new level of consistency. He was a little too quick for Steve Kerns, winning 6-11, 11-7, 11-7, 11-6.

Steve Kerns

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