

Top seed prevails ... just!

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Posted On: March 22, 2011



Geoff Ware & Paul Martindill

Cippenham Super 6 Veterans' 2-Star Open Championship (20.3.11)

Top seed Andy Misseldine prevailed at the Cippenham Super 6 Veterans' 2-Star Open on Sunday but only after an event that produced a great number of close finishes. 24 players took part, with six players in each of four groups each played on two tables. That kept the tournament moving swiftly and provided a lot of table tennis for all the players in a short period of time.

The respective rankings of the top players were very close and any one of eight or nine players could have emerged victorious. Indeed, after the top three in each group had won through to the competition proper, six of the eleven knock-out matches required the playing of a fifth and deciding game.

Three of the top four seeds, nevertheless, emerged top of their groups. The one exception was fourth seed Paul Beck who paid the penalty for his late arrival by getting blitzed 13-11, 11-4, 11-3 by an on-song Radovan Zivkovic in his first match. That win put Zivkovic top of that group despite his later loss to Mark Scott. That was one of three of Zivkovic's matches in the group that went the distance – the other two, against Michael Loveder and Paul Martindill, he got the better of.

In the last sixteen, Dave Randall had a five-game win over Dave Langham, Geoff Grange was similarly successful over Paul Beck and former champion Steve Davis emerged from his match against Dean Rose with the same result. Only Alan Cherry made it easier on himself with a 3-0 win over John Fannin.

In the quarter-finals Crowley need five games to beat Grange while Misseldine beat Randall, Cherry had a great win over second seed Jojo Senior and Zivkovic beat Davis all in four games. Misseldine then had an easier win over Crowley in the semi-final while Zivkovic had to come back from two games down before he overcame Cherry.



Andy Misseldine & Radovan Zivkovic

That set up one of the best finals seen at Cippenham as Andy Misseldine and Radovan Zivkovic, both left-handed attacking players, went punch for punch in a gripping encounter that brought a lot of applause from the watching spectators. No time more so than when Misseldine led 10-9 in the third game and let fly two ferocious smashes that Zivkovic somehow managed to return. Misseldine's response was a drop shot that Zivkovic raced onto and made a fantastic winning smash to seal the game and a 2-1 lead.

The fourth game was a topsy-turvy affair with Zivkovic at one time leading 6-3 only for Misseldine to turn that around to 9-6 in his favour. Four points later Zivkovic stood 10-9 and match point but made the ultimate faux-pas of serving off the table, a feat he repeated two points later to hand his opponent the game. In the end it was Misseldine who emerged 11-8 in the fifth game to claim the title.

The tournament was organised by Graham Trimming and refereed by Mick Strobe.

Results:

	Winner:	Runner-up:
Championship	Andy Misseldine (Oxon)	Radovan Zivkovic (Middx)
Consolation	Geoff Ware (Dorset)	Paul Martindill (Essex)

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