

Almost on Tupper the World

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Max Tupper in action

The Briar Guildford Grand Prix got off to a flier on day one at the Spectrum Parkway Leisure Centre on Saturday the 11th of June with a young man so closely to being on "tupper the world".

Seventeen year old Max Tupper who plays at the Geoff Reed Table Tennis Centre in St Helier made his island hop very worthwhile by winning the Men's Band 4 event. He overcame a determined four game challenge from finalist Danny "the diminutive destroyer" Lawrence to take his well deserved title. Tupper had that all important 'Max factor' that has always been in his make up! He was on a mission not only to enjoy some top class mainland opposition but also to get fully competition fit for the forthcoming Island Games where he is a representing Jersey in the senior team and individual championships. What a shame the Tupper ware party came to an abrupt end during the afternoon session when Adam Gigli had the last laugh by just getting the better of Max in the band five final in five nerve tingling games thus halting a double Tupper celebration.

In only his second Grand Prix Paul Payen an IT engineer from Ashford in Kent walked away with a superb glassware trophy for winning Men's Band 6. Paul has only been in the country since January playing locally at the Ashford Oaks club in local league. Originally from Brittany where he amassed 1500 French ranking points but in the scheme of things in France that would not put him in the top 2000! Losing finalist Will Ross at just fourteen years of age is a young man with a bright future in the sport. The Grantham based youngster improves at every Grand Prix and this was rewarded with a finalist trophy- your time will come, Will. Johnny Bispham and Luke Savill performed very well to reach the last four stage.

The last of the Men's morning competitions to complete saw the Bying Hall British League player Owe Karlsson walk tall with a Band 2 final victory over Chris Bush. Having been out of table tennis for over 3 years it was great to welcome Chris back to Grand Prix action and you could see he is still a very tough competitor to wear down with his unique double sided short pimped blade. The Graham Spicer Club player Bush was bullish on his way to the final taking players the calibre of Matt Porter and semi finalist Dan O'Connel out of the equation to reach that last stage. Jojo Senorin enjoyed a 4 game victory over Rory Scott to reach the last four but found Owe Karlsson to hot to handle.

Sue Collier took yet another Women's Band 2 title with a final triumph against brave 15 year old Okehampton player Naomi Jackson. This event started with a huge shock when top seed Sue was beaten by sixteen year old Emma Tovey in the groups which was an incredible result for the fast improving Kent youngster. That put Emma through as group winner and pitted against Naomi Jackson in the last four. Naomi had earlier played extremely well to beat Chrissie Slot (as Chrissie had enjoyed a superb victory over Jurate Brazaityte in the earlier group stage) but her great run came to an end against the highly experienced Veteran's National Champion Sue Collier, who had previously beaten her close friend Sandra Rider in the semi final.

With two more Women's banded events nearing completion it was emerging that Emma Tovey's great run in the earlier band 2 was continuing through to band 3. She gained her revenge from an earlier defeat by Naomi Jackson at the last four stage to await her final opponent. That turned out to be Chrissie Slot who had enjoyed a straight games win over Sue Rider to put Chrissie in the final with Emma. The Barming Club near Maidstone based GCSE student Emma Tovey proved just too consistent for the younger Chrissie Slot from Hampshire running out a 3-0 game champion.

Twenty five year old Oxford post graduate Jing Yu Sun passed with flying colours over every test thrown at him in Men's Band 3. He was made to work very hard for his title victory over quarter finalist Alan Cherry and then survive a two games to love deficit to pull back and go on and beat last four opponent Daniel Barna in five epic games. In the top half of the draw Fredrick Nilsson was the man to watch as he made his way to the final but did not have the answers against the Chinese player Jing Yu Sun.

As earlier mentioned the hardest band to win in terms of sheer number is always Men's Band 5 and once again Adam Gigli took another title, this time against Max Tupper. Bradley King and Anthony Patten played brilliantly to reach the last four stage of this event.

Leaving the blue ribbon events till last the Women's Band 1 competition was won by Channel Islands star Alice Loveridge. The Guernsey player played with great feeling and composure. Her combination of heavy topspin attack with her strong work ethic and influenced by her newly imported German coach had too much consistency for finalist Sanja Clements. Alice had earlier outfought Melissa Wright whilst Sanja enjoyed a titanic five game against Sue Collier to reach the final.

Great to see Neil Charles eventually winning a Men's band 1 and picking up a well deserved cheque for £60. His deceptive serves and his ability to manoeuvre his opponent around the court with a trademark faded forehand proved the deciding factor over finalist Emran Hussain. Neil had played his usual gutsy best to displace Mark Smith and semi finalist Ashley Robinson whilst Emran got past Jojo Senorin and Tom Cutler to reach the final.

Results from day one at Guildford as follows;

Men's Band 1

Neil Charles (Mi) beat Emran Hussain (E) 13-11, 11-8, 11-13, 9-11, 11-7.

Women's Band 1.

Alice Loveridge (GGY) beat Sanja Clements (Do) 11-6, 5-11, 12-10, 12-10.

Men's Band 2.

Owe Karlsson (K) beat Chris Bush (Sy)

7-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-9.

Women's Band 2.

Sue Collier (Ch) beat Naomi Jackson (Dv)

11-3, 11-3, 11-1.

Men's Band 3.

Jing Yu Sun (Ox) beat Fredrick Nilsson (Sx)

11-9, 11-8, 8-11, 11-8.

Women's Band 3.

Emma Tovey (K) beat Chrissie Slot (Ha)

11-5, 11-5, 11-9.

Men's Band 4.

Max Tupper (JEY) beat Danny Lawrence (K)

11-8, 11-9, 5-11, 12-10.

Men's Band 5.

Adam Gigli (Nk) beat Max Tupper (JEY)

11-8, 13-11, 4-11, 10-12, 11-6.

Men's Band 6.

Paul Payen (FRA) beat William Ross (La)

14-12, 11-9, 11-8.





By Geoff Ware

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