

Cippenham Team 2* Open Report

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Victorious Steve Munson and Robert Hansell

Cippenham Team 2-Star Open

That was close!

Another home victory to cheer about but it was so darn close! Robert Hansell and Steve Munson, masquerading under the aspirational team title of "Team O Boll" (fans of world table tennis will get this!), were at once in danger of finishing bottom of their preliminary round group and thus losing all hope of winning the title. The top seeds lost their opening match to Crusaders Blues for whom Mickel Miller, hitherto without a single senior ranking point, was tremendous. The youngster beat Munson 12-10 in the fifth and then capped off a 2-1 win for Crusaders by defeating Hansell 11-5 in the fifth with a devastating display of attacking table tennis against the wily defensive skills of Hansell.

In their second group match Hansell had to pull out all the stops against OLOP Impact's Daniel Moses to get home 11-5 in the fifth while Munson secured top spot in the group, on count-back, for the top seeds by beating Bradley King 3-0.

Two tables away third seeds Kathys Boys, alias Daniel and Peter Ives were falling to a Sussex junior duo called TT Mugs comprising Danial Barna and Alex Forshaw. Forshaw set the scene by beating Daniel, the top ranked player in the event and more than 350 places higher but who has had injury problems recently.

Cippenham's Steve Smith featured in another upset to the seeding when he and Martin Gunn (the Weapon Fashioners) (try reversing the surnames and you get gunsmith!) beat fourth seeds Crusaders TTC. However, that was down to Gunn winning his two matches.

Half of the teams that eventually finished in the top eight (there were 24 teams altogether in eights groups of three) started the day in second place in their group. Biggest leap came from Cardiff Coconuts who eventually finished fourth and had match points to reach the final. That came when, after Neil Wright had beaten Rob Hansell 3-0, Anna Labuz had match points against Steve Munson in both the third and fourth games before succumbing 11-8 in the fifth.

The other semi-final saw the demise of second seeds Hallmark All Stars, the father and son combination of Steve and Shaun Hall. Shaun lost to both Barna and Forshaw, the latter being 11-8 in the fifth. Backtrack one round and Hallmark's win against Crusaders was 2-0 but that hides the essence of a closely fought encounter with Shaun beating Michael Ho 12-10 in the fifth and Steve beating Ben Larcombe 11-8 in the fifth after coming back from two games down.

The tournament was organised and refereed by Graham Trimming and attracted a maximum 24 entries.

By Graham Trimming



Winners Alex Forshaw and Daniel Barna

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