

M&G Investments Chelmsford Closed TTC

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Upsets galore in 2012 M&G Investments Chelmsford Closed Table Tennis Championships

The 2012 M&G Investments Chelmsford Table Tennis League Closed Tournament produced a large number of shocks, with the Ladies Singles event proving to be the most unpredictable of all. The League's Press Officer was left to rue his comment – "the odds that the top two seeds Julie Vansertima and Debby Auvache will not be contesting the Ladies Final are likely to be exceedingly long".

The real drama took place in Group Two where Lin Attridge produced some stunning counter-attacking play from a couple of paces away from the table to take a 2-0 lead against 19 times Champion Julie Vansertima. Julie fought back – she isn't Champion 19 times for nothing but this was Lin's hour and she reasserted herself in fine style in a dramatic fifth end to win the match 3-2 (13-11, 11-6, 3-11, 2-11, 11-7).

This left Julie as runner-up in her group and she therefore had to face second seed Debby Auvache in her semi-final, a repeat of the 2010 and 2011 finals.

This game turned out to be even closer than the two previous Finals but it was Julie who prevailed. She fought back from 2-1 down to win 3-2 (11-9, 8-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-8). The other semi-final produced a second shock. It was Sue Hickman who came through over five ends to beat Lin Attridge 3-2 (7-11, 11-9, 6-11, 11-6, 11-7). Whereas Lin was able to feed off of Julie's pace here Lin felt obliged to take the game to Sue and a clearly inform Sue took full advantage, growing in stature as the game progressed.

In the Men's Singles three of the top four seeded players have battled their way through to the semi-finals. Top seed Alex Abbott wasn't troubled seeing off Waseem Quereshi 3-0 (11-2, 11-3, 11-3) and Paul Cuming 3-0 (11-5, 11-7, 11-7). Cuming had done well to beat Andrew Halling 3-1 (11-8, 9-11, 11-4, 11-9) whilst Waseem Qureshi had fought back from 2-0 down to defeat Peter Maynard 3-2 (8-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-8, 13-11).

Antony produced his free-flowing best table tennis to beat Mark Mulley 3-1 (9-11, 11-9, 14-12, 11-2) and Peter Hayden 3-1 (11-5, 8-11, 12-10, 11-9). It was the under-rated Gary Young who came through the third quarter of the draw. He hit top form to see off Darren Richardson 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 11-7) and then most impressively four-times Chelmsford Champion and the third seed Dave Cole 3-0 (11-5, 11-8, 11-7).

Meanwhile he will meet last year's runner-up Steve Joslin beat Michael Johnston 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-6) and Michael Andrews 3-1 (11-5, 10-12, 11-3, 11-3). Michael Andrews had ousted Steve Kerns 3-2 (8-11, 11-8, 7-11, 13-11, 11-8) a round earlier.



The Mens Doubles final will feature two pairs with strong Colchester connections. The holders and top seeds Steve Joslin/Michael Andrews battled their way past Paul Cuming/Steve Northcott 3-0 (11-7, 11-5, 11-4), Bill Smith/Phil Smith 3-0 (11-3, 11-2, 11-4) and third seeds Gary Young/Dave Cole 3-2 (11-8, 8-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-4).

They will meet a new pairing as far as the Chelmsford League are concerned: the unseeded Mark Mulley and Antony Greenwood. They produced some sparkling table tennis to end the aspirations of Waseem Quereshi /Darren Richardson 3-0 (11-4, 11-9, 11-5), Steve Kerns/Peter Hayden 3-2 (11-9, 11-9, 14-16, 11-13, 11-4) and second seeds Alex Abbott/Hamish Innes 3-0 (12-10, 11-4, 11-6).

Lin Attridge and Debby Auvache won the Ladies Doubles for the third year in succession but it wasn't plain sailing. They lost to last year's runners-up Julie Vansertima/Allison Barker 3-2 (5-11, 4-11, 11-7, 11-5, 8-11) (who finished second) but by beating Nicola Pippen/Melanie Bonnett decisively 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 11-6) they came out on top. Nicola/Melanie had in fact scored a fine 3-2 (7-11, 13-11, 10-12, 11-8, 11-8) win over Julie/Allison.

David Cole/Julie Vansertima, the top seeds are through to the Mixed Doubles final where they will be looking to capture a seventh title. They beat Peter Hayden/Allison Barker 3-0 (12-10, 11-6, 11-9) and Paul Cuming/Debby Auvache 3-0 (11-9, 12-10, 11-7). There was a surprise in the other half of the draw. It was Steve Kerns/ Melanie Bonnett who battled their way through to the final. They beat Ian Whiteside/Nicola Pippen 3-0 (11-5, 11-9, 11-9) and then second seeds Alex Abbott/Lin Attridge 3-1 (8-11, 11-7, 11-5, 11-6).

The Veterans Singles final which will be played on Finals Night will be between the top two seeded players. The top seed Alex Abbott was rarely troubled in beating Adrian Pitt 3-0 (11-4, 11-2, 11-7), Peter Ballard 3-0 (11-4, 11-4, 11-2) and Andrew Halling 3-0 (11-6, 11-9, 11-5). He will meet the holder Dave Cole in the final.

Dave defeated Steve Buer 3-0 (11-2, 11-5, 11-4), James Hicks 3-0 (12-10, 11-9, 11-4) and with some superb table tennis he also beat Peter Hayden 3-1 (3-11, 11-6, 11-7, 11-6).

Earlier upsets included a 3-2 (11-9, 13-15, 8-11, 11-8, 11-6) win for Andrew Halling against Steve Kerns and a 3-2 (12-14, 11-8, 11-8, 6-11, 11-8) win for James Hicks over Paul Cuming. Hayden had also been stretched by Mathew Brown before he eventually won 3-1 (11-8, 11-2, 6-11, 12-10).



Top seed Alex Abbott is the new Over 50s Singles Champion. After winning his group he galloped through the field, beating Richard Hiskey 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 11-4, Andrew Halling 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-8) and in the final Steve Buer 3-0 (11-1, 11-3, 11-2).

The other half of the draw had seen Michael Johnston score superb wins over Peter Ballard 3-1 (11-7, 10-12, 11-7, 11-9) and Ian Whiteside 3-2 (11-7, 11-5, 15-17, 3-11, 11-8) before missing out to Steve Buer 3-2 (12-10, 10-12, 5-11, 11-5, 0-11). Lin Attridge had made her mark with a fine 3-0 (11-6, 11-9, 11-6) victory over John Cleasby before she lost to Andrew Halling 3-0 (11-3, 11-5, 11-8).

Ace defender Peter Ballard captured the Over 60s Singles title for a fourth time. He beat Ian Whiteside, Champion for the last three years in the final 3-0 (11-8, 13-11, 11-9) although he had been fully extended by Ken James a round earlier. It was "touch and go" before Peter scraped home 3-2 (11-6, 13-11, 9-11, 9-11, 11-9). Ian beat Bill Smith 3-1 (11-5, 11-9, 5-11, 11-6) in his semi-final.

Top seeds Peter Hayden/Steve Kerns retained their Veterans Doubles title. They beat Neil Freeman/Guy McKenzie 3-0 (11-2, 11-9, 11-4), Peter Ballard/Dave Cole 3-0 (11-5, 18-16, 15-13) and in the final Alex Abbott/Hamish Innes 3-0 (11-8, 11-9, 11-5). Alex/Hamish were 3-0 (12-10, 11-7, 11-7) winners against Matthew Brown/Hector Rogers in their semi-final whilst Matthew/Hector had defeated Ian Whiteside/James Hicks 3-2 (8-11, 10-12, 11-7, 11-8, 11-9) in the best game of the event.

The Under 21 Singles final will be between top seed Darren Richardson and James Austin. Darren had to work hard to beat Jack Crook over five fluctuating ends in his semi-final 3-2 (11-9, 9-11, 11-6, 6-11, 11-6). While Austin recorded a fine 3-1 (6-11, 11-6, 11-6, 12-10) victory against second seed Mark Smith in their semi-final.

There was success for Jack Crook in the Junior Boys/Under 18 Singles. He took the title following wins over Martin Hiskey 3-0 (11-1, 11-9, 11-7), Wiktor Delimat 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 11-5) and Chris Denyer 3-1 (11-7, 7-11, 11-9, 11-6). Chris had been fully extended by Daniel Berry in their semi-final before he eventually won 3-0 (12-10, 11-9, 11-9).

Chris Denyer is the new Under 16 Singles Champion. He beat second seed Sarah Austin in a hotly contested four game final 3-1 (16-14, 14-12, 13-15, 11-4). Sarah had been fully extended by Ryan Gooday a round earlier. She prevailed 3-2 (11-8, 8-11, 11-6, 7-11, 11-7). Chris Denyer's semi-final opponent was Daniel Berry who he beat 3-1 (11-5, 5-11, 11-9, 11-3).

Daniel Berry captured the Under 14 Singles title. In another hotly contested final he beat Ryan Gooday 3-1 (11-13, 11-9, 12-10, 11-9) having defeated Emily Wood in the quarter-final and Thomas Nguyen in the semi-final. Ryan Gooday battled his way past Callum Day and Adam Kirshell.

Sarah Austin won the Junior Girls Singles for a third successive year. She beat Rebecca Denyer 3-1 (12-10, 11-7, 9-11, 11-3) in her closest game. Rebecca beat Emily Wood 3-1 (11-8, 12-10, 7-11, 15-13) in a very evenly fought game which ensured she finished second with Emily taking third place and Sarah Bell finishing fourth.



There was more success for Sarah Austin who captured the Junior Doubles title with her brother James. They beat Wiktor Delimat/Martin Hiskey 3-0 (11-5, 13-11, 11-4) in the final. Their semi-final opponents had been Daniel Thomas/Shane Bliss whilst Wiktor and Martin had defeated Charlie Mariner/Daniel Berry at the same stage.

Martin Hiskey became the 2012 Junior Handicap Singles Champion. He took the title with a five game win over Ryan Gooday having earlier seen off the challenges of Shane Bliss, Daniel Berry and Adam Kirchell. Ryan Gooday battled his way through to the final with wins over Thomas Nguyen, Charlie Mariner, Daniel Thomas and Rebecca Denyer.

Sunday's play was dominated by the four Divisional Singles events. Andrew Halling was the top seed in the Division Two Singles and he duly captured the title. But the event didn't go to plan. Halling lost his first match to Michael Johnston and only qualified as runner-up in his group after also being pushed to five ends by James Austin.

Halling had a very difficult ride to the final but he did what he had to. He beat Simon Webber 3-1 (11-3, 14-12, 7-11, 11-7), Gary Cattermole 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-7), Matthew Brown 3-0 (11-7, 11-8, 14-12) and he secured the title with a 3-2 (11-9, 9-11, 11-3, 9-11, 11-3) win over Chris Buer in the final. Chris Buer had seen off Julie Vansertima 3-1 (11-7, 11-8, 11-13, 11-6), Richard Hiskey 3-1 (11-6, 11-5, 9-11, 11-5) and James Hicks 3-2 (7-11, 6-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-8) to make it to the big stage.

Tony Hallet is the Division Three Singles Champion. He captured the title by beating Graham Briggs 3-1 (11-5, 17-15, 8-11, 11-8) having defeated Richard Storey 3-2 (12-10, 7-11, 12-14, 11-9, 11-7) in very hard-fought quarter-final and Steve Cheesman 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-8) in the penultimate round.

Allan Thompson captured the Division Four Singles crown. He beat Mohamed Mohseni 11-9, 11-7, 9-11, 11-6 in the semi-final and Allison Barker 3-1 (9-11, 11-8, 11-6, 11-9) in the final. Allison fought back from 2-1 down to get the better of Chris Denyer 3-2 (11-8, 9-11, 8-11, 11-4, 12-10) in her semi-final.

Frank Hodge became the first Division Five Singles Champion. He required four games to get the better of Ian Austin 3-1 (11-7, 7-11, 11-7, 11-7) in the final having seen off Daniel Berry 3-1 (11-4, 11-5, 8-11, 13-11) a round earlier. Ian Austin's semi-final victim was Martin Hiskey who he beat 3-0 (11-4, 13-11, 11-6).

The all-action Ryan Gooday completed an excellent weekend with a victory in the Handicap Singles. Playing off a handicap of 32 he rarely looked like losing and Gary Cattermole was the only player to take a game off him. Gooday showed excellent attacking form as he blasted his way past James Austin 2-0 (21-14, 21-16), Gary Cattermole 2-1 (18-21, 21-18, 21-7), Graham Briggs 2-0 (21-4, 21-9), Frank Hodge 2-0 (21-16, 21-17) and it was a similar story in the final where he dominated affairs against Allan Thompson winning 2-0 (21-14, 21-17).

Gary Young was the only first division player to take part and he lost in the last 16 to Neil Freeman 2-1 (21-19, 15-21, 16-21). Richard Storey prevailed in the closest game of the bottom half defeating Guy McKenzie 2-1 (18-21, 21-15, 23-21) whilst Mark Smith ousted Lee McHugh 2-1 (15-21, 21-17, 24-22) in the tightest game of the top half of the draw.

The last event of the weekend saw Ian Austin/Richard Storey capture the Handicap Doubles title with an emphatic 2-0 (21-4, 21-5) final victory against Simon Webber/Tony Hallett. The beaten semi-final pairings were Graham Briggs/Mark Smith and Phil Smith/Lee McHugh.

Biggest upsets of the weekend – Gary Young's superb 3-0 win over David Cole in the Men's Singles quarter-final and Lin Attridge's excellent victory over Julie Vansertima in the Ladies Singles Groups. Most assured performance – Alex Abbott in all of his singles matches. He never remotely looked like losing any of them.

The M&G Investments Finals Night takes place on Monday 20 February 2012 at Old Chelmsfordians Association, Lawford Lane, Chelmsford, CM1 2NS starting at 19.30 hours.

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