

6th NatWest Jersey Open Day One Report

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Day One at the 6th NatWest Jersey Open Table Tennis Grand Prix Tournament.

Good Friday was purely for the 'two man' teams and started with local success for the Tupper brothers in the Junior team round robin comprising of four duos. Runners-up were Chris Morshead and Tyler Gosselin but none of the teams were able to match the firepower of Max and Hugo Tupper.

The Women's team final was contested between top English pair Sue Collier and Sandra Rider verses Hannah Hicks (England No. 3) and Jersey's own Kelsey le Maistre. This went to the wire following a highly absorbing contest. Hicks won her two but the Jersey/Hampshire pair lost the all important doubles 3-0. Le Maistre played brilliantly against her highly ranked and experienced opponents but Rider and Collier stood firm taking their respective matches 3-0 and 3-1 to deservedly claim the Women's team title.

The Veterans team event was a very tight affair with top seeds Dean Rose (Kent) and Geoff Ware (Hampshire) beating Dave Gascoyne (Nottingham) and Carol Milnes (Jersey) in the semi final 3-0. In the bottom half of the draw Sue Collier and Sandra Rider negotiated their quarter final 4-1 to set up a match with local pair and second seeds Eugene Ellis and Bobby Vincent. Their encounter went to the wire with the result hinging on the final singles between Rider and Vincent after Collier had taken both her singles and the men converted the doubles. The Yorkshire Ladies veteran led 2-1 but Vincent fought back doggedly to take the last two games 11-4, 11-7 to secure their place in the final. Here they met the experienced English pair of Rose and Ware and the final could have gone either way. In the end it was Eugene 'Yogi' Ellis who claimed the fifth game with the teams tied two all and 2-2 in the final game to secure another local victory.

The Men's team Event turned out to be the star turn as expected. Second seeds Damien Nicholls (Shropshire) and Matt Ware (Hampshire) cruised through to the final without dropping a game dispatching Jersey's Matthieu Fisher and Glen Brown in the last sixteen then Dean Rose (Kent) and Geoff Ware (Hampshire) in the quarters. They faced fourth seeds Jersey's Craig Gascoyne and Yorkshire's Chris Parker in the semi-final after Gascoyne and Parker had squeezed through their earlier matches by the narrowest of margins 3-2 both in the fifth games of the last singles against Danny Lawrence and Jack Mills and then the Tupper brothers.

In the top half of the draw top seeds Darius Knight (Surrey) and Mike Marsden (Durham) beat the Kent duo of Paul Payen and Alan Taylor in the quarter-final who had earlier put paid to Jersey pair Tom Marsay and Jack Messervy in the last sixteen. The Channel Island pairing of Garry Dodd and Josh Band, seeded three, booked their semi-final slot with a 3-0 win over locals Tyler Gosselin and Chris Morshead, [with Morshead pushing Band all the way to the deciding fifth], followed by a much closer 3-2 win over another Jersey duo Marcin Jurkiewicz and Luke Walker. Jurkiewicz exacted a clinical 3-0 defeat over the Guernsey number one and then 3-1 against Band but with Band and Dodd taking the doubles 3-1 and then Band taking the final rubber by the same score against Walker the C.I. pairing made the semis to face the top seeds.

At this point local interest was stubbed out albeit with no disgrace as the top seeds snicked through the gears to record a 3-0 win whilst on the next table Ware and Nicholls joined them by beating Jersey's Craig Gascoyne and his partner Chris Parker [Yorkshire].

The final between the top two seeds was simply electric drawing huge applause from a packed Table Tennis Centre. Marsden squeezed home against Ware 12/10 in the fifth and Knight had a somewhat less stressful win against previous Open champion Nicholls 3-0. The top seeds sealed the Men's team title with a well crafted 3-0 victory after some exquisite play from both teams.

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