

Newcastle Tees Sport Grand Prix

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There were upsets galore in the Men's Open, where the atmosphere was electric with a whole packet of top seeds falling by the wayside. Firstly Stewart Crawford S2 took an early bath after succumbing to the French hotshot Wilson Huart (winner of the Men's Band 2) in the round of the last 16, followed by Darius Knight S1 making his way back to Sheffield after a dramatic and unexpected loss to Flying Scotsman Niall Cameron 9-11 in the fifth, after leading 6-2 in the deciding end. Wow what a dramatic match, then total silence followed! With Cameron S5 safely through to the last four, this left the remaining quarter-final match between Damien Nicholls S3,,(who had earlier been responsible for the departure of Scott Barton) and Craig Hardie (who had a famous win over Ben Barlow and was on cloud 9 from day 1) in the top half of the draw to be played.

Damien Nicholls was simply superb in blasting away yesterday's hero Scotsman Craig Hardie in straight sets to set up a last four clash with Niall Cameron (on a high after displacing Darius Knight in the previous round). This meant that three out of the four semi-finalists hailed from the Grantham College Academy! The Scotsman Cameron was probably playing his best ever table tennis and was in the zone throughout his semi-final battle with Nicholls, taking the match 3-0 to await his final opponent. Two tables away Matt Ware was also finding top form to halt the Frenchman's dramatic progress, coming through in three close sets to set up an England v Scotland final.

Ware took first blood in the opening set of the final, however it was once again the Flying Scotsman Cameron who soaked up everything that Ware could throw at him, countering spectacularly with top class back from the table pinpoint topspin rallies that the audience were in awe of. Niall levelled at 1-1, and then followed probably the finest set of wall to wall class from both finalists. Cameron then took that all so important third set 15-13, which he then followed up 11-8 in the fourth leg to secure an unexpected but thoroughly well deserved victory to be crowned Newcastle Men's Open Champion, together with a nice cheque for £300.

The Women's Open attracted a poor entry of just eight competitors. Naomi Wilson finished winner of group 1 with Melissa Wright taking the runner up spot. In the other group Lindsey Reynolds prevailed with Lisa Radford taking second place. Following a titanic marathon first semi-final Lisa Radford just got her head in front of Naomi Wilson in the fifth set to await her final contestant. Meanwhile Lindsey Reynolds proved too strong for the defender Melissa Wright to take her concluding place with Lisa.

The final turned out to be a roller coaster ride with Reynolds quickly going 2-0 up only to see her lead vanish with Radford finding top gear to level at 2-2. Lindsey established an early advantage in the final leg, which she grasped to take the Women's Open title and a nice cheque for £175.

Twenty four players contested the Under 21 Men's event, with the final being played out by top seeded Damien Nicholls S1 and Matt Ware S2 for possibly the tenth time in the last two seasons of Under 21 Grand Prix finals. The Hampshire player was quick out of the blocks taking the first leg of the final 13-11, and from there on Ware closed out the match in two further tight sets.

The Under 21 Women's event was played as a round robin competition with five competitors.

Melissa Wright won all her four matches making her the Champion with the gallant runner-up Rebecca George losing to Melissa in three straight sets, but proving too good for Emily Ross, Bethany Ross and Eszter Soos.

The Tees Sport Player of the tournament award and a £50 voucher went to Niall Cameron for his outstanding performances over the weekend's play.

Men's Singles

Niall Cameron (SCO) bt. Matt Ware (Ha)
10-12, 11-6, 15-13, 11-8

Women's Singles

Lindsey Reynolds (La) bt. Lisa Radford (Dv)
11-3, 11-6, 7-11, 9-11, 11-5

Men's Band 1
Craig Hardie (SCO) bt. Niall Cameron (SCO)
11-4, 11-6, 11-8

Men's Band 2
Wilson Huart (FRA) bt. Scott Barton (SCO)
10-12, 13-11, 10-12, 11-6, 11-5

Men's Band 3
Calum Main (SCO) bt. Edward Fambely (Y)
7-11, 11-6, 11-8, 11-6

Men's Band 4
Lewis Williams (WAL) bt. Steven Fowler (SCO)
8-11, 11-6, 11-5, 11-2

Men's Band 5
Hasitha Samarweera (SCO) bt. Kris Chok-Apinant (Nd)
11-5, 11-6, 11-7

Men's Band 6
Peter Morgan (Ys) bt. Blair Fowler (SCO)
13-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9

Under 21 Men
Matt Ware (Ha) bt. Damien Nicholls (Sp)
13-11, 11-9, 11-8

Women's Band 1&2
Melissa Wright (YS) bt. Rebecca George (Y)
11-2, 11-8, 7-11, 14-12

Women's Band 3
Rebecca George (Y) bt. Bethany Ross (SCO)
11-5, 11-3, 14-12

Under 21 Women's Round Robin
Melissa Wright (Ys)

Mixed Restricted
Stephen Munson (Bu) bt. Chris Main (SCO)
11-9, 11-8, 12-14, 11-6

Mixed Veterans
Eddie Smith (Nd) bt. Gerry Campbell (SCO)
5-11, 13-11, 11-4, 11-6

By Geoff Ware

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