

Bristol UWE Bribar Grand Prix

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Po Huang "Barry" Chen of Chinese Taipei and Naomi Owen of Wales, both the top seeded players in their respective Men's and Women's Open events, had all the right answers and continued to pull out that little extra when needed to despatch all challengers put before them at the Bristol UWE Bribar Grand Prix.

The Men's Open final was fought out at a fast and furious pace by Po Huang Chen S1 from the Greenhouse Progress Club in London and Damien Nicholls S2 (no stranger to Grand Prix finals), that went the full distance and was always in the balance. Damien had his chances in a final that was loaded with quality rallies and at times audacious shots coming from both players in an entertaining and enthralling affair. Nicholls twice fought back to level the final at 2-2 and had his opportunities going 8-6 up in the last set. But from there on in it was as good as it got for the Shropshire player with the Asian star waving his magic wand to take the last five points in super cool style to run out a worthy champion, earning himself £305 for a good morning's work.

The Women's Open went exactly to seeding with Naomi Owen S1 and Egle Adomelyte S2 contesting the final. Naomi had a fairly comfortable ride to the last match terminating all her challengers that included Claire Nelson, Emma Vickers and Amanda Mogeley to reach the expected final. Whilst in the bottom half of the draw Adomelyte had to be at her very best to get past a determined Sarra Wang coming through 12-10 in the fifth end. Her semi-final opponent Natalie Slater (who had good wins against Melissa Wright and Chloe Thomas) had no answers to the hard hitting style of Adomelyte at the last four stage.

So as expected the Women's final had some spectacular hard hitting rallies from both these accomplished young women, however it was the more consistent Naomi Owen who came through 3-1 to pick up a well earned cheque for £175.

In the Under 21 Men's the Welsh dynamo Patrick Thomas, enjoyed brilliant victories over Daniel Keenan and then a famous four set triumph over David McBeath S4, to book his place against Nicholls in the first semi. In the lower half of the draw, first year junior, Sean Cullen was definitely "on song" and played incredibly well to beat Eddie Famberly, then upped his game to knockout second seeded Paul McCreery 3-1, and then took a fantastic 3-0 win over player of the tournament Lewis Gray in the quarter-final. Lewis was earlier on a roll in the knockout stages getting past Olly Langlois and Richard Marshall, but came up against an unstoppable Sean Cullen. Mark Simpson S3 was doing extensive damage too in the lower half of the draw, gaining his place in the semi-final, but went out to the devastating Cullen. Damien Nicholls was given a stern test by Patrick Thomas in the top half semi, but weathered the Welsh storm 3-1 to come through to meet Sean Cullen. The stage was set, Cullen continued in his rich vein of form and the left hander "took first blood", with a 12-10 first set win to let Nicholls know he had a match on his hands! Those who have witnessed "Damo" play were not surprised to see him up the gears and take the next three close sets to be crowned once again the Under 21 Men's Grand Prix Champion.

On adjacent tables the Under 21 Women's was reaching the latter stages. Top seeded Claire Nelson from the Emerald Isle was the player to beat and was simply "the best", Natalie Slater came through as a worthy winner from the bottom half of the draw to meet the Irish top seed in the final. The final lived up to expectations, with the pendulum of power swinging one way then the other. Claire clawed her way back into the match after trailing 1-2 in sets and at a crucial stage in the fourth leg took that all important time out (as we have seen so many times this weekend) to turn it around in her favour, introducing a few tweaks into her repertoire, and from there on in Natalie had to settle for the runner-up spot with Claire proving the stronger in those last two sets to take the Under 21 Women's title with a double 11-6 score line.

The Bribar Player of the Tournament award and a £50 voucher was presented to Lewis Gray from Kent for the second successive time in Grand Prix's this year for his magnificent achievements throughout the weekend's play.

Men's Open

Po Huang Chen (TPE) bt. Damien Nicholls (Sp)

11-8, 4-11, 11-5, 6-11, 11-8

Women's Open

Naomi Owen (WAL) bt. Egle Adomelyte (Mi)

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

Under 21 Men's

Damien Nicholls (Sp) bt. Sean Cullen (Dy)

10-12, 11-9, 11-7, 11-9

Under 21 Women's

Claire Nelson (IRL) bt. Natalie Slater (St)

10-12, 11-4, 4-11, 11-6, 11-6

Veteran Singles

Costas Papantoniou (Mi) bt. Dave Randall (Ha)

11-8, 11-5, 11-8

Mixed Restricted

Mike Marsden (Cv) bt. Jonathan Crawford (Cu)

11-6, 11-8, 6-11, 11-6

Men's Band 1

Paul McCreery (IRL) bt. Zac Zilesnick (Mi)

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

Women's Band 1

Emma Vickers (Dy) bt. Mary Fuller (Y)

5-11, 11-4, 9-11, 11-5, 11-4

Men's Band 2

Lewis Gray (K) bt. Zac Zilesnick (Mi)

11-9, 9-11, 9-11, 13-11, 12-10

Women's Band 2

Charlotte Carey (WAL) bt. Annabelle Morle (Ha)

9-11, 9-11, 14-12, 11-6, 12-10

Men's Band 3

Lewis Gray (K) bt. Dan O'Connell (WAL)

11-8, 11-9, 11-8

Women's Band 3

Charlotte Spencer (Wa) bt. Chrissie Slot (Ha)

5-11, 4-11, 14-12, 11-7, 16-14

Men's Band 4

Ryan Flood (IRL) bt. Lewis Williams (WAL)

11-9, 6-11, 14-12, 11-7

Men's Band 5

Lee Morgan (WAL) bt. Edward Lynn (Wa)

11-9, 11-6, 9-11, 11-6

Men's Band 6

Edward Lynn (Wa) bt. Mark McGuigan (IRL)

11-6, 9-11, 11-9, 11-8

By Geoff Ware

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