

Gavin and Jo – Top the Show

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Gavin Rumgay and Jo Parker were just sensational Wolverhampton wonders in winning the Men's and Women's Open events on day 2 of the Tees Sport Wolverhampton Grand Prix held at the Aldersley Leisure Centre on Sunday the 16th of May.

Arise Sir Gavin Rumgay; you are the de man, respect bro! With now an unprecedented 18 Grand Prix titles under your belt, we salute you! Your battling qualities, sheer guts and determination, combined with showmanship, elements of escapology, and super strong mental ability, you are one of our shining lights for the UK Olympic team for 2012.

On a day to remember filled with superb matches, shocks and surprises, and sheer entertainment, today had it all. A top quality starting line up had assembled in the Men's Open that also included the likes of Drinkhall, Jenkins, Pitchford, Doran, Nicholls, Ware, Slevin, Cameron, Marsden and Maybanks – the Super Showman Rumgay fighting machine took over! Love him or hate him, his comeback from the jaws of defeat in his last sixteen match against Will Maybanks from an almost impossible situation of being 0-2 and 3-9 down was just incredible. He followed that up with supreme performances over Damien Nicholls coming back from a 1-2 deficit in games, to then produce a splendid victory over top seed Paul Drinkhall 3-0, with another sublime performance to outplay Mike Marsden in the final that had class stamped all over it.

Losing finalist Mike Marsden was playing out of his skin to produce top class performances that blew everyone away, including Sam Perry, Matt Ware, Ryan Jenkins and losing semi-finalist Chris Doran, that had the entire hall enthusing over his electric forehand and dynamic movement to the ball. It was just a pity that the final with Rumgay did not sparkle as much as his earlier play but he was unquestionably voted the player of the tournament – absolutely brilliant.

The day started with surprises galore firstly 12 year old Sam Mabey coming back from the dead in his group match against the much higher ranked James Ward from a 0-2 and 1-8 deficit showing "Rumgay" like never say die fighting qualities to pull through 3-2 in sets and progress through as group as runner up to Mike Marsden – sadly he departed the event at the hands of Patrick Thomas in the first round. Also in the group stage, Stuart Williams played well above his ranking to beat Norbert Tofalvi, Saturday's Band 1 winner, with both players going through to the knockout rounds. Then another huge shock with the early exit in the last sixteen round of England number 2 ranked Liam Pitchford to a devastating performance by David McBeath winning 3-0! David's next round departure was at the hands of Paul Drinkhall who also suffered a scare in the second round by Niall Cameron losing the first set game 4, but then got back into gear winning the next three sets to make the semis but then fell at the hands of title winner Rumgay. Chris Doran, the other losing semi-finalist, had to work very hard to thwart the challenges of Mark Simpson, Colum Slevin and Yang Zhang, however was blasted away at the hands of the dynamic Mike Marsden, as was the silky smooth but not quite sharp enough today Ryan Jenkins who departed at the quarter-final stage, after getting past Norbert Tofalvi in five tough sets. Losing quarter-finalist Damien Nicholls enjoyed victories over Simon Nutch, Jonathan Crawford and Stephen Jenkins but unfortunately could not close out his encounter with Rumgay after looking the likelier winner. Yang Zhang also had a brilliant event taking the scalps of Nick Gilmour, Mark Jackson and Tomasz Rzeszotko but lost out to Doran at the quarter-final stage too. There were so many top quality matches that made this Grand Prix a day to remember – none more so than the wonders of title winner Gavin Rumgay, now on course to pick up his fourth consecutive Grand Prix Champions title!

Once again it was sheer poetry in motion to be dazzled and amazed at the wall like defensive attributes that Jo Parker consistently produces as our England number 1 player to run out a comfortable Women's Open Wolverhampton Grand Prix champion. Jo was never really extended in her path to the title just dropping just the one set to Zsuzsanna Vegh in the final. She was in cruise control throughout the entire event displaying her class to rise above all her challengers, and just far too consistent for the likes of Barbara Izyk, Egle Adomelyte and losing semi-finalist Hannah Hicks.

Hungarian holidaymaker Zsuzsanna Vegh who played so beautifully on Saturday to win the Women's Band 1 title went one better to reach the Open final. After being beaten in the groups by Egle Adomelyte she continued in gritty form to end the chances of Hang Li, Emma Vickers, Chloe Whyte and losing semi finalist Karina Le Fevre. In the final with Jo she played very well and was patient in attack trying to create the opening for an opportunity, but Jo was far too steady and consistent using a mixture of hard chop and occasional float to the put away any loose short pushed ball to make a winner. Losing last four players Karina Le Fevre

were just too strong for Jessica Dawson and Tressa Armitage, whilst Hannah Hicks fought hard to bitter end to finish the challenges of Lucy Davidson and Natalie Slater but was not in the same league as Jo Parker who was a worthy champion.

Later in the day the Under 21's, Veterans, and Restricted events took place.

Emma Vickers once again showed her quality and determination to take the Under 21 Women's title from losing finalist Karina Le Fevre by 3 sets to one. Emma's route to the title was gained by victories over Xue Bai, and semi-finalist Yolanda King. Karina played very well to beat Sophie Neil and semi-finalist Charlotte Carey. Losing last four players Yolanda King beat Chloe Whyte to reach that position whilst Charlotte Carey got through a tough match with Tressa Armitage.

In the Under 21 Men's event Chris Doran played extremely well throughout to outpoint Liam Pitchford in the final 3-1. Chris was responsible for the departure of Eddie Fambely, Emran Hussein and losing semi-finalist Damien Nicholls. Liam's route to the last stage was gained by beating Patrick Thomas, Tom Maynard and losing semi finalist Matt Ware.

Tomasz Rzeszotko got the better of David Low in a close five sets Veteran's final whilst Mike Marsden continued in his rich vein of form to beat Jonathan Crawford by 3 sets to 1 in the restricted final.

Mike Marsden was voted Player of the Tournament for his outstanding performances.

Many thanks to the officials and umpires who kept the event running smoothly and on time and a quick reminder that the next Grand Prix is at Hereford over the weekend of 19th-20th June.

Results from day 2 at Wolverhampton.

Men's Open.

Gavin Rumgay (SCO) beat Mike Marsden (Du) 11-8, 11-7, 11-8.

Women's Open.

Jo Parker (Sy) beat Zsuzsanna Vegh (HUN) 11-7, 12-10, 10-12, 11-5.

Under 21 Men.

Chris Doran (Np) beat Liam Pitchford (Dy) 11-6, 11-9, 3-11, 11-6.

Under 21 Women.

Emma Vickers (Dy) beat Karina Le Fevre (Cv) 4-11, 11-9, 11-6, 11-3.

Veteran Singles.

Tomasz Rzeskotko (Ch) beat David Low (SCO) 4-11, 14-12, 13-11, 6-11, 11-7.

Restricted Singles.

Mike Marsden (Du) beat Jonathan Crawford (Cu) 11-9, 7-11, 11-9, 11-8.

Image: Gavin Rumgay (SCO)

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