

M & G Investments Chelmsford Closed Tournament

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Posted On: **January 21, 2013**



Shrimpton leads the way after weekend of upsets

The 2013 edition of the M&G Investments Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League Closed Championships produced a large number of shocks.

Robert Shrimpton led the way with a superb win over Brandon Crouchman to book his place in the Under 21 Singles final whilst Dawn Baldry will play Julie Johnson in the Ladies Singles final. Second seed Linda Attridge was ousted at the semi-final stage by the favourite Julie Johnson after failing to win her group. She missed out to Jennifer Crapnell on count-back after Jennifer had topped the group by recording a superb 3-0 win over Shirley Carroll.

Finals Night will take place on Monday 28 January 2013 at 19.30 hours at the Old Chelmsfordians Association, Lawford Lane, Roxwell Road, Chelmsford. Admission is free and all spectators will be very welcome.

The four Mens' Singles semi-finalists are the holder Alex Abbott, four-times winner David Cole, two-times former Champion Steve Joslin and surprise package Michael Andrews. Abbott needed four games to get the better of Mark Mulley and he defeated Brandon Crouchman 3-1 (11-7, 4-11, 11-7, 13-11) in his quarter-final. Brandon had beaten Gary Young 3-0 (13-11, 11-8, 11-8) to advance to the last eight.

David Cole required four games to get the better of John Holland 3-1 (15-13, 12-10, 7-11, 12-10) having seen off Simon Webber 3-1 (11-7, 11-7, 7-11, 11-7) a round earlier. John Holland defeated John Cleasby at the last 16 stage 3-0 (11-9, 11-4, 11-7) after Cleasby had taken over the seeded berth by beating the fancied Paul Sayer in the group stages. The big shock came in a very competitive third quarter.

Mike Andrews defeated Peter Mynard 3-1 (13-15, 12-10, 11-5, 11-6) and then the higher-rated Mindaugas Sinkus 3-1 (11-7, 6-11, 11-4, 11-6). This pitted him against another former winner Keiran Lally who needed five games to get the better of Paul Cuming 3-2 (9-11, 11-3, 9-11, 11-9, 11-5).

Mike didn't put a foot wrong and he beat Keiran 3-0 (11-8, 11-9, 11-5). Paul Cuming had also made his mark. He beat Kevin Gowlett 3-2 (9-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-9, 11-9).

The 'man for the big occasion' Stephen Joslin dominated the bottom quarter of the draw and he advanced to the Semi-Finals by beating Peter Ballard (11-4, 11-5, 11-6) and Paul Sayer (11-8, 11-5, 11-4). Sayer had ousted Paul Davison after a really hard-fought encounter (11-9, 17-15, 6-11, 8-11, 11-5) and Steve Kerns (9-11, 11-7, 11-4, 11-9).

The biggest shock in the group stages of the Mens' singles had taken place in group no. seven where John Cleasby topped the group by defeating Paul Sayer 3-0 (13-11, 12-10, 11-9). David Cole was also put under real pressure by James Hicks before he clinched a very tight five-setter 3-2 (11-8, 9-11, 11-8, 5-11, 13-11).

In the counter-part Ladies Singles event the overwhelming favourite – 19-times Champion Julie Johnson beat Linda Attridge 3-0 (11-8, 11-5, 11-4) in her semi-final and she will face Dawn Baldry in the final. Dawn defeated surprise package – Junior Jennifer Crapnell 3-0 (11-4, 12-10, 11-6) in the semi-final after Jennifer had relegated Linda to second place in her group with a superb 3-0 (11-8, 11-5, 14-12) victory over Shirley Carroll.

Shirley in turn hit back by beating Linda 3-2 (4-11, 11-8, 4-11, 11-6, 11-4) a result that cost Linda the first place in the group. Dawn took a game off Julie in their group match before Julie asserted herself strongly to win 3-1 (3-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-8). Dawn also had huge problems beating Jacqueline Smith and she had to dig deep to win 3-2 (12-10, 11-7, 8-11, 11-13, 15-13).

The Mens' Doubles final will be between four-times Braintree Champions Paul Davison and Kevin Gowlett and the second seeds Paul Sayer and Alex Abbott.

Davison and Gowlett beat Steve Kerns/Gary Young 3-1 (8-11, 11-8, 12-10, 11-5) in the last eight and they topped the 2011 and 2012 Champions Steve Joslin/Mike Andrews 3-2 (9-11, 5-11, 11-6, 12-10, 13-11) in a superb all-action semi-final, the best match of the weekend.

Paul Sayer/Alex Abbott had no such problems in the bottom half. They powered their way past Maurice Hardy/Steve Whitely 3-0 (11-8, 11-5, 11-9), Brandon Crouchman/Scott Dowsett 3-0 (11-7, 11-4, 11-3) and in the semi-final Keiran Lally/Mindaugas Sinkus 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-3).

The two seeded pairings Julie Vansertima/David Cole and Linda Attridge/Steve Kerns will contest the Mixed Doubles final. David/Julie required all five games to get the better of Steve Whiteley/Shirley Carroll 3-2 (11-2, 8-11, 11-5, 12-14, 11-4) whilst Steve/Linda defeated Tom Elder/Dawn Baldry 3-0 (11-4, 11-4, 12-10) to clinch their Finals Night appearance.

The top two players – Alex Abbott and David Cole will fight out the Veterans Singles final, a repeat of last year's final. Abbott was in all sorts of problems against ace-defender Robert Burton in the last eight and he needed all five games to win 3-2 (7-11, 11-13, 11-5, 11-3, 11-8).

Abbott had looked down and out in the semi-final as well when Gary Young (who had ousted Paul Sayer 3-1) took a 2-0 lead. The third end was crucial here and somehow Abbott retrieved a 1-6 deficit and he went on to win 3-2 (7-11, 6-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-9).

He will face David Cole in the final. Cole defeated Steve Kerns 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 11-7) after Steve had ousted Paul Cumimg 3-2 (13-15, 11-2, 11-13, 11-9, 11-5) and James Hicks 3-0 (11-8, 11-9, 11-4). Hicks had earlier defeated Kevin Gowlett 3-2 (5-11, 11-8, 13-11, 5-11, 11-4) – one of the many shocks of the weekend.

The losing Veterans Singles semi-finalists – Steve Kerns/Gary Young paired up to win the Veterans Doubles. They defeated Kevin Gowlett/Waseem Qureshi 3-1 (11-8, 9-11, 11-7, 11-4) in the final.

The scratch Gowlett/Qureshi pairing had ousted second seeds John Cleasby/David Cole 3-1 (11-3, 9-11, 11-8, 11-5) to book their final appearance.

Terry Dowsett is the Veterans Over 50s Champion. He needed four games to get the better of John Cleasby 3-1 (9-11, 11-6, 11-9, 11-7) in the semi-final and he produced his "A" game in the final powering his way to a 3-0 (11-5, 11-9, 11-6) victory over Peter Ballard. Peter defeated fellow defender Ian Whiteside 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-6) to advance to the final after Ian had taken out John Tandler 3-1 (11-3, 11-6, 10-12, 11-7).

John Holland is the Over 60s Champion for the third time. He beat Steve Buer 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 11-2) in the semi-final and he turned on the style to defeat Ian Whiteside 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-2) in the final. Ian had made his mark in no uncertain terms. He ousted Peter Ballard 3-2 (11-8, 12-14, 5-11, 11-5, 11-9) – yet another upset.

The Under 21 Singles produced one of the biggest shocks of the weekend. The favourite Brandon Crouchman, a quarter-finalist in the Mens' Singles met his match in his semi-final against Robert Shrimpton.

Robert raced into a 2-0 lead only to find himself pegged back to 2-2. The advantage looked to be with Brandon but Robert was having none of it. Robert won the decider 11-4 to complete a most dramatic 3-2 (14-12, 11-9, 5-11, 2-11, 11-4) victory. He will face Scott Dowsett in the final. Scott defeated last year's runner-up James Austin 3-0 (11-9, 12-10, 11-7) in their semi-final encounter.

Brandon Crouchman was able to put his disappointment in the Under 21 Singles firmly behind him with a controlled performance to win the Junior Boys Singles for the fourth time. He beat old rival Scott Dowsett 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 11-8) in the final. Brandon beat Chris Denyer 3-0 (11-1, 11-5, 11-5) in the semi-final whilst Scott was also a 3-0 winner. He beat Ryan Gooday 3-0 (11-5, 11-7, 11-6).

Chris Denyer retained his Under 16 Singles title although he had to dig deep to do so. He beat Andrew Wood 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-9) and he had to fight back from 2-0 down to get the better of Charlie Mariner 3-2 (6-11, 8-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-9).

The final was also hotly contested and Chris eventually beat Ryan Gooday 3-1 (11-8, 11-6, 8-11, 14-12). Ryan had needed all five games to beat Daniel Berry 3-2 (6-11, 12-10, 11-5, 14-16, 11-3) in the semi-final and Peter Windley 3-2 (5-11, 11-6, 11-13, 11-6, 11-8) a round earlier.

Ryan Gooday came into his own in the Under 14 Singles. He took the title with wins over Andrew Wood 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-3) and in the final Adam Kirchell 3-0 (11-7, 12-10, 11-6). Adam booked his final place by getting the better of Thomas Nguyen 3-1 (11-7, 8-11, 11-6, 11-6).

Brandon Crouchman/Scott Dowsett won the Junior Doubles for the fourth time. However, they were pushed harder than they might have expected. Peter Windley/Josh Watts only succumbed 3-0 (12-10, 11-9, 11-3) whilst Ryan Gooday/Sarah Austin took the third game in the final before succumbing 3-1 (12-10, 11-7, 12-14, 11-5).

The Junior Girls Singles Round-Robin event was hotly contested. Sarah Austin retained her title for the fourth year by beating Jennifer Crapnell by a last gasp 3-2 (11-9, 12-10, 7-11, 10-12, 12-10) margin. Jennifer sealed second position by defeating Rebecca Denyer 3-1 (11-7, 7-11, 11-9, 11-7).

Martin Hiskey retained his Junior Handicap Singles title. He always looked a likely winner beating Rebecca Denyer 3-1 (11-3, 11-9, 3-11, 11-7), Peter Windley 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 11-3), Thomas Nguyen 3-0 (11-2, 11-2, 11-7) and Sarah Austin 3-1 (11-5, 11-7, 10-12, 11-6).

Sunday's play was dominated by the four Divisional Singles competitions and there was a 'first occurrence' in the Division Two Singles – both finalists came from Division Three.

John Tandler won the title the hard way. His 'cast-iron' defensive play left a trail of five set victims in his wake. John beat Steven Whiteley 3-2 (11-6, 11-5, 11-13, 9-11, 11-9) and then Chris Buer 3-2 (9-11, 11-7, 11-7, 5-11, 14-12). The next round was only marginally easier, and this time John saw off Waseem Qureshi 3-2 (11-13, 11-1, 11-5, 12-14, 11-7).

It was odds-on that the final would go to five ends and John needed all of his experience to get the better of Scott Dowsett 3-2 (11-5, 8-11, 11-4, 6-11, 11-9). The very hard-hitting Dowsett had impressed in the top half of the draw. He struck some major blows for Division Three as he beat Richard Storey 3-1 (11-4, 9-11, 11-3, 11-6) and then James Hicks by a last gasp 3-2 (17-15, 11-9, 4-11, 5-11, 12-10) margin and in the semi-final he ousted Michael Johnson 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-6).

The high standard in Division Three was also evident in the Division Three Singles final. This time John Tandler had to settle for the runners-up position. He lost to Robert Burton in a battle of the defenders final 3-2 (11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 2-11, 11-9). Robert beat Tom Elder 3-1 (6-11, 11-9, 11-9, 11-4) in the penultimate round whilst John saw off Neil Thompson 3-0 (11-6, 11-3, 11-7).

That very experienced campaigner Tom Elder is the new Division Four Singles Champion. He beat Ian Austin 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-7), Stuart Wintle 3-1 (5-11, 11-4, 11-5, 11-8) and he took the title with a 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-5) win over Wiktor Delimat. Wiktor had been hard pushed to see off Jennifer Crapnell 3-2 (11-7, 6-11, 11-7, 5-11, 11-5) although he beat Charles Yeung quite decisively 3-0 (11-3, 11-5, 11-6) at the semi-final stage.

Another experienced campaigner – Stuart Wintle won the Division Five Singles title. He took five games to get the better of Wiktor Delimat 3-2 (12-10, 12-10, 10-12, 11-6, 11-2) and he also needed the full five games to beat Daniel Berry 3-2 (7-11, 10-12, 11-9, 11-4, 11-3) but he held all the aces in the final. Stuart beat Charlie Mariner 3-0 (11-1, 11-6, 11-7). Charlie's Semi-Final opponent was one of the busiest players of the weekend – Jennifer Crapnell and he ran out a narrow 3-1 (11-9, 7-11, 12-10, 11-9) winner.

Ryan Gooday became the third player to retain the Handicap Singles title. Good going after a significant amendment had been made to his handicap of last year.

After losing the first game in the final he made no mistake in the next two games by beating Frank Hodge 20-22, 21-9, 21-9. Ryan beat Mohammed Mohseni 21-9, 21-19 in his semi-final whilst Frank's semi-final victim was Martin Hiskey who succumbed 21-15, 17-21, 14-21.

James Hicks/Guy McKenzie are the 2013 Handicap Doubles Champions. They beat Josh Watts/Ian Austin 21-12, 21-14 in the final having defeated Peter Mynard/Matthew Brown 21-23, 23-21, 21-16 a round earlier. Josh/Ian had seen off the challenge of Stuart Wintle/Peter Windley 20-22, 21-12, 21-7 to book their final appearance.

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