

Sibley survives classic to reach final

Author: [Russell Moore](#)

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Kelly Sibley won one of the most outstanding Women's Singles semi-finals ever seen at the English National Championships after she battled past a courageous Karina Le Fevre 14-12 in the seventh end.

Leading 3-0 and 11-10, nothing seemed difficult for the English no. 2, but over the next twenty minutes Le Fevre almost pulled off a miraculous win.

It started off as tight as it would finish with a 12-10 game going in favour of the second seed. She then followed that up with comfortable 11-3 and 11-4 games to seemingly cruise her way into the final.

However, after spurning a match point at 11-10 in the fourth, she was made to pay by Le Fevre who proceeded to squeeze every inch of performance out of her by cleverly using the angles of the table.

She won that game 13-11, which appeared to be a consolation, until another two tight 11-9 games also went to the girl from Cleveland.

In the decider it was everything to play for and it was Le Fevre who drew first blood, forcing Sibley to take a timeout at 6-3 down. However, after establishing a commanding 9-4 lead she was forced to take her own timeout at 9-7 with the defending champion fighting back.

At 9-9, Sibley benefited from a big net to force the first match point, although it was saved straight after by Le Fevre. At 12-11 Le Fevre got her first, and only, match point opportunity, which she narrowly missed after a long rally.

She was immediately made to pay by Sibley who earned, and won, her third match point overall to let out a large sigh of relief following the astonishing encounter that ended 4-3 (12-10, 11-3, 11-4, 12-14, 9-11, 9-11, 14-12).

Meeting her in the final is Joanna Parker after she played out a much more straightforward victory over Emma Vickers.

It was short work for Parker whose defensive abilities have seen her cruise through all of her matches in straight games – her semi-final match being no different.

Vickers had no replies to Parker's consistency and eventual fell to a simple 4-0 (11-8, 11-5, 11-6, 11-7) defeat.

Quarter-Finals

Kelly Sibley overcame a massive test from 14-year-old Tin-Tin Ho to reach the semi-finals after a high-octane six game quarter-final.

The relief on Sibley's face was clear to see after she had been pushed by Friday's Under 21 Champion all the way over a pulsating encounter.

Tin-Tin charged out of the blocks and was much quicker close to the table in the first two games to shock the defending champion into a two-game deficit. However, Sibley's experience, level-head and most importantly power guided her through the final four games.

Having been unsettled by the fast hands of the 14-year-old, she finally found her rhythm to ease through four straight games and win 4-2 (5-11, 8-11, 11-6, 11-5, 11-2, 11-6). While Tin-Tin didn't have the power this time out, perhaps in 12 months it will be a different story.

Sibley's main threat, Parker had an easier ride to the semi-finals with a 4-0 victory over Yolanda King.

King had been the beaten Under 21s finalist but was given very few chances against the English no. 1 to make any impact. After winning both the first two games 11-6, she sealed the third 11-7 before completing the clean sweep in a dominant 11-2 fourth game.

Emma Vickers also made the semi-finals following her own six-game win against Hannah Hicks. She dominated the first game that she took 11-4 but was the unfortunate victim of a net on game point in the second to allow Hicks to level.

A 6-1 lead in the third put her back 2-1 ahead, only to see the English no. 3 retaliate again. However after that, Vickers attacking consistency proved too much for the expert defender as she saw off the final two games 11-9 and 11-7.

It was also six games for Karina Le Fevre to beat Tressa Armitage. After matching each other blow for blow in the first four games, Le Fevre stormed the fifth and sixth games 11-4 to book a place in the semi-finals.

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