

Yongbo denies returning Kinlocke in Bristol GP

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Men's Band 1

Yongbo Zhang won a classic Men's Band 1 final against Garth Kinlocke to light up proceedings at the Bribar Bristol Grand Prix.

Yongbo had been in imperious form throughout the afternoon, winning his group before accelerating through the knockout stages without dropping a game. His wins over Nathan Thomas, Nicholas Yeung and George Downing sent out a real message of intent from the no.1 seed.

However, rather than meet any of the remaining seeds in the final, Yongbo came up against a resurgent Garth Kinlocke, playing with an old bat from his father's house, who struck up his rhythm of old to win a few brilliant matches.

Although he lost in his group to Yeung, he beat Dominic Sussex in four before battling past both Mark Scutts and Joseph Langham-Ferreira in five games.

He may of thought that he was avoiding a third successive five-end encounter when he led Yongbo 2-0 in the final. But the seventh seed for the Men's Singles on Sunday was in determined mood and fought back brilliantly.

In the end the final game could've gone either way after a timeout at 7-6 to Yongbo, but he took control from that moment and won four important points in a row to seal the title.



Women's Band 1

It was a late finish for the Women's Band 1 event on Saturday night in Bristol but it was worth it for Abbie Milwain who earned her title following an extensive semi-final tussle with Natalie Slater.

Milwain had won her group with minimal fuss and performed even better in her next match against Yolanda King as she waltzed to a 3-0 (11-2, 11-5, 11-7) win.

That set up her meeting with Slater which turned out to be one of the games of the day. After a fluctuating first four games, the pair traded blows in a dramatic fifth game which went deep into deuce before Milwain finally held her nerve for a 14-12 nail-biter.

Her final opponent, Jas Ould, also had to fight through a five-game semi-final to make the last stage, but couldn't maintain her form in the final. Although she squeezed past Annabelle Morle 3-2, she fell to an energetic Milwain 3-1 in the final.



Men's Band 2

Joseph Langham-Ferreira won the Men's Band 2 title at the UWE Frenchay Campus but his efforts were denied their grandstand finish after final opponent Sam Mabey was forced to retire with a hip injury.

Both players had performed admirably throughout the morning with Langham-Ferreira confident in knockout victories over Jon Hall, Christoph Zickert and Anthony Kent.

Mabey meanwhile had also been impressive after beating Rajan Waterman, Zoltan Hosszu and Nicholas Leung en route to the final, but his hip injury denied a true test of the Grantham Academy duo's talents.

One of the best matches of the band saw Leung defeat second seed Chris Lewis in a dramatic 3-2 (11-8, 4-11, 11-4, 9-11, 11-8) encounter.



Women's Band 2

Cherith Graham battled hard to become a surprise winner of the Women's Band 2 at the Bribar Bristol Grand Prix,

especially after losing her opening match 3-0 to Emma Tovey.

Graham recovered to beat Amy Blagbrough in her second match and sneak into the main draw, that's where her hard work really began.

She faced three consecutive five game encounters – all of which she incredibly managed to battle through. Firstly, she downed Emily Standing 3-2 (11-13, 11-5, 12-10, 9-11, 11-5) before defeating the experienced Sue Collier 3-2 (11-8, 7-11, 11-8, 6-11, 11-9).

Finally her endurance saw her through another full distance match with youngster Yuki Wat 3-2 (11-5, 11-8, 5-11, 7-11, 11-9) to deservedly book her final place.

Eventually, whatever adrenaline she had left won through as she raced past Irish girl Emma Ludlow 3-0 in the final. Ludlow had previously only dropped two ends in her entire campaign – both of which came in a tricky tie with Sandra Rider 3-2 (4-11, 11-5, 10-12, 11-8, 11-7)



Men's Band 3

Welsh youngster Callum Evans gave a fantastic performance throughout the Bribar Bristol Grand Prix Band 3 event to seal a surprise title from the sixth seed position.

Evans' achievement was made all the more spectacular by the fact that he had to beat both the first and second seeds to earn his well-deserved prize.

Having won group six he saw off Jamie Davies and Danny Lewis to set up a quarter-final with second seed Stephen Joslin. Despite suffering in a one-sided 11-3 opening game, the Welshman stormed back to win the next three games to make the semi-final.

He took his new-found momentum into the game with Conor Neenan whom he saw off in three before starting rapidly in his final against top seed Anthony Kent by winning the first 12 points.

Although Kent replied with an 11-9 second game, it made little impact to Evans' progress as he won the next two games to seal the title, dropping just eight more points.



Women's Band 3

Chloe O'Halloran secured her second title of the day, following her Band 4 success, after another comprehensive performance in Band 3.

She had already found her touch in the morning bands and continued that into her afternoon session where she topped group four ahead of Hiba Feredj.

The pair then went on to follow each other's path into the final on separate sides of the draw. O'Halloran beat Danielle De Jong and Amy Humphreys while Feredj had to overcome an extra round against Elayna McGlone before seeing off Sandra Rider and Natasha Walsh.

However, when it came to the final, O'Halloran was once again in control. Just like in the group match Feredj found it difficult to cope with the Irish girl's defensive skills and had to settle for a runner-up spot as O'Halloran sealed her second success.



Men's Band 4

Noor Owadally scrapped for every point at the Bribar Bristol Grand Prix and deservedly won the Men's Band 4 title after battling back in the final against Jack Anthony from 2-0 down.

It was the third consecutive match that Owadally had triumphed after going the full distance in the West Country as he had to work hard for his title.

After winning his group he had to survive tough matches against Tristan Gretton 3-2 (11-6, 16-14, 8-11, 8-11, 11-9) and Jac Jenkins 3-2 (11-1, 13-15, 6-11, 11-6, 11-4) before his final win against Anthony 3-2 (11-13, 8-11, 12-10, 12-10, 11-3).

Anthony himself had overcome a tough semi-final against a spirited Ho Yin Lee 3-2 (11-9, 9-11, 11-13, 11-6, 11-8).



Women's Band 4

It was a real Celtic affair in the Women's Band 4 final with compatriots Chloe O'Halloran and Erin Thompson battling it out for the title in Bristol.

Defender O'Halloran had shown great persistence and control throughout the morning session to drop just a solitary game en route to the final as only Bethany Farnworth could break through her impressive chop technique.

Fellow Irish girl Thompson, meanwhile, had replicated a similar set of results with her only game being surrendered to Lydia John in her group.

However, when the pair met in the final, Thompson couldn't find the requisite power or placement to break past O'Halloran's defences as she won through in three straight games.

Men's Band 5

Marco Tang had a long day at the Bribar Bristol Grand Prix but ultimately earned his second title following eight matches in Band 5 which meant a late finish close to 10pm.

Tang, who had already won Band 6, was in no mood to hang around but was forced to wait as the Band 5 proved to be one of the longest events. Tang beat Dave Fox (3-1), Giorgios Briskolas (3-1) and Hewley Griffith (3-0) to make the final.

There he had to wait for Kevin Hutchinson, who was held up by a bizarre incident with the draw which meant that George Dicker's match with Hutchinson was replayed.

Finally, after a tight 3-2 (8-11, 7-11, 11-5, 12-10, 11-8) semi-final win against Alan Walsh, Hutchinson came up against Tang for a title decider. However, Tang's class shone through as he won in straight games.



Men's Band 6

Marco Tang took home his first Grand Prix title from Bristol after an excellent run in Men's Band 6 in which he only dropped one game at the final stage.

He held a perfect record throughout his group which he maintained into the knockout rounds by defeating Kevin Hutchinson, Henry Tam and Alan Hewitt in successive 3-0 victories.

Georgios Briskolis had a similar record on the other side of the draw, including a surprise semi-final win over Alan Walsh 3-1 (11-7, 8-11, 11-3, 11-6). However, there was little Briskolis could do as Tang dominated their final to win in four games.

Bribar Bristol Grand Prix Results

Men's Band 1

Yongbo Zhang bt Garth Kinlocke 3-2 (9-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-7, 11-6)

Women's Band 1

Abbie Milwain bt Jas Ould 3-1 (5-11, 11-3, 11-6, 11-8)

Men's Band 2

Joseph Langham-Ferreira bt Sam Mabey (retired)

Women's Band 2

Cherith Graham bt Emma Ludlow 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-8)

Men's Band 3

Callum Evans bt Anthony Kent 3-1 (11-0, 9-11, 11-3, 11-5)

Women's Band 3

Chloe O'Halloran bt Hiba Feredj 3-1 (11-3, 11-4, 8-11, 11-2)

Men's Band 4

Noor Owadally bt Jack Anthony 3-2 (11-13, 8-11, 12-10, 12-10, 11-3)

Women's Band 4

Chloe O'Halloran bt Erin Thompson 3-0 (11-5, 11-7, 11-6)

Men's Band 5

Marco Tang bt Kevin Hutchinson 3-0 (11-7, 11-9, 11-8)

Men's Band 6

Marco Tang bt Georgios Briskolas 3-1 (11-8, 11-8, 6-11, 11-7)

Written by Russell Moore (November 16, 2013)

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