

# Celtic clash illuminates West of Scotland GP

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**Posted On:** January 26, 2014



An epic Men's final but did Rumgay or Howieson win?

## Men's Singles:

The Tees Sport West of Scotland Grand Prix came to a climactic Celtic finish with the home-grown Scots dominating the semi-final line-up in the Men's Singles.

Gavin Rumgay, Craig Howieson, Stewart Crawford and Niall Cameron ensured there was plenty of local interest at Scotstoun when the tournament came to a head on Sunday afternoon.

Top seed Rumgay had eased into the semi-finals without dropping a game after a successful group stage campaign and knockout wins over Daryl Strong and Ryan Farrell.

He met Cameron in the last four who had battled heroically in back-to-back five-enders against Colin Dalgleish and John Murphy. The eighth seed first saw off youngster Dalgleish 3-2 (11-5, 6-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-3) before producing the comeback of the day to see off the fourth seeded Irishman, Murphy 3-2 (7-11, 8-11, 11-4, 11-8, 11-5).

Cameron was the surprise package in the last four as both Howieson (2) and Crawford (3) made their expected meeting in the other semi-final. Crawford, who had beaten David Wetherill and Sean Doherty, came in as the slight underdog to Howieson who had won past Nicholas Leung and Calum Main.

With the four strong Scots in the semi-finals it was a test of how the quartet would perform when the National Championships arrive in a few weeks' time.

As it turned out, the semi-finals proved to be one-sided with Rumgay defeating Cameron 3-0 (11-7, 11-8, 11-8) and Howieson strolling past Crawford 3-0 (11-4, 11-8, 11-4).

When the top two seeds met in the final it produced one of the best exhibitions of passion and powerplay on the British circuit. It was Howieson who was quick out of the blocks – taking an 11-7 lead before forcing Rumgay into an early timeout at 6-2 in game two.

Despite the Scottish No.1 closing the gap and saving two game points at 8-10, Rumgay was unable to take his own at 12-11 as Howieson commanded an important 2-0 lead following a 14-12 hold.

It was at this point that the tide turned with the wily Rumgay working his way back into the contest. He won the third end 11-7 before winning a crucial point at 9-9 in the fourth with a delicate cross-table forehand to set up an 11-9 game and a 2-2 scoreline.

With the title's destiny still clouded, Rumgay maintained his form and reached the change of ends 5-1 to the good. However, undeterred, Howieson bravely fought back and eventually levelled at 8-8 to set up a thrilling

climax.

With everything to play for it was the second seed who took the bull by the horns and secured the next three points to finish a fantastic contest at the home of this year's Commonwealth Games.



### **Women's Singles:**

If the Men's Singles was all about the Scots, then the Women's Singles was all about the English as only Welsh girl Chloe Thomas broke the English stranglehold on the semi-finals.

Top seeds Hannah Hicks and Karina Le Fevre were joined by surprise package Emily Bolton and Thomas in the make-up of the Women's Singles last four.

While Hicks, Thomas and Le Fevre all won their group it was Bolton who produced the only shock as she defeated Gillian Edwards to secure the fourth seed spot.

From there she beat fellow English girl Cherith Graham 3-1 (8-11, 11-6, 11-7, 11-2) to set up a semi-final with Cleveland's Le Fevre, who had beaten Tees Sport Player of the Weekend Hannah Lynch-Dawson (IRL) 3-0 (11-5, 14-12, 11-6).

In the top half of the draw it was English No. 3 Hicks who was dominant – winning her group with ease before seeing off the battling Edwards in four ends 3-1 (11-9, 11-4, 10-12, 11-7).

Hicks met yesterday's Band 1 winner, Thomas, in the semi-final after the Welsh girl had come from behind to beat compatriot Nicole Hall in a close 3-1 (4-11, 12-10, 12-10, 11-9) match-up.

While Le Fevre saw off Bolton in four, Hicks maintained her progress with a straight games victory over Thomas to set up a repeat of the Senior Six Nations Women's Singles Final from Cardiff.

However, unlike on that occasion when Hicks had to recover from a 2-0 deficit to win 3-2, she was much more convincing in the lead this time and never looked back from an 11-5 opening game to seal the win, and the Tees Sport West of Scotland Grand Prix title in double-quick time.



### Men's Under-21:

Colin Dalgleish triumphed in an all-Scottish final against Daniel Swiatek to earn himself another Grand Prix title – this time in his home country.

With top seed Scott Barton unable to attend, it opened the draw to a different champion at Scotstoun with Dalgleish taking control.

The young Scot won his group, dropping only one end to Jersey's Josh Band on the way, before opening his knockout stage account with a 3-1 (11-7, 11-5, 6-11, 11-8) victory over Ireland's Ryan Farrell.

Dalgleish would then impart a second defeat on the Irish contingent with a 3-0 victory over Saturday's Band 4 runner-up, Tom Davis, to set up a final against fellow Scot, Daniel Swiatek.

Swiatek, who had won group 4, before beating Kevin Hutchinson 3-0 – won through to the final with a brilliant performance against young Welsh prospect Conor Edwards 3-2 (11-6, 7-11, 11-8, 9-11, 11-9).

However, in the final he couldn't match Dalgleish's new-found form and confidence as the Grand Prix regular clinched the title in three-straight games.



### Women's Under-21:

Lynda Flaws exacted revenge on her group stage defeat to Irish girl Hannah Lynch-Dawson to win her first Women's Under-21s at the Tees Sport West of Scotland Grand Prix.



Her endeavour was a big boost to the host nation as her spirited performances saw her through consecutive five-end matches at Scotstoun.

Flaws began well with a 'flaw-less' 3-0 win over Caitlin Cameron to open her account but fell foul of Lynch-Dawson's punchy attack in a 3-1 (11-7, 11-13, 11-3, 11-9) defeat to finish second in group 2.

However, the duo would be assured of a second meeting as both defeated their respective group 1 opponents in the semi-finals. Lynch-Dawson beat group 1 runner-up Rebecca Plaistow 3-0, while Flaws recovered from 2-1 down to beat Katie McGlone 3-2 (11-6, 6-11, 7-11, 11-5, 11-4).

As if that comeback wasn't enough she provided another gritty performance in the final to overturn a 2-0 deficit to Lynch-Dawson to win her maiden title – all that coming after the earlier defeat to the same opponent in the groups.



#### **Open Doubles:**

It was a case of youth versus experience in the doubles final as Chris Wheeler and Calum Main faced Gavin Rumgay and Niall Cameron late on Sunday at the Tees Sport West of Scotland Grand Prix.

It was apt that the final event in Scotstoun should be dominated by the host nation with the semi-final line-up consisting of four all-Scottish pairs.

In the bottom half of the draw, the young duo of Wheeler and Main punched a couple of major blows in the knockout rounds to make the final. First they disposed of Irish duo John Murphy and Peter Graham 3-1 (11-6, 11-5, 5-11, 11-9) before brushing off the challenge of higher ranked Scottish duo Craig Howieson and Sean Doherty 3-1 (12-10, 11-6, 2-11, 11-7).

However, despite one Main making the final, we were denied the chance to see the 'Main' event as Chris and Richard Main were beaten in their semi-final by Rumgay and Cameron.

Instead the final that was presented to the Scotstoun faithful was a surprisingly one-sided start for the junior pair.

After winning a close first game 11-7 they raced 8-1 ahead in the second en route to a 2-0 lead. However, the fighting qualities of Rumgay and Cameron saw them close the gap in the third before a huge rally at 6-3 down in the fourth saw Rumgay exclaim: "We want this!" and it proved so as they levelled the match at 2-2.

Keeping tradition, the last match of the Grand Prix had gone the full distance with the Scottish quartet keen to end their Glasgow campaigns on a high. Right until the final blows the pairs couldn't be separated – in the end Rumgay and Cameron were left to rue a missed match point at 10-9 as Wheeler and Main won through 12-10.



### **Veterans Singles:**

Strong by name, Strong by nature was the course of the Veterans' Singles at the Tees Sport West of Scotland Grand Prix as Ireland's Daryl Strong coasted to the title without dropping an end.

Strong was the top seed and comfortably justified his rank as he demolished the opposition late on Sunday.

Group wins over Derek Lundie 3-0 (11-8, 11-5, 11-3) and Dariusz Szymczak 3-0 (11-2, 11-9, 11-9) were followed up by a semi-final triumph over Peter Wilkinson 3-0 (11-7, 11-8, 14-12) and a second victory over Szymczak when the duo met in the final once more.

Although group 1 produced both finalists, group 2 was worth a mention as well after four of the six group matches went the full distance. Group winner Peter Cameron beat both Peter Wilkinson and Roy Coard in five while Wilkinson also beat Coard and Michael Curry beat Cameron after going all the way.

### **Sudden Death:**

Gavin Rumgay became the first top seed to triumph in the Sudden Death competition when he emerged victorious at his 'home' Grand Prix in Glasgow.

With a doubled-up £64 prize on offer the Scottish No. 1 was intensely focused on the job and disposed of fellow Scots Terry McLernon and Alex Wheeler to make a semi-final with Nicola Bentley.

On the other half of the draw GB Performance player Martin Perry worked his way through his fellow Scottish contingent to make a semi-final with Nicholas Leung. Having beaten John Hannah, Yaser Razouk and Sepehr Bidari, he defeated Leung with a clever serve to book his final place.

There he met top seed Rumgay, who denied Bentley the chance to become the first female Champion in their semi-final. At the last stage Rumgay was victorious once more to reap the £64 pot and claim his first Sudden Death success.

### **Tees Sport West of Scotland Grand Prix Results:**

#### **Men's Singles:**

Craig Howieson bt Gavin Rumgay 3-2 (11-7, 14-12, 7-11, 9-11, 11-8)

#### **Women's Singles:**

Hannah Hicks bt Karina Le Fevre 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-7)

#### **Men's Under-21:**

Colin Dalgleish bt Daniel Swiatek 3-0 (11-6, 11-4, 11-9)

#### **Women's Under-21:**

Lynda Flaws bt Hannah Lynch-Dawson 3-2 (9-11, 7-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-7)

#### **Open Doubles:**

Chris Wheeler/Calum Main bt Gavin Rumgay/Niall Cameron 3-2 (11-7, 11-3, 9-11, 9-11, 12-10)

**Veterans Singles:**

Daryl Strong bt Darius Szymczak 3-0 (11-5, 11-3, 12-10)

**Sudden Death:**

Gavin Rumgay beat Martin Perry

Written by Russell Moore (January 26, 2014)

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