

Joslin hopes for fourth time lucky at M&G Investments Chelmsford Champs

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Joslin faces Halling in Finals Night thriller in M&G Investments Chelmsford Championships

The 2013-4 edition of the M&G Investments Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League Annual Championships played at the Hylands School in Chelmsford produced a huge number of upsets with seeds falling by the way side in many of the events.

The four Semi-Finalists in the Mens Singles event which will be played on Monday 17 February 2014 at Old Chelmsfordians Association, Lawford Lane at 19.30 hours are the top seed Steve Joslin who will play the third seed Tony Halling and the equal ninth seeded George Reeves who will face another equal ninth seed – Mindaugas Sinkas.

The favourite Steve Joslin (runner-up for the last three years) looked to be in trouble in the first round when he trailed Chris Jacob 2-0 but showing great resolve he uncovered whatever mysteries Jacob's Combination bat style was throwing up to progress 3-2 (8-11, 6-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-2). Joslin was on his way and he stormed past Scott Dowsett 3-0 (11-4, 11-6, 11-5) and most impressively Rik James 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-5). Rik James, the Champion in 1998 and still one of the best players in the League had ousted the higher seeded James Denyer 3-1 (11-9, 13-11, 9-11, 11-8).

Tony Halling looked every bit as impressive as Joslin. He beat Gordon Gatherall 3-0 (11-4, 11-5, 11-5) and then last year's semi-finalist Michael Andrews 3-0 (11-8, 11-5, 11-7) and finally Ben Warner 3-0 (11-7, 11-5, 11-9). The stylish Warner, returning to the game after a 14-year absence had made his mark by beating Steve Kerns 3-1 (11-8, 8-11, 11-6, 11-8) and then Peter Hayden over three furious ends 3-0 (12-10, 11-9, 11-7).

The second half of the draw took on an open look before the event even started with second seed Keiran Lally having to withdraw through work commitments. scratch entry Simon Webber caused a major stir by removing team-mate Alistair Hill over five ends and then sensationally fourth seed and four times Champion Dave Cole, after trailing 2-0. Webber eventually turned back a 10-8 fifth game deficit to win 3-2 (9-11, 3-11, 11-9, 13-11, 12-10). They say that "all good things have to come to an end" and Webber met his match in the quarter-final where he was beaten 3-0 (11-5, 11-4, 12-10) by George Reeves. Reeves had earned his "right of passage" by ousting John Cleasby 3-1 (11-9, 7-11, 11-6, 13-11) and Paul Davison 3-2 (11-7, 10-12, 10-12, 11-6, 11-6).

Am inform Mindaugas Sinkas fought his way through to the last four by beating Steve Whiteley 3-1 (11-7, 10-12, 11-6, 11-7), Gary Young 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 11-7) and then Paul Cuming 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 11-7). Cuming had ousted Brandon Crouchman 3-2 (5-11, 8-11, 11-9, 11-4, 11-2) and Charles Sweeney 3-0 (11-6, 13-11, 11-8).

Minor shocks occurred in the Qualifying Groups with Alistair Hill winning Group five by beating Steve Kerns in five ends and John Cleasby finishing as runner-up in Group seven (behind Ben Warner) by beating Terry Dowsett 3-1.

Julie Johnson will be trying to win the Ladies Singles Final for an amazing 21st time. She booked her final appearance by beating Sarah Austin 3-0 (11-6, 11-3, 11-5) and she will face second seed Linda Attridge who beat Dawn Baldry after a widely fluctuating five ends 3-2 (11-5, 0-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-5).

The top seeds Steve Joslin/Michael Andrews, winners in 2011 and 2012 are through to the Mens Doubles Final. But, they came perilously close to taking a "first round bath". Scott Dowsett/Brandon Crouchman led 9-2 in the fifth end of a pulsating clash before the top seeds somehow inched themselves back into the frame. Joslin/Andrews eventually won 3-2 (11-6, 11-13, 11-5, 4-11, 13-11) and after this monumental scare they defeated George Reeves/Paul Cuming 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 13-11) and Alistair Hill/Rik James 3-0 (13-11, 11-9, 11-5). They will face Gary Young/Steve Kerns in the Final. Gary/Steve beat Ryan Gooday/Paul Nicol 3-0 (11-4, 13-11, 11-6) and they overturned a 7-10 fourth game deficit to defeat Ben Warner/Charles Sweeney 3-2 (9-11, 9-11, 11-9, 12-10, 11-6). After such a hard-fought victory their tails were up in their semi-final. They beat John Cleasby/Tony Halling decisively 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-5). Halling/Cleasby had earlier ousted the second seeds – Dave Cole/Peter Hayden after trailing 2-0 – fighting back to win 3-2 (4-11, 5-11, 14-12, 11-7, 12-10).

David Cole/Julie Johnson are odds-on Favourites to win the Mixed Doubles for a ninth time. They beat Robert Shrimpton/Jacqueline Smith 3-0 (11-7, 11-4, 11-6) and Paul Nicol/Sarah Austin 3-0 (11-8, 11-4, 11-6). Their opponents on Finals Night will be a name very familiar to older players – 1973/1974 Mens Singles Champion Steve Whiteley and Shirley Carroll. Steve/Shirley scored two hard-fought five end wins to make their way through to the final. They beat second seeds – Peter Hayden/Linda Attridge 3-2 (11-6, 8-11, 1-11, 11-8, 11-9) and then Brian Riedling/Dawn Baldry by an equally hard-fought 3-2 (10-12, 11-8, 11-5, 6-11, 11-8) margin.

There were no surprises in the Ladies Doubles. Julie Johnson/Linda Attridge took the title in a round robin event by beating Shirley Carroll/Dawn Baldry 3-1 (14-12, 5-11, 11-5, 11-9) and Jacqueline Smith/Sarah Bell 3-0 (11-3, 11-1, 11-5). Shirley/ Dawn defeated Jacqueline/Sarah to finish second.

Scott Dowsett will face Brandon Crouchman in the Under 21 Singles Final. Dowsett was twice taken to five ends. He beat Ryan Gooday 3-2 (12-10, 9-11, 10-12, 11-5, 11-5) and then last year's Champion – Robert Shrimpton 3-2 (11-3, 2-11, 11-8, 6-11, 11-7). Brandon Crouchman came past Charlie Mariner 3-1 (11-13, 11-1, 11-2, 11-4), then Daniel Berry 3-0 (11-2, 11-8, 11-9) and in the semi-final he produced some superb play to get the better of second-seed James Denyer 3-1 (11-9, 12-10, 9-11, 11-5).

There was ample consolation for James Denyer who won the Junior Boys Singles without dropping a game. He powered his way to the title with wins over Adam Kitchel 3-0 (11-3, 11-4, 11-5) and Wiktor Delimat 3-0 (11-7, 11-8, 11-9) and he beat Ryan Gooday 3-0 (13-11, 11-7, 11-5) in the final. Ryan Gooday booked his final place by defeating Daniel Berry 3-1 (11-4, 11-9, 7-11, 11-9) in the penultimate round.

Daniel Berry is the Under 16 Singles Champion. This time he defeated Ryan Gooday after a very hard fought five-set final 3-2 (12-10, 8-11, 11-5, 10-12, 11-9).

There was further success for Daniel Berry in the Junior Doubles. Paired with Charlie Mariner they beat Wiktor Delimat/Martin Hiskey by a last-gasp 3-2 (9-11, 11-4, 9-11, 11-9, 14-12) margin and in the final they defeated Ryan Gooday/Peter Windley, again in five ends – 3-2 (11-13, 13-11, 11-5, 9-11, 11-7).

Emily Wood came through a very competitive Junior Girls Singles event. She beat Jennie Crapnell 3-2 (11-8, 6-11, 11-9, 7-11, 11-8) and Sarah Austin 3-1 (7-11, 8-11, 11-3, 11-2, 11-7) to take the title whilst Sarah defeated Jennie Crapnell 3-2 (11-2, 6-11, 11-5, 9-11, 12-10) to finish in second place.

Nathan Fry became the Under 14 Singles Champion. He took the title with wins over Andrew Wood 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 1-15), James Hughes 3-0 (11-9, 11-3, 11-5) and Kristain Krejcirik 3-2 (11-6, 9-11, 7-11, 12-10, 11-9). Andrew Wood finished second.

Emily Wood also won the Junior Handicap Singles with victories over Lawrence Bartlett, Josh Watts, Wiktor Delimat and in the Final – Sarah Austin.

Numbers were down on the Friday night in the Veterans events – but this didn't stop some very hard-fought table tennis taking place. The Veterans Singles Final will be between George Reeves and Kevin Gowlett. Reeves will be attempting to win a title he won in 2002 whilst Gowlett – the 2013 Colchester Veterans Singles Champion will be contesting his first Chelmsford Veterans Singles Final.

George Reeves fought his way through to the final with wins over Steve Buer 3-0 (11-2, 11-6, 11-7), joint third seed Gary Young 3-2 (11-7, 9-11, 7-11, 11-6, 11-5) and joint fifth seed Steve Kerns 3-1 (10-12, 13-11, 11-8, 12-10). Kerns had made his mark by beating the holder and top seed Dave Cole 3-1 (11-8, 11-6, 7-11, 11-3) a round earlier. Kevin Gowlett beat Ken Sheard 3-0 (11-6, 11-2, 11-5), John Cleasby 3-1 (9-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-2) and second seed Peter Hayden over five fluctuating games 3-2 (11-7, 4-11, 7-11, 11-7, 11-8).

Gary Young/Steve Kerns retained their Veterans Doubles title. They beat Dave Cole/James Hicks 3-1 (11-8, 13-11, 5-11, 11-9) in the semi-final and in a very hard-fought final they battled back from 4-1 down in the fifth end to get the better of Peter Hayden/Kevin Gowlett 3-2 (9-11, 11-8, 11-9, 9-11, 11-7).

There were shocks galore in the Over 50s Singles. Ian Whiteside beat the holder and top seed Terry Dowsett 3-2 (4-11, 12-10, 1-11, 11-6, 11-9) to book his place in the final. It wasn't enough to take the title. That honour went to Babul McLeod who impressed by defeating John Cleasby convincingly 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-3) and he then battled his way back from 2-0 down to get the better of Chris Jacob 3-2 (7-11, 3-11, 13-11, 11-9, 11-7) and finally he beat Ian Whiteside 3-2 (7-11, 12-10, 11-6, 4-11, 11-5).

The top seed Chris Jacob became the Over 60s Champion. He defeated Colin Barham 3-0 (11-4, 11-3, 11-5) and then Ian Whiteside 3-1 (9-11, 11-6, 11-4, 11-7) and he beat Steve Whiteley 3-0 (11-9, 16-14, 11-8) in a closely contested final. Whiteley had made his mark by getting the better of John Cleasby 3-2 (11-6, 4-11, 6-11, 11-7, 11-9) a round earlier.

Sunday's play was dominated by the four Divisional Singles Championships. Waseem Qureshi became the Champion for the second time in the Division two Singles, another event where the form book meant little. Steve Northcott beat the top seed Scott Dowsett 3-1 (14-12, 11-5, 10-12, 11-9) before missing out 3-0 (10-12, 10-12, 5-11) to Waseem Qureshi. In the other half of the draw Ryan Pitt made his mark by beating second seed James Hicks 3-1 (11-7, 11-3, 13-15, 11-5) and then Steve Whiteley 3-1 (11-6, 13-11, 5-11, 11-7). Pitt fell at the semi-final stage against Robert Shrimpton over five ends 3-2 (10-12, 11-5, 6-11, 11-7, 7-11) and Waseem Qureshi then came through to capture the title by beating Robert 3-0 (11-8, 12-10, 11-9) in the final.

Neil Freeman excelled in the Division three Singles Championships. He looked to be in really good form as he battled his way past Frank Hodge 3-1 (11-8, 11-7, 9-11, 11-7) and then top seed – Robbie Burton 3-1 (12-14, 11-3, 11-9, 11-4). Neil was on a roll and this took him to the title as he beat Robert Shrimpton 3-1 (11-5, 6-11, 11-7, 11-5) and in the Final he saw off Allan Thompson 3-0 (11-8, 11-4, 11-9). Second seed Steve Northcott succumbed to Ryan Gooday 3-1 (10-12, 11-8, 9-11, 7-11) and Ryan in turn missed out 3-0 (3-11, 14-16, 5-11) against Allan Thompson.

The Division four Singles Final was an all OCs affair. Frank Hodge came out on top. He beat the top seed Daniel Berry 3-2 (8-11, 11-9, 11-3, 4-11, 11-8) to capture the title. Daniel Berry had to pull out all the stops to get the better of Victor Chan 3-2 (6-11, 11-9, 13-11, 9-11, 12-10) a round earlier.

Victor Chan, who came so close to making it the Division Four Singles Final came into his own in the Division five Singles event. He beat Jacqueline Smith 3-1 (11-5, 11-2, 7-11, 11-4) and after a last gasp thriller – David Gatherall 3-2 (11-5, 11-5, 5-11, 4-11, 15-13) and he saw off Peter Windley 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-7) in the Final.

The Tournament finished with the Handicap Singles and Handicap Doubles and as has been the case in recent years the younger players dominated the Handicap Singles. Wiktor Delimat was the Handicap Singles winner and he beat Peter Windley 21-11, 21-13 in the Final. He had disposed of Richard Storey 21-12, 21-9 in the penultimate round whilst Peter Windley defeated Steve Whiteley 21-17, 15-21, 21-13 at the same stage.

Ryan Gooday/Martin Hiskey are the 2014 Handicap Doubles Champions. They beat Scott Dowsett/Josh Watts in a three-end final (21-19, 12-21, 21-14) having beaten Neil Freeman/Wiktor Delimat 22-20, 21-16 a round earlier. Ryan Gooday/Martin Hiskey defeated Gary Young/Mohamed Mohseni 22-20, 21-18 at the semi-final stage.

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