

Joslin crowned Chelmsford Champ after 18-year wait

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Joslin crowned M&G Investments Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League Champion

As predicted, the favourite, Steve Joslin won his third M&G Investments Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League Men's Singles title played in front of a capacity crowd at Old Chelmsfordians Club on Monday 17 February 2014. Joslin had previously been crowned Champion in 1995 and 1996.

However, he didn't have it all his own way and the fluent and hard-hitting Tony Halling put up an excellent showing in their semi-final fighting back from 9-5 down in the fourth end to level at 2-2 before falling away in the decider. A relieved Joslin triumphed 3-2 (11-7, 11-13, 11-8, 11-13, 11-4).

The second Men's Singles semi-final featured two of the joint no. nine seeds – Minda Sinkus and George Reeves and it was Minda who 'weathered the storm' that most players experience when facing George's vicious serves and accurate forehand. Minda came out on top 3-1 (11-7, 4-11, 11-8, 11-9).

In the final, played at the end of the evening, Minda played some courageous shots (particularly with his high-octane super fast forehand) in an excellent second game which he shaded 16-14 and he was always in there battling for every point throughout the whole match. A composed Joslin, whose trademark is his superb control, never really looked comfortable although he eventually came through to win 3-1 (11-9, 14-16, 12-10, 11-8).

Scott Dowsett, runner-up last year, went one better this time in the Under 21 singles final. His opponent, Brandon Crouchman, (Champion in 2011) started by far the brighter and surged into a 2-0 lead. To Scott's credit he persevered and with his bullet forehand coming into play more and more he levelled the scores at 2-2. Scott kept his nerve superbly to win the decider for a 3-2 (2-11, 6-11, 11-8, 11-6, 11-8) win.

David Cole/Julie Johnson retained their Mixed Doubles title – their fifth win on the bounce by beating Steve Whiteley/Shirley Carroll 3-0 (11-7, 11-4, 11-5). Steve Whiteley – Men's Singles Champion in 1974 and 1975 gave a few glimpses of his play of years gone by but the overall efficiency and effortless play of the Cole/Johnson partnership always appeared to have something in hand.

There was an upset in the Men's Doubles Final when the left-handed/right-handed partnership of Gary Young/Steve Kerns toppled the no. one seeds Steve Joslin/Michael Andrews 3-2 (9-11, 11-9, 13-15, 11-9, 12-10). The scores give you an idea of how close the match was but they fail to mention that Gary/Steve were 10-7 down in the decider before somehow pulling through to win. This was a first Chelmsford Mens Doubles title for Gary Young – and a second for Steve Kerns (who won in 1995 with Nick Mills).

The Veterans Singles Final was every bit as close as the Men's Doubles and Kevin Gowlett was crowned Chelmsford Veterans Champion for the first time. He looked to have lost his chance when he served off in the fourth end leading 10-9 and then slipping out of contention in the decider. He held his game together superbly to inch his way back into the match and he eventually shaded it 3-2 (14-12, 9-11, 11-8, 10-12, 13-11).

The favourite – Julie Johnson duly won the Ladies Singles title for an incredible 21st time – her sixth win on the trot. Her opponent – the determined Linda Attridge matched her all the way to 9-9 in the first game but when Julie shaded it 11-9 the match turned in Julie's favour. Julie was always ahead in the second and third games as she ran out a 3-0 (11-9, 11-8, 11-4) winner.

Steve Kerns

Press & Publicity Officer

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