

McBeath's maiden GP win closes 2013/14 season

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David McBeath (all pictures courtesy of Michael Loveder)

Men's Singles

David McBeath survived two match points in his last 16 tie en route to securing his first-ever Grand Prix title at the Bribar London GP.

The Hampshire player had engaged few difficulties reaching the last 16 after winning Group 3 and beating Adam Laws 3-0, but found himself in severe trouble against Adam Harrison at 2-0 and 10-8 down.

Pulling out all the stops he crept through the third game 12-10 before easing home 11-8 and 11-4 to book a quarter-final berth with Richard Andrews.

The close nature of his last 16 battle with Harrison appeared to energise McBeath for the battle ahead as he defeated Andrews 3-0 (13-11, 11-8, 11-6) and top seed Darius Knight 3-1 (11-4, 7-11, 11-6, 11-8) to reach the final in Redbridge.

There were also shocks in the bottom half of the draw as the second seed Chris Doran and fourth seed Matt Ware were both beaten at the quarter-final stage. Doran lost 3-0 (14-12, 11-9, 11-7) to Kent youngster Lewis Gray while Ware's campaign was ended by the Bribar Nottingham Grand Prix Champion Tom Maynard 3-0 (11-8, 12-10, 11-8).

In the semi-final it was the 20-year-old from Kent who took bounced back from losing the first game 11-8 to take charge of proceedings. In a tight encounter Gray booked his place in his maiden final with a 3-1 (8-11, 11-8, 16-14, 11-9) victory over Maynard.

Waiting in the final was McBeath, who had previous experience in a final having lost to overall Champion Ryan Jenkins in Cardiff, but who had no answer for Gray's early barrage as the 7th seed raced to an 11-3 opening game.

However, rather than shy away from the challenge, McBeath fought back immediately to claim the second 11-1 before narrowly holding onto the third game 13-11 despite throwing away a 10-5 lead.

The challenge was therefore laid down for Gray to rise to and, although he tried his best, he fell painstakingly short as McBeath secured two crucial points from 9-9 to 11-9 to seal his maiden Grand Prix triumph.



Women's Singles

Angharad Phillips fought off a battling Karina Le Fevre in a dynamic Women's Singles Final to ensure there was Welsh glory at the Bribar London Grand Prix.

With most of the regular Grand Prix entrants from Wales participating at the 2014 World Team Championships, including Ryan Jenkins, Conor Edwards and twin sister Megan Phillips, Angharad alone flew the Welsh flag at the Redbridge Sports Centre in Barkingside.

Her lone vigil in London turned out to be a successful one as she won her group to set up a quarter-final with Ireland's Emma Ludlow, which she took by a 3-1 scoreline (11-9, 11-8, 9-11, 11-3). She then repeated that score against Emily Bolton (Cu) to reach the final.

On the other side of the draw, Karina Le Fevre won her quarter final against Kelsey Le Maistre 3-0 before an excellent 3-2 (11-7, 7-11, 12-10, 8-11, 11-9) victory over Lauren Charles (nee Spink).

In the final it was the Welsh girl who began well again by winning the first two games in quick succession but reigning overall Grand Prix Champion Le Fevre wasn't finished and fought back with 11-3 and 11-8 games to take the match to a deciding end.

The Cleveland girl extended her form into the fifth end and opened up two match points at 10-8 but was unable to convert as Phillips won the next four points to snatch the title at the death and send a message to the Welsh selectors.



Men's Under 21s

Gabriel Achampong was the shock victor of the Men's Under-21s with a superb 3-0 victory in the final over top seed and heavy favourite, Lewis Gray.

Gray, who had already made his way to the Men's Singles Final, was stunned by the aggressive attacking intent of Achampong who never let his levels drop following titanic tussles with both Marcus Giles and Hugo Pang in the previous two rounds.

The London Academy player saw off Pang 3-2 (7-11, 11-8, 16-14, 4-11, 12-10) in the quarters before defeating Giles 3-2 (12-10, 11-9, 5-11, 7-11, 11-9) to set up the meeting with Gray, who had also fought through his own full-distance semi-final against Alex Ramsden 3-2 (9-11, 11-9, 11-3, 7-11, 11-8).

When they met in the final you would have expected the top seed to win with relative comfort but this was not the case as Achampong charged out of the blocks to win the opening two games 11-6 and 11-8.

It looked as though Gray would begin a large-scale recovery in the third when he pulled himself back into contention with a 10-8 lead but four successive points from the dynamic Achampong ensured a quite brilliant title at the Bribar London Grand Prix.

Women's Under 21s

Yolanda King was the victor of the last Grand Prix event of the season as the Women's Under-21s finished last on Sunday evening at the Redbridge Sports Centre.

The tournament favourite won her group before fending off the challenge of cadet prospect Kate Cheer 3-1 (11-6, 11-5, 8-11, 18-16) in the semi-final.

In the other half of the draw Ireland's Ashley Givan was successful in winning her group but made hard work of her semi-final with Emily Bolton despite leading 2-0 at one stage.

Bolton's fightback was admirable but ultimately she fell short – losing deep in the fifth end 3-2 (11-9, 11-8, 8-11, 5-11, 11-9).

In the final Givan began well once more, winning the first game 11-6, but was blown away by King in the second end 11-2 and never managed to recover enough composure to stop the Kent youngster from claiming the final Grand Prix title of 2013/14.

Open Doubles

Matt Ware and Mike O'Driscoll rekindled their excellent doubles partnership to secure yet another Grand Prix title, and with it, a likely share of the top prize monies from the overall season pot.

Ware, returning after his surgery, teamed up with the experienced left-hander O'Driscoll to successfully win their group and defeat the family pairing of John and Jamal Dennison in the semi-finals 3-0 (12-10, 11-3, 11-5).

In the final they met Dean Cundy and Dan Kolesnik, a pair they had already beaten in the group stages, but who had forged their path to the final fixture by defeating both Adam Nutland/Luke Walsh (3-0) and Tom Maynard/Richard Andrews (3-1).

It looked as though the underdogs could sneak a surprise after winning a close 11-9 opening game but Ware and O'Driscoll fought back to level before taking the lead with a crucial 14-12 third end.

Any chances Cundy and Kolesnik had of overturning the result quickly evaporated in the fourth end as they were comfortably beaten 11-3 and had to settle for the runners-up prize.

Veterans

The top two seeds in the Veterans' singles contested the final of the London GP event with Costas Papantoniou emerging victorious in back-to-back competitions.

Having won on his previous Grand Prix appearance, Papantoniou confidently won his group before beating John Malone 3-1 in the quarter-finals to set up an interesting head-to-head with Clive Carthy.

There was little to choose during their contest but the agile Papantoniou just managed to evade the attentions of Carthy in the deciding game 3-2 (11-13, 11-9, 11-8, 9-11, 11-8).

Top seed Neil Charles, who had cruised past Paul Carter and Jimmy Walsh 3-0, met him in the final but couldn't prevent the domineering Papantoniou from claiming the title in four ends.

*Grand Prix points will not be completed this weekend due to errors in recording during the earlier part of the season. Full records will be rechecked and victors and prize monies allocated at a later date.

Bribar London Grand Prix Results:

Men's Singles:

David McBeath bt Lewis Gray 3-1 (3-11, 11-1, 13-11, 11-9)

Women's Singles:

Angharad Phillips bt Karina Le Fevre 3-2 (11-7, 11-8, 3-11, 8-11, 12-10)

Men's Under 21s:

Gabriel Achampong bt Lewis Gray 3-0 (11-6, 11-8, 12-10)

Women's Under 21s:

Yolanda King bt Ashley Givan 3-1 (6-11, 11-2, 11-6, 11-6)

Open Doubles:

Matt Ware/Mike O'Driscoll bt Dean Cundy/Dan Kolesnik 3-1 (9-11, 11-5, 14-12, 11-3)

Veterans:

Costas Papantoniou bt Neil Charles 3-1 (11-4, 11-9, 8-11, 12-10)

By Russell Moore (May 4, 2014)

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