

Kinlocke powers to band 1 success on GP return in Liverpool

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Liverpool Grand Prix 2014/15



Garth Kinlocke was in impressive form at Wavertree

Men's Band 1

Garth Kinlocke returned to Grand Prix action to win the season opening band 1 event after holding off Irishman Declan O'Brien's gallant fightback.

Kinlocke, who only managed a band 1 best of Bristol GP runner-up last season, was on top form this time around at the start of 2014/15 as he powered to the title.

After winning group 2 he dismissed Jersey's Josh Band 3-0 (11-4, 11-6, 12-10) and Michael Marsden 3-1 (11-6, 9-11, 11-4, 11-8) to set up the meeting with O'Brien in the final.

The Irishman, who was only a runner-up in his group to Jon Hall, recovered his form well to defeat Ryan Fellows 3-1 (5-11, 11-5, 12-10, 11-9) in the preliminary round before seeing off group 1 winner Mike Fraser 3-2 (11-9, 11-6, 9-11, 7-11, 11-9) and Roman Doryn 3-0 (12-10, 11-9, 11-9) in the semi-final.

However, the in-form Kinlocke was waiting for him in the final and started well – taking both of the opening games. To O'Brien's credit he fought back superbly to level the match at 2-2 and force a decider following 11-8 and 11-6 games.

Unfortunately for the Irishman his energy reserves had all been used up as he crashed to a dominant performance from Kinlocke in the final game 11-2.



Emily Bolton narrowly missed out in band 1

Women's Band 1

Angharad Phillips began the season in perfect fashion by picking up the women's band 1 title at the Liverpool Grand Prix.

With the women's prize money now equal with men's, the Welsh youngster will be pleased to be picking up a cheque for £65 and starting off her series campaign with maximum points from the opening weekend.

Her tournament began by sealing top spot in group 1 and receiving a bye into the semi-finals. There she met Derbyshire teenager Isobel Ashley who pushed her all the way in a classic 3-2 (10-12, 1-11, 11-9, 11-7, 13-11) battle that the Welsh girl did well to recover.

In the final she met Emily Bolton, who had finished runner-up to her in group 1 earlier on a points countback. Bolton, from Cumbria, actually beat Angharad's twin sister Megan Phillips 3-0 (12-10, 11-7, 11-9) in the quarter-finals before overcoming second seed Abbie Milwain 3-1 (11-8, 11-8, 10-12, 11-9) in the semis.

Despite her earlier win over Megan, Bolton was unable to complete the family double at the final hurdle as Angharad forced her way to a four-game victory to take home the honours.



A relaxed Joe Pilkington (r) posing with Joe Killoran earlier on Sat

Men's Band 2

Joe Pilkington and Ryan Fellows fought out one of the closest finals of the day in men's band two with no game decided with more than a three point margin.

Group 4 winner Pilkington scraped past Mike Fraser 3-2 (11-4, 11-9, 6-11, 11-13, 11-3) in his first knockout round before finding the going slightly easier against Martin Matuzevicius (3-0) and Jon Hall (3-1) in the last eight and last four respectively.

Fellows meanwhile, in the other half of the draw, won group 5 before beating Kieran Smith (3-1), Craig Feargrieve (3-0) and Callum Evans 3-2 (6-11, 12-10, 11-5, 6-11, 11-9) to set up the meeting with Pilkington.

There was little between the pair throughout but despite falling 2-1 behind, Pilkington rallied to take the final two games 11-9 and 12-10 and claim the title.



Band 2 finalists Sandra Kaczynska and Emily Bolton

Women's Band 2

Sandra Kaczynska emerged victorious from the women's band 2 event over English youngster Emily Bolton in the final at the Wavertree Sports Centre.

The woman from Yorkshire avenged her group defeat to Bolton by winning the final after a fast-paced contest 3-2 (6-11, 11-6, 11-8, 13-15, 11-6).

The pair also met last year in a Liverpool Grand Prix final, albeit in the band 3 event from 2013/14, which resulted in another victory for Bolton so Kaczynska was celebrating a landmark win.

Earlier in the knockouts Kaczynska beat both Lisa Radford and Zoe Cheesman 3-1 while Bolton, who earned a bye to the semi-final, saw off Joanna Roberts 3-2 (11-8, 9-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8).



Cutler and Bevington

Men's Band 3

The men's band 3 event at the Liverpool Grand Prix was a long, endurance test with Harry Cutler and Jody Bevington having to endure the full marathon as they contested the final after 21:30 on Saturday night.

Bevington, winner of group 5, and Cutler, winner of group 6, advanced smoothly through the knockout stages despite the late nature of the competition.

Bevington defeated Xin Li (scratched), Josh Harland (3-1) and Rory Scott (3-0) to make the final while Cutler had to progress through an extra preliminary round as he beat Kin Fung Chan 3-2 (4-11, 6-11, 15-13, 11-9, 11-7) before marching past Ryan Stockham 3-1, Joel Webb 3-0 and Joe Killoran 3-1.

The final, played between two weary competitors, was a low-key affair watched by the remaining grand prix crowd on Saturday night. In the end it was Cutler who emerged victorious in three games to close the opening day of the 2014/15 season.



Finn (l) and Roberts (r) fought out a dramatic band 3 final

Women's Band 3

Welsh girl Kate Roberts had to rue her own profligacy by throwing away a series of match points to give Rebecca Finn her second grand prix title of the day (after her band 4 win below in the morning).

Roberts had bravely found her way into the final after finishing runner-up in group 3 to compatriot Soffi Jenkins but recovered sufficiently to beat Danielle De Jong 3-2 (13-11, 11-13, 19-17, 10-12, 11-6) and Amy Humphreys 3-2 (9-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-13, 11-6).

Her opponent in the final, Irish girl Finn, had won group 2 before cruising past Amy Wells (3-0) and Rebecca Plaistow (3-0).

However, when the pair began in the final it was all Roberts. Leading 2-0 and 10-6 the game seemed over – it wasn't. Finn fought back to win the third 12-10 with six consecutive points.

At 10-5 up in the fourth game it looked as though Roberts had corrected her mistake, amazingly that wasn't the case. A second end spurned 13-11 took the game to a decider that unsurprisingly the bubbling Finn managed to take 11-6 to cruelly deny the Welsh girl of a deserved prize.



James Garrod won a nail-biting final

Men's Band 4

If the men's band 4 competition over the 2014/15 season carries on in the same vein as the opening event at the Liverpool Grand Prix then we're in for an entertaining campaign.

James Garrod, the tenth seed, managed to fight his way to the title including a classic five-end final against the eighth seed Joshua Harland.

Both won their groups before embarking on a long knockout run. Harland's including victories over Steven Gray, Kris Foster and David Wetherill while Garrod defeated Sam Do, Kin Fung Chan and Joel Webb to set up their final meeting.

The pair then traded 11-6 and 11-9 games to work their way into a deciding end which carried on deep into deuce. With so little to choose between them it was virtually a toss of the coin to decide the winner – eventually Garrod winning through 17-15 to close a dramatic encounter.



Band 4 winner Rebecca Finn

Women's Band 4

It was a battle of the Rebeccas in the women's band 4 event at the Liverpool Grand Prix as namesakes Finn and Plaistow fought it out in the final.

The tournament's top seed Plaistow won her group and took up her place in the final following a tight semi-final win over Ireland's Erin Pyper 3-2 (11-3, 11-3, 9-11, 5-11, 11-9).

Joining the Scot in the final was another Irish girl, Rebecca Finn, who managed to win group three and get past both Erin Thompson (3-1) and Beth Farnworth (3-1) before finding herself 2-1 down in the final.

However, the Irish girl fought back gallantly to win games three and four and secure that coveted grand prix crown.



Mishra come back in the final to pick up his second crown

Men's Band 5

Abhijay Mishra and Shah Masoudi met in an enthralling band 5 final late on Saturday night having overcome the odds to reach the last stage.

Mishra, won won the morning band 6 (below), came from winning group three to work his way through the knockout stages with a 3-1 win over Matthew Evans, 3-0 win over Alan Walsh and 3-0 victory over Sam Clayton to make the final. There he met winner of group 11, Masoudi, who had to overcome a series of opponents.

Samson Bekele (3-0), Kris Foster (3-0), Tony Whelan (3-1) and Callum Morrison (3-0) all fell by the wayside to the Yorkshireman.

It was close in the final between the two with Masoudi taking the opening two games but Mishra fighting back to

level at 2-2. With momentum on the youngster's side, he picked up his seconded banded title of the day with an 11-5 final game to seal the comeback win.



The finalists from band 6 - Cooper (l) and Mishra (r)

Men's Band 6

Teenager Abhijay Mishra began his 2014/15 season in perfect fashion by becoming the first player to claim a title after cruising to the men's band 6 success in Wavertree.

The Yorkshire youngster won his group to enter the knockouts as third seed. There he played dominantly to beat Ken Connor (3-1), Chris Price (3-0) and Michael Griffiths (3-0) to setup a final berth against top seed Timmy Cooper.

The Warwickshire player had won his group but had to battle past Matthew Evans 3-2 (11-6, 2-11, 7-11, 11-9, 11-9) in the quarters and Alan Walsh 3-2 (10-12, 8-11, 11-2, 11-7, 12-10) in the semis to make the final hurdle. However, once there it was all one-sided with Mishra triumphing in three straight games.

Liverpool Grand Prix 2014/15 Results

Men's Band 1:

Garth Kinlocke bt Declan O'Brien 3-2 (11-7, 11-9, 8-11, 6-11, 11-2)

Women's Band 1:

Angharad Phillips bt Emily Bolton 3-1 (11-9, 7-11, 11-8, 11-3)

Men's Band 2:

Joe Pilkington bt Ryan Fellows 3-2 (11-8, 8-11, 10-12, 11-9, 12-10)

Women's Band 2:

Sandra Kaczynska bt Emily Bolton 3-2 (6-11, 11-6, 11-8, 13-15, 11-6)

Men's Band 3:

Harry Cutler bt Jody Bevington 3-1 (11-5, 7-11, 11-8, 11-6)

Women's Band 3:

Rebecca Finn bt Kate Roberts 3-2 (11-13, 5-11, 12-10, 13-11, 11-6)

Men's Band 4:

James Garrod bt Josh Harland 3-2 (11-6, 6-11, 9-11, 11-9, 17-15)

Women's Band 4:

Rebecca Finn bt Rebecca Plaistow 3-2 (9-11, 11-8, 10-12, 11-5, 11-7)

Men's Band 5:

Abhijay Mishra bt Shah Masoudi 3-2 (9-11, 10-12, 11-7, 11-8, 11-5)

Men's Band 6:

Abhijay Mishra bt Timmy Cooper 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-6)

by Russell Moore (August 16, 2014)

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