

Doran wins epic Liverpool GP final

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Liverpool Grand Prix 2014/15



Chris Doran celebrates his moment of victory

Men's Singles

Chris Doran and Gavin Rumgay produced one of the best men's singles finals of recent eras as they opened the 2014/15 season in spectacular style at the Liverpool Grand Prix in Wavertree.

The young Englishman and experienced Scotsman produced a series of stunning exhibition-style rallies to wow the crowd in Liverpool and introduce the latest season of table tennis to some world-class performances.

Third seed Doran and second seed Rumgay were both untroubled right up until the semi-final stages where they suddenly found the competition a lot fiercer.

With the top seeds all progressing in the morning, a quarter-final line-up of top seed Darius Knight vs Matt Ware, Chris Doran vs Michael Marsden, David McBeath vs Helshan Weerasinghe and Gavin Rumgay vs Garth Kinlocke was sure to create lots of excitement.

While Doran and Rumgay were both comfortable in winning their last eight clashes in three straight games, the other two semi-finals would prove to be tense affairs.

England no. 8 McBeath and no. 14 Weerasinghe played out five excellent ends before the slightly higher ranked player from Hampshire snuck home 3-2 (13-11, 6-11, 11-6, 4-11, 11-8).

Meanwhile, there was high drama in the match between Knight and Ware with loud and aggressive rallies spurring the underdog Ware into a 2-0 (11-6, 12-10) lead. Soon after that he opened up a match point in the third but Knight was able to save it and take his own game point to close the gap with a 12-10 end.

The whole match then turned on a pivotal fourth game that went well into deuce with Knight again saving two match points before finally surrendering a third and giving Ware the win 3-1 (11-6, 12-10, 10-12, 15-13).

That exertion proved too much for Ware though as his exploits ultimately resulted in his shoulder being pulled out of place. Although he won the first game in his semi-final with Doran 11-9, he gradually weakened and had to shake hands at 0-5 in the fourth game – eventually leaving the venue in a sling.



Ware remained in a good mood despite his ailment

In the other semi-final Rumgay and McBeath went the distance with their meeting finally decided deep in deuce in the fifth end. From 10-8 up Rumgay spurned two match points but went on to save two from McBeath before finally sealing a dramatic win 14-12 and book his place against Doran in the final.

It had been quite a while since the pair last met competitively but there was no delay in finding a mutual rhythm as the duo started trading long topspin to topspin rallies from the start.

It may be a footballing cliché but if anyone fits the description 'good touch for a big guy' then Chris Doran is it. Time after time Rumgay would pound forehands at the Northamptonshire player but again and again Doran was able to retrieve and work a opening to win the point.

A close opening game was only decided once six game points had been saved – four by Rumgay and two by

Doran before the latter finally accepted a fifth to take it 16-14.

In the next two ends the pair would continue to trade blows with Doran opening a 2-0 lead before Rumgay replied to close the gap. However, they saved their best until the fourth game where a great battle commenced from 10-8 to the Englishman.

Despite being two match points down, the wily Scot fought back and kept his hopes alive through a series of excellent rallies – the match point save at 10-11 being of an extraordinary nature.

Unfortunately for him, Doran managed to grit his teeth and see his way over the line, sealing a 13-11 success to open the 2014/15 campaign with a Liverpool Grand Prix win under his belt. Look out for that one on YouTube when the video is uploaded as it's not to be missed.



No-one would've predicted the Milwain/Megan Phillips final beforehand

Women's Singles

Abbie Milwain was the surprise winner of the opening women's singles event of the 2014/15 season following an excellent campaign and a dominant performance in the final.

The student from Derbyshire was the first recipient of the newly-boosted prize funds for the women's competitions and walked off with £320 for her fine performance in beating Welsh girl Megan Phillips in the final.

The third seed successfully won her group on Sunday morning and received a bye to the quarter-finals where she met Sophie Neil. There she continued her fine form to beat Neil in three straight games 3-0 (12-10, 11-7, 11-7) before repeating the dose against surprise semi-finalist Nicole Hall 3-0 (11-9, 11-8, 11-7).

Hall, herself earned deserved credit after beating second seed Angharad Phillips 3-1 (11-9, 11-13, 11-6, 13-11) at the same stage that Angharad's sister Megan, scraped past Natalie Slater 3-2 (11-4, 10-12, 7-11, 11-7, 11-5) in the quarters.

Megan Phillips went on to provide the shock result of the tournament by cruising past top seed, and 2013/14 series champion, Karina Le Fevre 3-0 (11-2, 11-6, 11-9) in her semi-final to set up the meeting with Milwain.

The pair then traded early blows in the final, Milwain 11-5 in the opener, Phillips responding 11-6, before the English girl took control. Despite her nerves, she powered past her Welsh opponent 11-4, 11-3 to seal the win and record her first-ever women's singles grand prix win.

With extra prize money on offer at the end of the tunnel there might be a great incentive for the rejuvenated Milwain to carry on her progress and achieve the big overall prize come May.



Weerasinghe in action earlier in the day

Men's Under-21s

Helshan Weerasinghe powered to the Men's Under-21 title after successfully completing his campaign on Sunday afternoon without dropping a game.

The southern youngster had a delayed start to his efforts after his men's singles campaign continued into the quarter-finals but despite suffering 3-2 at the hands of David McBeath, he quickly pulled himself together to win his group and take his spot as top seed in the knockout draw.

There he raced to straight games victories over Joe Killoran, Joe Pilkington, Jac Jenkins and finally Liam McTiernan to seal the first under-21s title of 2014/15.

McTiernan had a much more interesting progression to the final on the other half of the draw. After winning group 2 he beat James Garrod 3-1 (11-6, 11-9, 10-12, 11-7) before overcoming the challenge of his own brother Daniel McTiernan 3-0 (11-4, 11-8, 11-5).

His final win was in a dramatic semi-final against Irishman Declan O'Brien 3-1 (11-8, 8-11, 11-9, 11-9) before falling to a dominant Weerasinghe in the final.



Women's U21 finalists Beth Roberts (l) and Emily Bolton (r)

Women's Under-21s

Emily Bolton won the first women's singles title of the 2014/15 season at the Liverpool Grand Prix after seeing off the threat of Welsh youngster Beth Roberts in the final on Sunday.

Bolton as the second seed in the tournament but with Abbie Milwain pulling out after her amazing women's singles exploits, she suddenly moved into the favourites position in Wavertree.

Her 3-0 (11-7, 11-9, 11-6) quarter-final win over Rebecca Finn and 3-1 (14-12, 11-5, 8-11, 11-5) victory in the semi-finals against Soffi Jenkins gave her a place in the final, justifying her new position.

She met Roberts at the last stage who had done well to win group three and then beat both Naomi Jackson 3-0 (11-7, 11-5, 11-2) and Amy Humphreys 3-0 (11-9, 11-4, 11-5) to book her place.

However, she couldn't raise her game at the crucial points as she was left to rue missed chances in both the opening games, going down 14-12, 13-11. She fought back to win the third but the young Cumbrian stopped any recovery in the fourth with an 11-7 game to take the honours.



Partnership of Dolder and Orzechowska in action

Open Doubles

Kev Dolder and Pawel Orzechowska won the first Open Doubles competition of the season at the Liverpool Grand Prix after staging an amazing comeback against Sam Cowan and Anthony Constantinou in the final.

The pairs met in the groups stages where Dolder/Orzechowska were winners to earn the second seeded spot in the semi-finals. There they cruised past Geoffrey Potjewyd/Frances Potjewyd 3-0 (11-3, 11-1, 11-5) to make the final.

Cowan and Constantinou were equally dominant in their semi-final as they brushed aside Rachel Baker/Annie Hudson 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-6).

They thought they had continued their progress and avenged their group loss from earlier when they took a 2-0 lead in the final but Dolder and Orzechowska fought back to take the next three games and pick up the title.



Veterans' finalists Neil Pickard (l) and Shah Masoudi (r)

Veterans' Singles

Shah Masoudi picked up where he left off on Saturday by winning the Veterans' singles after beating Neil Pickard in the final.

The band 5 runner-up only managed second place in his veterans' group 4 behind Peter Wilkinson but recovered his confidence in the knockout rounds to defeat third seed John Magnall 3-1 (11-5, 6-11, 11-4, 11-8) and then Stephen Green 3-1 (11-8, 7-11, 11-9, 11-8) in the semi-final.

The top seed Pickard meanwhile experienced few difficulties in winning his group before reaching the final with a 3-0 (11-4, 11-9, 13-11) win against Andy Frain and a 3-0 (11-7, 11-3, 11-1) triumph over Dennis Bromage.

However, when the winner of group 1 and runner-up of group 4 met in the final, a surprise scoreline was the result as Masoudi made a mockery of the rankings with a confident 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-6) win.

Sudden Death

Joe Killoran won his second Sudden Death competition, this time walking away with the grand prize of £50 after

adding his Liverpool crown to his previous Doncaster win.

The Cheshire player beat Harry Cutler, Marcus McDonald, Liam McTiernan, Daniel McTiernan and finally Aaron Beech to win the prize money.

Beech, who beat Neil Pickford, John Cheung, Kin Fung Chan and Dave Randall, didn't leave empty-handed as his exploits earned him a modest £14 for runner-up.

– To find pictures from the event head to our [Facebook page here](#)

Liverpool Grand Prix 2014/15 Results

Men's Singles

Chris Doran bt Gavin Rumgay 3-1 (16-14, 11-6, 8-11, 13-11)

Women's Singles

Abbie Milwain bt Megan Phillips 3-1 (11-5, 6-11, 11-4, 11-3)

Men's Under-21s

Helshan Weerasinghe bt Liam McTiernan 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-3)

Women's Under-21s

Emily Bolton bt Beth Roberts 3-1 (14-12, 13-11, 9-11, 11-7)

Open Doubles

Kev Dolder/Pawel Orzechowska bt Sam Cowan/Anthony Constantinou 3-2 (5-11, 6-11, 11-4, 12-10, 11-9)

Veterans' Singles

Shah Masoudi bt Neil Pickard 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-6)

Sudden Death

Joe Killoran bt Aaron Beech

by Russell Moore (August 17, 2014)

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