

Bristol Grand Prix: Day one report

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It has been a long and absorbing day at the record-breaking Bristol Grand Prix, with around 650 matches played on a day which featured just over 14 hours of continuous play.

Fittingly, the Men's Band 1 final was the last match on the table and was a high-quality affair between Grantham club-mates Joe Pilkington and Joseph Langham-Ferreira.

The action all begins again at 8.45am in the morning, with the Men's and Women's Singles featuring the likes of Ryan Jenkins, Gavin Rungay, Chris Doran and Karina Le Fevre.

Men's Band 1



Champion Joseph Langham-Ferreira (right) and runner-up Joe Pilkington (left) with Table Tennis England Competitions Officer Zach Ferris

Joseph Langham-Ferreira won the all-Grantham affair 3-1 against Joe Pilkington on his second match point as the last rally was finished at 10.53pm.

Pilkington made it into his first Band 1 final in brilliant style, taking the decider 12-10 on his second match point against Steve Beerling.

The second semi also went the distance as Federico Viterbo, who had defeated top seed Garth Kinlocke in the quarters, took on Langham-Ferreira.

And it was the Grantham youngster who took it, 11-6 in the decider, to the delight of the vocal watching contingent who had been cheering on both players.

By comparison, the final was eerily quiet as the watchers stayed neutral, and it was Langham-Ferreira – also in his first Band 1 final – who took the title.

Women's Band 1



Yolanda King (left) and Sanja Clements with Zach Ferris

Yolanda King prevailed in the round-robin format, winning all five matches to take the title.

Having dropped only one game in her first four matches, the decider was against second-placed Sanja Clements, and it proved a classic as King came from 2-1 down to win in five.

Special mention should also go to Lisa Radford, who also came from 2-1 down to beat Beth Roberts 18-16 in an epic decider.

Men's Band 2



Winner Garth Kinlocke (left) and runner-up Esben Larsen with Zach Ferris

Garth Kinlocke recorded an unusual double as he beat father and son entries from Denmark in the semi-final and final.

The Bristol Civil Service player, who got in as a scratch entry on the morning, needed five sets to beat father Jannik Larsen in the last four to set up a clash with son Esben for the title.

This time, it took only four games to decide the winner as Kinlocke kept the title in Bristol.

Kinlocke said: "They were completely different. Dad was a defender and I had to dig deep against him. He had a lot of backspin and I had to make a lot of effort to get the ball over the net."

Women's Band 2



Amy Blagbrough with Phil Thomas of Bribar

Amy Blagborough defeated Hiba Feredj in three straight to take the title back to Basingstoke. Blagbrough was in good form in the knockout stages but was extended in the groups by Kate Roberts of Wales, having to come from 2-1 down to win in five.

Men's Band 3



Ashley Facey-Thompson (left) and Jannik Larsen with Zach Ferris

After the disappointment of both himself and his son Ebsen missing out in Band 2, Jannik Larsen ensured a title would be going back to Denmark with a three-set victory over Ashley Facey-Thompson of Middlesex.

Women's Band 3



Winner Michele Reeves (right) and runner-up Sofia Uddnas with Table Tennis England Competitions and Event Manager Amanda Robinson

Michele Reeves gained revenge over two opponents who had beaten her earlier in the day to become another local winner.

The Failand TTC player had lost to Amy Blagbrough in the semi-finals of the Band 2 event, but defeated her in the semi-finals of Band 3 to go through to the final against Sofia Uddnas of Jersey.

Uddnas had beaten her in the group stage, but Reeves set the tone with an 11-1 opening game and went on to win in three straight.

"I think I tied her up a little bit, stopped her hitting," said Reeves. It feels great to have won."

Men's Band 4



Winner Lawrence John (left) with Phil Thomas, receiving awards from Bribar's Mike Chapman

Two amazing points rounded off a superb final as Lawrence John of Wales got the better of Kent's Phil Thomas in four.

John took the first two, but Thomas hit back in the third. But the real fireworks came in the fourth as Thomas fended off four match points and then, on the sixth deuce, crashed through the barriers yet still somehow got back on court to return the next ball. He stayed in the rally with more defence from the back of the court before John did put it away to bring up match point No 5.

A net cord in his favour looked to have settled it, only for Thomas to lunge forward and get the ball back on the table. More stoic defence followed before John put in an unreturnable smash to clinch the title.

Women's Band 4



Johanna Berge receives her trophy from Ron Rowley of Bribar

Bristol Civil Service player Johanna Berge was the day's first winner, making local advantage tell as she beat Lydia John of Wales in the final. Although the result was in three straight, the games were close, with two going to deuce as Lydia narrowly failed to emulate her brother Lawrence's victory.

Men's Band 5



Marc Castro (left) and Bryan Kwan with Zach Ferris

Bryan Kwan made it two titles on the day, having earlier won Band 6, with a four-game victory over Marc Castro of Wales.

Both semi-finals had gone the distance, Castro coming from 2-0 down to book his place in the final by beating Carl Baldry 7-11, 7-11, 11-8, 11-4, 11-7.

Kwan, by contrast, was never behind in beating local man Chris Price 12-10, 9-11, 11-6, 2-11, 11-9, and he carried that form into the final to clinch his double.

Men's Band 6



Bryan Kwan (centre) and Jeff Rigby with Ron Rowley

At 2-0 up with 11-3 and 11-4 games under his belt, it looked as if Bryan Kwan would win the final against Jeff Rigby at a canter.

But his Oxfordshire opponent dug in and won the next two 12-10 to take it to a decider, which Kwan took 11-8 to take the trophy.

Elsewhere in Band 6, there was a tournament debut for Sam Priestley, who with coach Ben Larcombe is conducting a year-long experiment to turn Sam from a social player into one capable of breaking into the top 250.

And it was a great start as Sam won his first match 3-1 against David O'Connell. He lost the first set 11-7, despite coming back from 6-0 down to lead 7-6. In the second, he saved four game points from 10-6 to take the set 12-10 and then pulled away to take the next two 11-8, 11-3.

It meant he went through to the knockout stages as group runner-up, where he lost 3-0 to Cade Short.

"I thought I would do a lot worse than I did," said Sam. "I played some very good people and I'm still getting decent scores against them.

"A lot of the time it was me messing stuff up. I need to get more shots back on the table. But give it a bit more training and a few more tournaments."

A reminder that the closing date for entries to the Nottingham Grand Prix is Wednesday, November 19.

[Click here to download an entry form](#)

Results

Men's Band 1: Joseph Langham-Ferriera (Sy) bt Joe Pilkington (Ch) 3-1 (11-8, 7-11, 11-6, 11-6)

Men's Band 2: Garth Kinlocke bt Esben Larsen 3-1 (11-9, 4-11, 11-9, 11-7)

Women's Band 2: Amy Blagbrough (Ha) bt Hiba Feredj (Mi) 3-0 (11-8, 14-12, 11-5)

Men's Band 3: Jannik Larsen (Den) bt Ashley Facey-Thompson (Mi) 3-0 (11-9, 11-8, 11-5)

Women's Band 3: Michelle Reeves (Av) bt Sofia Uddnas (Jer) 3-0 (1-11, 7-11, 7-11)

Men's Band 4: Lawrence John (Wal) bt Phil Thomas (K) 3-1 (11-5, 11-7, 7-11, 16-14)

Women's Band 4: Johanna Berge (Av) bt Lydia John (Wal) 3-0 (11-7, 14-12, 12-10)

Men's Band 5: Bryan Kwan (Mi) bt Marc Castro (Wal) 3-1 (11-5, 8-11, 11-9, 11-6)

Men's Band 6: Bryan Kwan (Mi) bt Jeff Rigby (Ox) 3-2 (11-3, 11-4, 10-12, 10-12, 11-8)

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