

McBeath and Loveridge taste singles title glory

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Darius Knight, who won the doubles title alongside Mike O'Driscoll in Jersey

The popular annual NatWest Jersey Open provided a feast of table tennis over Easter, welcoming top ranked players from all over the UK.

Day one

The tournament started with team events for two-player line-ups with singles, reverse singles and a doubles to decide the best of five matches.

The men's event had attracted no fewer than 17 teams, with some top Internationals on show. The top seeds, Darius Knight & Mike O'Driscoll, reached the final without dropping a game, seeing off Mark Scutts & Paul Hopgood of England and then Max Tupper & Luke Greenfield from Jersey to set up a semi-final against Jersey's Jordan Wykes & Josh Band, which they also won 3-0.

Wykes & Band had earlier seen off the experienced mainland pair of John Magnall & Geoff Ware and then took a hard-fought 3-1 win against Rory Scott (Sussex) & Calum Morrison (Scotland) with two matches going the full five.

In the bottom half of the draw, the second seeds from Hampshire, David McBeath & Matt Ware, made the semi with wins against Ben Foss (Guernsey) & Dylan Curry (Scotland) and then the Stacey twins from Guernsey, both 3-0.

They were joined in the semis by Jersey's Craig Gascoyne & Sam Perry from Derbyshire, who had negotiated Tom Marsay & Jack Messervy from Jersey and a tricky match against David Arrowsmith & Steve Smith from England.

As expected, McBeath & Ware joined Knight and O'Driscoll in the final, overcoming a spirited effort from Perry & Gascoyne by the same 3-0 scoreline.

The final was a much tighter affair. McBeath started against O'Driscoll and took the first game. The former European junior champion roared back to take the second with some deft winners. However, McBeath steadied the ship converting crucial winners to take the next two games and the match 3-1.

Next on were No 1 seed Knight against No 3 Ware. The left-handed Knight kept Ware under pressure and won the crucial points when it got to the business end of the games after Ware had pressed him throughout. Ware's persistence got him the third game at 13-11 although fortuitously with a faint long edge. Knight regrouped and put on the afterburners, racing to 8-4 before Ware missed at crucial point at 8-7 Knight eventually closed the match out 11-8.

With the match score at 1-1, the first game of the doubles turned into a war of attrition. Eventually after a number of deuces a serve by O'Driscoll drew an error from Ware and the No 1 seeds took a one game lead 16-14.

However, O'Driscoll netted at 10-10 in the second and Ware sent down a superb serve to square the match with a 12-10 game. McBeath and Ware edged ahead again 11-9 in the third and it was nip and tuck in the fourth until a couple of errors proved critical and the Hampshire duo closed out the match 11-9 for a 3-1 win to go 2-1 up in the overall match.

McBeath faced Knight in the first of the reverse singles. Knight took the first with some aggressive shots and the second at a relative canter 11-2. McBeath struck immediately 11-9 to claw a game back.

The fourth was cut and thrust and at 10-8 up Knight looked to be home and dry. However, McBeath forced an error and won on serve to pile the pressure on. He got this reward as Knight netted to give him the game to square the match. At 10-5 up in the decider, McBeath looked invincible but Knight won the next seven points to rapturous applause from the packed hall to take the event to a deciding rubber.

Ware faced O'Driscoll to decide the title and it was O'Driscoll who struck first, surviving a deuce ball from having been 10-8 up to win 12-10. Ware reached parity with another 12-10 game. The tension mounted and Ware suffered two foul serves and O'Driscoll took full advantage keeping his own serves tight to win 11-5 to go 2-1 up. And O'Driscoll then won 12-10 to settle the destination of the title.

The **Women's Team** event went to the Derbyshire's dynamic mother-and-daughter duo of Jane & Emma Vickers, who defeated Jersey's Kelsey Le Maistre & Sofia Uddnas. The scoreline was 3-0 to the much higher-ranked England pair. However, the Jersey ladies played very well and were unlucky not to take the doubles to force a fourth end.

The **Veteran's Team** saw the first local success though as Eugene 'Yogi' Ellis & Kevin Allen beat Dorset's Richard Barrett & Reinhard Lindner 3-0. This set up the final against the very canny pairing of John Magnall (Isle of Man) & Geoff Ware (Hampshire). The first match was pivotal with Allen against Ware. The Jersey player took the first two games 11-2, 11-4 and all looked plain sailing. Ware, though, took the next two equally cheaply and in a nailbiting decider the powerful topspin of Allen overcame the chopping defence of Ware to give the local duo a 1-0 lead. Ellis survived a deuce game against Magnall and closed his singles out 3-0. The doubles and the deciding match also went to the Jersey team, who recovered from a game down to take the title.

The **Junior Team** event saw Jersey and Guernsey players trying to unseat the No 1 seeds from Scotland. Jacob Gosselin & Luc Miller from Jersey were the first to try after negotiating their first match against fellow locals Tom Cotillard & Tanguy Billet-Masters. Calum Morrison & Dylan Curry from Scotland were on top form but found the Jersey pair firing on all cylinders too. Miller & Morrison battled out a great match with the young Scot before going down in three (9-11, 9-11, 7-11). Curry put the top seeds 2-0 up with a 3-0 win over Gosselin but the doubles went to the wire. The Jersey pair went 2-0 up and should have closed it out but the Scots took the third and survived match point to nick the fourth 13-11. The decider went to the Scots when at 8-8 they won crucial rallies to reach the final.

Jersey's top pairing of Jordan Wykes & Tyler Gosselin defeated Guernsey's Ben Foss & Luke Greenfield 3-1 in an entertaining match to set up the interesting final. In the end though it was the Scottish pair who held their nerve with Morrison in superb form to resist two comebacks from Jordan Wykes to clinch the deciding game 7-11. Gosselin took the first against Curry but once again the Scot sealed the match just 12-10 in the fourth. The Scottish pair then took the doubles 3-0 to deservedly claim the title.

Day two

The Men's Band 1 was a straight shootout between Mark Scutts from Sussex and Sam Perry from Derbyshire. Perry took the first two games 11-7, 11-8 but Scutts struck back in the third winning 11-6. It looked to be going to a decider with Scutts in the ascendancy but Perry put on the afterburners at 5-5 and did not drop another point to take the title with a 3-1 win.

Women's Band 1 was decided between Emma Vickers, Alice Loveridge and Jane Vickers. Loveridge, the former NatWest Ladies champion from Guernsey, took the bragging rights going into the Open singles on day three, winning both matches. The one against Emma was a close 3-1 (11-9, 10-12, 11-9, 11-5).

Men's Band 2 boasted a strong field with Perry and Scutts the respective top seeds. Perry won his group and Jersey's Chris Morshead beat the higher ranked Rory Scott and Calum Morrison to take the runner-up slot. Scutts won group 2 but there was more local success as Max Tupper beat David Arrowsmith and David Thompson to also take the runner-up slot. Perry and Scutts ended local hopes in the semis though, with Perry going on to take the title 3-0.

Women's Band 2 Singles was a close affair played on a round-robin basis. The local interest included Kelsey Le Maistre and Sofia Uddnas who will both be representing Jersey at the NatWest Island Games in June. The eventual winner was the highly experienced Jane Vickers who was unbeaten throughout. Uddnas claimed the

runner-up slot, losing just the one match to Vickers.

Men's Band 3 was one where the seeds struggled. Jersey's Jordan Wykes won group 1, unseating top seed David Arrowsmith, Scotland's Calum Morrison and Nottingham's Adam Feargrieve. The second seed Yorkshire's David Thompson also fell at the first hurdle with Jersey's Chris Morshead and Kent's Alan Taylor progressing from the group.

Ben Foss and Lawrence Stacey from Guernsey and Rory Scott from Sussex and Max Tupper from the hosts made up the other quarter-final places. Tupper beat Wykes in what turned out to be a great match which could have gone either way with the score 15-13, 18-16, 11-7. He then progressed to the final with a 3-1 win over Rory Scott.

In the lower half, David Arrowsmith got the better of Ben Foss 3-0 and then after some very patient play edged out the chop of Chris Morshead but only just after recovering from 2-1 down. The final was an all-out attacking affair. Arrowsmith took first blood and the second game was full of booming loops with Tupper winning some fantastic rallies. But it was not enough, with the Derbyshire player prevailing 11-6. The third game was nip and tuck and reached deuce. Arrowsmith then forced two errors to take the title 3-0.

Womens's Band 3 Singles was also played as a round-robin. This time local players were triumphant with wins against Guernsey's Erin de Carteret and Middlesex's Mariola Hyzyk. The winner was Sofia Udnass, who beat Kelsey le Maistre in the deciding match.

The **Men's Band 4** was a highly contested affair with Jersey's Luke Greenfield turning the form-book upside down in Group 1. Greenfield, ranked 28 for the tournament with 829 rating points, put paid to David Wetherill (No 18), Adam Feargrieve (No 19) and Guernsey's 2015 Island Games player Josh Stacey (No 15 and the Band 4 premier seed) for three maximum ranking points wins. Greenfield followed this by defeating the second seed Jody Bevington in the semi-final for another maximum win.

In the bottom half of the draw Jordan Wykes, after winning his group, also beat Guernsey's Josh Stacey and then Jersey's Yogi Ellis to make the all-Jersey final. Wykes's greater experience and shot selection proved crucial as he took the title 3-0.

Men's Band 5 attracted 24 players in six highly competitive groups. Jack Mills from Jersey, the top seed, reached the quarter-finals after winning his group. He then faced experienced Guernsey's Andre de Carteret who proved to be too hard a nut to crack.

Another local, Tom Marsay, also made the quarter-finals but was stopped by Scotland's Dylan Curry in progressing further. Young Luc Miller, also from Jersey, meanwhile was having some superb wins, topping his group and then beating fellow Islander Tyler Gosselin to reach the semi-finals, where he faced Luke Greenfield. Miller went on to make the final with another focused performance. Curry was keeping the Scottish flag flying, beating De Carteret to prevent a Channel Island final. In the end it was the young talented Scot who won the final with some aggressive shots, forcing crucial errors from his opponent.

Men's Band 6 also had a large field of six four-man groups. Jersey's Luc Miller excelled as the lowest ranked in group 1, beating his three opponents including top seed Dylan Curry from Scotland. After the preliminary knockout Miller faced experienced local Tony Wood and once again got a great win. He joined Jacob Gosselin in the semis, who had also won his group and then beat Middlesex's James Lennard in their quarter-final.

In the lower half of the draw, Jersey's Tom Marsay and Tyler Gosselin, the group 5 and 6 group winners, faced mainland opposition in the form of Dorset's Danny Allen and Scotland's Dylan Curry. The Jersey duo prevailed with Gosselin winning their ensuing semi. Luc Miller prevented a sibling final by defeating Jacob Gosselin and then proceeded to take the title against Tyler with some superb topspin forehands.

Day three



Singles champion David McBeath

It was another packed Geoff Reed Centre for the final day and climax of this prestigious competition.

The **Men's Singles** group seeds all negotiated the first hurdle as group winners. In the first round of the knockout though, top seed Darius Knight was taken all the way by a spirited performance from Rory Scott from Sussex. Scott took the first game and then levelled at 2-2 before Knight moved down a gear to seal the deciding game 11-5. Knight made the semi-finals at the expense of Jersey's junior player Jordan Wykes, who took the second game off him and played exceedingly well.

Second seed David McBeath had an easier passage, beating Josh Stacey from Guernsey and then David Arrowsmith without dropping a game.

The other seeds also had comfortable passage through to the semis. Matt Ware beat Jody Bevington and then Jersey's Chris Morshead in the quarter-final, also without dropping a game. Mike O'Driscoll, not to be outdone, achieved the same feat against David Wetherill and then Jersey's Craig Gascoyne.

So, the usual suspects lined up to chase the title. Knight was quick out of the blocks, taking the opening two games against Ware. The third went to deuce with Ware claiming four points without reply en route. Ware held game point but Knight closed the door with a three-ball kill off serve. In the end an unforced error on serve from Ware who went long gave the match to Knight.

The other semi was much closer. McBeath took first blood 11-8, only for O'Driscoll to hit back to claim the lead 11-5, 12-10. The fourth game and the match looked to be going to O'Driscoll but McBeath clawed his way back to 9-9 and then closed the game out on serve. The decider was real nip and tuck with both players entertaining the huge crowd with some breathtaking rallies. McBeath won a few crucial points as they approached the business end and upped his game just enough to close the match out 11-7.

In the final, Knight started briskly and was three points up at 9-6. McBeath kept his nerve and clawed his way back to 10-10. Knight was not to be denied though and he took the game 12-10. McBeath roared back in the second, forcing a string of errors from Knight and took the game relatively cheaply 11-5.

McBeath started the third buoyed by levelling the game score. The players traded some booming loops after some delicate touch play from serve and thoroughly entertained a highly appreciative and packed hall. Once again though errors from Knight some forced and some unforced cost him the game 7-11. McBeath was visibly pumped and put Knight under pressure from the start of the fourth, forcing a time-out at 4-1 up. Knight tried to re-group but his opponent did not release his stranglehold on the match and deservedly won the game 11-6 to take the title and the purse of £570.



Alice Loveridge won the women's singles

The **Women's Open Singles** was contested via a round-robin format. The top two seeds, Emma Vickers the defending champion and Alice Loveridge emerged as expected unscathed from the group encounters with only Loveridge dropping a game overall to Jersey's Sofia Uddnas who took the first 13-11.

The final started with both ladies attacking from the start. Vickers took a two point lead at 9-7 but Loveridge levelled on serve with some aggressive winners. Vickers reached game point but Loveridge struck back positively to reach deuce. She continued in this vein to close the game out. This visibly affected Vickers who went on the defensive in the next game. Loveridge continued to boss the exchanges putting immense pressure on her opponent. In the end she took the next two games to reclaim the title she had last won in 2013.

In the **veterans** final Mike O'Driscoll saw off a valiant effort from Jersey's Yogi Ellis, winning 3-0 (11-9, 11-5, 11-9).

In the **U21's men's** final, Jordan Wykes continued his good form over the weekend, overcoming Ben Foss from Guernsey 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-9).

In the **U21 girls'** final, Kelsey Le Maitre was just too strong for Guernsey's Erin De Carteret, winning comfortably 3-0 (11-6, 11-2, 11-5).

In the **restricted singles**, there was a close encounter between Paralympian David Wetherill and Jody Bevington, with Weatherill coming out on top 3-2 (11-13, 11-5, 6-11, 11-5, 11-9).

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