

Capital gains for champs Roberts and Bryant

Author: Paul Stimpson

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The Grand Prix series is building to an exciting climax at the Redbridge Sports Centre. Four overall champions have been confirmed so far, with plenty more action to come today in the Bands. Here's what's happened so far.

Men's Band 1



Craig Bryant

Craig Bryant made a triumphant first Grand Prix appearance of the season as he took the London title.

He came from behind to do so, losing the first set to Scotland's Niall Cameron before gradually asserting himself to win it 3-1 (12-14, 11-8, 11-7, 11-3).

Bryant said: "Most of my table tennis is in Belgium (he plays for Nodo), so it's time really that's stopped me playing more, and having a family at home.

"This weekend was free, so I thought I'd enter, and it's paid off so far."

Unofficial award for the most ridiculous scoreline of the day would probably be claimed by Adam Nutland and Joseph Langham-Ferreira.

The pair's five-setter involved three deuces, one of them into the 20s, as JLF twice levelled. It made the anti-climax of the fifth – which went to Nutland 11-3 – all the more surprising. The final reckoning was 11-6, 12-14, 21-19, 13-15, 11-3 – and this in a group match!

In the event, both men progressed, but with Matthew Leete and Luke Walsh also in the group, there were no three-setters and Nutland was also taken to five by Leete.

Nutland eventually ran out of steam in the semi-finals, beaten in three by Scotland's Niall Cameron (10, 4, 7).

The other last-four clash saw Bryant oust Adam Fuzes in three (5, 6, 9).

Nutland's run was enough to banish any thoughts of him being overhauled by the chasing pack and he duly ended the season as Band 1 champion ahead of Garth Kinlocke.

Women's Band 1

Joanna Roberts made it a double double by winning both the day's competition and the overall series, to match her feat from Band 2 earlier in the day.

The Yorkshirewoman was pushed closest by Cherith Graham of Lancashire – the 'War of the Roses' going to a fifth which Roberts took 12-10, having earlier seen her opponent come from 2-0 down to level.

Roberts won her other three matches in the round-robin contest, dropping only one other set, to Sweden's Elin Ingvarsson.

Zoe Cheesman was second, beating Graham in the decisive clash between the pair.

Roberts was delighted with her day's and her season's work. She said: "I've really enjoyed the season and a lot of women have been entering so some of the groups have been really strong.

"I'm 42 this year, so the whole thing is a challenge from the first match to the last – but I'll be back to defend them next season if I'm still fit enough!"

Men's Band 2

Luke Walsh took the day's honours by coming out on top in five against Viktor Kihlstrom of Sweden.

A scrappy first set went the way of the Swede, but the game suddenly livened up in an epic second. Walsh led 10-7, 11-10, 12-11, 13-12 and 14-13 but could not force the decisive point. That was until a timeout did the trick as he won the next point to take the set 15-13.

He took the third as well, and held match point at 10-9 in the fourth before a run of three points saw Kihlstrom level.

But Walsh was not made to regret that missed opportunity, finding his best form of the match when it mattered most to seal the fifth 11-5.

It was a measure of family revenge as well – Kihlstrom had defeated Luke's brother Ethan in the group stages, in another topsy-turvy five-setter (11-7, 6-11, 11-1, 7-11, 11-5).

Both finalists had three-setters in the last four, Walsh defeating Shaquille Webb-Dixon (9, 3, 4) and Kihlstrom seeing off Laurence Sweeney (11, 6, 8).

No change in the top three overall, Joe Pilkington taking the laurels, but Martin Matuzevicius and Matthew Leete crashed the money places by getting through the group stages.

Women's Band 2



Joanna Roberts won Women's Band 2 on the day and overall (picture by Michael Loveder)

Joanna Roberts won the battle of the top two in the series, sealing victory on the day as well as her overall title by beating Gosia Muda in four.

By reaching the final, Muda staved off any threat to second place from Zoe Cheesman or Amy Blagbrough. But she had to dig in to see off Sarah Horsnell in the last four, twice coming from a set down to win on deuce in the fifth (10-12, 11-9, 7-11, 11-7, 13-11).

Roberts' passage to the final was altogether less fraught as she beat Warwickshire's Rachel Pilgrim 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-8).

Men's Band 3

Chun Ying Yu engineered the turnaround of the day to claim the London Grand Prix Band 3 title.

Channel Islander Morshead won the first two at such a canter (11-1, 11-2) that when he made it to 10-8 up in the third no one could see any way back for Yu.

But he took the next four points after protracted rallies against the chopper and the tide had started to turn.

The next went 11-6 to the Northumberland player and so complete was the transformation that the fifth followed 11-3 as Morshead was unable to adapt his style. Just to crown his day, the disconsolate Morshead received a yellow card for throwing his bat after the final point.

The beaten semi-finalists were Matthew Daish and Sujay Jagannathan, the former succumbing to Morshead (1, 9, 5) and the latter to Yu (8, -9, 4, 8).

Overall, Matthew Leete was the winner ahead of Jody Bevington.

Women's Band 3

Lina Kazimieraityte made sure the title stayed in Essex as she defeated Sally Hughes 3-1 in the final.

Hughes at least had the consolation of improving on her group defeat to Kazimieraityte, which had been in three straight – and finishing second in the overall series was also pretty good compensation.

In the last four, Hughes had defeated Gosia Muda in three (9, 7, 4), while Kazimieraityte got the better of Amy Blagbrough, also in three (9, 6, 3).

That semi-final appearance was enough to ensure overall victory for Muda.

Men's Band 4



King Ki Wu won the Men's Band 4 event today (picture by Michael Loveder)

King Ki Wu was too strong for Miro Vala as he took the final in three comfortable sets.

Showing great ability to get the ball back on the table from all angles, the left-hander rushed through the first 11-4.

Vala looked as if he might level at 6-2 up in the second, only for Wu – aided by two edges in the space of four points – to turn it around with a run of nine of the next 10 points. He was never in trouble after that as he closed out the third 11-8.

The semi-finals had been much more competitive, both going to five. Wu appeared to be coasting when he won the first two sets against Chun Yin Yu, but he then had to re-focus after his opponent levelled. In the end, Wu closed it out 3-2 (11-5, 11-8, 8-11, 4-11, 11-5).

Vala, meanwhile, came from behind to beat Gloucestershire's Olly Tyndall 3-2 (11-8, 7-11, 7-11, 11-8, 11-8) in his last-four clash.

Tyndall had earlier ended the overall title hopes of Paralympian David Wetherill, who started the day eighth in the standings but as the highest-ranked player competing at Redbridge. Getting through his group earned him some prize money but Tyndall made sure he went no further, winning in three straight (8, 8, 6).

Overall, Wetherill ended in fourth, just one point off third place. Calum Morrison was the 2014-15 champion.

Men's Band 5

Lewis Mayhew and Reiss Vydelingum fought out a compelling five-setter to add to respective semi-finals which also went the distance.

It was Sussex's Mayhew who prevailed, though not before his Kent opponent had fought back from two down to level.

In the semis Vydelingum eventually overcame Dexter Sherin (4-11, 13-11, 10-12, 11-7, 11-4), while Mayhew had to dig even deeper to end Romaine Stewart's day (11-7, 13-15, 11-9, 2-11, 15-13).

The overall title went north of the border to Calum Morrison, who made it a double after topping the Band 4 standings. Alex Aston and Cade Short both garnered enough points to leapfrog Timmy Cooper into the top three.

Men's Band 6

Romaine Stewart made the most of a scratch entry by taking the day's prize in Band 6 with a 3-1 victory over Nial Akata.

It was something of a derby clash, and the Middlesex youngster came out on top against his Essex rival.

The semi-finals saw two Jersey players beaten – Stewart reaching the final courtesy of a three-straight win over Tyler Gosselin, though the set score hides the ups and downs of the match which the victor took 13-11, 11-3, 14-12.

Akata had a more routine last-four triumph over Tom Marsay – 11-9, 11-7, 11-6.

Overall, Cade Short had already done enough to win the title.

Results

Men's Band 1

Craig Bryant (Sx) bt Niall Cameron (Sco) 3-1 (12-14, 11-8, 11-7, 11-3)

Final overall standings: 1 Adam Nutland (Wo), 2 Garth Kinlocke (Ha), 3 Joseph Langham-Ferreira (Sy), 4 Stephen Beerling (K), 5 Jody Pilkington (Ch)

Women's Band 1

Round robin: 1 Joanna Roberts (Y), 2 Zoe Cheesman (Y), 3 Cherith Graham (La)

Final overall standings: 1 Joanna Roberts (Y), 2 Isobel Ashley (Dy), 3 Zoe Cheesman (Y)

Men's Band 2

Luke Walsh (He) bt Viktor Kihlstrom (Swe) 3-2 (6-11, 15-13, 11-8, 10-12, 11-5)

Final overall standings: 1 Joe Pilkington (Ch), 2 Ryan Fellows (St), 3 Callum Evans (Wal), 4 Martin Matuzevicius (Ha), 5 Matthew Leete (Li)

Women's Band 2

Joanna Roberts (Y) bt Gosia Muda (Mi) 3-1 (11-5, 13-11, 10-12, 11-6)

Final overall standings: 1 Joanna Roberts (Y), 2 Gosia Muda (Mi), 3 Amy Blagbrough (Ha), 4 Zoe Cheesman (Y), 5 Paulina Orzechowska (La)

Men's Band 3

Chun Ying Yu (Nd) bt Chris Morshead (Jey) 3-2 (1-11, 2-11, 12-10, 11-6, 11-3)

Final overall standings: 1 Matthew Leete (Li), 2 Jody Bevington (Wa), 3 Rory Scott (Sx), 4 Noor Owadally (Mi), 5 David Wetherill (Co)

Women's Band 3

Lina Kazimieraityte (E) bt Sally Hughes (Sx) 3-1 (11-5, 11-8, 7-11, 11-6)

Final overall standings: 1 Gosia Muda (Mi), 2 Sally Hughes (Sx), 3 Beth Farnworth (La), 4 Paulina Orzechowska (La), 5 Amy Blagbrough (Ha)

Men's Band 4

King Ki Wu (Mi) bt Miro Vala (Ca) 3-0 (11-4, 11-7, 11-8)

Final overall standings: 1 Calum Morrison (SCO), 2 Lawrence John (Wal), 3 James Garrod (Y), 4 David Wetherill (Co), 5 Jody Bevington (Wa)

Men's Band 5

Lewis Mayhew (Sx) bt Reiss Vydelingum (K) 3-2 (11-9, 11-9, 4-11, 7-11, 11-7)

Final overall standings: 1 Calum Morrison (Sco), 2 Alex Aston (Np), 3 Cade Short (Wal), 4 Timmy Cooper (Wa), 5 Tony Whelan (Ch)

Men's Band 6

Romayne Stewart (Mi) bt Nial Akata (E) 3-1 (11-9, 11-7, 5-11, 12-10)

Final overall standings: 1 Cade Short (Wal), 2 Timmy Cooper (Wa), 3 James Lennard (Mi), 4 Tony Whelan (Ch), 5= Sam Wiggins (Wa) & Alex Aston (Np)

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