

Milwain and Matsubuchi take London crowns

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Chris Doran and Karina Le Fevre were crowned 2014-15 Grand Prix champions at the season finale tournament in London.

Although neither won their respective singles events at Redbridge Sports Centre, they had enough points in the bag to ensure that they could not be caught by the chasing pack.

Men's Singles



Kenichi Matsubuchi on his way to winning the Men's Singles (picture by Michael Loveder)

Kenichi Matsubuchi added the London Grand Prix to the West of Scotland event he won earlier this year.

The adopted Swede didn't always have things his own way in the earlier stages but was unstoppable in the final as he overwhelmed David McBeath in three straight (11-6, 11-7, 11-7).

Both finalists got through their semis in four – McBeath against Matt Ware (7, -10, 8, 9) and Matsubuchi against Alim Hirji (3, 5, -8, 4).

Matsubuchi needed five to see off Tom Jarvis in the quarters, the 15-year-old coming from behind twice before his opponent took it 3-2 (11-3, 8-11, 11-2, 7-11, 11-7).

But the matches that got everyone watching were in the last 16, when the newly crowned series champion Chris Doran and serial winner Ryan Jenkins were both eliminated within minutes of each other.

Doran fell in an epic and well-supported encounter with Peter Cleminson, a former England No 1 Under-18 who had been living in Hong Kong until a few months ago and who was at his first Grand Prix for 12 years.

Cleminson raised a few eyebrows by taking the first two, but Doran won the third. As the crowd watching the tie swelled, the fourth turned into an epic. Doran saved two match points but missed several game points of his own before taking it 16-14.

But any thoughts of the tide being turned were banished as the decider remained close throughout. Cleminson held, and lost, match points at 10-9 and 11-10 – the former as he missed a gettable forehand, complaining loudly to the growing crowd that it was supposed to be his favourite shot.

But Cleminson's competitive juices were flowing and he in turn denied Doran a match point at 11-12, before finally taking his fifth chance to win it 3-2 (11-7, 11-9, 7-11, 14-16, 14-12).

Barely a couple of minutes later, Jenkins had also fallen by the wayside, losing 3-1 to Sweden's Mattias Augustsson (11-6, 10-12, 13-15, 7-11).

That meant Ware was guaranteed second place in the standings – he would have played Jenkins in the quarters and the Welshman would have taken second had he beaten Ware and gone on to reach the final.

Also worthy of mention was Ryan Fellows' defeat of Niall Cameron in the last 32, coming from 2-1 down to triumph 6-11, 12-10, 3-11, 11-5, 11-9. It helped Fellows to leapfrog Tom Maynard and take the final money position of fifth.

So Doran, who won three of the first four Grands Prix of the season, was overall champion. He said: "It felt better before Christmas when I was winning! This is a nice culmination of that – I was playing well before Christmas and I've managed to win it a little bit by default in the second half.



Chris Doran receives his series trophy from Table Tennis England Board member Anna-Lisa Tazartes (picture by Michael Loveder)

"It wasn't nice finishing with a last 16, but I had an operation on my nose seven weeks ago and this was my first tournament back. I didn't think I played badly, I came up against a player who had nothing to lose and played really well."

As for Cleminson, he admitted he had performed "beyond my wildest dreams" in beating Doran, even though his dummy ranking had seeded him 15.

"I was really nervous," he said. "I didn't think I would get to the last 16 – I was really happy to get through my group."

"It was an awesome game against Chris. I hadn't seen him for years and he's a really nice guy. There was a great nature to the game."

"I've really enjoyed it and I can't wait to play another."

Women's Singles



Abbie Milwain, who won the Women's Singles (picture by Michael Loveder)

Abbie Milwain ended the season as she had begun it, with victory in a Grand Prix.

Her four-set win over Yolanda King meant she added the London title to the Liverpool crown she claimed back in August.

King started quickly and looked in control of the first set until Milwain came through to take it on the first deuce. The Derbyshire player then ran through the second 11-3, only for King to reduce the deficit. But Milwain was not to be denied as she took the fourth.

It was also important in the final standings as Milwain overtook King's semi-final victim Emma Vickers to take second place, and the extra prize money that went with it.

"We'll be okay, I'm sure," said Milwain, who was driving both King and Vickers home after the event.

"This has been the most Grands Prix I've played in a season. When I won in Liverpool I was very happy but at this one I think I played better."

"I'm training a bit less at the moment as I'm just about to finish my degree, so I feel less pressure."

Milwain had reached the final courtesy of a 3-2 (11-8, 4-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8) victory over series champion Karina Le Fevre, while King impressively beat Vickers in three (8, 7, 9).

Le Fevre, needing to win one match to confirm her overall title, had a nervy moment in her first outing of the day as she trailed 2-0 to Helene Hjelmvik before coming through in five (-8, -5, 7, 6, 8).

And so the Cleveland player had won the overall title for the third year in succession.



Karina Le Fevre shows off the series champion's trophy (picture by Michael Loveder)

Le Fevre said: "It's really nice. I was obviously in for it all season but taking every competition individually. I got off to a slow start but it's nice to know I've been the most consistent player all season."

"I'm a bit disappointed with today but it gives me extra motivation to train over the summer."

It is also the first season of equal prize money for men and women, and Le Fevre added: "It's helped me with costs a lot more – I've been able to go further and to more tournaments and it's encouraging more women to go to more tournaments."

Men's Under-21 Singles

Tom Jarvis overcame Jack Bennett for the second time on the day to secure the London title.

He was taken to five in the Men's Singles but this time needed four to secure victory (7, -6, 4, 9).

In the last four, Jarvis had seen off Matt Leete 3-0 (13-11, 11-6, 11-6) while Bennett had come from behind to beat Ethan Walsh in four (-8, 5, 6, 7).

Walsh had himself enjoyed a notable victory in the quarters, twice fighting back from a set down against Christoph Zickert to take it in five (-8, 8, -3, 9, 8).

The overall title went to Welsh youngster Callum Evans.

Women's Under-21 Singles

Abbie Milwain made even more sure of the bragging rights for the car journey home – though she admitted feeling bad about beating Yolanda King on "the biggest edge ever" on the final point.

The Women's Singles had been decided in four sets, but this one went all the way before Milwain could celebrate a 3-2 win (6-11, 11-4, 11-8, 12-14, 11-7).

King at least had the consolation of finishing as series champion, ahead of Milwain – some counterbalance for the banter on the journey home.

The two finalists had overcome younger opposition in three in the semis – Milwain defeating Mollie Patterson (8, 5, 10) and King dominating Amy Blagbrough (2, 5, 5).

Veterans' Singles

Phil Snelson took victory on the day, but beaten finalist Dave Randall was overall champion.

Snelson's success was by a 3-1 margin (6, -8, 7, 4) but Randall's run saw him overtake Peter Wilkinson to take top place in the series.

Snelson's victim in the semi-finals was Chris Beckley, the score 3-1 (11-7, 8-11, 11-5, 11-9). Randall overcame Paul Martindill in three straight (6, 4, 3).

The overall champion, 66, said: "I didn't expect to win. I just like travelling around to the tournaments, and it keeps me fit. I'll be back next year."

Open Doubles

Matt Ware took the overall title and partner Kenichi Matsubuchi bagged his second trophy of the day as the pair beat Bryan Kwan & Chun Yin Yu in the final.

The scoreline was 3-0 – though the last set of the day was certainly eventful as it finished 11-6, 11-6, 17-15.

Plenty of five-setters in the earlier stages, including three in the quarter-finals.

Matsubuchi & Ware ended the interest of David & John McBeath (11-3, 11-6, 9-11, 8-11, 11-6) while Le Fevre & Vickers beat Craig Bryant & Aaron Fennell (11-9, 4-11, 11-3, 14-16, 13-11).

Kwan & Yu were taken the distance by Ryan Jenkins and Cherith Graham – it finished 8-11, 11-6, 11-9, 7-11, 11-9.

The semis saw Matsubuchi & Ware again go to a decider, beating Adam Nutland & Peter Cleminson 3-2 (11-7, 9-11, 9-11, 11-5, 11-7)

Kwan & Yu defeated Le Fevre & Vickers in four (11-1, 12-10, 5-11, 11-6).

[Click here to view all the final Grand Prix standings](#)

Results

Men's Singles

Kenichi Matsubuchi (Swe) bt David McBeath (Ha) 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-7)

Final overall standings: 1 Chris Doran (Np), 2 Matt Ware (Do), 3 Ryan Jenkins (Wal), 4 Craig Howieson (Sco), 5 Ryan Fellows (St)

Women's Singles

Abbie Milwain (Dy) bt Yolanda King (Sx) 3-1 (12-10, 11-3, 8-11, 11-4)

Final overall standings: 1 Karina Le Fevre (Cv), 2 Abbie Milwain (Dy), 3 Emma Vickers (Dy), 4 Yolanda King (Sx), 5 Isobel Ashley (Dy)

Under-21 Men's Singles

Tom Jarvis (Li) bt Jack Bennett (Sx) 3-1 (11-7, 6-11, 11-4, 11-9)

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

Under-21 Women's Singles

Abbie Milwain (Dy) bt Yolanda King (Sx) 3-2 (6-11, 11-4, 11-8, 12-14, 11-7)

Final overall standings: 1 Yolanda King (Sx), 2 Abbie Milwain (Dy), 3 Isobel Ashley (Dy), 4 Amy Blagbrough (Ha), 5 Amy Humphreys (Ng).

Veterans' Singles

Phil Snelson (Sy) bt Dave Randall (Ha) 3-1 (11-6, 8-11, 11-7, 11-4)

Final overall standings: 1 Dave Randall (Ha), 2 Peter Wilkinson (Cv), 3 Tony Whelan (Ch), 4 Samson Bekele (Sy)

Open Doubles

Kenichi Matsubuchi (Swe) & Matt Ware (Do) bt Bryan Kwan (Mi) & Chun Yin Yu (Nd) 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 17-15)

Final overall standings: 1 Matt Ware (Do), 2= Cherith Graham & Ryan Jenkins (Wal), 4 David Wetherill (Co), 5 Jody Bevington (Wa)

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