



Welsh wonders earn Liverpool Grand Prix bragging rights

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MEN'S

Ryan Jenkins captured his 52nd Grand Prix title in a dramatic opening event of the season.

The legendary Welshman put in a calm and convincing display throughout the numerous stages, saving his best performance for last with a 3-1 victory over the sensational Ryota Kawai in the final.

Jenkins' composure was stark contrast to the competition in the hall, with shocks aplenty taking place. Gabriel Achampong's shock 3-0 victory over Mike O'Driscoll sparked the hall into life, with a siege of surprise results coming thereafter.

The biggest upset came in the shape of Ashley Robinson, who stunned second seed Gavin Rungay in a 3-1 display, whilst exciting youngster Ethan Walsh picked up one of his best wins yet, defeating John Murphy.

However, the eventual finalists were going about their business quietly. Jenkins overcame Gavin Maguire and Esben Larsen 3-1 before cruising to victory over Scot Chris Wheeler. That victory set up a semi-final tie with Paul McCreery, who couldn't contain Jenkins as he went down 3-0.

Meanwhile, Kawai's route looked challenging, but the Japanese star fought his way through big names like Chris Doran and Craig Howieson to make it to the final.

It was the final the crowd had craved for, and ultimately, it delivered. A tirade of powerful exchanges brought the best out of both players. It was Kawai who took the initiative with victory in the first end, but from there the match belonged to Jenkins. He tweaked his game, utilised his impeccable touch play and restricted his opponent to fewer openings. When the opportunity came, Jenkins pounced, and took his chances to claim the final three ends.

WOMEN'S

Charlotte Carey's quest to capture the Grand Prix circuit started in ideal circumstances as she reigned supreme in Liverpool.

Carey defeated third seed Gillian Edwards in the final, who showed great signs of improvement on her way to the showpiece, a fact replicated by her astonishing victory over second seed Karina Le Fevre.

Carey dropped just two games on her way to the title, coming out of her group with an immaculate record before defeating Emma Tovey 3-1 to advance to the final.

Amazingly, Edwards hardly made it out of her group after suffering a shock defeat to Sudden Death winner Kate Cheer 3-2. It meant Edwards had to win the rest of her matches, which she did... just. After a 3-1 win over Cherith Graham, she scraped her way past a valiant Soffi Jenkins and then Emma Tovey, battling to victory in the fifth set on both occasions.

It meant Edwards' quarter-final opponent would be Megan Phillips, who suffered a shock group defeat of her own to Isobel Ashley. It was at this point that Edwards really found her groove and registered an impressive 3-1 victory over the Welshwoman.

But it was her next victory that really stood out, as Edwards played with grit and panache to defeat Le Fevre, stunning the second seed in a 3-1 victory.

Unfortunately for Edwards, she couldn't overcome Carey. Despite being tied at 1-1, Carey's devastating forehand proved unplayable as she went on to claim her first Grand Prix crown of the season.

UNDER 21 MEN'S

Gabriel Achampong recovered from a shock defeat to claim the maiden Under 21's title of the season.

Having defeated Mike O'Driscoll in the men's event, Achampong was on the receiving end of a shock as he was defeated by Player of the Weekend Owen Cathcart, who eventually was knocked out by Joshua Bennett.

Made to do it the hard way, Achampong defeated Ethan Walsh, Abhijay Mishra and Jack Bennett to reach the final, which was also competed by Bao Long Li. Li overcame all before him, firstly coming from behind to beat Joe Killoran in five before beating Joel Webb and Joshua Bennett.

The final proved to be the last match of the entire weekend, and it produced a number of exquisite rallies that will last long in the memory.

An army of forehand exchanges were gruelling for both players after a long weekend, but Achampong's focus and drive to win saw him succeed, taking the match in five.

UNDER 21 WOMEN'S

Isobel Ashley was the maiden winner in the U21 series for the 2015/16 season.

Chesterfield's Ashley defeated Kate Cheer in an entertaining 3-2 final to end a challenging weekend on a high.

After coming through her group unscathed, the future Sheffield Hallam student defeated Charlotte Wetherby 3-1 to secure her place in the final with Kate Cheer, who had defeated Beth Atkinson 3-1 to advance to the last two.

After dropping the first end, Ashley recovered to win the next two ends 11-5. However, Cheer showed her fighting qualities again, taking the game to a decider with a fourth end 11-7 win. It was down to Ashley to hold her nerve, and she did so as she closed out the final end 11-7 to win the event.

DOUBLES

Irish duo Gavin Maguire and Ashley Robinson took the initiative in the doubles series following a 3-1 victory over

Charlotte Carey and Paul McCreery.

Maguire & Robinson jumped a number of tricky hurdles on their way to the crown, dropping just one game on their path to the final. Their most notable triumph came in the shape of Scottish pairin Craig Howieson & Chris Wheeler. Their thoroughly entertaining semi-final win over the Scots came after a 3-0 victory over Michael Fraser and Reece Lo.

Meanwhile, Carey and McCreery appeared to be on the same wavelength throughout, defeating teams such as Adam Nutland & Peter Cleminson and Ryan Jenkins & Cherith Graham.

Whilst they did drop a game in the final, Maguire & Robinson looked confident throughout and comfortably dispatched Carey & McCreery in the third end 11-4 before claiming the trophy with an 11-9 win in the fourth.

VETS

Tomasz Rzeszotko earnt revenge on Boguslaw Ogonek to win the Veterans competition.

Ogonek had got the beating of Rzeszotko in the group stages before defeating Paul Beck and Jannick Larsen on his way to the final.

He once again came up against Rzeszotko, who had responded to his group stage defeat by overcoming Zoltan Barabas and Semi Idowu 3-0.

An epic final pursued with both players spending parts of the game in control. Ultimately however, it was the top seed who prevailed by the narrowest of margins, taking the match 11-9 in the fifth.

SUDDEN DEATH

The day started with a piece of history, as Kate Cheer became the first ever female Sudden Death winner.

Cheer beat Dylan Curry, Fraser Riley, Connor Whitehead and Jack Bennett en route to the final, where she came up against Abhijay Mishra, who had defeated Adam Laws, Rhys Davies, Barry Cheer and Chris Doran.

With serve advantage, Cheer made the most of it to score the decisive point.

Men's

Ryan Jenkins 3-1 Ryota Kawai

10-12, 11-3, 11-9, 11-5

Women's

Charlotte Carey 3-1 Gillian Edwards

12-10, 9-11, 11-6, 11-8

Doubles

Maguire & Robinson 3-1 Carey & McCreery

11-9, 11-13, 11-4, 11-9

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