



Cambridgeshire Top 12: Jepson and Boulton take titles

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Twenty-four of Cambridgeshire's best table tennis players assembled at the Burwell Community Sports Centre in the curtain-raiser to the 2015/16 season.

The men's and ladies' competitions each begun with three groups of four and in men's group one, 20-time county men's champion and Cambs President Keith Richardson took on England Cadet Sam Chesterman, Ronald Cron and Paul Hillier.

The group saw some amazing table tennis with three of the six matches going to five legs, and the other three to four legs. Keith and Ronald won two matches each, and Sam and Paul both winning one each.

Group two was dominated by county champion Adam Jepson, who dropped only one leg in his three victories over Harvey Dinkle, Steven Gray and Julian Tee. Julian got the better of Harvey and Steven, and Steven had a four-leg win over Harvey.

In group three, Mirek Pazdzior was unbeaten, while there were two wins for Martin Freeland, one for Kevin Gray and despite some close games Ben Brown was unable to get a win.

In the ladies' event, group one was extremely close with Emily Birt, Carrie Cope, Yan Gao and Tracey Sambrook in action. Yan unfortunately was unwell and had to withdraw after defeating Carrie but losing to Tracey, meaning Emily was handed a walkover in the final game.

Carrie raced into a two-leg lead against Tracey, but Tracey squared it at 2-2, before Carrie took the fifth leg. That result meant that they had both won two, with Emily and Yan one apiece.

The second group saw County No 1 lady Maria Boulton gain maximum wins over Helen Arnold, Diane Gutteridge and Emily Brown. Diane overcame Helen and Emily, and Helen finished third in the group with victory over Emily.

In the third ladies' group there were some really close games, with one of the six matches going to five legs and the other five to four legs. Current county champion Charlotte Boston proved the strongest, winning all three of her matches, surprise package Elaine Hanworth caused all sorts of problems only going down 11-6 in the fifth to Charlotte. Elaine was second in the group, with two wins over Georgina Lister and Anna Bridge.

The second round of groups saw Kevin Gray have to withdraw from group four and the competition due to a back injury, which left Adam Jepson to complete the group stages unbeaten as he overcame both Keith

Richardson and Paul Hillier.

Group five was won by Ronald Cron, whose five-leg win over Martin Freeland pushed him into second place in that group, ahead of Steven Gray and Ben Brown.

In the final men's group Sam Chesterman topped the group with wins over Mirek Pazdzior, Harvey Dinkle and Julian Tee. Sam's victory over Mirek was his only defeat in the group stages. Harvey Dinkle won his first match of the day with a tight four-leg win over Julian.

The ladies' second phase saw Maria Boulton complete another maximum, winning her matches against Emily Brown, Carrie Cope and Georgina Lister, who became the first player to extend Maria to a fourth leg. Georgina also got the better of Carrie and Emily, with Carrie claiming the third spot in the group.

With Yan Gao already on her way home, Elaine Hanworth continued her march with more successes over Helen Arnold in four legs and Anna Bridge in five. Helen's straight games win over Anna meant that she finished as runner up in group five.

Charlotte Boston's five-leg decider against Tracey Sambrook meant that she, like Maria Boulton, had finished unbeaten in her group with six wins out of six.

Diane Gutteridge's victory over Tracey gave her second spot in the group, with Tracey third ahead of Emily Brown.

Each player's points gained from their groups determined their place in the main draw. The table took a while to formulate as quite a few were level on points and we had to have a countback on legs.

In the men's event Julian Tee (8) was paired with Steven Gray (9) and came through to the quarter-final in straight games.

Amazingly, Ben Brown (12) who had not won a match all day, recovered from two legs down against Martin Freeland (5) to claim a quarter-final spot.

Paul Hillier (7) comfortably came through against Harvey Dinkle (10), and Sam Chesterman (6) was given a bye to the last eight due to Kevin Gray's absence.

In the quarter-finals, Adam Jepson (1) came back from a leg down to beat Julian Tee (8) in four games, Ben Brown (12) took the first leg against Keith Richardson (4), but Keith's experience saw him through 3-1.

Ronald Cron (3) also won the first game against Sam Chesterman (6), but the youngster clawed his way back, causing the upset of the round to take the next three games and a place in the semis.

Mirek Pazdzior (2) filled the final place in the semi-finals, with a routine, straight games win over Paul Hillier (7).

With the ladies' event running simultaneously, Helen Arnold (8) reached the quarter-finals with victory over Anna Bridge (9) in four games. Carrie Cope (7) also progressed, easing past Emily Birt (10).

Georgina Lister (6) had a walkover against Yan, and Emily Brown (12) emulated her brother Ben's performance to overcome Tracey Sambrook (5) in five games.

In the quarter-finals, after a close first leg 13-11, Maria Boulton's (1) consistent looping from both wings gave her success over Helen Arnold in straight games.

Diane Gutteridge (4) was relieved as she brought Emily Brown's run to an end, but had to come back from 2-1 down against the youngster.

Elaine Hanworth (3), who had started the tournament as an unknown quantity at this level, progressed to the semi-final as she bamboozled Georgina Lister with her pimples and unusual style. Charlotte Boston (2) completed the semi-final line-up, overcoming Carrie Cope.

Both ladies' semi-finals were won in straight games and both unbeaten ladies reached the final with Maria and

Charlotte proving too strong for Diane and Elaine respectively.

The men's semi-finals saw youth against experience, as the current county champion Adam Jepson took on Keith Richardson.

Adam took the first leg 11-8, but Keith pulled the next one back 7-11. Adam got away in the third and maintained his lead 11-6, and clinched the fourth 11-8 to reach the final.

Mirek Pazdzior proved to be too consistent for Sam Chesterman in the second semi-final, although the cadet was getting stronger with each game. Mirek closed it out 5-11, 6-11, 9-11.

The men's final saw Mirek Pazdzior take a close first leg 13-11, but Adam Jepson hit back to take the second 11-5 and the third 11-8. The fourth leg proved to be a marathon with both players refusing to give an inch. In the end Adam clinched the match and the TOP12 title 18-16.



Maria Boulton receives the ladies' trophy from Jeremy Locke from Melcon Homes Ltd

The ladies' final was also completed in four legs. Maria taking a 2-0 lead, 11-9, 11-8, but Charlotte fought hard to get back into the match and took the third 6-11. Maria went up a gear to win the fourth 11-1 and take the title.

Awards were also given to Sam Chesterman and Elaine Hanworth for the best performances of the day.

Cambridgeshire Chairman Martyn Livermore thanked Phil Morris, Martin Gray and the members of the Burwell TTC for their help with setting up the tournament.

The players were thanked for making it such an entertaining and competitive day of table tennis.

Cambridgeshire TTA would like to thank all of the sponsors, Jarvis Sports, Chemtest, Aldhouse & Smith, The Fox, Burwell as well as Jeremy Locke of Melcon Homes Ltd for their support.

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