



Noutch and Bolton set the scene in South Shields

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Men's Band 1

Simon Noutch warmed up for Sunday's Men's Singles with a Band 1 victory at the South Shields Grand Prix.

Noutch, given the fourth seeding for the singles, emerged unscathed from group 3 in band 1 to take his quarter-final berth. There he defeated Jack Dempsey 3-1 (9-11, 11-6, 12-10, 11-7) to face the surprise package Tomasz Rzeszotko who had earlier caused a shock to fell top seed Chris Wheeler 3-2 in the group.

Wheeler's day didn't improve as he was beaten 3-2 (12-10, 11-8, 7-11, 5-11, 11-8) by Bradley Tuttle in the first round, leaving him with many questions to answer ahead of the men's singles tomorrow, where he is seeded second to compatriot Craig Howieson.

While Noutch ensured of his place in the final with a 3-1 win over Rzeszotko, Cleveland player Alec Ward made his way through the knockout stages with victories over Tuttle (3-1) and Harry Dai (3-1) to set up the showpiece.

However, there wasn't quite the climax that there might've been as Noutch forced his way into a comfortable 2-0, 10-6 lead before stumbling over the line 13-11 in the third to pick up Saturday's main prize.



(l-r) Simon Nutch and Alec Ward

Women's Band 1

Emily Bolton emerged triumphant in Women's Band 1 and remained unbeaten throughout an excellent campaign on Saturday at the South Shields Grand Prix.

The Cumbrian had earlier won band 2 and backed up her fine morning efforts with five more composed performances. Victories over Zoe Cheesman, Isobel Ashley, Rachel Baker, Lynda Flaws and Emma Tovey sealed the win.

Tovey, in particular, had reason to be frustrated by Bolton's form as she finished runner-up in band 1, having also finished behind the England junior in the morning band 2.

The pair were equal on four wins apiece heading into the final fixture, but just like earlier, Bolton emerged victorious, this time in four ends 3-1 (11-5, 11-7, 13-15, 11-8).



(l-r) Emily Bolton and Emma Tovey

Men's Band 2

Bryan Kwan added his name to the list of band 2 winners this season with a stunning series of knock-out stage performances to cruise to the win in South Shields.

Kwan overcame a tricky group, beating Simon Nutch in four but losing to Shaquille Webb-Dixon 3-2 (8-11, 11-8, 11-9, 10-12, 11-8) to earn his spot in the first round on countback.

However, from there on in he was unstoppable, reeling off consecutive 3-0 victories over Harry Dai, Chun Yin Yo and Matthew Leete to take the title. He joins Ryota Kawai, Alex Ramsden and Callum Evans in a congested band 2 leaderboard.



(l-r) Matthew Leete and Bryan Kwan

Women's Band 2

Emily Bolton extended her lead at the top of the Women's Band 2 points standings this season with another title at South Shields.

Following her victory at Aldershot and second-placed finish in Bristol, Bolton won all five of her fixtures in the round robin event to boost her points balance in the race for the overall title.

Second placed Emma Tovey matched her stride-for-stride on Saturday morning, including a tight 3-2 (11-9, 7-11, 4-11, 11-7, 11-6) win over Beth Farnworth, but when the pair met in the final fixture, Bolton was commanding en route to a 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 11-9) victory.



(l-r) Emily Bolton and Emma Tovey

Men's Band 3

Shayan Siraj and James Garrod contested the final of the day as the Men's Band 3 event ended with a bang at the Temple Park Centre.

The top seed Garrod won his group while Siraj came through group 5 as the winner to set up their last 16 positions.

Garrod's route to the final saw him record victories over Jon Mickle (3-1), James Rule (3-0) and a tight semi-final win over Daniel Fielding 3-2 (10-12, 11-6, 9-11, 11-8, 11-2).

Siraj, meanwhile, defeated Lewis Carby (3-1), Lawrence John (3-0) and another thrilling semi-final 3-2 (8-11, 11-4, 5-11, 11-5, 14-12) over the unfortunate Keir Morton.

Having just recovered from that victory, the Yorkshire cadet – a current Under-14 National Champion, was slow out of the blocks allowing Garrod to build a deserved 2-1 lead. However, during ferocious rallies Siraj levelled the game 11-9 and took it to a 6-6 lock in the decider.

From there it was all Siraj who as able to rattle off five consecutive points and seal the top prize.



(l-r) James Garrod and Shayan Siraj

Women's Band 3

Beth Farnworth picked up the Women's Band 3 title with the unfortunate Kitty Chow picking up a second runners-up finish following her Band 4 result earlier in the day (see below).

Farnworth showed few signs of being troubled in what was a dominant display at the Temple Park Centre as she was never taken to five games in any of her five encounters.

One of her closest battles was against the eventual runner-up Chow who was defeated 3-1 (11-9, 9-11, 11-8, 11-6). In fact, only one match in the round robin competition went the full distance and that was in the form of an excellent comeback win by Lynsey Story over Charlotte Weatherby 3-2 (7-11, 6-11, 12-10, 11-8, 11-9).



(l-r) Kitty Chow and Beth Farnworth

Men's Band 4

The top two seeds met in the Men's Band 4 final as Lucas Papantoniou and James Rule safely steered their way through the groups and knock-out stages to reach the final hurdle.

Both nearly came unstuck en route but Rule managed to see off the challenge of Keir Morton 3-2 (7-11, 11-9, 7-11, 11-9, 11-5) in the first round, while Papantoniou resisted the challenge of Nick Gilmour 3-2 (11-6, 9-11, 11-8, 8-11,

11-4) in the quarter-final.

The contest in the final see-sawed dramatically in the first two games with the players exchanging games with comfortable leads. However, from there on in Papantoniou dominated, losing just four points upon securing the title.



(l-r) James Rule and Lucas Papantoniou

Women's Band 4

Holly Williams picked up her first banded win of the 2015/16 Grand Prix season with a round robin victory at the Temple Park Centre in South Shields.

She was the first victor to be announced on Saturday morning having comfortably won through to the title with four consecutive wins. Runner-up Kitty Chow was the closest to stopping her progress when they met in the opening encounter, however, she was defeated 3-1 (8-11, 11-9, 14-12, 11-8).



(l-r) Holly Williams and Kitty Chow

Men's Band 5

Joseph Cranna won the Men's Band 5 event with a five-set victory late on Saturday evening over Fraser Riley.

Scotsman Cranna won his group before fighting off Sam Pierce 3-1 (12-10, 5-11, 11-2, 11-9) in the last 16. A straightforward 3-0 quarter-final win against Danny Bajwa was followed up by another 3-0 win in the semi-final – this time against Joshua Walshe.

Riley made the final after winning through his group 6 before beginning his knock-out campaign with a 3-1 (11-13, 11-6, 11-9, 11-3) win over Thaaqib Saleem. He followed this up with a convincing 3-0 win over band 6

champion Jevon Chan before defeating Jack Cope 3-1 (11-5, 11-5, 5-11, 12-10) in the semi-final.

When Cranna and Riley met in the final the pair traded blows in the opening four games to force the decider which appeared to be going in Cranna's favour when he led both 5-1 and 8-3.

However, five consecutive points from Riley brought the Yorkshireman back into the contest at 8-8. The comeback wasn't enough though as Cranna took his first match point for an 11-9 win.



(l-r) Joseph Cranna and Fraser Riley

Men's Band 6

Jevon Chan remained unbeaten throughout Saturday's early proceedings as he marched to the band 6 title following a series of impressive performances.

Not seeded that highly, Chan unfurled a number of aggressive forehands from his penhold grip to not only win group 6 but to power through four knockout stage games.

Joe Walker was the unlucky participant in the final, despite taking the first game 13-11, he fell 11-7, 11-7, 11-8 in the next three as he couldn't keep pace with Chan's aggression. Walker earlier miraculously survived a quarter-final tie with Jack Cope where he trailed 8-2 in the deciding game before reeling off nine consecutive points to seal a remarkable win.



(l-r) Joe Walker and Jevon Chan

Results:

Men's Band 1

Simon Noutch bt Alec Ward 3-0 (11-5, 11-9, 13-11)

Women's Band 1

Emily Bolton wins round robin. Emma Tovey runner-up.

Men's Band 2

Bryan Kwan bt Matthew Leete 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 11-4)

Women's Band 2

Emily Bolton wins round robin. Emma Tovey runner-up.

Men's Band 3

Shayan Siraj bt James Garrod 3-2 (5-11, 11-5, 9-11, 11-9, 11-6)

Women's Band 3

Beth Farnworth wins round robin. Kitty Chow runner-up.

Men's Band 4

Lucas Papantoniou bt James Rule 3-1 (11-5, 5-11, 11-2, 11-2)

Women's Band 4

Holly Williams wins round robin. Kitty Chow runner-up.

Men's Band 5

Joseph Cranna bt Fraser Riley (4-11, 11-5, 9-11, 11-9, 11-9)

Men's Band 6

Jevon Chan bt Joe Walker 3-1 (11-13, 11-7, 11-7, 11-8)

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