

Life's a Pitch!

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: July 05, 2010



Life has its ups and downs as a player competing in tournaments, one time you're a villain the next, a hero! This was clearly demonstrated by Liam Pitchford or "Pitch" as he is affectionately called. His last performance in a Men's Open at a Grand Prix was an early bath going out in first round with the inevitable "bad luck mate" – yet in the next event you are a Champion with the plaudits saying "fantastic Liam you were razor sharp today" or as Del Boy once said, "It's all wot appens on the day Rodney, my son", and clearly it was Liam's day today in winning the Men's Open title at the Tees Sport Doncaster Grand Prix on Sunday the 4th of July against Ryan Jenkins in the final.

The consummate Gentleman Ryan Jenkins with his vast international experience who has played at the top level in table tennis and is a much respected dour competitor but now concentrates most of his time to coaching and development. He took the 17 year old English National Singles runner up to a masterclass five set spectacular with sensational rallies at almost every point. In the final analysis it was the younger Pitchford that played the bigger points better and was sharpest when it mattered most. The BTTF development squad player had to save match points in the fourth set trailing 1-2 and starring defeat in the face then played incredibly well to level at 2-2. In a last set turnaround Liam pulled out all the stops to nose ahead of the gallant Welshman taking the last set 11-5 to a standing ovation.

The event as always held its surprise results none more so than Emran Hussein taking a brilliant victory over 6th seed Matt Ware in the 2nd round. He soon departed at the hands of Pitchford (S3) who eased his way to the final enjoying results over Tomasz Rzesutko, Tom Maynard, Emran Hussein, and then a great triumph against the enigmatic showman Gavin Rumgay to reach the final. The brilliant Welshman Jenkins was also firing on all cylinders removing the likes of Danny Lowe, Sam Perry, a four set belter over Danny Reed (S5) then went one better to beat Norbert Tofalvi in the semi final.

The Hungarian player Tofalvi was in dazzling form displacing Simon Nutch, yesterdays hero Sam Walker, then enjoy a quarter final win over Chris Doran in straight sets to face Jenkins in the last four. Tofalvi took Jenkins to five sets but simply ran out of steam in the last set, leaving Ryan to face Pitchford in the final.



Kelly Sibley (S1) for the tournament duly obliged by winning the Women's Open beating Karina Le Fevre (S2) in a straight sets final. Kelly almost suffered an early loss in the group stage to Chloe Whyte coming through by the skin of her teeth 13-11 in the 5th set. Kelly dropped just the one set in the k/o rounds and that to Hannah Hicks in the semi final. The Ormesby player Karina Le Fevre played very well to displace Chloe Whyte and last four opponent Lucy Davidson to reach the last stage. Arguably the match of the tournament was the quarter final clash between Lauren Spink (S5) and Hannah Hicks (S3) that went the full distance. A most crowd pleasing contest between out and out attacker Spink against the defensive skills of Hicks. After being down and out at 0-2 in sets Hannah staged a spectacular come back. She ground out a brilliant 3-2 result over the fearless Lauren Spink who just kept on looping, pushing; attacking hard with cute short play, but in the end could not get through to close out the match. Egle Adomeyte (S4) fell at the last eight stage to an in form Lucy Davidson, who to her vast credit also came back from a 0-2 sets deficit to knockout the Grand Prix points' champion. Lucy then went out of the tournament at the hands of losing finalist Karina Le Fevre.

I am absolutely delighted to report a new name on this years Men's under 21 Grand Prix hall of fame. Step in Alim Hirji who so often reaches the latter stages, but this time he was crowned a very worthy Champion. His style of play dictates dynamic movement, ultra consistency, always looking to get in on his forehand wing, but most of all he never gives up on any ball. He was totally in the zone throughout the tournament by beating Mark Simpson, Damien Nicholls (Mr Under 21 Grand Prix Points Champion for a 4th time) then following up with a great result against Sam Walker (who was the round before responsible for the departure of Chris Doran) in the last four to meet Danny Lowe in the final.

Danny too was playing with incredible style and panache working hard grinding out results against Tom Maynard in five sets, the effervescent Emran Hussein then a fabulous semi final victory over David McBeath (who had just knocked out Matt Ware) again in

five tough sets to meet Alim Hirji in the final. The first set of the final was a very close nip and tuck affair between Alim and Danny however the more consistent Hirji prevailed taking the title in straight sets. Very well played to both of you!

Karina Le Fevre gained some consolation from her loss in the final of the earlier Women's Open singles to go one better and take the title in the Women's Under 21 event. Karina once again today defeated her younger club mate Chloe Whyte, but this time in a four sets final. She was in top notch form to defeat Angharad Phillips then Charlotte Carey in the last four stage. Chloe was also playing extremely well to outplay Charlotte Spencer and Lucy Davidson in a titanic five set belter but had to play second fiddle to the Champion Karina Le Fevre.

Mr Charisma himself Abdul Wuraola topped the bill in the Veterans competition taking the winner's glassware trophy home to Middlesex at the expense of the charming finalist Chris Clinton. Losing semi finalists Tomasz Rzeszotko and Mark Land added a huge contribution to a very competitive event.

The bubbly and brilliant Will Bayley was the main man in the restricted event taking the title the hard way coming back from the tough position of being 0-2 down in sets against finalist Wayne Mason showing true grit to take the next three sets to become the Champion. Will had a great day getting the better of Matthew Knott and semi finalist Jonathan Crawford, whilst losing finalist Wayne Mason had his work cut out getting past Rory Scott and last four opponent Billy Pegg.

Unquestionably the Tees Sport Player of the Tournament award and a £50 voucher was presented to Sam Walker who played magnificently throughout the two day's play.

Results from Day 2 at Doncaster.

Men's Open

Liam Pitchford (Dy) beat Ryan Jenkins (WAL) 11-7, 7-11, 8-11, 16-14, 11-5

Women's Open

Kelly Sibley (Wa) beat Karina Le Fevre (Cv) 11-7, 11-8, 11-7

Under 21 Men

Alim Hirji (Mi) beat Danny Lowe (Dy) 11-9, 11-3, 13-11

Under 21 Women

Karina Le Fevre (Cv) beat Chloe Whyte (Cv) 11-6, 11-8, 4-11, 12-10

Veteran's

Abdul Wuraola (Mi) beat Chris Clinton (Y) 11-3, 12-10, 9-11, 11-7

Restricted

Will Bailey (Av) beat Wayne Mason (Ca) 7-11, 11-13, 11-4, 11-9, 12-10

This was the last in the series of Grand Prix events for the 2009/2010 season. A huge thanks must be paid to all the Referee's and their top table of officials, the tournament organisers that work so hard to put up and take down all the tables and associated equipment which help to make the events run so smoothly. Very many thanks to our dedicated team of Bluecoats who work tirelessly throughout the long day's play and of course our not forgetting our two sponsors during the season, that of Tees Sport for the northern events and Bribar for supporting the southern events.

May I take this opportunity to thank all the players, parents, coaches and spectators for their continued support of the Grand Prix series of events this year and look forward to a new playing season that starts at Liverpool over the weekend of the 21st -22nd of August 2010.

By Geoff Ware

Downloaded From:

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/lifes-a-pitch/>