



## Fusion defeat London Academy to win team gold

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The England Leopards heroes are all safely through their first tests of the PG Mutual National Championships on a day Fusion won the inaugural Men's Team event.

### Men's Singles

England's world bronze medallists from Malaysia all advanced to the second round without dropping a game at Hertfordshire Sports Village in Hatfield.

Paul Drinkhall defeated Liam McTiernan 11-3, 11-8, 11-6, 11-4, while Sam Walker was also untroubled against Mitchell Jones, winning it 11-8, 11-6, 11-6, 11-3.

Liam Pitchford needed to save game points in the first against Alim Hirji before prevailing 12-10, 11-3, 11-6, 11-8.

With Andrew Baggaley and Danny Reed absent through injury and illness respectively, places in the latter stages are up for grabs and one or two served notice of their intent.

They included fifth seed David McBeath, a six-game victor over Jack Bennett, and Adam Nutland, who defeated Jack's brother Josh, also in six.

Eighth seed Tom Jarvis only needed four against Steve Beerling, as did Chris Doran, seeded seven, who dispatched Luke Savill. Another through in four straight was Craig Bryant, against Adam Harrison.

Gabriel Achampong came from 3-1 down to defeat Sam Mabey 4-3 (11-8, 10-12, 4-11, 8-11, 11-9, 12-10, 11-5).

Mike O'Driscoll, part of the champion Fusion team earlier in the day, advanced at the expense of Matt Leete, while his two team-mates, Lorestas Trumpauskas and Emran Hussain faced each other – the former advancing in four.

Also through are Danny Lawrence (4-2 versus Marcus Giles), Alex Ramsden (4-1 over Matt Ware)

### **Men's Team**

The Fusion team of Mike O'Driscoll, Emran Hussain and Lorestas Trumpauskas triumphed 3-2 over London Academy's Steve Beerling, Mathew Ware and Gabriel Achampong to win the inaugural Men's Team gold.

O'Driscoll's double was the key as he overcame Beerling (10, 5, 6) in the first match and then saw off a determined Ware in five in the fourth tie – seeing his opponent save three match points in the third and another in the fourth before finally getting over the line 11-7, 11-8, 10-12, 11-13, 11-8 as his opponent had a heavy collision with the table in the decider.

In between, London had taken a 2-1 lead as Ware defeated Trumpauskas, again in five (9, -6, -6, 4, 8) and Achampong also needed five to get the better of Hussain (-9, 8, -6, 8, 6).

After all those marathons, the decider was somewhat quicker as Trumpauskas beat Beerling in three (5, 8, 7).

O'Driscoll said of his marathon against Ware: "I felt I was playing well and in control but maybe enjoyed it a little too much and thought I'd done it. But he's a real fighter and he kept going and I just hung in."

The youngest member of the team, Hussain, said: "It's good to win the first team event and it's my first gold medal at a Nationals, so it feels really good.

"It wasn't easy, we had some long matches but that's not a surprise because we played them twice in the British League this year and I think they both finished 4-4, so we know each other pretty well."

Trumpauskas added: "It wasn't easy, they were hard games and I think a bit of experience helped us. It's nice to be a winner."

Fusion had also fought out a prolonged semi-final lasting around two hours against Batts I before finally triumphing 3-1.

Jack Bennett gave Batts the ideal start by beating Trumpauskas in four, but O'Driscoll came from 2-0 down to level by beating Adam Nutland 3-2 (8-11, 8-11, 11-5, 11-5, 11-7).

Hussain put Fusion in front in four against Peter Cleminson and Trumpauskas then sealed victory as Nutland was on the wrong end of another five-setter, the Fusion man taking it 9-11, 20-18, 11-8, 12-14, 11-3.

The other semi-final was a more routine affair as London Academy beat the Batts II team of Jimmy, Luke and Ethan Walsh.

Luke came closest to taking a point as he was beaten in five by Beerling (11-9, 7-11, 11-8, 3-11, 11-9).



The winning Fusion line-up, from left, Lorestas Trumpauskas, Michael O'Driscoll and Emran Hussain (picture by Alan Man)

### Men's Doubles

Liam Pitchford & Paul Drinkhall started their quest for a fourth successive title with a routine 11-2, 11-6, 11-3 victory over youngsters Harry Dai & James Garrod and will next play Craig Bryant & Lorestas Trumpauskas in the quarter-finals.

Hull pair Garrod and Dai were nevertheless glad of the experience of taking on England's top two. Dai said: "It was ridiculous – everything I did, they just did back 10 times as good."

"It's good experience getting to play those sort of players once in a while and you get to see how they expose your weaknesses."

Garrod added: "They're the best players I've played by a country mile but it was good to give them a game."

The tightest match was the last of the day to finish and resulted in an impressive 3-2 (11-7, 11-7, 10-12, 10-12, 11-4) victory for Alim Hirji & Emran Hussain over Adam Nutland and Mathew Ware. The victory next play Chris Doran & Mike O'Driscoll, who eliminated Matt Leete & Shaquille Webb-Dixon in four.

Also through are Tom Jarvis & Gavin Evans, who defeated the Bennett brothers Jack and Josh and will face Alex Ramsden and Luke Savill, who benefitted from a bye.

Helshan Weerasinghe & Danny Lawrence completed the line-up, defeating Luke & Ethan Walsh and will play Sam Mabey & Kim Daybell in the quarters – the latter pair having received a bye.

### Under-21 Men

Saturday's quarter-final line-up was settled as the younger generation battled out two rounds at Hatfield.

Top seeds Tom Jarvis and Helshan Weerasinghe entered in round two and dropped a game to Shaquille Webb-

Dixon and Olly Tyndall respectively but made it safely through.

Liam McTiernan defeated Lucas Papantoniou 3-2 (11-9, 10-12, 11-7, 8-11, 11-5) in the closest match of the first round, while Sam Mabey needed his experience to hold off Adam Jepson in four close games (8-11, 14-12, 12-10, 12-10).

Mabey, fighting back to full fitness after a recent illness, saw his run ended by Jack Bennett in the second round in four games.

Danny Lawrence won the only match to go the distance in round two, beating James Hobson 3-2 (5-11, 11-3, 9-11, 11-9, 11-7).

The quarter-finals will see Jarvis play George Downing, Alex Ramsden face Lawrence, Bennett play McTiernan and Weerasinghe line up against Luke Savill.

### **Under-21 Women**

Tin-Tin Ho started the defence of her title by defeating Nicole Bird in three straight (9,6,3) and now has a bye straight into the semi-finals because of withdrawals.

The other three quarters promise to be competitive as, in the top half, Kate Cheer and Emma Torkington will play-off for the right to meet Ho. Cheer breezed past Zahna Hall, while Torkington defeated Mollie Patterson, both in three.

In the bottom half, Emily Bolton and Letitia McMullan set up a quarter-final meeting, Bolton beating Charlotte Bardsley in three and McMullan ending the challenge of Naomi Jackson in four.

The final last-eight clash will pair Maria Tsapsinos – conqueror of Ella Patel in three – with Denise Payet, who needed four to overcome Sophie Barlow.

[Click here for full details of all today's results, plus the upcoming schedule for the rest of the tournament](#)

You can follow all the action on our social media platforms – use the #PGMutalNationals hashtag on Twitter for all the latest news – with regular reports on our website too.

We will be [live-streaming the matches](#) on court No 3 all day on YouTube, where you can join in the chat with table tennis enthusiasts as well as keep up with the latest action.

Tomorrow's live streaming schedule:

10:00	Mixed Doubles Round 1 (1.6)	Bennett & Peake vs O'Driscoll & Hughes
10:35	Mixed Doubles Round 2 (2.1)	Reed & Sibley vs TBC
11:10	Women's Doubles Round 1 (1.3)	Cheer & Payet vs Collier & Neil
11:45	U21 Women's Singles Round 2 (2.2)	Kate Cheer v Emma Torkington
12:30	Women's Singles Round 1 (1.4)	Emma Tovey vs Hannah Hicks
13:15	Men's Singles Round 2 (2.8)	TBC
14:15	U21 Men's Singles Semi-Final (4.2)	TBC
15:15	Men's Doubles Semi-Final (3.1)	TBC
16:00	PARA Women's 3-5	Gilroy, Shackleton & Campbell
17:45	PARA Men's 6-8	Bayley, McKibbin, Wilson & Wetherill
19:30	U21 Women's Singles Final (4.1)	TBC

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