



## Doran dominates at Tipton while Haoyu picks up maiden win

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**Tipton Grand Prix**



Chris Doran and Matthew Leete with TTE Board Member Simon Griew

### Men's Singles

Chris Doran unceremoniously charged to the Tipton Grand Prix men's singles title after rarely being troubled by a weakened field on Sunday.

The top seed was set to battle it out with England no.8 Darius Knight but following Knight's withdrawal through injury after British League duty on Saturday, the English no. 5 was billed as heavy favourite from the off.

Frequently toying with his opponents from the back of the court, Doran showed off his impressive repertoire of recovery skills to keep rallies going and absorbing opponents pressure. He won his group over Kevin Nicholls, Rory Scott and Richard Cullis, conceding just one end before brushing aside Sam Chesterman (3-0) and seeing off Joe Clark (3-1).

That set him up with a repeat fixture in the quarter-finals against yesterday's band 1 final opponent Kenny Lindsey. Once again the Scotsman seemed the most likely to cause an upset, winning the first game and leading late into the second. However, Doran stepped up a gear and did enough to keep Lindsey at bay once more – winning in four ends 9-11, 11-9, 11-5, 12-10.

Having picked up another gear in the last eight, Doran never took his foot off the throttle and sealed a 3-0 semi-final win over Adam Harrison before repeating the scoreline in a relatively one-sided final against Matthew Leete.

Lincolnshire player Leete could be pleased of his performance though as his appearance in the final completed a fine weekend's work that saw him win the Tees Sport Player of the Weekend award.

Leete had won his three-man group, scraping past Louis Price 3-2 (11-3, 6-11, 11-6, 7-11, 11-2) in the process, before beating Ben Glover (3-0), Naphong Boonyaprapa (3-0) and upsetting third seed Ismaila Akindaya 3-1

(11-9, 11-9, 8-11, 11-8) to reach the semi-finals. There he faced Calum Morrison, who had equally done well to reach this stage, but was no match as Leete claimed his final place with a 3-1 (11-6, 11-8, 9-11, 11-2) win.



Karina Lefevre and Haoyu Liu with TTE Board Member Simon Grew

### Women's Singles

University of Nottingham student Haoyu Liu lived up to the pre-tournament rumours by playing some high calibre table tennis en route to the women's singles title at the Tipton Grand Prix.

Previously unseen on the grand prix circuit, the university student was quick to show her talents with a dominant group stage performance. Firstly she blew past Sophie Barlow 3-0 before also clean sweeping the group's top seed Lois Peake 3-0 (11-6, 12-10, 11-6) and finally Katie Holt 3-0.

It took until the first knockout round match with Evie Collier for the debutant to drop an end, this time progressing 3-1 (11-6, 9-11, 12-10,, 11-7) to set up a meeting with UoN team mate Maria Tsaptsinos. This proved to be as intensive as expected with the pair trading blows throughout. Liu took the opening game comfortably 11-4 but Tsaptsinos fought back to win the second 12-10 and force the issue in the third. However, when Liu snuck home 11-9 it changed the energy in the match and shortly after she burst into a 9-1 lead in the fourth en route to the win.

On the other side of the draw, top seed Karina Lefevre was also progressing confidently. After beating both Letitia McMullan and Neetha Ramesh in straight games in her group she then went on to reach the final, conceding just the one end to Amy Blagbrough on the way after disposing of the Hampshire player and Sussex youngster Lois Peake in the quarters and semis respectively.

The two pre-tournament favourites then clashed in the final with Lefevre striking the early blow to lead 1-0 before Liu fought back to take control of the match at 2-1 up with consecutive games. Undeterred, the top seed from Cleveland showed great fight to save a match point in the fourth to win the game 12-10 and force a decider. Unfortunately, the fifth game wasn't able to produce the drama that it deserved as Liu broke away early to lead 5-1 and eventually seal the game comfortably 11-4 to pick up her first grand prix title.





Calum Morrison and Matthew Leete

### Men's Under-21s

The top two seeds met in the final in the men's under-21 event in Tipton as Matthew Leete and Calum Morrison battled it out for the last prize on offer at the weekend.

Both had performed well earlier in the day, with Leete advancing to the men's final having beaten Morrison 3-1 in the semi-final. The Scot must have plotted revenge in their next meeting.

Just as he had performed on Saturday, Leete took control of his group and stormed through with three consecutive 3-0 victories. He continued this form into the knockout rounds, beating Adam Jepson 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 12-10) and Shayan Siraj 3-0 (13-11, 11-9, 11-4) before finally dropping his first game of the competition to Morrison in the final.

The Scot, meanwhile, had beaten Ben Glover (3-1), Joe Walker (3-0) and Brijesh Karthigesu (3-0) in group two before surviving the challenge of Joe Clarke 3-0 (13-11, 11-6, 11-8) and Amirul Hussain 3-1 (14-12, 15-17, 11-5, 11-2) to book his place in the final.

When the duo met for the second time on Sunday it was a close contest like the first. Morrison edged the opening game 11-9 followed by Leete replying in kind by the same score. Morrison would have been hoping this time he could pull away and secure the win but the Lincolnshire player proved too good once more, taking the final two games 11-7, 11-9 and picking up another title on a successful weekend.



Lois Peake and Kate Cheer

### Women's Under-21s

Kate Cheer emerged victorious in a tight see-saw five game final with fellow England youth player Lois Peake to finish off her weekend with success.

Cheer secured her place in the final with a powerful display of hitting to see off her opponents. The Sussex junior beat Lauren Evans 3-0, Katie Holt 3-1 and Daisy Kershaw 3-1 in the groups before maintaining her form to quickly dispose of Rebecca Plaistow 3-1 (11-6, 7-11, 15-13, 11-9) and Letitia McMullan 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-6) in the quarter and semi-finals.

Meanwhile, Peake raced to the final two, dropping just one end to Erin Thompson in the quarter-finals en route. The left-hander conceded just 16 points in combined 3-0 victories over Danielle Kelly and Charlotte Boston in her group before her win over Thompson and a semi-final victory over Lauren Evans (3-0) ensued.

The final was close throughout with Peake seemingly winning the crucial third game 17-15 to lead 2-1 but Cheer wasn't finished and dug deep to win the final two games 11-9, 11-8 and sneak over the line.



Elton Costa and Tony Whelan

### **Veterans' Singles**

Elton Costa called on all of his reserves to win the Veterans' title late on Sunday at the Tipton Grand Prix after fighting through back-to-back five end matches to secure a deserved prize.

Costa was relatively untroubled with his progress to the final until he met Rory Scott in the semi-final. Having defeated Dariusz Sienko (3-1) and Michael Stephens (3-0) in the group, he despatched Alex Aston 3-0 (11-9, 11-4, 11-6) in the quarter-final.

However, the semi-final proved tougher work as he and the Sussex player went the full distance. Despite falling behind early on, Costa was able to secure the crucial late points and advance by a tight 11-9 margin.

On the other side of the draw, Whelan made short work of his singles group. Apart from a one-sided 11-2 game he lost to Dave Randall, the Lancastrian secured nine games out of ten to emerge top of the pile and take his place as the second seed. After beating Helmuth Osborne 3-1 (11-5, 7-11, 11-6, 11-2), he picked apart Boguslaw Okonek 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-7) in the semi-final to set up the title decider.

The final itself was to and fro with Costa taking the lead, before Whelan fought back to go 2-1 in front. However, the Oxfordshire player wasn't done yet as he slowly clawed his way back into the game at 2-2 before taking a close final game 11-8 to seal the win.

### **Tipton Grand Prix Final Results**

Chris Doran bt Matthew Léete 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 13-11)

### **Women's Singles**

Haoyu Liu bt Karina Lefevre 3-2 (8-11, 11-6, 11-8, 10-12, 11-4)

### **Men's Under-21s**

Matthew Leete bt Calum Morrison 3-1 (9-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-9)

### **Women's Under-21s**

Kate Cheer bt Lois Peake 3-2 (11-8, 3-11, 15-17, 11-9, 11-8)

### **Veterans' Singles**



Elson Costa bt Tony Whelan 3-2 (11-5, 11-13, 5-11, 11-7, 11-8)



Tees Sport Player of the Weekend Matthew Leete with TTE Board Member Simon Grew

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