



BUCS Table Tennis Individual Championships review

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The BUCS Table Tennis Individual Championships took centre stage at the University of Nottingham over the weekend Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th November with the home institution coming away victorious.

The newly built David Ross Sports Village was the venue for this reinvigorated competition. Moved to a new period within the academic year, combined with the timely opening of the revitalised sports facility on campus, gave BUCS the ideal opportunity to expand the competition. A total of 32 competition tables were installed and used over the two days providing top quality playing surfaces for men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles, and mixed doubles.

Mixed doubles was the opening act on Saturday morning welcoming the crowds of students into the impressively large sports hall. Following the early rounds of mixed doubles the event gave individual men and women the chance to prove themselves in the group stages of the singles competition. A loss in their first match did not necessarily mean they would be eliminated, and chances for redemption were often available and taken. After the conclusion of the singles groups all competing seeds had successfully progressed to the knockout stages.

The mixed doubles reached its peak on Saturday evening as the final was the first to be contested. University of Nottingham had three of the four semi-finalists, ensuring home representation in the showpiece match of the day. Ismaila Akindiya and Evangeline Collier (Nottingham Trent University) took on Adam Harrison and Maria Tsaptsinos (University of Nottingham) to provide resistance to an all green and gold final. However, Harrison and Tsaptsinos overcame their local rivals 11-8 13-15 11-4 11-7. In the final they would meet Danny Reed and Haoyu Liu (University of Nottingham) who beat fellow teammates Gabriel Achampong and Yolanda King 12-10 11-0 11-7. With the gold and silver already guaranteed it was Reed and Liu who sealed the first title, claiming the mixed doubles trophy with a 11-5 11-7 11-6 score.

Sunday welcomed back all successful singles competitors and commenced the men's and women's doubles. As the temperatures continued to drop outside, the action was heating up inside. Home favourites Liu and Tsaptsinos made their way to the women's doubles final without dropping a game. Their opponents would be

Megan Phillips and Angharad Phillips (Durham University), looking to retain their 2015-16 title. Phillips and Phillips won in four close sets, 11-8 11-8 4-11 11-8, becoming women's doubles champions for the second year in a row taking the title back to the North East.

In the women's singles it was England's no.3 Karina Le Fevre (Teesside University) who impressed and safely made her way to the semi-finals overcoming Lois Peake (Loughborough University) on the way. Le Fevre would meet University of Birmingham's Vicky Lee for a place in the final. The unseeded Lee had already defeated the no.4 seed Emma Vickers (Liverpool John Moores University) in a shock quarter-final match. However, a place in the final was one step too far with Lee losing to Le Fevre in straight sets.

Maria Tsaptsinos, runner-up in 2015-16, sought revenge in the quarter-final stage when up against Chloe Thomas (Bournemouth University) who had beaten her to the title last year. It was Tsaptsinos who ended Thomas' quest for a second singles title, and would face teammate Haoyu Liu for the remaining place in the final. Already the mixed doubles champion, Liu was ruthless as she took the match 11-1 11-3 11-7 to seal her second final spot of the weekend. The final began as a close encounter, with both Le Fevre and Liu engaged in intense rallies to gain the perfect start. Liu took the first set, and with it gained the crucial momentum to seal a 13-11 11-9 11-3 victory, becoming women's singles champion and collecting her second gold medal at the Championships.

Top seed, and England no.5, Danny Reed (University of Nottingham) progressed comfortably through to the semi-finals of the men's singles competition where he met a determined Jared Patel (Loughborough University). Patel had earlier defeated higher seeds during an impressive morning session which had the Loughborough team in jubilant spirit. The jubilation ended soon after the defeat to Reed, but both competitors embraced after a high quality match. Reed making his second final of the weekend and remaining on track for success in all three events entered.

In the second half of the draw Ashley Facey Thompson (London South Bank University) defeated no.2 seed Kim Daybell (University of Leeds) in the quarter-final stage. Facey Thompson's next opponent would be no.3 seed Adam Harrison (University of Nottingham) who had earlier beaten Colin Dalgleish (Robert Gordon University), a semi-finalist from the previous year.

Harrison was too good for Facey Thompson, who was unable to recreate the form shown in the quarter-final defeat of Daybell. Harrison was victorious in three games to set-up a final against fellow University of Nottingham teammate Reed. Reed, who had only lost one game on his way to the final, battled through a tough encounter with Harrison to claim his maiden BUCS men's singles title 12-10 12-10 11-8, and second gold medal.

The final competition to conclude the weekend was the men's doubles. After an epic encounter in the semi-finals Gabriel Achampong and Liam McTiernan (University of Nottingham) overcame a fightback from teammates Garth Kinlocke and Martynas Matuzevicius to reach the last match of the competition. Their opponents would be Danny Reed and Adam Harrison, who only earlier had competed against each other in the singles final. Reed and Harrison, as a united front, were emphatic as a doubles pairing. Achampong and McTiernan battled hard but were unable to overcome the class of the two singles finalists. Reed and Harrison triumphed 11-8 11-9 11-5.

With eight of 10 finalists it was a weekend for University of Nottingham to savour. Taking home a collection of medals, including four golds, placed the host institution as the clear leader at the BUCS Table Tennis Individual Championships. A total of 364 competitors attended the event, contributing to 850 matches across the two days. University of Nottingham's Haoyu Liu, women's singles and mixed doubles champion, won 52 games and only dropped three, while Danny Reed took home three gold medals, winning all 20 of his matches, dropping only four games compared to 60 won. Both competitors recorded a staggering game conversion rate of 94%.

Full results and competitor statistics from the event are [available on the Tournament Software website](#).

Plans are already underway for next year's event. BUCS Table Tennis Individual Championships returns to the University of Nottingham's David Ross Sports Village on Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th November 2017.

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