

## Leete recovers to post strong message at Cleveland GP

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**Posted On:** January 14, 2017

### Men's Band 1

Matthew Leete made up for a quiet band 2 performance at the Cleveland Grand Prix with a much-improved demonstration of his abilities in the afternoon's band 1 to take home the top prize on Saturday.

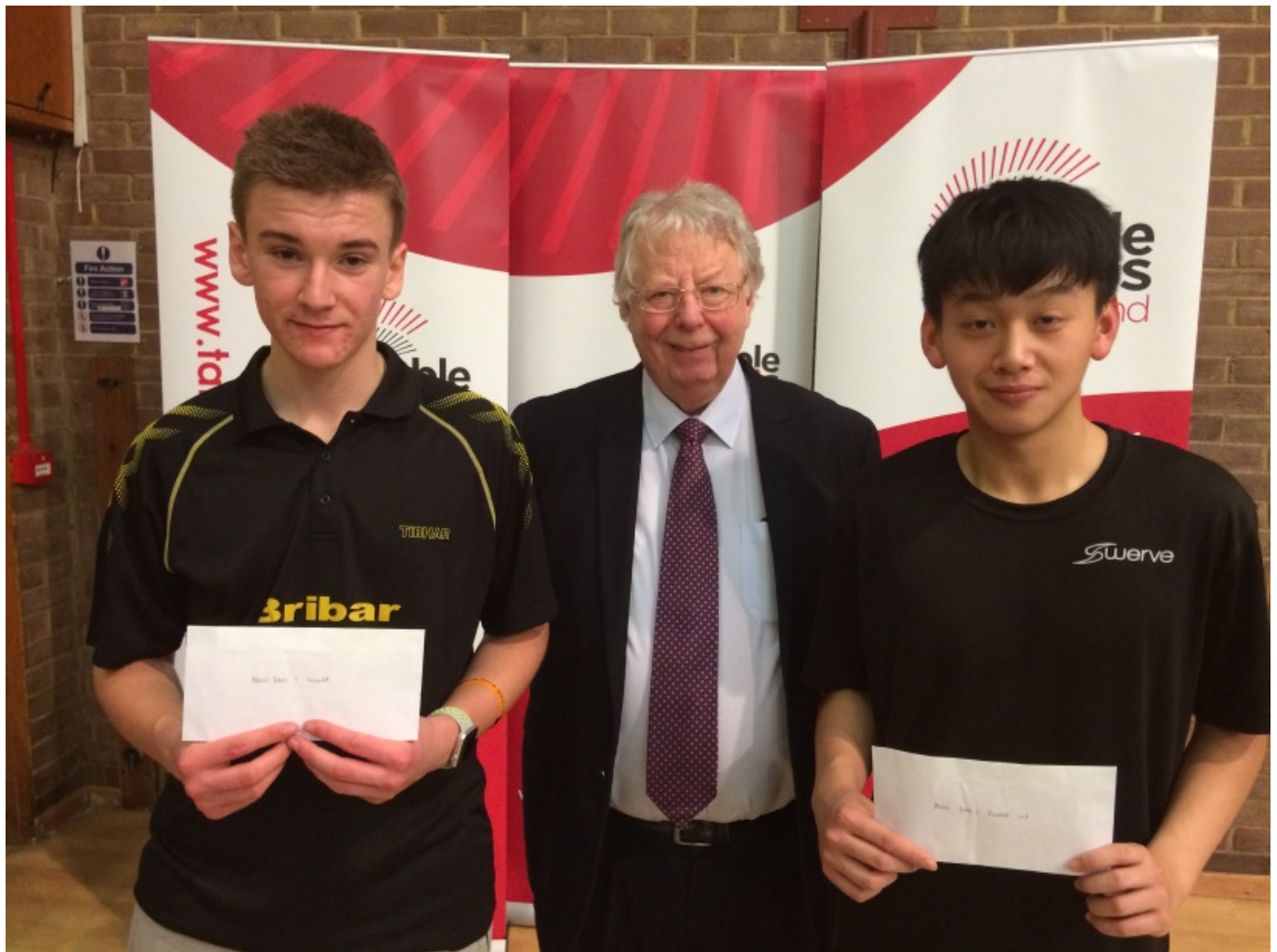
Having been eliminated in his group on count back earlier, he fought harder second time round. He stormed past Joe Killoran 3-0 (11-6, 11-9, 11-6) before showing his renewed grit by coming through a 3-2 (11-7, 6-11, 11-8, 8-11, 12-10) match against Joe Clarke. A 3-0 win over a deflated Shayan Siraj sealed top spot in the group.

That secured him the second seed berth in the knockouts where he met, and cruised past, Simon Nutch 3-1 (11-7, 11-5, 12-14, 11-3) to make the final.

There he met Sam Kwan, who had looked dangerous earlier in the day in band 2 and continued his form into the afternoon by winning a three-man group over Harry Dai and Dylan Curry – both succumbing to 3-0 defeats.

Kwan, in the top seed position, then met Joe Clarke in the semi-final, whom he breezed past 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 12-10).

Although he had played six less ends than Leete at this point it was Leete who proved stronger throughout in the final. When the Lincolnshire man won an important third game 11-9 to take a 2-1 lead, there was no looking back and he raced to the title in the very next end, sealing the band 1 prize with an 11-3 end.



Matthew Lette (L) and Sam Kwan (R) with Alan Ransome OBE

### **Men's Band 2**

Alec Ward powered his way to the Men's Band 2 title at the Cleveland Grand Prix with an assured final performance against Shayan Siraj.

With both the men's singles and men's band 1 prizes as potential targets for Ward this weekend the local Cleveland player made his mark on Saturday morning in Thornaby Pavillion.

It wasn't all plain sailing for the youngster, his opening 3-2 (5-11, 9-11, 11-4, 11-8, 11-9) win over Joe Killoran tested his mettle early on. However, after that he went on the rampage, dispatching Harry Dai and Jordan Wykes 3-0 in the group before seeing off a dangerous Sam Kwan 3-1 (11-8, 9-11, 11-8, 11-6) in the semi-final.

On the other side of the draw Shayan Siraj took his place in the knockout stages by winning a five man group with four consecutive victories over James Garrod (3-1), Sam Kwan (3-2), Rory Scott (3-0) and Joe Clark (3-0).

In the knockouts the Yorkshire youth beat county compatriot Harry Dai 3-1 (11-4, 9-11, 11-9, 11-9) and Josh Harland 3-2 (13-11, 12-14, 11-6, 12-14, 11-7) to set up the meeting with Ward. However, when he got there – whether he was tired from he previous energy-sapping encounters or not, he was no match for Ward's tremendous form who deservedly won the title.



Shayan Siraj (L) and Alec Ward (R) with Colin Davison

### Men's Band 3

Welshman Joshua Stacey picked up the Men's Band 3 title on Saturday evening with after a competitive 3-1 final victory over Sam Chesterman.

After neither player was able to win their group, they were surprise entrants to the final but great performances in the knockout rounds, including beating the number 1 and 2 seeds respectively, they earned their place in the last stage.

Chesterman, in group 2, beat Jacob Goss 3-1 first up but fell 3-0 (12-10, 11-9, 11-3) to Josh Weatherby before recovering to beat Jevon Chan 3-1 and seal a place in the knockout rounds.

Stacey, meanwhile, was in a five man group and finished tied on three wins with group winner Harry Watson – but his 3-0 defeat to the Lancastrian worked against him. Earlier victories over Ethan Chapman (3-0), Lewis Carby (3-1) and David Ashwell (3-0) were enough to see him through.

In the knockouts, the two players had very different journeys. Stacey's was one of comfort as he bullied his way past Joe Wright, top seed Rory Scott and Keir Morton all with a 3-0 scoreline. Chesterman, meanwhile, had a tougher set of results – battling past Reece Chamdal (3-1), second seed Joe Cope 3-2 (11-9, 6-11, 5-11, 14-12, 12-10) and finally David Gofton 3-1 (12-10, 8-11, 11-7, 11-9) to make the final.

Perhaps buoyed by his confident run, Stacey started the quicker and won the first game 11-9 before racing to the second game 11-3. It seemed as though it was all one-way traffic but to Chesterman's credit, he fought back to win the third 12-10 and force the fourth close. Unfortunately, not quite close enough as he lost the game 13-11 and ended up as runner-up.

Had he managed to take the match to a decider, you have to think the momentum would have been with the





Joshua Stacey (L) and Sam Chesterman (R) with Alan Ransome OBE

#### Men's Band 4

A dramatic comeback wasn't enough for Will Dobinson to prevent Jamie Liu from winning his first Grand Prix band as the Berkshire cadet won a brilliant five-game final.

The two's journey started where it would end up, with a clash against each other. They met in band 4 group 4's opening fixture and it was Liu who completed a competitive 3-2 (11-4, 7-11, 5-11, 11-7, 12-10) victory en route to winning the group.

Liu struggled initially in the knockout stages and had to save two match points against Reece Chamdal 3-2 (12-14, 11-7, 8-11, 13-11, 11-4) before beating David Gofton (3-0) and Jacob Goss (3-1) to make the final.

Dobinson also battled early on in the knockouts but he overcame group 2 winner Michael Young 3-2 (3-11, 8-11, 12-10, 14-12, 11-8) to make the quarter-finals before getting past Harry Watson (3-1) and Keir Morton (3-1) to reach the last stage and set up the meeting with Liu again.

It looked as though the result would be a formality early on as the Berks player eased 2-0 ahead but Dobinson was able to turn the tide and took momentum into the fifth after leveling at 2-2. However, Dobinson never recovered from a 5-1 deficit at the change of ends in the decider as Liu secured the second victory against the Cleveland player and picked up the title to boot.



Jamie Liu (L) and Will Dobinson (R) with Colin Davison

### Men's Band 5

Lewis Palmer and Ian Wright shared a classic grand prix final encounter as they closed out the first day with a fine contest at the Cleveland Grand Prix.

Both were victorious in their groups; Wright beating Lee Tinkler 3-0, Matthew Rigg 3-0 and a close encounter with Craig Allen 3-2 (6-11, 11-4, 12-10, 6-11, 11-8). While Palmer cruised past Kashif Mahmood, Andy Cullen and Angus Poole – sacrificing just one game en route.

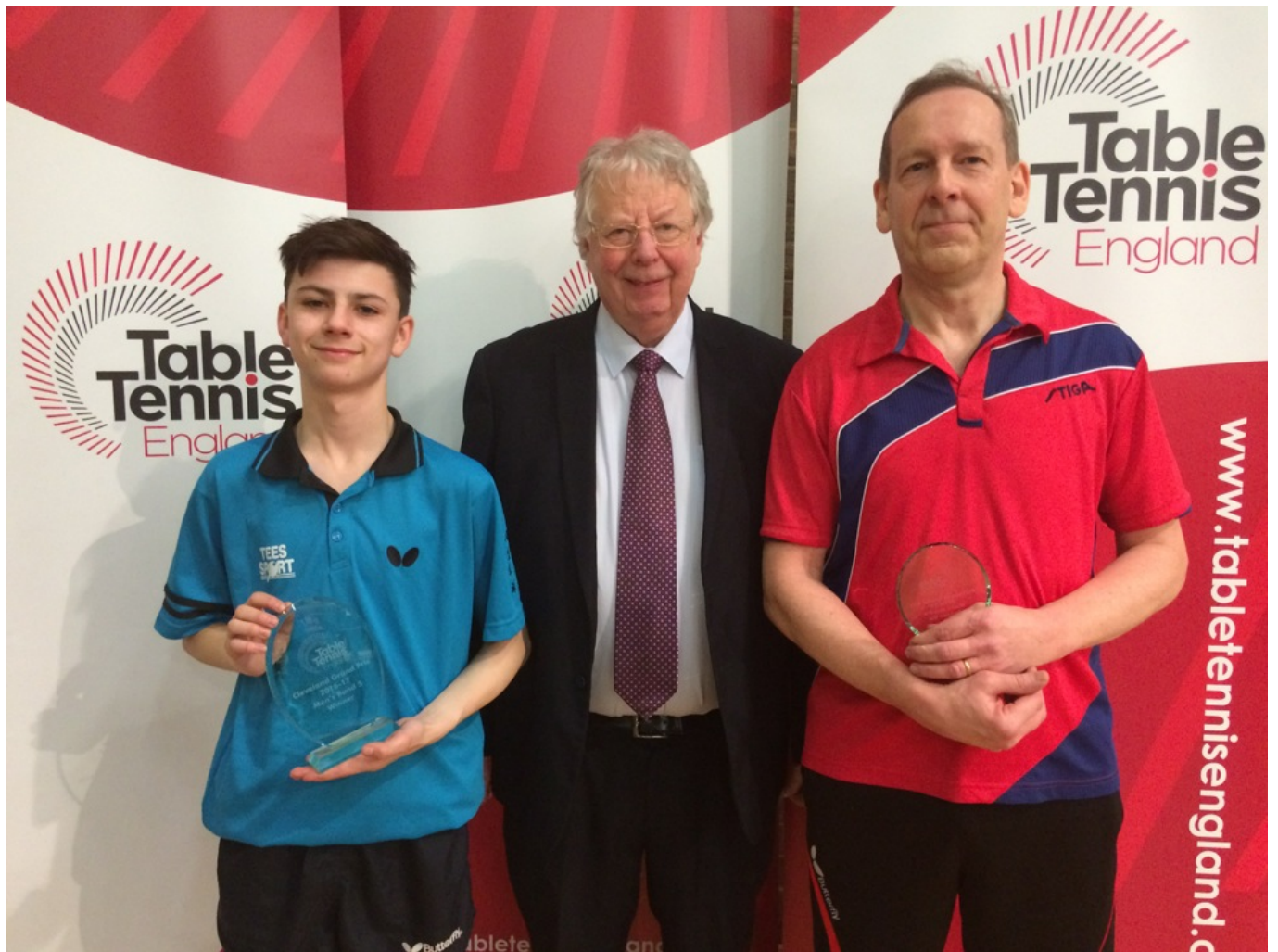
Palmer continued this destructive form in the knockout stages – seeing off Jacob Reilly-Cooper and Ben Goodchild 3-0 before finally having to go the distance with a fine 3-2 (11-9, 7-11, 11-6, 9-11, 11-9) semi-final win over Adam Ridley.

Wright, meanwhile, given a bye as fourth seed, had to repeat his victory from the morning (see below) over Brian Hallsworth, this time a tense 3-2 (11-7, 10-12, 11-6, 10-12, 11-7) win. Before beating Chris Marlow 3-0 to seal his place at the last stage.

The final itself was full of ebbs and flows and you could tell after opening games of 16-14 and 11-13, the fixture would go the distance. Having won the fourth 11-3 and taken a 4-1 lead in the fifth, the title seemed set for Wright's mantlepiece. However, a well taken time out from Palmer turned the tide.

From 4-1 down he commanded a 7-4 lead and eventually sealed the game 11-9, despite a wobble that saw Wright recover to 9-9. A fine match to close any day's play.





Lewis Palmer (L) and Ian Wright (R) with Alan Ransome OBE

### **Men's Band 6**

Yorkshireman Ian Wright beat Lancastrian Brian Hallsworth in the war of the roses clash in the men's band 6 at Thornaby Pavilion.

It wasn't an easy start for Wright who had to progress from his group courtesy of a three way countback with Ben Savage and Jacob Reilly-Cooper. His five set defeat to Reilly-Cooper ultimately helping him win the differential battle and emerge as group winner.

Hallsworth meanwhile, came out of group 2 as runner-up, losing to James Neal 3-2 (8-11, 8-11, 11-4, 11-8, 11-7) but defeating Angus Poole (3-0), Ben Goodchild (3-2) and Nigel Savage (3-1) to get through to the knockout stages.

Both players faced a quarter-final test with Wright beating Matthew Rigg 3-1 and Hallsworth emerging victorious over Ben Savage 3-0 before setting up their final clash by beating Adam Gittings (Hallsworth 3-0) and James Neal (Wright 3-2) respectively.

After his full-distance game against Neal, you could've forgiven Wright for feeling some fatigue but he didn't show any in a confident victory, taking the band 6 title with a 3-1 win.



Brian Hallsworth (L) and Ian Wright (R) with Colin Davison

### Women's Band 3

Wales' Anna Hursey picked up the women's band 3 prize at the Cleveland Grand Prix after a long six-match round robin group campaign in Thornaby.

The youngster was efficient with her work, winning four times in straight games, while recording just solitary victories that went to four and five games respectively. Hursey saw off the challenges of Amy Webster, Rana Rassem, Ruby Chan and Jasmin Wong in straight games while Sophie Barlow managed to record a single game.

The champion's biggest challenge came against Charlotte Weatherby who fell narrowly short in a 3-2 (12-10, 11-7, 16-18, 11-13, 11-6) defeat. The Durham youth Weatherby could feel somewhat unfortunate as three of her matches went the full distance, but defeats to Hursey and Rassem in the final games cost her a chance of a top finish.

Instead, Jasmin Wong snuck into second place, winning all her games except the crucial final match-up against Hursey.





Anna Hursey (L) and Jasmin Wong (R) with Colin Davison

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

It was a case of déjà vu with the women's under-21s as Anna Hursey took the top prize and Jasmin Wong finished second behind her in the round robin group to complete a perfect replication of the morning's results.

Once again it was the Welsh girl who won all of her matches to pick up back-to-back titles in Cleveland. The youngster beating Amy Webster 3-0, Rana Rassem 3-0, Charlotte Weatherby 3-1, Ruby Chan 3-1, Sophie Barlow 3-1 and finally, in the title decider, Jasmin Wong 3-1 (9-11, 11-8, 11-8, 11-4).

Just like before, Jasmin had also won all of her games but couldn't get past the challenge of the Welsh girl. Wong's 3-2 (11-9, 5-11, 11-6, 6-11, 11-5) win over Sophie Barlow finishing as one of only two matches in the group to go the full distance (the other a 3-2 win for Barlow over Weatherby).





Anna Hursey (L) and Jasmin Wong (R) with Alan Ransome OBE

#### **Cleveland Grand Prix Results**

##### **Men's Band 1**

Matthew Leete bt Sam Kwan 3-1 (11-8, 9-11, 11-9, 11-3)

##### **Men's Band 2**

Alec Ward bt Shayam Siraj 3-1 (11-9, 11-2, 10-12, 11-4)

##### **Men's Band 3**

Joshua Stacey bt Sam Chesterman 3-1 (11-9, 11-3, 10-12, 13-11)

##### **Men's Band 4**

Jamie Liu bt Will Dobinson 3-2 (11-6, 11-4, 9-11, 4-11, 11-5)

##### **Men's Band 5**

Lewis Palmer bt Ian Wright 3-2 (16-14, 11-13, 12-10, 3-11, 11-9)

##### **Men's Band 6**

Ian Wright bt Brian Hallsworth 3-1 (11-6, 11-8, 8-11, 11-6)

##### **Women's Band 3**

Anna Hursey wins round robin, Jasmin Wong runner-up

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

Anna Hursey wins round robin, Jasmin Wong runner-up

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