



## Chelmsford & District: Hume dominates on day of upsets

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There were shocks galore in this year's M&G Investments Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League Championships played at Hylands School, Chelmsford over the weekend.

The Men's Singles in particular did not go to form and a series of major upsets coupled with four top seeded players (Dave Cole, Keiran Lally, Alex Abbott and Trevor Lloyd) having to scratch for a variety of reasons meant that the seedings counted for nothing. Perhaps for the first time ever not one of the top eight seeded players have made it through to the semi-finals.

In the top quarter of the draw 22-year-old Reece Seddon benefited from the withdrawal of top seed David Cole despite having lost 3-2 (9-11, 9-11, 11-2, 12-10, 8-11) in his Group to Ryan Pitt. Seddon played very well to beat the seeded Colin Stallwood 3-1 (6-11, 11-6, 13-11, 11-7) only to succumb to George Reeves in four (11-6, 6-11, 11-13, 7-11) in the quarter-finals.

On a day where shocks abounded Reeves had also beaten Ryan Gooday 3-1 (11-7, 11-4, 2-11, 11-4) and then most impressively the higher seeded Brandon Crouchman in five (11-8, 11-4, 6-11, 4-11, 12-10).

There was an even bigger shock in the second quarter where Scott Dowsett battled his way through to the last four. Lee McHugh scored an absolute "gem" of a win – a real stunner of a victory by beating Duncan Taylor 3-0 (12-10, 11-8, 11-9) and he followed this up with another excellent 3-1 victory over Babul McLeod (11-6, 4-11, 11-5, 11-4). Dowsett made his mark by defeating Adrian Pitt in four (7-11, 11-9, 11-3, 11-6) and in the quarter-final shoot-out he beat the 27-year-old McHugh 3-1 (11-6, 7-11, 11-6, 12-10).

The third quarter threw up a new name to many of us – Ross Saxby. New to the area having been a Men's Singles finalist two years ago in Guildford, the 26-year-old top-spinner produced some top quality play to beat Colin Stallwood in their group encounter (11-8, 11-7, 11-8) and then James Hicks (11-3 11-8, 11-7), then seeded Gary Young (12-14, 11-7, 11-2, 11-6) and finally and most impressively of all Wale Bada (11-5, 11-8, 11-1).

Saxby will face Essex No 1 Junior Sam Hume in his semi-final. Hume had to pull out all the stops to retrieve a 8-4 and 10-8 fifth end deficit to get the better of Charles Sweeny 3-2 (11-4, 11-3, 8-11, 11-13, 13-11) – arguably the best match of the day – and he then showed his mettle by beating the dangerous Glenn Johnson 11-9, 11-4, 12-10. Hume was just one game away from the semi-finals and he showed no shortage of determination by getting the better of Simon Webber 11-8, 11-5, 11-8. Webber had made his mark with a superb victory of his own over the second seed Paul Davison, winning 3-2 (11-7, 6-11, 9-11, 11-7, 11-7).

Both semi-finals, which will be played on finals Night, promise to be highly exciting matches. Both Reeves and Dowsett have made it to the semis before and are proven tournament players whilst Saxby and Hume gave every indication that they have all the credentials to capture the title.

Champion Dawn Baldry fought her way through to the Ladies' Singles final, where she will meet Lin Roff on finals Night. Ironically the two players met in their Group and it was the in-form Roff who came out on top 3-1 (13-11, 13-11, 6-11, 11-4). Roff also had her work cut out to beat newcomer Kelly Yuen 3-1 (11-2, 11-7, 7-11, 12-10).

In the other half of the draw top seed Julie Johnson won her three games and she looked to be on good form as she defeated Jan Fuller in three (11-6, 11-8, 11-8).

The two semi-finals produced fascinating encounters. Julie Johnson took a 2-0 lead against Dawn Baldry but it was Baldry who shaded a close third end and, displaying all her tenacity and hard-hitting abandon, she eventually triumphed 3-2 (9-11, 1-11, 11-9, 11-3, 11-2). Roff, clearly on very good form, ran out a four-game winner over Jan Fuller (11-3, 3-11, 11-4, 11-5).

The Men's Doubles, always the most open of events, became even harder to predict this year with many players withdrawing and pairings having to be reshuffled.

Wale Bada and Reece Seddon emerged from the top half of the draw by getting the better of scratch-pairing Colin Stallwood & Paul Davison 3-1 (11-9, 11-9, 6-11, 11-6) in the semi-final. They will meet George Reeves & Ross Saxby in the final.

Reeves & Saxby were in all sorts of trouble against Ryan Gooday & Robert Shrimpton and trailed 7-3 in the fifth end. However, displaying all their experience, they rallied to win 3-2 (4-11, 12-10, 11-5, 4-11, 11-8) and they then beat the 2015 champions Scott Dowsett & Brandon Crouchman 3-1 (14-16, 12-10, 11-9, 11-6).

The semi-final ebbed and flowed but it was Reeves & Saxby who got their noses in front in the fifth end and they emerged as 3-2 (11-7, 11-8, 9-11, 9-11, 11-6) winners over surprise semi-finalists Lee McHugh & Peter Mynard. The McHugh & Mynard combination scored two excellent wins of their own. They beat Adrian Pitt & Andrew Huckson 3-0 (11-5, 18-16, 18-16) and then Sam Hume & Gary Cattermole 3-1 (9-11, 11-19, 11-5, 11-3).

The Mixed Doubles final will be between scratch pairing Julie Johnson & Ryan Gooday and second seeds Jan Fuller & Duncan Taylor. Gooday & Johnson impressed by beating Lin Roff & Gary Young 3-0 (11-9, 12-10, 11-8) whilst Jan & Duncan showed their credentials by getting the better of Shirley Carroll & Steve Whiteley 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-8) and Ciaran Whelan & Dawn Baldry 3-1 (11-6, 11-6, 9-11, 11-7).

New pairing Julie Johnson & Jan Fuller emerged victorious from a hotly contested Ladies' Doubles event. They beat Lin Roff & Kelly Yuen 3-0 (12-10, 11-9, 11-7) and Dawn Baldry & Shirley Carroll 3-1 (11-2, 9-11, 11-9, 17-15. Baldry & Carroll finished runners-up by beating Roff & Yuen 3-2 (7-11, 11-3, 6-11, 11-3, 11-6).

As with the Men's Singles there were numerous shocks in the Veterans' Singles. Newcomer Wale Bada has fought his way through to the final where he will meet second seed Paul Davison. Wale beat James Hicks 3-0 (12-10, 11-9, 14-12) and then Andrew Huckson 3-1 (11-7, 9-11, 11-9, 11-3) and he then produced a top class display of hard-hitting Table Tennis to oust Alex Abbott in three straight (11-9, 11-6, 11-7).

Abbott beat Steve Whiteley 3-1 (9-11, 11-5, 12-10, 11-9) after Whiteley had ousted the seeded Colin Stallwood 3-2 (12-10, 11-5, 5-11, 9-11, 12-10), yet another superb victory. Gary Young, who didn't win his group having lost to Adrian Pitt in five (9-11, 11-8, 10-12, 6-11, 9-11), was involved in three more titanic battles in the bottom half of the draw. Young showed all his tenacity by ousting Duncan Taylor (7-11, 11-6, 11-7, 6-11, 12-10) and George Reeves (11-7, 12-10, 6-11, 6-11, 11-8) in five, before missing out to Paul Davison over five furious ends (7-11, 11-6, 11-9, 3-11, 8-11). Davison, in his first year as a Veteran, made no mistake in battling his way past Adam Buxton 3-0 (11-8, 11-6, 12-10) and the seeded Trevor Lloyd 3-1 (5-11, 11-6, 11-9, 11-8).

There were yet more shocks in the Veterans' Doubles and a new pairing have taken the title – unseeded Andrew Huckson & Adrian Pitt. Again there were twists and turns galore. Pitt & Huckson opened their campaign by beating scratch-pairing Steve & Whiteley & Gary Cattermole 3-1 (11-6, 11-6, 10-12, 11-3) and they then scored “the win of the event” by fighting back from 2-0 down to sensationally get the better of second seeds George Reeves & Duncan Taylor 3-2 (6-11, 9-11, 11-4, 11-5, 11-9).

In the top half of the draw the favourites Paul Davison & Alex Abbott ousted Jan Fuller & Paul Mulley 3-0 (11-4, 11-3, 11-5) and they battled back from 2-1 down to get the better of Trevor Lloyd & Colin Stallwood in five (9-11, 11-5, 8-11, 11-5, 11-7). However, Alex Abbott had to pull out of the final which was scheduled for Saturday with a shoulder injury and the title has been awarded to Huckson & Pitt. Perhaps the least expected success of the weekend?

Babul McLeod emerged as the winner of the Over 50s' Singles – an event he also won in 2014. McLeod battled past Ian Whiteside in five (11-6, 7-11, 10-12, 11-8, 11-7), Lin Roff 3-0 (11-5, 11-9, 11-9) and then Steve Whiteley 3-1 (9-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-7) and he produced a superb display to get the better of Glenn Johnson 3-1 (11-6, 11-8, 3-11, 11-4) in the final.

Johnson was on good form, seeing off Roger Hance 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-9), Keith Martin 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-7) and Adrian Pitt 3-1 (11-4, 11-5, 8-11, 11-2). Martin had made his mark by getting the better of Dawn Baldry 3-1 (11-4, 11-9, 15-17, 11-6).

Glenn Johnson, the top seed in the Over 60s' Singles, made no mistake this time. He beat Steve Whiteley 3-0 (11-3, 11-5, 11-8) and Trevor Carter 3-0 (11-9, 11-3, 11-7) to take the title. Trevor Carter had ousted the holder Ian Whiteside 3-1 (7-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-6) in the penultimate round having also had to battle all the way to get the better of Mike Johnston 3-2 (11-9, 11-5, 8-11, 7-11, 11-8) a round earlier.

The Under-21 Singles final on Finals Night will be fought out between the holder Sam Hume and Ryan Gooday. Hume had to battle hard to get the better of Sam Lowman 3-0 (13-11, 11-9, 11-9) whilst Gooday was also pushed to see off Peter Windley in five (9-11, 11-6, 8-11, 11-8, 11-8). Windley had upset the seedings by beating Daniel Berry 3-1 (11-8, 11-9, 8-11, 11-6).

Sam Hume retained his Junior Boys' Singles crown but only just. His final against Ryan Gooday was a stunning encounter and Gooday came so close to capturing the crown. Gooday took a 2-0 lead and despite Hume rallying strongly to level at 2-2 it was Gooday who surged clear in the fifth end to lead 10-6. Playing with real composure and no shortage of determination Hume fought back to win 3-2 (9-11, 8-11, 11-1, 11-5, 12-10). The beaten semi-finalists were Connor Payne and Nathan Fry.

Sam Hume – by far the busiest player of the weekend – also retained his Junior Doubles title. Paired with Connor Payne they beat Ryan Gooday & Ben Jackson 3-0 (11-9, 11-4, 11-7) and Matthew Elliott & Nathan Fry 3-1 (11-7, 16-18, 11-6, 11-8). Fry and Elliott had booked their appearance in the final with a last-gasp 3-2 (11-7, 11-7, 6-11, 15-17, 11-8) victory over Aidan Noguchi & Matthew Laws.

Connor Payne scored his second win of the weekend by taking the Under-16 Singles from the top seeded position. He beat Ben Jackson 3-0 (11-9, 11-1, 11-3) and then Toby Kelly 3-1 (11-3, 15-17, 11-3, 11-7) and in the final he defeated Matthew Elliott in three straight (11-3, 12-10, 11-6). Elliott booked his final appearance with wins over Tom Picton (11-6, 11-5, 11-6) and James Hughes (11-4, 7-11, 3-11, 11-4, 11-7).

Toby Kelly became the Under-14 Singles champion for the first time. He booked his place in the final by beating Christopher Stephens and Aidan Noguchi and he captured the title by getting the better of Oliver Cohen 3-0 (11-9, 11-8, 12-10) in a hard fought final. Cohen had to pull out all the stops to reach the final. His match with second seed Rio Teplizki went all the way “to the wire” with Cohen finally clinching victory 3-2 (7-11, 8-11, 11-7, 1-18, 14-12).

The Junior Handicap Singles saw Sam Hume win again. Despite being heavily weighed down by having by far the toughest handicap to contend with he only dropped one game as he defeated Nathan Fry 3-1 (12-10, 11-9, 5-11, 11-7), Harry Rogers 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-8), Connor Payne 3-0 (11-9, 15-13, 13-11), James Hughes 3-0 (11-9, 12-10, 12-10) and in the final Ryan Gooday also in three (11-9, 11-8, 11-9). Gooday battled his way past Daniel Slaney (12-10, 11-7, 12-10), Aidan Tucker (11-7, 11-8, 11-6), Alex Headley (11-7, 11-5, 11-5) and, in his semi-final, Toby Kelly

(11-13, 11-8, 12-10, 11-9).

Sunday's play which is dominated by the Divisional Singles events is always fiercely fought and this year's events were as competitive as ever. In the Division Two Singles you would certainly have expected Lee McHugh to feature in light of his heroics on the Saturday. Although he beat Sam Lowman in a narrow 3-0 (11-9, 12-10, 11-9) that was as far as he progressed. He lost 3-1 to Andrew Huckson (11-5, 6-11, 9-11, 6-11) a round later. Huckson in turn lost 3-0 (5-11, 9-11, 6-11) to second seed James Hicks in the semi-final.

In the top half of the draw Robert Shrimpton stole the show. He beat Ryan Pitt 3-1 (13-11, 6-11, 11-7, 11-5) and then the hard-hitting Ciaran Whelan 3-1 (11-1, 6-11, 11-6, 11-9) and he defeated top seed Adrian Pitt by a last-gasp 3-2 (7-11, 11-3, 11-4, 5-11, 11-9) margin in a tense semi-final. Whelan had impressed by ousting Neil Freeman 3-2 (11-7, 5-11, 11-13, 11-9, 11-9).

The final was always going to be a tight affair but it was a very composed James Hicks who eventually emerged as the winner in four ends (9-11, 12-10, 11-8, 12-10).

Samuel Lowman who plays such a smooth free-flowing attacking game emerged as the winner of the Division Three Singles. He beat Roger Hance 3-0 (12-10, 14-12, 11-4) and then David Gatheral 3-1 (11-6, 11-7, 8-11, 11-9) and in the semi-final he saw off Trevor Collin in three (11-6, 11-7, 11-9).

His opponent in the final was Robert Shrimpton – no surprise bearing in mind how well he had played in the Division Two Singles. Shrimpton had to pull out all the stops to see off Dan Anderson 3-2 (11-6, 11-4, 3-11, 9-11, 12-10) and Ciaran Whelan 3-2 (9-11, 4-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-3) in the semi-final. The final was another cracker and it was Sam Lowman who sneaked home in five (10-12, 6-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-9).

Trevor Collin, clearly playing well as displayed by his excellent run to the semi-final in the Division Three Singles, duly took top honours in the Division Four Singles. He toppled top seed Roger Hance 3-1 in the final (11-8, 11-9, 13-15, 11-6), having beaten Colin Barham 3-0 (12-10, 12-10, 11-6) in the penultimate round.

Hance was pushed in his semi-final before finally seeing off Mark Glenister 3-2 (9-11, 11-6, 4-11, 13-11, 11-8), while Collin was given a scare in his first-round encounter as Kelly Yuen raced into a 2-0 lead before succumbing 3-2 (3-11, 7-11, 11-7, 11-3, 11-5).

Pewist Osman, the favourite in the Division Five Singles, was crowned champion. He beat Fedal Azzazi 3-0 (11-7, 11-9, 12-10) in the semi-final and Mark Glenister also in three (11-7, 11-3, 11-9) in the final. Glenister booked his final appearance by defeating Kamil Lentas 3-1 (9-11, 11-9, 11-5, 11-7).

Matthew Laws is the 2017 Handicap Singles winner. His final opponent Pewist Osman had to retire injured but he had given a great account of himself to reach the final. Laws defeated Peter Davenport (21-12, 21-11), Peter Windley (21-15, 21-13) and Rod MacLennan (12-21, 21-19, 21-19) to reach the final.

Osman ousted Charles Yeung (21-11, 18-21, 21-14), Robert Shrimpton (21-17, 21-13) and Lee McHugh (21-7, 21-18). McHugh had beaten David Gatheral by a scoreline that needs to be read twice to be believed (21-17, 33-35, 24-22).

Reece Seddon & Ken Sheard emerged as the winners of the Handicap Doubles. The final went all the way to the wire before they finally saw off James Hicks & Peter Windley 16-21, 21-15, 21-19.

Finals Night takes place at the Old Chelmsfordians Club on Monday February 13, starting at 7pm. Presentations of all trophies will be made on the night.

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