



Bennett stars on day one in Nottingham

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The group matches are over and it's down to pure knockout after a first day featuring some thrilling matches at the PG Mutual Nationals.

Player of the day was undoubtedly Josh Bennett, the Sussex youngster getting through his Men's Singles Group and battling into the quarter-finals of both the Under-21 Singles and the Men's Doubles.

Bennett's reward in the senior event is a crack at Chris Doran as the top eight seeds enter the fray.



Darcie Proud goes airborne

All pictures by Alan Man

There was plenty more thrilling play in front of hundreds of spectators at the David Ross Sports Village at the University of Nottingham, in men's and women's, senior and under-21 events.

The day's play ended with the first round of the Men's Doubles and Women's Doubles, with Darius Knight & Danny Reed in particularly blistering form as they dispatched Luke & Ethan Walsh for the loss of only seven points.

[Click here for full results from day one, plus the draws for the knockout stages](#)

Men's Singles



Emran Hussain, who made it through as lucky loser

Emran Hussain was the lucky loser, drawn at random from second-place finishers to take the place in the draw vacated by fifth seed Andrew Baggaley.

He came through a Group 3 also featuring Mike O'Driscoll and Alec Ward, O'Driscoll winning both matches and Hussain's 3-0 win over Ward proving doubly beneficial to the victor.

Ward had pushed O'Driscoll close, leading the clash 2-1 before O'Driscoll came back to take the fifth 12-10.

Josh Bennett won two five-setters to rise from No 3 to win Group 6. The Sussex youngster first overcame Luke Savill 12-10 in the fifth after his opponent had levelled from 2-0 down, then repeated the feat against Lorestas Trumpauskas, taking the decider 13-11 on this occasion. It rendered Savill's three-set win over Trumpauskas academic.

Group 4 had the curious distinction of featuring two players from Sussex and a player called Sussex. It was the latter – Dominic – who started well, defeating Jack Bennett in three (8, 7, 6). The group's top player was Craig Bryant and he defeated Sussex in three before being pushed all the way by Bennett, who eventually succumbed 11-9 in the fifth.

Helshan Weerasinghe made short work of Liam McTiernan and Steve Beerling in Group 2, while Tom Jarvis was slightly inconvenienced by James Hobson in Group 1, who took the first set of their clash before Jarvis added his scalp to that of Mitchell Jones.

Matt Ware had two 3-0 wins in Group 5 but it hides a bit of a struggle – Matt Leete going down 11-7, 16-14, 17-15 and Ethan Walsh also taking him to two deuce games.

Gabriel Achampong had been on the wrong end of a deciding set in the under-21 last 16 but he bounced back to see off John Taylor 3-2 (11-2, 13-15, 5-11, 11-6, 11-8) in Group 7, but both were defeated by Paralympian Kim Daybell, who next plays England No 2 Liam Pitchford.

And in Group 8, Adam Harrison emerged unscathed from a group also featuring Alim Hirji and Joe Clark.

Women's Singles



Denise Payet

Group 4 provided the main talking point as it went to countback. Sophie Barlow started at No 3 but overcame the top seed Kate Cheer in five, taking the decider 11-3 after twice fighting back from a set down.

But Cherith Graham's 3-0 win over Barlow kept the group in the balance, and it was Graham who advanced, despite a 3-2 defeat to Cheer.

There was an upset in Group 5, where Zahna Hall's victory over top seed Charlotte Bardsley put her through, while the No 2 also triumphed in Group 7, Bethany Farnworth overcoming Kate Hughes.

Naomi Jackson, No 2 in Group 2, had to fight to hold off No 3 Amy Humphreys in five (11-8, 10-12, 5-11, 11-9, 11-6) and Humphreys then took No 1 Abbie Milwain to a decider after winning a prolonged fourth game. But Milwain prevailed 3-2 (8-11, 11-6, 11-3, 13-15, 11-7).

Also through to the knockout stages are Emily Bolton, Denise Payet, Letitia McMullan and Evie Collier.

Under-21 Men's Singles



Lucas Papantoniou

Surprise group winners Papantoniou and Clark could not carry their form through to the next round after both suffering losses. Papantoniou was defeated 4-0 by Jack Bennett (6, 7, 9, 7), whilst Clark pushed James Hobson all the way eventually going down 4-3 (7-11, 11-9, 4-11, 8-11, 11-8, 11-5, 4-11).

Matt Leete produced a strong performance to progress with a 4-1 victory over Mitchell Jones (7, 6, -9, 4, 7), while the University of Nottingham's very own Gabriel Achampong agonisingly lost 3-4 to Josh Bennett in an extremely competitive match (8-11, 14-16, 11-7, 11-9, 4-11, 11-8, 9-11).

Papantoniou and Clark had caused the group stage upsets as they overcame higher-ranked players to reach the last 16.

Papantoniou won Group 7 from No 3 in the group, first defeating Adam Jepson and then, impressively, No 1 Alec Ward in three straight (8, 5, 9).

Clark was ranked No 2 in Group 1 and followed up his opening 3-1 win over Addi Duhan by beating top-ranked Sam Mabey 3-0 (13-11, 11-8, 12-10).

Olly Tyndall sunk current Cadet Boys' champion Harry Dai in a monumental opening encounter in Group 4, twice seeing Dai level but eventually clinching it 3-2 (17-15, 6-11, 12-10, 8-11, 11-7).

Dai had a chance to make it through when he led Jack Bennett 2-1 and was also 6-3 up in the decider, but Bennett took eight points in a row to notch his second win and make it through.

In Group 2, third-ranked George Hazell defeated second-ranked Ethan Walsh in three straight (11-7, 11-9, 11-8), but Gabriel Achampong beat them both – although Walsh fought hard before going down 3-1 (11-4, 11-13 15-13, 11-5).

Joel Webb overturned ranking and the scoreboard as he came from 2-0 down to beat the University of Nottingham's own Joe Pilkington in the first match of the group stage (9-11, 4-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-5), while Shayan Siraj enjoyed a 3-0 victory (6, 13, 8) over the higher-ranked James Smith.

That first result left James Hobson to take charge of Group 5, but it was not so straightforward in Group 6, where top seed Mitchell Jones beat Siraj but then lost to Smith. In the event, Jones went through on countback.

No alarms in Group 3 and Group 8 where Matt Leete and Josh Bennett went through as expected.

Under-21 Women's Singles



Amy Humphreys

Amy Humphreys was the only player to win through from below position one in a group as she defeated Bethany Farnworth in four (11-8, 11-9, 6-11, 11-6) to top Group 7, having earlier beaten Emily Haskell.

No dramas for top three Kate Cheer, Charlotte Bardsley and Denise Payet in their groups, but Letitia McMullan had to fight to overcome Bhavika Mistry to take her place in the last 16 courtesy of a 3-2 (6-11, 11-8, 7-11, 11-9, 11-6) scoreline.

Mollie Patterson, Zahna Hall and Isobel Ashley also won their groups, with Patterson having to hold off Katie Barlow in a close match which ended 3-1 (11-7, 12-10, 10-12, 12-10).

Darcie Proud overturned Stephanie Cross in four to finish second in Group 2 behind Bardsley, while Sophie Barlow had to mount a comeback to see off a spirited Danielle Kelly in five (11-6, 8-11, 11-13, 11-7, 11-8) in Group 1, Cheer's group.

In the last-16, the left-handed Zahna Hall provided stern competition for Denise Payet, taking the first two games before her opponent recovered to win 4-2 (8-11, 9-11, 11-7, 11-5, 11-7, 11-8).

Despite an early blip, Kate Cheer progressed comfortably with a 4-1 victory over Amy Humphreys (-5, 5, 12, 6, 9), whilst Mollie Patterson and Charlotte Bardsley were both victorious with 4-0 wins over Letitia McMullan (11, 7, 10, 9) and Isobel Ashley (8, 8, 2, 9) respectively.

Men's Doubles

Darius Knight and Danny Reed caught the eye with an 11-3, 11-1, 11-3 demolition of the Walsh brothers, Luke & Ethan, while Sam Walker & David McBeath started with an 11-3, 11-9, 11-8 scoreline against Shayan Siraj & Harry Dai.

Tom Jarvis & Helshan Weerasinghe had a comfortable 3-0 win over Joe Clark & Olly Tyndall and it was the same scoreline as Mike O'Driscoll & Chris Doran – last year's beaten finalists – overcame Dominic Sussex & Mitchell Jones.

Perhaps fittingly, it was Josh Bennett and his brother Jack who finished the day, winning the final point to seal a 3-2 (11-9, 10-12, 14-12, 5-11, 12-10) victory over Liam McTiernan & Gabriel Achampong.



Action from the last match of the day

Women's Doubles

Denise Payet & Kate Cheer have had their share of title triumphs in the younger age groups and their partnership again proved strong as they got past Evie Collier & Lauren Evans 3-1 (9-11, 11-8, 11-8, 12-10).

Abbie Milwain & Hannah Hicks also made a good start, seeing off Sarah Horsnell & Cherith Graham in three straight (6, 4, 8).

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