



## Jarvis and Ho take the titles in Nottingham

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Tom Jarvis and Tin-Tin Ho won the Under-21 titles on a pulsating second day of the PG Mutual National Championships in Nottingham.

Three para titles were won by Kim Daybell, Aaron McKibbin and Jack Hunter-Spivey in front of hundreds of enthusiastic spectators.

And there were plenty of other stories – not least 15-year-old Denise Payet ousting two seeds to reach the semi-finals of the Women's Singles.

The big guns in the Men's Singles are all through – safely in the case of Liam Pitchford and Sam Walker, but Paul Drinkhall was given a major scare by Helshan Weerasinghe, who led their quarter-final clash 3-1 and stood at 10-10 in the fifth.

And there was a happy return for Jo Drinkhall, who is through to two doubles finals on her comeback to the sport.

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All photos by Alan Man

## Under-21 Men's Singles



Tom Jarvis receives the trophy from England coach and namesake Nick Jarvis

Tom Jarvis retained his title by beating Helshan Weerasinghe in seven sets in what he described as one of the toughest matches he'd ever played.

It was a passionate match as both gave their all, Jarvis to retain the title and Weerasinghe to win it for the first time.

In the end, Jarvis had the edge in the final game with a run of points from 6-6 to 10-6 proving crucial to the end score of 4-3 (11-8, 8-11, 12-10, 8-11, 6-11, 11-5, 11-8).

The winner's verdict was:

"I think that's the toughest match I've ever had to fight through in my life.

"He's been in really good form in the last few weeks, so I knew I would have to play my best and do something

special.”

Earlier, Jarvis did not have matters his own way in the last four as Josh Bennett hung in there in an attempt to continue his remarkable tournament. But Jarvis’ extra class told as he finished a 4-2 victor (11-8, 9-11, 11-7, 11-8, 9-11, 11-5).

By contrast, Weerasinghe was always in total control against Matt Leete, seeing him off 4-0 (11-9, 11-2, 11-8, 11-5).

Bennett had earned his semi-final place with another victory over Luke Savill, who he had beaten in the senior singles yesterday. On that occasion it was 3-2 in the groups, this time it was 4-1 in the quarters.

Leete also caused an upset, dismissing seeded Adam Harrison 4-3 (7-11, 12-10, 3-11, 11-7, 11-8, 8-11, 11-5).

Jarvis went through in five against James Hobson and Weerasinghe needed only four against Jack Bennett.

## Under-21 Women’s Singles



Tin-Tin Ho with Table Tennis England President Jill Parker

Tin-Tin Ho bagged the one National title which had eluded her last year, reversing the result of the same clash last year against Maria Tsaptsinos and earning the 39<sup>th</sup> National title of her career.

It was tight throughout but the Londoner always had a slight edge after Tsaptsinos had levelled at 1-1. The final result was 4-1 (12-10, 9-11, 11-9, 11-9, 11-8).

Ho said:

“It means a lot after last year. Anyone who loses in a final the year before will want to win it the next time.

"I felt I played a bit smarter this year compared to last. Every National title means a lot to me but I'm happy with this one because of the way I played. I was calmer and less stressed and that's an important part of my game going forward. I've been working on my mentality."

Tsapsinos said:

"Tin-Tin played well, but equally, I played well. The way I played was more like I want to progress. She won, and all credit to her, but I wasn't upset because that's how I want to play."

Tsapsinos had to resist a determined Emily Bolton comeback in the semis, reasserting herself at 2-2 to claim it 4-2 (11-4, 11-9, 9-11, 10-12, 11-7, 11-8).

Ho was more serene as she defeated Lois Peake in four (11-3, 12-10, 11-6, 11-6).

The top four seeds had made it through their quarter-finals, but only Tsapsinos found it straightforward, beating Kate Cheer in four straight.

Ho twice trailed Denise Payet before prevailing 4-2 (8-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-1, 11-8, 11-6), while Bolton also needed six against Mollie Patterson, despite leading 3-0.

And Peake was taken the distance by Charlotte Bardsley before eventually recording a 4-3 (11-8, 11-5, 10-12, 11-6, 5-11, 9-11, 11-9) victory.

## Men's Singles



Kim Daybell in action against Liam Pitchford

If Paul Drinkhall does successfully defend his title he can point to a huge moment in his quarter-final against

Helshan Weerasinghe.

Trailing 3-1 – having barely conceivably lost the fourth 11-1 – the No 1 seed saw his teenage opponent pull back from 10-7 down to 10-10 in the next to stand two points from victory.

But Drinkhall slammed the door with the next two points and gradually imposed himself, firing up himself and the crowd and not giving Weerasinghe enough of a look-in to threaten in the remaining two sets.

The final reckoning was 4-3 (6-11, 9-11, 11-4, 1-11, 12-10, 11-6, 11-4).

Drinkhall's semi-final opponent will be Danny Reed, who came from two down to beat fourth seed David McBeath (6-11, 9-11, 11-8, 13-11, 11-4, 11-8).

In the bottom half of the draw, second seed Liam Pitchford faces third seed Sam Walker in a repeat of last year's semi.

Pitchford dispatched sixth seed Chris Doran 4-1, triumphing 14-12, 9-11, 11-3, 11-8, 14-12 against an opponent who had his moments but never seriously threatened.

Walker produced a dominant performance against Darius Knight in the quarters, overcoming the eighth seed with a convincing 4-0 win (11-9, 14-12, 11-9, 11-4).

Josh Bennett had a great day in the groups yesterday but not surprisingly found Doran a different prospect in the last 16, though he held his own in a 4-0 scoreline (11-7, 11-9, 12-10, 11-6).

Pitchford began his quest for a fourth singles title in comfortable fashion with victory over Kim Daybell, recovering from a loss in the first game to win 4-1 (9-11, 11-4, 11-5, 11-5, 11-8).

In a clash of left handers, Knight made it safely through to the quarter-finals with a straightforward 4-0 win against Michael O'Driscoll (8, 5, 3, 11)

Walker and Craig Bryant produced a match of real quality with Walker progressing with a 4-1 win (8-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-8, 11-7).

Adam Harrison came up against top seed Drinkhall, going down 4-0 in their last 16 match (11-7, 11-4, 11-4, 11-5).

Seventh seed Reed was the victor in a quality last-16 match against Matt Ware, coming from two games behind to eventually win 4-2 (-11, -2, 3, 5, 5, 3).

McBeath was the winner in a fiercely contested match against the young Tom Jarvis, winning the final three games in a 4-2 victory (-8, 6, -8, 7, 7, 5).

Weerasinghe progressed through with a resounding 4-0 win over 'lucky loser' Emran Hussain (11-8, 11-3, 11-7, 11-9).

## Women's Singles



Denise Payet

No doubting the player of the day as 15-year-old Denise Payet stunned third seed Karina Le Fevre 4-1 (12-10, 9-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-8) in the last 16 and followed up with a thriller against University of Nottingham favourite and seventh seed Yolanda King.

That quarter-final ebbed and flowed and kept the crowd wondering all the way until the youngster brought it home 4-3 (11-7, 11-9, 10-12, 2-11, 11-6, 4-11, 11-5).

Payet will face top seed and head coach at the university, Kelly Sibley, who started with a strong performance on home turf against Abbie Milwain winning 4-0 (11-3, 11-3, 11-4, 11-2).

She then motored through her quarter-final against Hannah Hicks 4-0 (4, 7, 8, 10).

The other semi-final will be between Maria Tsaptsinos and defending champion Tin-Tin Ho.

Fourth seed Tsaptsinos began the competition with a solid 4-0 victory over Letitia McMullan (11-8, 11-4, 11-3, 11-8) and then defeated Emily Bolton 4-0 in the quarters (7, 6, 6, 6).

Ho was equally serene in defeating first Beth Farnworth (9, 3, 5, 9) and then Emma Vickers (6, 5, 5, 6)

In the last 16, Bolton produced an excellent display to overcome eighth seed Lois Peake, winning 4-1 (11-7, 11-8, 11-3, 6-11, 11-3).

Hicks responded to a loss in the first game to come back and win 4-1 against Evie Collier (-7, 4, 6, 9, 4).

Vickers, the sixth seed, produced a convincing performance to defeat Zahna Hall 4-0 (11-5, 12-10, 11-6, 11-8), while King got through to the quarters with a very good performance against Cherith Graham, winning 4-1 (5, 6, -8, 5, 6).

## Men's Doubles



Paul Drinkhall & Liam Pitchford on their way to beating Danny Reed & Darius Knight

Paul Drinkhall & Liam Pitchford are one step away from winning their fifth doubles title in a row.

Standing in the way of the top pair are Chris Doran & Michael O'Driscoll, making it a repeat of last year's final.

They took advantage of defeat for second seeds Sam Walker & David McBeath in the quarters, the England pair being outgunned by Tom Jarvis & Helshan Weerasinghe, who toppled them in impressive fashion, the margin 3-1 (11-7, 4-11, 11-7, 11-6).

O'Driscoll & Doran then overcame Jarvis & Weerasinghe in three (9, 5, 4) in the semis, while Drinkhall & Pitchford conceded the opening set to Danny Reed & Darius Knight but came back to win 3-1 (8-11, 11-8, 11-4, 11-7).

Earlier, Drinkhall & Pitchford started with a relatively routine 11-8, 11-8, 11-9 win over Luke Savill & Matt Ware.

O'Driscoll & Doran made light work of the Bennett brothers, Josh and Jack (2, 4, 6), while Reed & Knight saw off Craig Bryant & Lorestas Trumpauskas 3-1 (11-9, 11-13, 11-8, 11-6).

## Women's Doubles

As if they had never been away, Kelly Sibley & Jo Drinkhall are into their first final since 2014 and Drinkhall's break from the game.

They never looked as if they would not make it, defeating Lois Peake & Yolanda King 3-0 in the last four (11-5, 11-8, 11-6) and youngsters Charlotte Bardsley & Zahna Hall in the quarters – though they were pegged back at 1-1 before pulling clear 3-1 (11-4, 9-11, 11-1, 11-4).

They will face defending champions Tin-Tin Ho & Maria Tsaptsinos, who began with a comprehensive 3-0 win over Kate Hughes & Naomi Jackson, followed in the semi-finals by another 3-0 against Karina Le Fevre & Emma Vickers (11-7, 11-7, 11-8).

In the other quarter-finals, although ranked one place below their opponents, Peake & King were victorious in their quarter-final against Abbie Milwain and Hannah Hicks, finishing the very competitive match as 3-2 winners (11-7, 3-11, 11-5, 5-11, 11-8).

Le Fevre and Vickers were the eventual winners in their match against Denise Payet & Kate Cheer, coming out on top 3-2 (12-10, 9-11, 11-8, 9-11, 11-4).

## Mixed Doubles



Paul and Jo Drinkhall

Can the Glasgow golden couple life another trophy? We will find out on Sunday after Paul & Jo Drinkhall reached the Mixed Doubles final today.

The Drinkhalls trailed Chris Doran & Hannah Hicks but came back to win 3-1 (7-11, 11-9, 11-6, 11-8).

The will face defending champions Sam Walker & Tin-Tin Ho, whose hold on the title looked precarious at times in a superb semi-final against Danny Reed & Kelly Sibley which drew prolonged applause from the crowd when the winners finally sealed it 3-2 (11-5, 11-13, 8-11, 11-5, 11-8).

Jo said afterwards:

“As much as it can be it’s a bit of fun, but I’m still competitive at the end of the day.

“Obviously, I’ve not played my best, but I’ve got so many years of experience and it’s helped me through it. And



particularly with Paul that's got us through – we know when to take risks and when to just get the ball on the table.

"I'm far more relaxed than I usually am, so that's nice!"

Earlier, it took a little while for the Drinkhall magic to come back in their first match as they lost the opening set to Matt Ware and Karina Le Fevre. But once they clicked, they really clicked as they powered to a 3-1 win (5-11, 11-3, 11-6, 11-6).

Two of the other quarters were monumental. Doran & Hicks dug deep to overcome David McBeath & Emma Vickers 3-2 (11-7, 4-11, 6-11, 11-4, 12-10), while the clash between Reed & Sibley and Tom Jarvis & Maria Tsaptinos was even closer.

The younger couple twice led against the Commonwealth Games bronze medallists and had match point, but came up just short, as their opponents won it 3-2 (9-11, 11-8, 4-11, 11-6, 14-12).

It was a bit easier for Ho & Walker against Mike O'Driscoll & Kate Hughes, although they did lose the third (11-9, 12-10, 10-12, 11-9).

In the first round, youngsters Matt Leete and Hannah Ward gave a good account of themselves against Mike O'Driscoll & Kate Hughes before the older couple triumphed 14-12, 11-3, 14-12).

Reed & Sibley took the bragging rights against their University of Nottingham colleagues Liam McTiernan & Yolanda King with a reasonably straightforward margin of 3, 7, 9.

Jarvis & Tsaptinos lost the first 12-10 against Alim Hirji & Denise Payet but came back to win comfortably in the end.

Ware & Le Fevre also dropped a set against Jack Bennett & Lois Peake, as did McBeath & Vickers against Shaquille Webb-Dixon & Emily Bolton, but both higher-ranked couples made it through.

## Para Class 9-10

Paralympic class told as Kim Daybell defeated Shae Thakker and Craig Allen, with Ashley Facey Thompson unable to play having picked up a back injury at the Italian Masters this week.

In the first matches, Paralympian Daybell comfortably beat Allen 3-0 (11-3, 11-4, 11-5).

Thakker then set up a decider with Daybell courtesy of a 3-1 victory (11-8, 9-11, 11-7, 11-8) over Allen.

And he took a set off his illustrious opponent before Daybell turned it around to win 3-1 (10-12, 11-6, 11-3, 11-5).

Daybell said:

"When I started after Beijing, there were no young players coming up behind the squad. Now there are players like Shae coming through, and it means you can't sit back if you want to keep your place in the squad – you have to work for it."

Thakker was delighted with his silver, saying:

"I'm really happy, I played really well. It's brilliant to play a Paralympian. It was tough and he made me play a lot of balls but it was a fantastic experience."

## Class 6-8



Aaron McKibbin and Will Bayley

A high-class clash between Rio team-mates Will Bayley and Aaron McKibbin was key to deciding the destination of the gold medal.

McKibbin took the first two sets, but the Rio champion bounced back to level. The decider was a prolonged battle with neither giving any quarter and both having chances. But it was ultimately McKibbin who prevailed 16-14 in the fifth.

He followed up by defeating David Wetherill in three straight, while Bayley was given a battle by Billy Shilton before prevailing 3-1 (16-14, 11-6, 5-11, 11-4).

The final set of matches saw Bayley end with a 3-0 (11-5, 11-8, 11-6) victory over Wetherill, while McKibbin needed four against Shilton.

McKibbin said: of his match against Bayley:

"It's always a battle between us two. I won the first two sets but it wasn't comfortable then for the next two sets, he didn't miss a ball.

"I knew I had to change something, so I mixed up my serve and tried to move around and be a bit smarter and when it went to deuce I tried to play simple and stay relaxed."

Bayley was generous in defeat, saying:

"We train together, so it's going to be close. He served well and I missed a couple of receives. It's what happens

sometimes in sport, you win some and lose some. He played well and deserved to win.”

## Para Class 3-5



Jack Hunter-Spivey

Jack Hunter-Spivey, minus his trademark Mohawk hairstyle, was given a huge fight by Dan Bullen before emerging victorious.

The first set saw Bullen resisting game point after game point – and he missed a couple of his own – as it went all the way to 20-18. But Bullen was not downhearted and took the next 12-10. The next two were not as tight as the Paralympian asserted himself to complete a 3-1 victory with two 11-4 games.

Hunter-Spivey had started in style by overcoming Nicko Anderson in three straight (8, 4, 4), but he also faced a tough fight in his last match as Kevin Plowman took him the distance.

Plowman, beaten in his opener by Bullen, had won his second match against Anderson in four and he took that form into his clash with Hunter-Spivey, winning the first set and later levelling at 2-2. Once again, Hunter-Spivey turned it on to clinch the gold, the final scoreline 3-2 (9-11, 11-4, 11-6, 6-11, 11-6).

Anderson provided stern competition for Bullen in the final round of matches. Bullen started off strongly, taking the first two sets, before being pegged back in the third. But he completed a 3-1 victory which was good enough for the silver medal.

Hunter-Spivey said:

“I haven’t played a lot of table tennis this season because I’ve been on a fitness programme in the gym, so this was a stepping stone for me ready for internationals in May.

"The standard gets better every year, everyone's pushing me. Kevin's always a difficult match, Dan and Nicko are improving, so I can't get complacent."

Bullen said of his silver:

"I'm really pleased with it, to be fair, I played very well throughout the day. I was pushing Jack, it was close but I'm not quite there yet."

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