

Top seeds prevail at Peterborough

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Egle Adomelyte winner of Women's Open with losing finalist Lauren Spink

Chris Doran and Egle Adomelyte took top honours in their respective Open events on day two of the Bribar Peterborough Grand Prix on Sunday the 10th of October.

For Doran – Doran the much travelled man – who represents Club Badhamn in the German Bundesliga playing Europe's best in bi weekly matches, yet has to find alternative top coaching and sparring in Helsingborg in Sweden at club BTK Record to continue to challenge the World's best. To his credit he took time to fly back to England and compete in the Grand Prix, with of course the added incentive of a nice payday. This applies to so many of our top players who constantly travel abroad and begs the question – what can we do to raise the profile of table tennis and why do our best players have get regular flights overseas to find top class opposition?

The question is often asked of me – why can't we form a weekly Professional League in England with good money on offer for competitors and attract TV coverage for Europe's finest players? In my opinion we so desperately need a high profile personality to be involved in our sport and get the continued media coverage and sponsorship we so rightly deserve! Come on Jamie Oliver – cook us up a recipe for success as they have in France, Germany, Belgium, Spain and Sweden, or how about entrepreneur and sports promoter Barry Hearne – bring your expertise and TV coverage from boxing and snooker to the table tennis table – or Mr Sugar, sweeten us up with your involvement in our wonderful game – I don't mind being FIRED! We all know you three love the beautiful game of table tennis – please- just ring this number – 01424 722525 and get involved.

Chris Doran is ranked at six in the Men's ratings and had to fend off all comers to pick up another Grand Prix Men's Open title. His toughest match, and there were a few, was his semi final against the fast improving and dynamic Sam Walker (who was responsible for the departure of Dave Randall, Tomasz Rzeszotko, and 3rd seed Wang Zheng). Sam is a huge force to be reckoned with in the senior game and he gave Chris a run for his money taking him all the way to five sets. Chris had earlier eased past Steve Cowley, Nathan Thomas, a tough match with quarter finalist Owe Karlsson and after his epic with Sam had to wait for his final opponent.

In the bottom half of the draw Richard Andrews was the man in top form. He swept past Jon Hall and Dan O'Connell and then had to be at his very best to halt the brilliant run of Lewis Gray (who had displaced Helshan Weerasinghe and 2nd seed Damien Nicholls in five top class games). Richard then moved up another gear to thwart the determined challenge from Emran Hussein (who had accounted for Jarred Knowles, John Holland and 4th seed Niall Cameron) to book his second consecutive Men's Open final. To Richards' credit he did take a game off the champion however, Mr Doran was just too strong and consistent winning the title 3-1.

In an absolutely spellbinding Women's Open final between top seeds Egle Adomelyte and Lauren Spink the assembled audience were not to be disappointed. These two dynamic players with their all out attacking policy left us at times gasping for breath. Rallies after rallies of hard hitting play ensued and a repeat of their last month's Medway Open final but this time with a different final result. Egle was razor sharp to halt the back to back title wins that Lauren was hoping for. The Greenhouse Progress extremely talented player and coach Egle Adomelyte got off to a super start in the fifth game after Lauren had levelled at 2-2, and from there on eased ahead to take a much deserved title victory.

Up to the final match, Lauren was never really extended as she had just too much firepower for the likes of Evangeline Collier and semi finalist Joy Whitehorn (who had earlier beaten Sophie Neil) to reach the final with Egle. In the top half of the draw after beating Sarra Wang S4, Jurate Brazaityte's run came to an end against Egle, whilst losing semi finalist Sanja Clements (who the round before accounted for Tressa Armitage) also lost out to the champion.

I am delighted to report that two new names were etched in the hall of fame in both the Men's and Women's under 21 events.

Evangeline Collier was outstanding in coming through to take her first ever Under 21 Women's title enjoying victories over Emily Ross, last four opponent Naomi Jackson and finalist Jas Ould. To her immense credit in reaching her first Under 21 final, Jas was also in sparkling form to outplay Isobel Ashley and 2nd seed Sophie Neil but could not contain the powerful force of winner Evangeline Collier.

Tom Maynard also won his first ever Under 21 Men's Open title. With the withdrawal of the two top seeds Doran and Nicholls, the event was thrown wide open and was there for the taking. Tom's pathway to the title was gained through sheer hard work and total commitment in fending off challengers Jarred Knowles, Sean Mills, and then a brilliant semi final win against Sam Walker (coming back from 1-2 down in games) to then up another gear and gain a memorable 3-0 victory against Lewis Gray. Players the calibre of Ryan Collins, Jake Collins and Emran Hussein all fell at the hands of Lewis Gray but he could not contain the energetic title winner Tom Maynard.

The Restricted Singles also went to rookie Jon Hall who overcame ETTA's own Matt Porter in the final. Jon accounted for Andrew Hodges, and last four opponent Ian Musk, whilst Porter outpointed Fredrick Nilsson, a five set belter against Rory Scott and semi finalist Wayne Mason, also in five brilliant games, to reach his first restricted final.

The Veteran singles glassware trophy went to John Holland taking a 3-1 win against finalist Costas Papantoniou. Losing last four players Jimmy Walsh and Tomasz Rzeszotko played a huge part in an entertaining event.



Danny Lawrence, winner of Player of the Tournament, pictured with referee Mick Strobe

The player of the tournament award and a £50 Briar voucher was presented to 13 year old Danny Lawrence for his outstanding performances.

In what was at times a difficult weekend Referee Mick Strobe and his team of officials which included Steve Smith, Diane Kirkwood, Jim Kenny and Graham Rogerson, together with the band of hard working blue coats, held it all together magnificently.

The next scheduled Grand Prix is to be held in Newcastle over the weekend of the 23rd and 24th of October.

Results from day two at Peterborough as follows:

Men's Open

Chris Doran (Np) beat Richard Andrews (Bk) 11-6, 11-5, 8-11, 11-9.

Women's Open

Egle Adomelyte (Mi) beat Lauren Spink (Nk) 11-4, 14-16, 11-8, 6-11, 11-3.

Under 21 Men

Tom Maynard (Bk) beat Lewis Gray (K) 12-10, 12-10, 11-7.

Under 21 Women

Evangeline Collier (E) beat Jas Ould (K) 12-10, 11-9, 11-6.

Veteran Men

John Holland (Dy) beat Costas Papantoniou (Mi) 11-6, 14-12, 11-13, 11-7.

Restricted Men

Jon Hall (Bu) beat Matt Porter (Sx) 11-8, 11-6, 11-7.

By Geoff Ware

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