

The 2015 London Open - Juniors, Seniors and Ladies

The last weekend in November saw a marathon of pool as the juniors, seniors and ladies descended upon Spots & Stripes for their respective London Open events.

First up, the juniors, and with no former champs in the running, we were guaranteed a first-time winner, and for some of the competitors this would be the last chance to be London Junior champion.

Two such hardy veterans were Tony Griffin and Connor Hewson, and both were in fine form as they made it through to the grand final, Connor seeing off Jasper Bacon in the preliminary final for the right to take on the unbeaten Tony.

In the end, it was Tony who held on to win the trophy. Fourth place went to newly crowned national under-16 champ Chris Panayiotou who also picked up the special prize for best performance by an under-15 player.

As expected with all that experience on show, the seniors proved to be a dogged event.

Defending champion Paul Gafa always rises to the occasion at the Open, and once again his game was solid and meticulous as he brushed aside all-comers to reach the final from the winners' side.

In a tournament dominated by Pauls, Paul Dawson emerged as winner from the losers' side, taking out Paul Alexander on a deciding frame in the preliminary final.

In the end, it was Paul Dawson who lifted the trophy, beating Gafa in the grand final.

On Sunday, it was the turn of the ladies, and with very little separating the field, it was always going to be a close event.

Former England International Michaela 'The Jester' Lester squeezed through on the winners' side by seeing off a rejuvenated Linda Redwood who was playing some beautiful pool, but she'd been run close along the way, not least by last year's runner-up, Suffolk player and England trialist Chantelle Wosko.

This 4-3 win sent Chantelle into the losers' side and she proceeded to win last-frame deciders against Corinne Gratton and then Linda to qualify for another stab at Michaela in the grand final. She'd clearly learned a lesson from their previous encounter and won comfortably, 4-1, to force the tournament into a deciding match between the two stand-out players, and, unsurprisingly, this went all the way.

Chantelle had her chances but was unlucky to snooker herself on her last ball and Michaela took out a bold finish to emerge as champion.

Well done to Michaela, Paul and Tony, and to all who took part in the events.

Next Sunday we have the main London Open and with around 80 players already confirmed, it really does promise to be the biggest and most exciting London Open in years.

Good luck to everyone playing, and thanks as ever to Nigel, Clair and the Spots & Stripes team for being such fantastic hosts.