

# Loveridge adds to her growing reputation

## Table Tennis

by Aaron Scoones

**ALICE LOVERIDGE** added a few more notable scalps to her collection as she shone at the seventh Stiga City of Liverpool Four Star Junior Open last weekend.

Competing at the Greenbank Sports Academy, the 12-year-old Guernsey table tennis sensation beat the England number-one under-13 player to clinch the age-group girls' title. The Grammar School student also made it to the final of the U-18 girls band-one event, defeating top British and Irish competitors in the process, and did better than expected in the U-18 girls' open competition to make it to the semi-finals.



**Twelve-year-old Alice Loveridge.**  
(Picture by Daniel Guerin, 0347458)

Local stockbroker Cenkos helped Loveridge get to this ranking tournament.

'I was really pleased to get so far in the U-18 competition as so many highly-ranked players competed,' said Loveridge.

'I felt I played some of my best table tennis ever and have never felt so tired at the end.'

The first event, on the Saturday morning, saw Loveridge take part in the U-13 open. After five matches without dropping a single game, the Sarnian met England's best U-13 player, Emily Bates, in the final.

Loveridge soon found herself two games down but she dug deeply to rally back to win 3-2.

Next up was the U-15 cadet girls and Loveridge again went five matches without dropping a game to meet Bates again, this time in the quarter-finals.

On this occasion it was the English girl who was celebrating at

the end when she won 3-1.

Day two kicked off for Loveridge with the U-18 girls' band-one contest and she was in fine form to notch up some impressive victories over several of England's, Ireland's, Scotland's and Wales's best players. The standout successes were over England's Melissa Wright and number-one seed Hannah Hicks, whom she overcame 3-1 in the semi-finals.

Unfortunately for Loveridge, however, she could not keep this going into the final as she went down 3-2 to the top England U-15 girl, Martha Travis, after a long and tiring battle.

The blue-riband event of the tournament was the U-18 girls' open and after expecting to go out in the first round, Loveridge turned in some great performances to finish runner-up in her group and progress further.

The highlight of her group-stage matches came against Italy's U-18 number two, Liz Insam. The encounter drew a large crowd as both the Italian and Loveridge play in an attacking style that brought out long and exciting rallies.

Loveridge eventually went down 3-1, with two of the sets going to deuce. Far from being disheartened, she then took her next two rounds after the groups before meeting the number-three seed, Caroline Hallows.

The U16 England number two fell to Loveridge 3-1 to give the Guernsey girl one of the best results of her young career. She then took care of another highly ranked contestant to make it to the semis, where she came up against Hicks for the second time in the day.

After five gruelling games and having two match points, Loveridge could not repeat her earlier success over Hicks as the English girl took the fifth game 13-11 to clinch the match. Guernsey Table Tennis Association president Derek Webb was delighted with Loveridge's achievements over the weekend.

'It's fantastic,' he said.

'She's well respected now on the UK circuit. When girls see Alice's name down for a competition, they say, "ohhh".'

Loveridge has a particularly busy schedule ahead of her now. Early next month, she is off to a European Table Tennis Union training camp in the Czech Republic with fellow local junior star Ollie Langlois.

Then, at the end of February, she is going to Sweden with the rest of the Great Britain Talent ID squad for the 2012 Olympics before competing in another big tournament in Derby a few weeks later.