

Next stop Europe for Webb's crew

Table Tennis

by Rob Batiste

IT'S next stop Europe for Derek Webb's team at the Guernsey Table Tennis Association.

On the day the GTTA completed hosting the three-day British Schools Championships, it was confirmed they will stage a European Table Tennis Union 'Eurokids' camp here next February.

Hungarian Zita Pidl, the ETTU's development manager,

confirmed the invite and her positive impression of Guernsey's facilities and organisational skills, as she sat watching the British Schools finals.

She heaped praise on the organisational team and facilities at the Hougue du Pommier.

'Many bigger European countries would be pleased to have such a hall at their disposal 24 hours a day.

'I knew something was going on here, but didn't know that so much is going on in Guernsey.'

The GTTA headquarters fits the bill perfectly for staging a Eurokids camp, she said.

'For a camp you need at least 16 tables, 20 preferably and accommodation for 50 to 60 within walking distance.'

Sixteen nations will be represented at the Eurokids camp which comprises five full days of training and an in-house tournament.

Webb said that half-term week next February was the most likely date and hoped to tag on an annual tournament to the camp.

'It's definitely going to happen. It's ours,' he said, after he and GTTA vice-president Phil Hunkin completed negotiations with Pidl.

'It's all OK'd and after the training camp which has 15 associations coming in with two players each, as well as 15



Rachel Harm featured in the British Schools girls' under-14 tournament alongside her identical twin, Laura. (Picture by Daniel Guerin, 0453727)

coaches, we are looking to have a tournament.'

While in Guernsey Pidl met Graham Chester, the island's Culture and Leisure sports development manager.

'It's very nice to know that your government supports table tennis. It is not like that everywhere.'

Even before arriving, Pidl was well aware of the talents of now two-time British under-14 champion Alice Loveridge, but she is not the only Guernsey youngster to have impressed.

'Oliver [Langlois] has a very impressive backhand top-spin and Matthew's [Stubbington] fighting spirit I like very much.

'Generally, the level is OK here.'

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