

'Nerveless' Paula sinks the Scots

Table Tennis

by Rob Batiste

THAT Alice Loveridge should win another national medal comes as no surprise.

But that Guernsey's juniors should return from the annual [Six Nations](#) Champion-ships at Warwick University in Coventry, with not one medal but four – two silver and two bronze – was a pleasant surprise for Derek Webb, the sport's supremo.

'Winning a medal in the junior boys [under-18s] was a big

breakthrough for us. This is the first junior medal we've won and they are now starting to believe that they can get results at this level,' said Webb.

In Coventry and with Guernsey and Isle of Man competing as full nations alongside England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, the silver medals came courtesy of girl cadets Loveridge and Paula Le Ber, Oliver Langlois in the cadet [under-15] boys and Scott Romeril and Gary Dodd in the junior boys team competition.

In the latter event, Romeril played some superb [table tennis](#) in the last rubber against Ireland, winning the decisive fifth set 12-10 after being two sets to one down.

The Guernsey pair also beat both Wales and the Isle of Man 5-0.

Loveridge and Le Ber went very close to claiming gold in the cadet girls' team competition, losing only 3-2 to England after beating Wales 4-1, Ireland 4-1 and the Isle of Man 5-0.

They then went on to play Scotland and with the match delicately poised at 2-2, Le Ber went on to play and beat the Scottish number two Linda Flaws, in four to secure the silver medal.

Webb was ecstatic with Le Ber, 14, who, he says, under-estimates her ability and role alongside Loveridge.

'She is nerveless,' he said.

'In the decider she came out all guns blazing, hitting forehand



Paula Le Ber came away from Coventry with two silvers. (Picture by Daniel Guerin, 0367320)

topspins and backhands, both close to the table and away from it.

‘Paula and Alice are a very good team because they are so good as a doubles partnership.’

Loveridge, 12, did not drop a game in the team event and then sailed through to the final of the individual girls’ competition in which she has a further two years.

In the team event she beat England number one Melissa Wright, a competent defender, but on this occasion she surprisingly went down 3-1 after some long and tiring rallies.

‘She was very disappointed,’ said Becks O’Keefe, the island’s development officer.

In the corresponding boys’ event, Langlois and Matthew Stubbington just missed out on a bronze on countback after they had beaten both Wales and the Isle of Man.

They both qualified for the singles knockout where Stubbington went down 3-0 to Sean Cullen, the England number two, while his teammate topped his group on points countback and went on to claim bronze.