

Alice Loveridge Shines in Junior 4 Star event

By

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Eleven Juniors, together with coaches and supporters travelled to Stockton-on-Tees last weekend for the 2007 Junior 4 Star Table Tennis Championships.

The Championships were divided into Cadet and Junior Team tournaments and Individual tournaments for Mini Cadets, Cadet, Juniors and Grade 1 players. The event was held in the Thornaby Pavilion and was sponsored by Tees Active Ltd. The 17 tables were kept occupied throughout the 2 days and there was plenty of action involving the Guernsey players to keep their supporters involved from start to finish.

Players from 7 countries were on view including all the top English players as well as Welsh, Scottish and Irish Internationals. The main success for Guernsey came from the exceptionally talented Alice Loveridge who took home the Cadet Girls Trophy and the runner-up prize in the Junior Girls final. In the Cadet Girls final she beat Natasha Rees from Wales in three straight sets 11-8, 11-5 and 11-7.

In the Junior Girls event, the unseeded Alice Loveridge had beaten 4th seed Caroline Hallows on the way to the final. However she came up against Team Peniel's new Chinese recruit Liu Mehan in the final who proved just too tough for her at the end of a long and tiring weekend. She lost the first two games in a match dominated by the spin of her opponent but showed how strong she was when she fought back to win the third 11-8. All the Guernsey supporters hoped for a come back of epic proportions but it was not to be and Liu Mehan proved too strong for Alice in the 4th game to win the match 3-1.

In the Junior 7 nation team events early successes were achieved for Guernsey by Adam Langlois and Joshua Stacey, Lawrence Stacey and Liam Robilliard and Oliver Langlois and Matthew Stubbington. While Kate Stubbington and Rachel Harm together with Alice Loveridge and Paula Le Ber lost their matches. Oliver and Matthew, Liam and Lawrence also experienced early successes in the Cadet Boys Team events but couldn't get any further.

While Alice shone in the Individual tournaments others also tasted success in the round robin stages. Amongst them, Kate Stubbington, who was then beaten in the first round of the Mini Cadet Singles losing out to the losing finalist in the group. In the Cadet boys both Matthew Stubbington and Oliver Langlois qualified for the final stages but lost in the first round. Oliver Langlois topped a good weekend for him by also qualifying for the final stages of the Boys Grade 1 event. Paula Le Ber played several exciting games against strong opponents while Rachel and Laura Harm acquitted themselves well and came close to gaining their first International successes in thrilling five set matches.

In fact many of the games were exceptionally close with players giving their opponents tough games at all levels. Having seen many of these players in action in Cork 7 months ago, the improvement across the board was impressive. Perhaps the biggest improvement came from the smallest players in the team. The Stacey twins received high praise from their coaches for the way they had acquitted themselves as they took on much older and taller opponents - and won. The future is certainly bright for Guernsey Table Tennis.