Hee, Hee, Hooray! Double win for brothers

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Brothers Ben and Joseph Hee defended their titles and there was a title for birthday girl Patricia Ianau at the Butterfly School Individual Championships.

The Hee brothers were both top seeds and faced a brotherly challenge from Naphong and Naphat Boonyaprapa, both seeded two.

In the event, Joseph Hee faced Naphat in the Under-16 final, but Naphong had to settle for a bronze as Ben Piggott tore up the script for two 'family finals'

Ianau won the Under-16 girls, but her twin sister Natalia, playing up at Under-19, could not make it a double. That title was won by Charlotte Bardsley, stepping up from the U16 gold she won last year.

Around 300 players took part in 10 hours of competition at the Aldersley Leisure Village in Wolverhampton.

Many of the players will be back at the venue next week for the PG Mutual Cadet & Junior National Championships.

All photos by Ted Cottrell.

Under-11 Boys

The medallists receive their awards from Schools Committee Chairman Mike Smith and Welsh table tennis star Ryan Jenkins

Oliver Maric-Murray won a superb final against Jakub Piwowar to take the winner's trophy, twice coming from behind to shade the match 3-2 (12-14, 11-3, 11-13, 11-9, 11-6).

Henry Shaw and Cameron Driver were the two third-placed athletes, Shaw being defeated 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 11-8) by Piwowar and Driver in four (9-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-8) by Maric-Murray.

Shaw had an interesting scoreline in his quarter-final, overcoming Sam Gabriel 3-1 (11-3, 17-19, 11-6, 11-9).

Whitgift School pupil Maric-Murray, 10, said: "It was a really close final and it feels really good to win. It's one of the most important trophies we play for."

Under-11 Girls

The Under-11 Girls podium

Sophie Barcsai took the title thanks to a 3-2 win in the last final of the day. It was a top-quality match as well as she defeated top seed Maliha Baig 11-5, 10-12, 11-7, 8-11, 11-7.

Barcsai's semi-final saw her battle back from 2-0 down against Kate Watkinson to win another very tight encounter 3-2 (11-13, 10-12, 13-11, 11-5, 11-8).

Baig needed four to end the competition of Connie Dumelow (11-9, 11-7, 7-11, 11-5) in the other semi-final. A round earlier, she defeated Jyothirmayi Ghanta, who had knocked out second seed Bethany Ellis in the first round.

Nine-year-old Barcsai, from Poole, said: "I wasn't sure I could win, but all the support from people helped me. It's the best thing I've won."

Under-13 Girls

The Under-13 Girls' podium

First winner on the day was Sandy Choong, who dropped only three games on her way to winning the title, beating Erin Green 3-1 (11-8, 9-11, 11-6, 11-5) in the final.

It meant the runner-up was unable to emulate her younger twin siblings, Connor and Anna, who won the Under-11 titles last season.

The other games dropped by 13-year-old Choong were in a prolonged semi-final against Raquel Sao Pedro, which she won 3-2 (11-9, 12-14, 11-8, 6-11, 11-8).

Choong, originally from Hong Kong but now living in Ramsbottom, where she attends Woodhey School, said: "It's the best thing I have won in table tennis but it was difficult. In the semi-final I thought I was going to lose but I believed in myself and didn't give up."

Green's semi was a more serene 3-0 (4, 8, 8) against second seed Amy Marriott while, earlier in the knockouts, there was an impressive 3-2 (9-11, 11-4, 11-9, 8-11, 11-8) victory for Jasmine Fung over fourth seed Niamh Scarborough in the first round.

Under-13 Boys

The Under-13 Boys presentation, with former ESTTA Chairman John Blackband

A see-saw final saw Ben Hee defend his title against Ben Piggott after the two came through to the final from a highly competitive field.

Hee twice led and Piggott twice levelled, before the defending champion clinched it 3-2 (11-9, 5-11, 11-8, 8-11, 11-5).

Piggott withstood a big comeback by second seed Naphong Boonyaprapa in the semi-finals, seeing one match point go begging in the fourth but ultimately prevailing 3-2 (11-5, 11-5, 10-12, 11-13, 11-7).

The other bronze medallist was Bertie Kelly, who was beaten 3-0 (8, 7, 5) by Hee.

City of London School pupil Hee, 13, said: “It feels great. Last year was quite a depleted field so there weren’t as many quality players there and it fees better this time because I’ve had to work so much harder.

“We were talking with Naphat and Naphong and said the winning family would be the best family!”

Under-16 Girls

The Under-16 Girls' podium

Patricia Ianau celebrated her 15th birthday in style as she won the title, the London Academy player beating Alice Dillon 3-0 (11-9, 11-5, 11-8).

Both finalists needed five games in the quarter-finals, Dillon needing a super comeback, recovering from two sets down to beat Federica Bonato 3-2 (7-11, 8-11, 11-4, 11-8, 11-4).

Ianau on the other hand had to hold off a fightback from Danielle Kelly, eventually winning it 3-2 (11-5, 11-7, 7-11, 3-11, 11-4).

Dillon went on to sink top seed Gemma Kerr in the last four, by a 3-1 (8-11, 11-9, 11-4, 11-7) scoreline, while the other semi-final saw Ianau defeat Katie Holt 3-0 (11-7, 11-4, 11-8).

Ianau, who represents Romania but has lived here since she was four, said: "I thought at the start of the day that it would be nice to do well on my birthday and go home happy.

"It's good to win the title, I've got a couple of second places in the team event but this is my first individual trophy.

"In the quarter-finals I think there were too many mistakes at 2-0 and my focus went down, but at 2-2 I kind of woke up."

Under-16 Boys

The Under-16 Boys' presentation

Joseph Hee followed his brother's lead by winning the title for the second year running, defeating Naphat Boonyaprapa in the final 3-0 (11-8, 11-9, 11-6).

The two third-place athletes were Thomas Rayner, beaten 3-0 (7, 5, 8) by Hee, and Ben McDonald, who lost in three (7, 4, 6) to Boonyaprapa.

Hee, 15, said: "It's always an honour to win something and I felt I played really well today and the opposition was good. I'm really happy I can play for my school and win the championship.

"I knew Ben had won his final. It didn't motivate me in mine, but it did encourage me."

Rayner had survived a dramatic quarter-final against Freddie Osenton-Brown, who fought back from 2-0 and 10-8 down to take it to a decider before Rayner came through 3-2 (11-9, 11-2, 10-12, 11-13, 11-4).

Rayner also needed five in the first round as he won 3-2 (8-11, 11-6, 11-13, 11-8, 11-7) against Ben Savage, while Osenton-Brown beat Jake Cutts 3-2 (9-11, 11-7, 2-11, 11-8, 11-5) at the same stage.

McDonald's quarter-final went to five as he overcame Chamika Weerasinghe 8-11, 11-6, 12-10, 5-11, 11-7), his opponent in turn having won 3-2 (12-14, 6-11, 11-5, 11-8, 11-7) against Robert Pelc in the first round.

Under-19 Girls

The Under-19 Girls' podium

Charlotte Bardsley 'upgraded' her Under-16 title from last year to the Under-19 version as she overcame Mollie Patterson in the final.

It was a clash between the top two seeds and Bardsley, the No 1, took it 3-1 (11-9, 11-6, 9-11, 11-7).

She said: "I knew it was going to be a mentally tough day because there's a lot of different styles at the Schools and you have to keep making sure you are on it.

"Mollie played really well in the final and it was good preparation for the Nationals next week."

Both semi-finals were won in three straight, with Bardsley overcoming Amy Blagbrough 11-7, 11-4, 11-5 and Patterson defeating Mari Baldwin 11-6, 11-4, 11-4.

In the quarters, Patterson had ended the chance of Natalia Ianau matching her twin sister's feat of winning the title and making it an even better joint birthday celebration.

At the same stage, Blagbrough twice trailed Megan Dillon but came back to win 3-2 (7-11, 11-8, 9-11, 11-3, 11-8), while Baldwin shaded the tightest of tight matches against Naomi Lau 3-2 (8-11, 12-10, 11-8, 6-11, 14-12).

Under-19 Boys

The top players in the Under-19 boys

Fifth seed Sam Wilson chopped his way through the field to take the title, beating fourth seed Gaurav Aravind in a pulsating final which finished 3-2 (11-3, 7-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9).

Wilson had seen off fifth, third and second seeds in succession on his way to the final, defeating Israel Awolaja 3-1 (11-6, 10-12, 11-9, 11-5) in the first round before ending the chances of Ethan Walsh 3-0 (9, 7, 9) in the quarters.

His semi-final opponent was de facto top seed George Hazell – the original No 1 Sam Kwan having withdrawn and been replaced by a much lower ranked player. Wilson won that semi 3-0 (4, 9, 8).

The other last-four clash was also a 3-0 victory as Aravind bt Murhad Hussain 11-6, 11-6, 11-4). Hussain had impressively defeated Max Stevens 3-2 (4-11, 11-6, 4-11, 11-5, 11-7) in the quarter-finals.

Wilson, 17, from Corby, said; “I go into every tournament gunning for it and thinking I can win. I’ve been battling a long time trying to get my consistency up and finally it happened.

“I beat four players above me and I lost to two of them last time I played them. It’s a really good feeling to have it all come together.”

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