

Head & Shoulders Above The Rest

Author: Russell Moore

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Polish Open

England's 20 year old Chris Doran is certainly a player who stands out from the crowd; in fact he stands head and shoulders above the rest.

The reason is that in virtually every tournament he competes, he is the tallest player. At the Volkswagen World Junior Championships in December 2009, he attracted the attention in Cartagena de Indias and at the current Polish Open in Warsaw he has caught the eye.

However, it is not just the fact that he is over two metres tall that attracts the attention; he is a very able player.

Fine Results

In Cartagena de Indias he beat Hungary's Daniel Kosiba, the reigning European Youth champion at the time, in the group stage of proceedings in the Boys' Singles event and in Warsaw he has impressed.

Life in the Men's Singles event was torturous, he was beaten by both Japan's Kaito Fujimoto and Russia's Grigory Vlassov but in the Under 21 Men's Singles first phase matches on Thursday 11th November 2010, life was much better.

He defeated the Czech Republic's Marek Obeslo before causing an upset to overcome Slovenia's Jan Zibrat, the third highest world ranked player on duty in the first phase of the event's proceedings.

Likened to Vladimir Samsonov

"I'm 202 centimetres tall and I play table tennis, I'm also one of the tallest players in the world", said Chris Doran. "My friends call me the English Vladimir Samsonov."

Now that is a high accolade and Chris Doran is not unlike the three times winner of the Men's World Cup; a major quality of his play is he excellent control over a table tennis ball; as they say in the trade, "he has good hands".

Favourite Player

My friends always compare me to Vladimir Samsonov", continued Chris Doran. "One day I hope to play just like him, he's my favourite player".

It was his Samsonov likev style of play that brought success on the second day of action.

Defect

"It's difficult for me to play aggressively and dynamically close to the table", explained Chris Doran who was born with a defect in his clavicle that grew with age.

"When I was 11 years old I underwent an operation as the defect became too large", continued Chris Doran. "They took some bone from my hip an inserted it into my clavicle, for four years I had a metal screw in my collar bone; to this day I still have scars from the operation."

The result was that for two years after the surgery the Englishman could only block the ball when playing table tennis; only later did his career start to blossom.

Good Golfer

"I've been playing table tennis since I was 11 years old", added Chris Doran. "Swimming played an important role in my recovery as well as with my overall physical development, I couldn't always train twice a day, even though I would have liked to; in my spare time I love playing golf and basketball."

No doubt he is built for basketball but he is a fine golfer, a single figure handicap, he was been the

Northamptonshire Junior champion, the county from which he hails in England.

Plays in Germany, Trains in Sweden

Currently he plays in the German Bundesliga Second Division for Dortmund Bad Damm but he lives and trains in Sweden.

"I live in Helsingborg, on weekends I travel to league matches in Germany and on Monday I return to Sweden to train", concluded Chris Doran. "My dream is to represent Great Britain at the next Olympic Games in London, 2012."

Judging by his performance in Warsaw on the second day of play at the Polish Open, that dream may come true.

Courtesy ITTF

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