



## Worcestershire Schools individual competiton

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Beth Pye

The U13 girls competed in a round-robin format with all six girls coming from schools in Evesham. The competitors were Beth Pye of Bredon Hill Academy, Matilda Neale and Anna Blakely from Blackminster and Bella Reid, Ciara Webb and Pippa Thomas all from St Egwin's.

Blakely and Reid produced one of the matches of the day in a five set thriller. After going two games to one down Reid fought back to take the match 3-2.

Webb, Neale and Thomas played well but struggled to keep pace with their more accomplished opponents.

The championship depended on the result of the final match between Pye and Reid. Playing supremely confident table tennis all day, Pye was able to secure a 3-0 win and remain undefeated.

Winner: Beth Pye; Second: Bella Reid; Third: Anna Blakely

The U13 boys drew 11 competitors with several from schools in Worcestershire entering the competition for the first time.

The first semi-final pitched Blackminster players Alfie Saunders and Danny Norman against each other. The fast improving Saunders took the match with a comfortable 3-0 win.

In the second semi-final Ben Thacker of Heathfield Knoll School, Kidderminster faced Harvey Gough from Blackminster. Whilst Gough tried his hardest to stay in the match, Thacker eased to a 3-0 win.

The final provided a re-run of a first round match between Saunders and Thacker. In their first match, Saunders had pushed his opponent all the way losing narrowly 3-2 in an epic struggle. Thacker seemed to have the measure of a tiring Saunders in the final and played composed table tennis to win 3-0.



Gough took the consolation of third place beating Norman 3-0

Winner: Ben Thacker; Second: Alfie Saunders; Third: Harvey Gough

The U11 girls drew six girls from St.Egwin's Middle, Littleton First and Blackminster Middle and as the U13 girls, played in a round – robin format.

Phoebe Allcock, Elmarie Lourens, Madison Millar and Katie Fisher of Littleton put in a fantastic effort against the slightly older girls, Lexi Clarke of Blackminster and Sophie George of St.Egwins.

Allcock pushed George all the way in the first match of the day with George just clinging on to win 3-2.

Katie Fisher took the first game against Clarke before going down 3-1.

After a nervy start to the competition, Clarke seemed to gain confidence. In her next match, against George, she again went one game down. Clarke's, deep, heavy backspin return was her most effective shot and began to pay dividends. Playing some fine table tennis she won the next three games to take the match 3-1. She went on to maintain her 100% win record and become champion.

Winner: Lexi Clarke; Second: Sophie George; Third: Katie Fisher.

The U11 Boys drew the largest entry of 17 competitors from a wide selection of schools in Worcestershire, with some being schools new to the competition.

Alex Setchell of Meadow Green Primary (Wythall) was the previous years U11 Runner- up and was back to try and take the title.

In the first semi-final Setchell played David Morrish of St. Nicholas Middle School, Pinvin. Morrish put up a spirited display, however, the more experienced Setchell proved too strong to win the match 3-0.

In the second semi-final school friends Joshua Sanders and Henry Guy of St.Nicholas faced each other. Both boys played some terrific table tennis before Guy was able to take the match 3-1.

The final started at a frantic pace. Setchell seemed to struggle with the defensive style of Guy and quickly found himself one game down. He then began to adjust to the different pace of the match and began to wear down his opponent. In a clever tactical battle Setchell went on to win the title for the first time 3-1.

The third –place play off was one of the best matches of the day. Sanders beating Morrish 3-2. Both boys playing some brilliant table tennis.

Winner: Alex Setchell; Second: Henry Guy; Third: Joshua Sanders

This year, the boys just had the edge over the girls on standard of play and technique. With the organiser finding it hard to decide who should collect the trophy for Player of the Tournament, a 'Glory Final' between the U11 Boys Champion, Alex Setchell and U13 Boys Champion, Ben Thacker was played.

In a memorable match both boys played some superb table tennis for the watching parents and spectators. Setchell was leading 2-1 and up in the 4th game when Thacker produced an incredible return from a smash which Setchell then blasted into the net. This inspired Thacker who went on the attack to secure an awesome fight back and win the match 3-2.

Sam Thomas of St John's Primary School, Kidderminster was presented with the tournament trophy for Good Sportsmanship for his determined and enthusiastic play against older and more experienced players.

John Mckay, WSTTA representative, presented the trophies.



Sam Thomas

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