



Grantham double up at School Team finals

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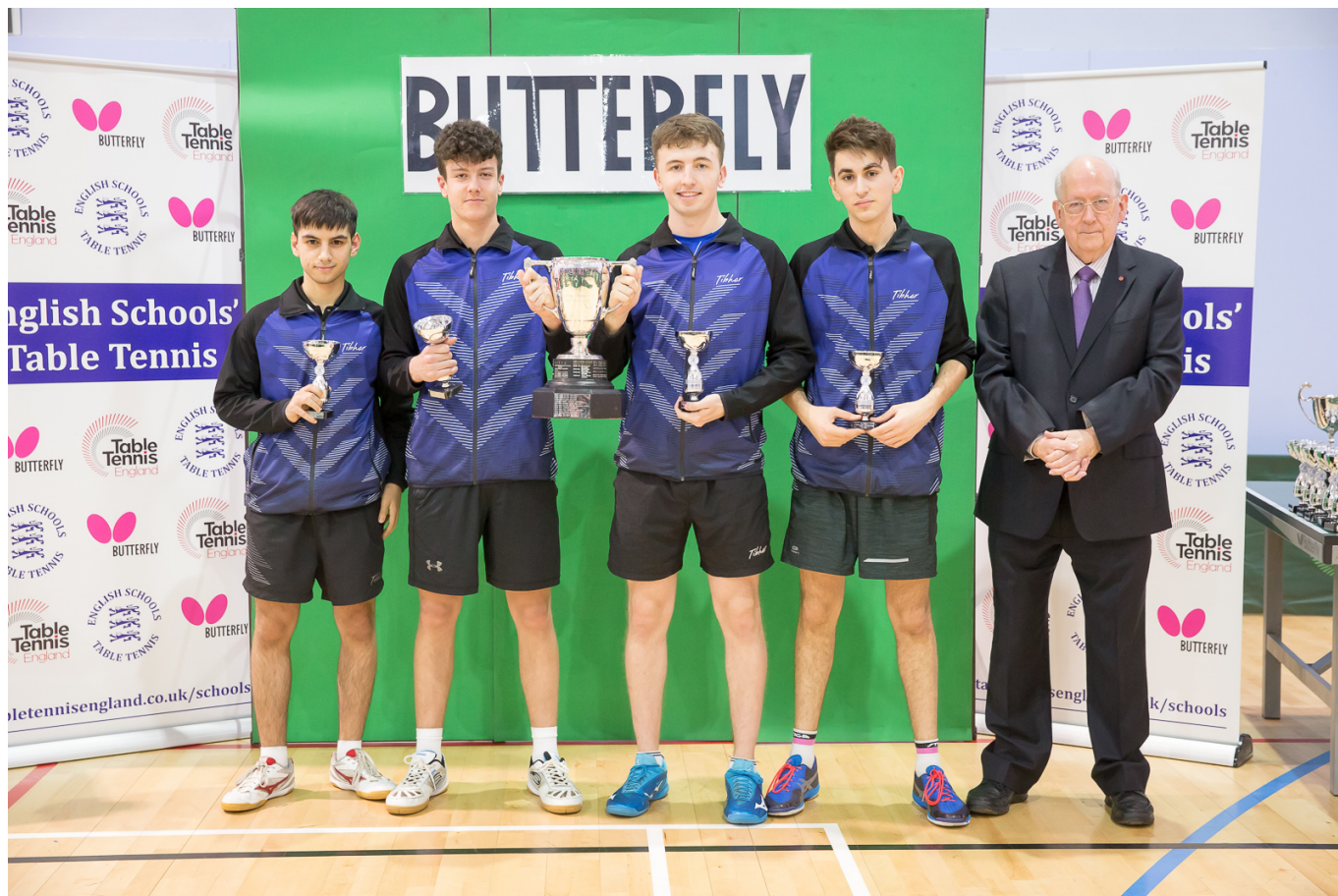
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Seven different schools won titles and only two of last year's champions successfully retained their crowns on a terrific day of table tennis at the Butterfly School Team Championships in Hinckley.

Grantham College were the team to win two trophies – taking both the Under-19 categories – as the teams celebrated the culmination of a competition that began at local level and encompassed zone and regional finals before the national showpiece.

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Under-19 Boys



The winning team with John Arnold MBE, former President of ESTTA.

Grantham College dethroned the champions of the last two years, Whitgift School, beating them 6-2 in the deciding final tie of the tournament.

The champions pulled away from 2-2, winning the remaining four matches to secure the Norman Cook Cup. It meant that Whitgift player James Smith's overnight dash from the Italian Junior & Cadet Open was ultimately in vain.

Grantham earlier defeated Bradford Grammar School 8-0 and Ernest Bevin College 7-1. Whitgift recorded the same margin against Ernest Bevin and defeated Bradford 6-2.

Ernest Bevin came out on top against Bradford – the score was 5-3 – to finish in third place.

Grantham's Olly Tyndall said: "It's a big achievement after a lot of work and it means quite a lot because we all fought as a team, even when we were behind, and now we're national champions.

"We knew every game mattered against Whitgift and I think the fact we had to play them last was better for us because we were able to get warmed up."

Winning team: Sam Chesterman, Andreas Dickman, Hippolyte Levy, Olly Tyndall.

Under-19 Girls



The winning team with Table Tennis England Schools Committee Chairman Mike Smith

Grantham College got the better of The College of Richard Collyer in a shootout for the title in a category featuring only three teams due to the withdrawal of Okehampton Community College.

Sarah Menghistab and Sophie Barlow both won their two singles against Kate Cheer and Alice Hazell, though the latter pair won the doubles to reduce the deficit to 2-1 and give them hope of turning around the match.

But Menghistab beat Cheer in five (5-11, 11-9, 11-9, 3-11, 11-8) to ensure Grantham would claim the Claud Kichenside Cup, and Barlow then made the final scoreline 4-1 by defeating Barlow, also in five.

Earlier, both teams had beaten Bromsgrove School – Grantham by a 5-0 scoreline and Richard Collyer by a 4-1 margin. Jade Ngan got Bromsgrove's point by defeating Hazell in three.

For the winners, Barlow said: "It was a struggle at times but we fought hard and had a good rapport. When we lost the doubles we forgot about it and picked ourselves up for the remaining matches."

Winning team: Sophie Barlow, Sarah Menghistab.

Under-16 Boys



The Tanbridge House line-up with Alan Ransome OBE

Tanbridge House won all three of their matches to take home the Leach-Carrington Cup.

The Horsham school met Carlton Le Willows from Nottingham to decide the destination of the trophy and they came out 6-2 on top.

That added to 7-1 margins of victory over both Ernest Bevin College (Wandsworth) and St Mary's College, Hull.

It is also noteworthy that Tanbridge House were taken to a deciding set in seven of their individual matches and won them all.

For the winners, Jacob Evans said: "The chemistry of the team was there – we worked together a lot and cheered each other on."

Carlton Le Willows beat Ernest Bevin 5-3 and St Mary's 6-2 to ensure second place, while Ernest Bevin were third thanks to a 6-2 victory over St Mary's.

Winning team: Jacob Evans, Charlie Graham-Adams, Zach Hodges, Oli Michell, Harry Yip.

Under-16 Girls



The Charles Read team receive the trophy from Table Tennis England Board member Simon Griew.

Three matching 6-2 wins clinched the Mick Betts Memorial Cup for Charles Read Academy as they successfully defended their title from last year.

Despite injuries which meant Mollie Patterson and Jodie Norris were unable to complete every match, the Lincolnshire school had enough in hand to finish ahead of Okehampton College.

Raquel Sao Pedro of the winning school said: "We knew all the matches would be at different levels and we would have to adapt to that, but our team spirit helped us through, especially as we had the injuries."

Okehampton themselves had two 6-2 scorelines – against Wood Green Academy (Wednesbury) and Priory Ruskin Academy (Grantham).

Wood Green finished in third, drawing 4-4 against Priory Ruskin but ending above them by an 18-16 sets margin.

Winning team: Danielle Kelly, Jodie Norris, Mollie Patterson, Raquel Sao Pedro.

Under-13 Boys



The winning team with Mike Smith

St Mary's College from Hull successfully defended their title, but had to rely on a last-match victory to edge out Wallington Grammar from Sutton.

Needing a victory – a draw would have seen their opponents emerge on top – they saw Wallington close from 2-0 and 3-1 down to level and 3-3.

Luke Hodgson saw off Chid Egbeama 3-1 to put St Mary's back in front but Jake Hewitt found himself 2-0 down against Sai Gandepalli, before launching a brilliant fightback to win 3-2 (3-11, 10-12, 11-6, 11-7, 12-10) and ensure his team lifted the T Austin Harrison Cup.

Hodgson said: "It's brilliant. It was a challenge and a lot of effort but we know how each other play and I think we played really well as a team. I thought we really deserved it."

Wallington had not dropped a match before the final showdown, having beaten Harrogate Grammar and John Hampden Grammar (High Wycombe) 8-0.

It was the same score for St Mary's against Harrogate, but it was 7-1 over John Hampden – who themselves defeated Harrogate 7-1 to claim third place.

Winning team: Jake Hewitt, Luke Hodgson, Luke Lowther, Lennon Maughan-Staves.

Under-13 Girls



The winning squad with John Arnold MBE

Ripley St Thomas High School's victory over Thomas Aveling School was the key result which earned the Hartshill Cup for the Lancaster School.

It was 6-2 in favour of Ripley, the same score they had registered against Ashlyns School, Berkhamsted, earlier in the competition. An 8-0 victory over Market Bosworth School completed their 100% record.

Jessica Felton, of Ripley St Thomas, said of their victory: "It's really good, I'm very proud of everyone.

"I'd like to thank Graham and Tom from Garstang Table Tennis Club for training us and our parents for bringing us here and being very supportive.

"We've worked so hard to get here and we all worked as a team and were all very supportive of each other."

Thomas Aveling, from Rochester in Kent, were second thanks to a 6-2 win over Market Bosworth and a 5-3 triumph over Ashlyns – in which their opponents three times levelled the score.

Ashlyns' 5-3 success over Market Bosworth saw them claim third place as they held off a comeback by Market Bosworth, who pegged back a 3-0 deficit to 3-3 before Ashlyns won the last two.

Winning team: Jessica Felton, Isabelle Stanton, Olivia Walling, Anna Walsh.

Under-11 Boys

The Irene Elliott Cup was lifted by Earls Hall Primary, who won all three matches, including a key 6-2 victory over Amherst School.

Allied to a 6-2 triumph over defending champions St Peter's CE Academy and an 8-0 margin against Redlands Primary, it saw the Westcliff-on-Sea school on top.

Joe Buscombe from the winning Earls Hall team said: "It's brilliant because last year we came fourth and it was like our job this year to do better."

"We've all improved because every break time and lunch time we've been training with Mr Smith and Mr Dorn and they've given their time supporting us. If they didn't do that, we wouldn't be here."

Amherst, from Sevenoaks were second, ahead of St Peter's (East Bridgford) on countback after the match between the two finished 4-4. Amherst were never ahead in that match, fighting back from 2-0, 3-2 and 4-3 down to claim a draw, clinched by Daniel Henderson's 3-2 win over Harry Dudhill in the final match.

Both St Peter's and Amherst beat Redlands – the former by 5-3 and the latter by 6-2.

Winning team: Joe Buscombe, Joey Page, Jack Riley, Noah Unstead, Aaryan Vatsa.

Under-11 Girls



The winning U11 Girls' team with Simon Grew

The closest competition of all went to countback to decide the champions and winners of the Martin Foulser Cup.

And it was Redlands Primary School from Worksop who came out on top over St Andrew's CE Primary in Plymouth.

Both arrived in the final round with two victories to their name – St Andrew's registering 6-2 wins over both St Bede's Catholic Junior School (Widnes) and Greenway Primary (Berkhamsted), while Redlands beat St Bede's 6-2 and Greenway 7-1.

And that deciding tie ended 4-4 after a real see-saw battle. Redlands trailed 1-0, led 2-1, trailed 3-2 and then pulled level at 3-3. Gypsie Kay put St Andrew's in front by defeating Daisy Walshaw 3-1, but Redlands rescued a

draw and won the trophy on sets difference (17-16) when Promise Tselios beat Jennylee Collings 3-0.

Anna Mocan from the winning team said: "We're proud of ourselves. Paul (Johnson) our coach helped us by telling us what to do to improve, and we were all supporting each other."

Defending champions Greenway ended in third by virtue of a 5-3 defeat of St Bede's.

Winning team: Grace Dickinson, Anna Mocan, Promise Tselios, Daisy Walshaw.

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