



Hee's done it! Schools hat-trick for Joseph

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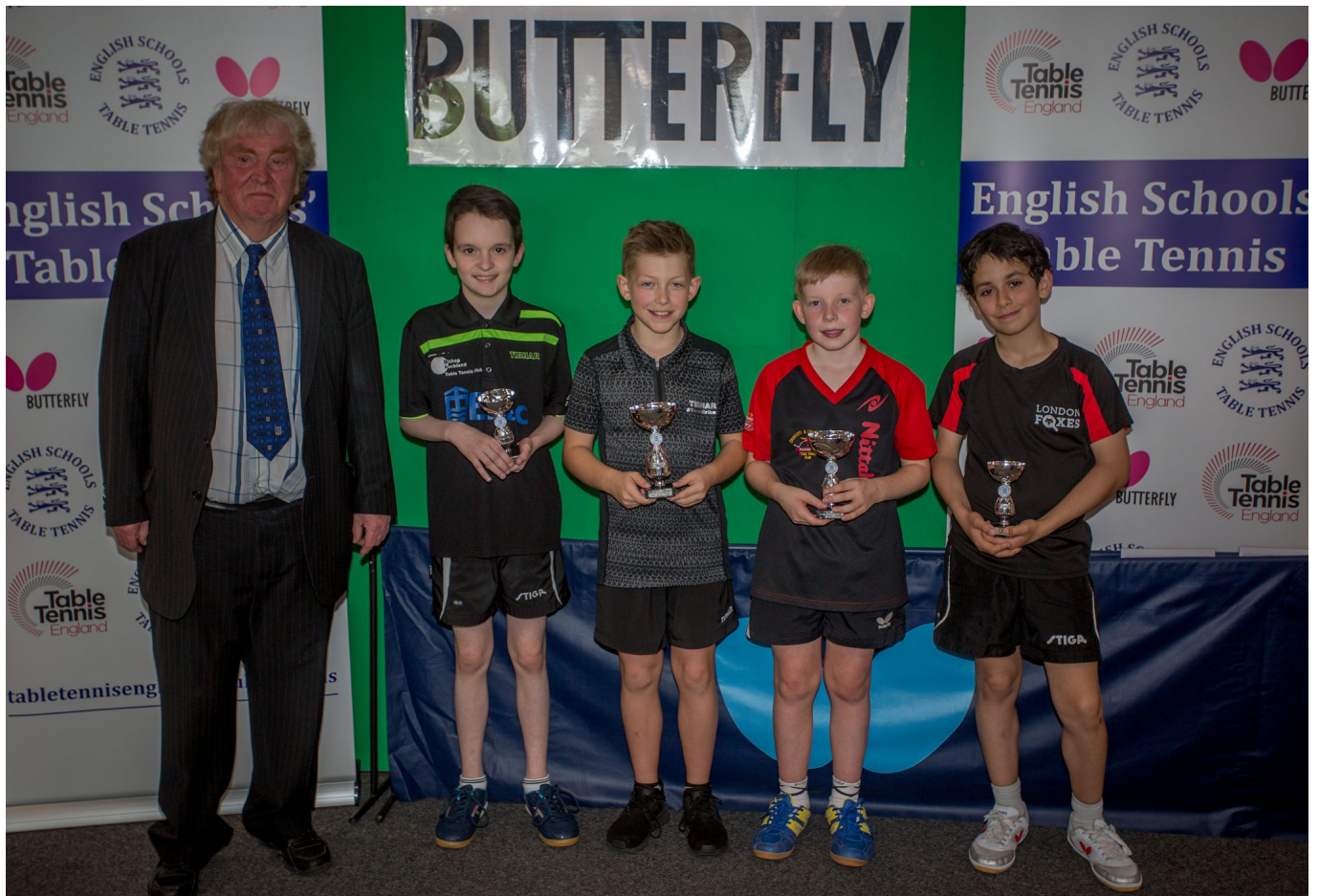
Joseph Hee won for the third year in succession and Charlotte Bardsley defended her title at the Butterfly School Individual Championships in Wolverhampton.

With more than 300 players in action on 32 tables, it was a busy day of action in four age groups, with boys and girls' titles decided.

As well as Hee, Jakub Piwowar, Connor Green and Ethan Walsh won the boys' competitions. Alongside Bardsley, the girls' champions were Sienna Jetha, Maliha Baig and Sandy Choong.

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Under-11 Boys



The under-11 boys medallists with Table Tennis England Schools Committee Chairman Mike Smith

The top two seeds met in the final and it went with seeding as Jakub Piwowar beat Joseph Cooper 3-0 (11-5, 14-12, 11-7).

The two bronze medallists were Ben Mold – who was defeated 3-0 (4, 7, 6) by Piwowar – and Francesco Bonato, who led Cooper 2-0 but saw his opponent fight back to take it 3-2 (9-11, 8-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-6).

Cooper also had to go to five games in the last 16 before coming through 3-2 (11-6, 9-11, 11-8, 8-11, 11-8) against Max Radiven.

Piwowar's closest match, and the only one in which he dropped a game, was in the quarters against Sam Davies, which he won 3-1.

The champion, who attends Our Lady of the Angels Primary in Torquay, said: "I'm happy because I didn't finish second like I did last year. I felt a little bit of pressure but I had to forget I was the first seed and just keep playing my game."

Under-11 Girls



The under-11 medallists with Mike Smith

Top seed Sienna Jetha defeated third seed Jessica Morris 3-0 (11-6, 12-10, 11-0) to win the title without dropping a set.

The bronze medallists were Mia Longman, who was beaten 3-0 (11-4, 11-4, 11-7) by Jetha, and Salina Solari, who lost 3-1 (11-3, 10-12, 11-6, 11-7) to Morris.

Morris had a good struggle with Gypsie Kay in the quarter-finals, getting through 3-1 (13-11, 11-9, 9-11, 16-14).

Winner Jetha, who attends Aldenham School in Hertfordshire, said: "It was good to win. I was confident at the beginning but it got harder as the day went on.

"My mum and dad were supporting me and I had good motivation."

Under-13 Boys



The medallists with John Arnold MBE, former President of ESTTA

Connor Green won his second individual title after picking up the Under-11s two years ago, as he beat Todd Stanmore 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-8) in the final.

Top seed Green, representing Charles Read Academy in Lincolnshire, dropped his only game of the tournament in the semi-final, but still came through against Joseph Hunter 3-1 (13-11, 11-7, 7-11, 11-4).

Green said: "In a few matches, especially in the semi-final and final, I was tense, but once I got the first game away, it was pretty good after that.

"I'm very happy to win a national title and now I'm excited for the Cadet & Junior Nationals. I'm seeded quite high in the Cadets so I want to get as far as I can, and I've got a wildcard in the Juniors, so I can play freely and hopefully win some matches."

In the other semi-final, Stanmore beat Tom Powlesland, who came through as runner-up in Group G but beat two group winners to reach the last four. However, Stanmore was too strong, winning 5, 6, 7.

In the quarters, Stanmore had been due to face third seed and Under-12 National Cup champion Ollie Maric-Murray. Instead, he was up against Jake Haygarth, who staged a tremendous fightback to beat Maric-Murray 3-2 (4-11, 11-13, 1-6, 11-9, 11-7) in the last 16. Haygarth could not repeat the feat and Stanmore prevailed 5, 6, 7 in that clash as well.

Under-13 Girls



Alan Cooke with the under-13 medallists

Sixth seed Maliha Baig added the title to the gold medal she won at the Under-12 National Cup, defeating second seed Megan Jones 3-0 (11-9, 11-8, 11-8) – snuffing out Jones’ hopes of a comeback when she led the third 7-3.

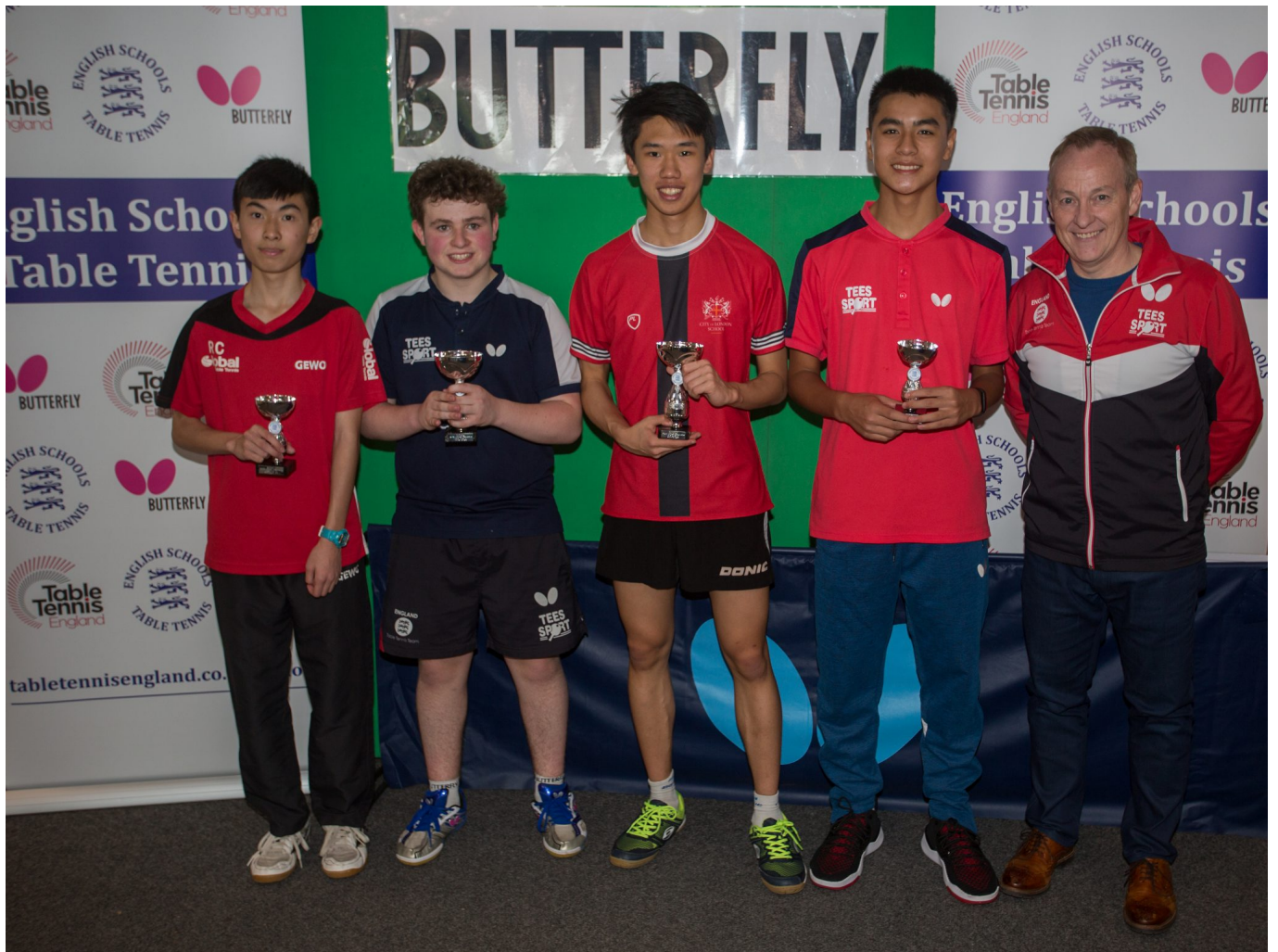
In the semi-finals, Baig had ended Anna Green’s hopes of emulating her twin brother Connor’s title triumph, defeating the top seed 3-0 (11-3, 11-7, 11-5) in the semi-finals.

In the other semi, Jones beat the third seed Sophie Barcsai 3-1 (11-9, 3-11, 11-6, 11-8).

Earlier, Green had to withstand a comeback by Katie Bates in a quarter-final which had the curious scoreline of 3-2 (11-7, 11-8, 0-11, 10-12, 11-7).

Baig, who attends Eastbury Community School, said: “It was a hard competition and I really didn’t expect to win at all. I thought I would lose in the semi-final and definitely in the final because I’d never beaten Anna or Megan before.”

Under-16 Boys



The medallists with Table Tennis England Technical Director Alan Cooke

Joseph Hee once again chopped down all before him to win the title for the third successive year, justifying his top seeding as he beat second seed Louis Price 3-1 (8-11, 11-1, 11-7, 11-2) in the final.

Hee had come through the draw with few alarms, though sixth seed Rhys Davies took a game off him in the quarter-finals before Hee took it 3-1 (11-9, 11-4, 5-11, 12-10). Hee went on to defeat fourth seed Naphong Boonyaprapa 3-0 (11-8, 11-6, 11-6) in the semis.

Price won his semi-final against third seed Ryan Choong in four (6-11, 11-3, 11-6, 11-5) but had been extended by Bertie Kelly in the quarter-finals before prevailing 3-2 (12-14, 11-2, 6-11, 11-8, 11-9).

Kelly had himself been looking down the barrel of a gun in the last 16, when he saved three Owen Brown match points and went on to win 3-2 (11-7, 8-11, 9-11, 11-4, 13-11).

The champion, from City of London School, said: "I feel honoured to win. It's three years since I started playing in England and to win it three times is a pretty awesome feeling.

"I was very impressed with how Rhys Davies played – that was a good match and very close."

Hee's younger brother Ben had won the Under-13 title in the previous two years but is currently studying in Singapore, and Joseph added: "It feels strange without my brother here, he's my sparring partner too and I miss him."

Under-16 Girls



The under-16 medallists with Alan Cooke

Sandy Choong defeated top seed Anaya Patel in a pulsating final match of the day, missing a match point in the fourth game and finally taking her fourth match point in the decider. The final scoreline was 3-2 (11-3, 3-11, 11-8, 11-13, 12-10).

Patel had a remarkable match in the quarter-finals as her opponent Gemma Kerr battled back from 2-0 down to level. The fifth almost made it to the old days of 21-up, Patel winning it 19-17 to complete a 3-2 (11-5, 11-9, 10-12, 5-11, 19-17) scoreline.

It was a little more straightforward in the semis as she overcame Amy Marriott 3-1 (12-10, 11-6, 8-11, 11-9).

Choong's semi-final opponent was Raquel Sao Pedro, who reached that stage with a 3-2 (11-6, 13-11, 13-15, 6-11, 11-7) victory over Erin Green. But Sao Pedro could not sink Choong, who beat her 3-0 (11-9, 11-4, 11-8).

Choong, a pupil at Woodhey High School in Manchester, said: "It was hard because I'm 14 and playing in the under-16s, so I'm really happy to win."

Under-19 Boys



The top four with Mike Smith

Second seed Ethan Walsh came from 2-0 down and saved five match points in the deciding fifth set to take the title, beating surprise finalist Harry Watson 3-2 (7-11, 10-12, 11-7, 11-7, 16-14).

Watson came through as a group runner-up but laid waste to a succession of seeds on his way to the final – fourth seed Peter Smallcombe, sixth seed Joe Walker and then, most impressively, top seed James Smith 3-0 (13-11, 11-7, 11-6) in the semi-finals.

So Walsh, who beat Naphat Boonyaprapa in the semi-finals having overcome Freddie Osenton-Brown in the quarters, would have been under no illusions about this final opponent.

When Watson took the first two sets, it looks as if the Merseysider was on his way to gold. But England international Walsh hit back to level.

Watson again took the initiative and led 10-6 in the final set. Walsh whittled that four-point deficit away either side of a Watson time-out and for a while the boys traded match points, Walsh missing three and Watson one more before Walsh took his fourth chance.

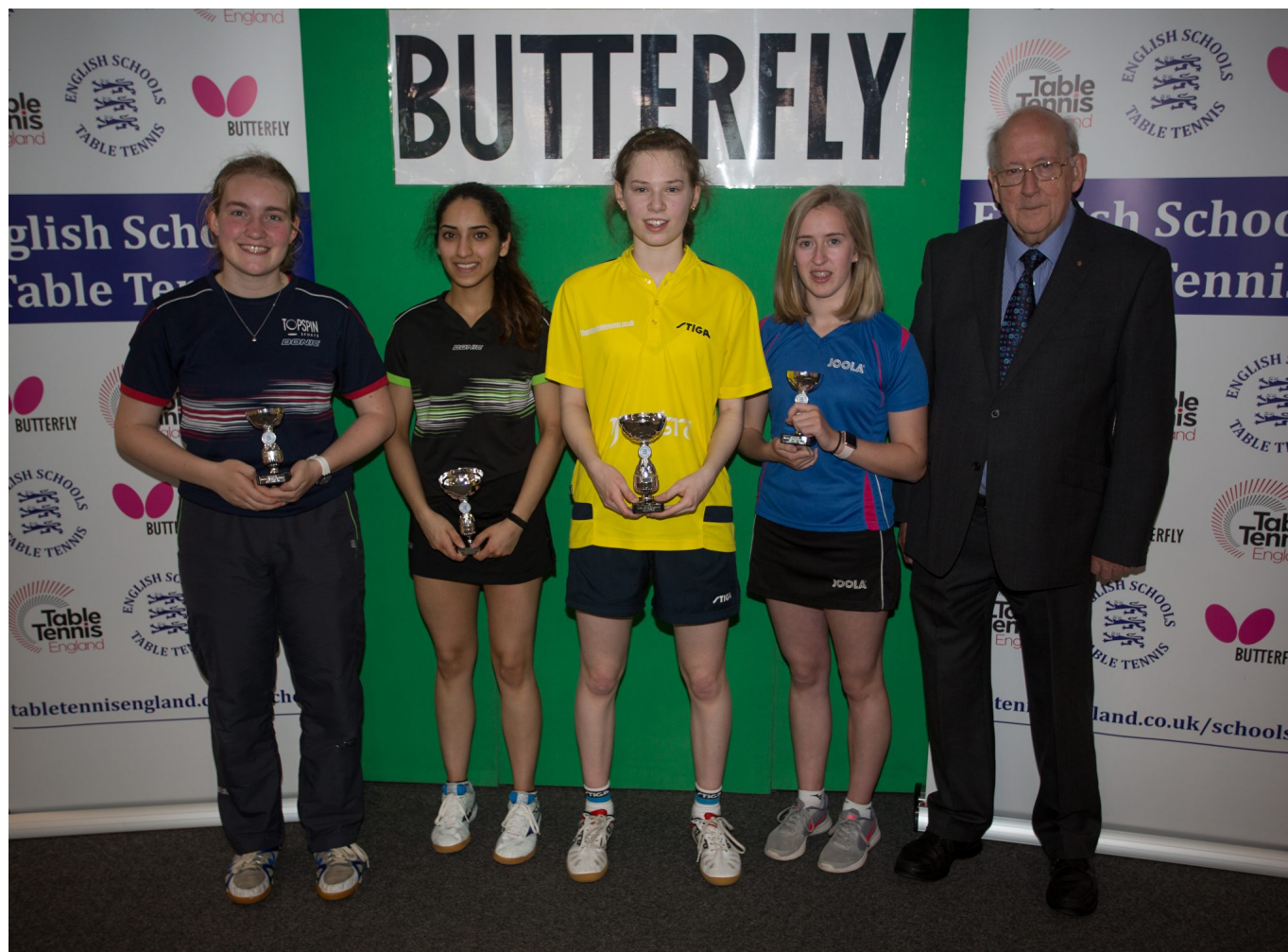
Walsh, a student at Marriott's School in Stevenage, said: "When he beat James 3-0 I was shocked but I knew I couldn't take it easy in the final and he surprised me how he was reacting to what I was doing.

"I changed my game when I was 2-0 down and fought back but at 10-6 down in the final set I thought I'd lost it but I kept going and tried to get the ball back on the table every time.

"This is up there with all the national events and it's my best achievement so far this season. I've not had the best season, so it's good to win this to show I'm still in it – hopefully I can play well at the Cadet & Junior Nationals."

In other notable results earlier, top seed Smith had been extended in the quarter-finals, coming from 2-0 down to defeat Ogi Kostov 3-2 (9-11, 9-11, 11-3, 11-5, 11-5). Kostov had himself recovered a 2-0 deficit in the last 16, where he beat Jack Rogers 3-2 (5-11, 11-13, 11-5, 11-9, 11-9).

Under-19 Girls



The under-19 winners with John Arnold MBE

Charlotte Bardsley retained her title in a hard-fought final against second seed Gauri Duhan, winning 3-0 (12-10, 11-4, 12-10).

The top two seeds got through the earlier rounds with relative ease, Bardsley defeating Tameesha Hobbs 3-0 (11-5, 11-4, 13-11) in the quarter-finals and Federica Bonato 3-0 (11-6, 11-2, 11-1) in the semis, while Duhan got past Anya Milnes 3-0 (5, 5, 2) in the last eight and Emily Haskell (3, 8, 4) in the last four.

Haskell, the fifth seed, upset third seed Tiana Dennison 3-0 (11-6, 11-9, 11-4) in the quarter-finals.

Champion Bardsley, a student at Old Swinford Hospital School in Stourbridge, said: "It's always nice to win it when you are top seed, because there's a bit more pressure on you.

"My level increased as the day went on and I think I played my best in the semi-final. The final was a good match, we both played well.

"I'd like to thank my parents and coaches for bringing me here and the help they give me."

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