



Medals galore for England in Guernsey

Author: Paul Stimpson

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England returned from the Senior Schools International in Guernsey with 27 medals – 10 of them gold.

England's Boys and girls competed against players from Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man in Under-18, Under-16 and Under-14 categories.

The haul included 11 team medals – four gold, five silver and two bronze. In the individual events, England won six gold, four silver and six bronze.

England's contingent also included two junior umpires, Flynn Connolly and Tom Konarski, both from Grantham. Despite their young age, they demonstrated excellent umpiring skills throughout the weekend, especially in many close team matches.

Photos courtesy of Guernsey TTA



Young English umpires Flynn Connolly and Tom Konarski

Team events

The competition started with the team events, and it was in the under-16 that England particularly excelled, as both boys and girls took gold and silver.

In the girls' event, England A (Danielle Kelly and Anaya Patel) and England B (Gemma Kerr and Amy Marriott) both topped their groups.

In the semi-finals England A faced Wales, and got off to a great start with Kelly beating Lauren Stacey, and Patel beating Grace Clement. Despite Wales fighting back to win the doubles in five, Kelly went on to beat Clement 3-1 to secure their place in the final.

England B beat Ireland 3-0. Kerr beat Silkie Heinen 3-1, Marriott beat Thi Ly Cashman 3-0, and then the English girls teamed up to win the doubles 3-1.

In the final, Kelly and Patel were too strong for the B team, and won the match 3-0. Kelly beat Marriott 3-0, Patel defeated Kerr 3-1, and they then secured the gold with a 3-1 doubles win. Ireland took the bronze.



The Under-16 Girls podium

Both boys' teams also won their groups, and England B (Jacob Evans and Bertie Kelly) then won a preliminary round match against Ireland.

In the semi-finals, England B faced Wales and Jacob Evans beat Louie Evans 3-0. This was followed by an awesome comeback by Kelly from 0-2 down against Joseph Roberts to win 3-2. Evans and Kelly secured their place in the final through beating the Welsh pair in the doubles 3-1.

In the other semi-finals England A (Joseph Hee and Ryan Choong) faced Scotland A a tricky match, with Scotland's Martin Johnson beating Choong. Hee levelled the match with a 3-0 win against Charlie Morton. As was the case in many matches over the weekend, the doubles proved to be a pivotal game. The attacking and defensive combination of Choong and Hee proved too much for the Scotland players, securing the win in four close sets.

Hee versus Johnson then went the distance. Hee battled back from 1-0 down to go 2-1, 10-8 up, only for Johnson to fight back to take it to the decider. Hee proved to be the better player, taking the fifth set 11-1 to earn a place in the final.

Once again the final was England A versus England B. The A team took a 2-0 lead as Hee beat Kelly and Choong overcame Evans. The B team continued their successful doubles form, beating Hee and Choong 3-1, but Hee secured the Gold by defeating Evans. Wales won the bronze.



The Under-16 Boys medal presentation

England's other golds went to the boys' teams in the Under-14 and Under-18 categories.

In the Under-14s, England A (Rhys Davies and Ben Piggott) reached the semi-finals with 5-0 wins against Guernsey A, Wales and Isle of Man A, with the loss of just one set. England B (Connor Green and Joseph Hunter) matched the A team with 5-0 wins against Jersey, Scotland B and Isle of Man B, for the loss of only five sets.

In the semi-finals, England A defeated Scotland A 3-0, while England B got past Ireland 3-1, Hunter losing to the Irish left hander Maitiu Heckmann.

Piggott and Davies started well, by beating Hunter and Green respectively, but England B took the doubles. Piggott secured the gold medal for England A by beating Green 3-1, while Ireland took bronze.



The Under-14 boys podium

In the Under-18s, England A (Naphat Boonyaparapa and Harry Watson) booked their place in the semi-finals with a 4-1 win against Guernsey and 4-1 win against Scotland B. In the semi-finals they faced Ireland. Harry Watson beat Alan Pattison 3-2 and Naphat Boonyaparapa beat Kris Dapkuis 3-1 to take a 2-0 lead. The Irish pair pulled one back in the doubles, but Boonyaparapa beat Pattison 3-1 to lead England A into the final.

England B (Sam Chesterman and Peter Smallcombe) topped their group with 5-0 wins against Jersey and Wales. In the semi-final they faced Scotland A. Smallcombe beat Danny Bajwa 3-1, however, Scotland's Dylan Curry levelled the match with a 3-2 win against Chesterman. The doubles went the distance with the Scottish pair winning 11-4 in the deciding set.

Smallcombe beat Curry in the fifth set, fighting back from 2-0 down to win the latter three sets 13-11, 11-9, 11-4. Bajwa coped with the pressure of the final match, beating Chesterman 3-0, and putting Scotland into the final.

The final went the distance once as Boonyaparapa beat Bajwa 3-1, followed by Curry beating Watson 3-2. The doubles went to the fifth set, the Scottish pair winning 3-2. Boonyaparapa levelled the match again with a 3-1 win against Curry. The decider also went the distance, Watson winning 3-2 against Bajwa.

England B won bronze, beating Ireland in another close match. Smallcombe beat Conor Nugent 3-1, followed by Chesterman beating Alan Pattison 3-1, to go 2-0 up. However, Ireland levelled the match score by winning the doubles 3-1, and Pattison beating Smallcombe 3-2. Chesterman proved too strong for Nugent winning 3-0 to secure the bronze medal.



England's teams on the Under-18 podium

In the Under-14 Girls, the two England teams met in the semi-finals, as England B (Erin Green and Maliha Baig) won their group and England A (Raquel Sao Pedro and Sandy Choong) were runners-up to Wales, who beat them 3-2.

England A came through a preliminary round against Ireland and the semi-final was a close-fought battle. Green fought back from 2-1 down to beat Sao Pedro. Baig, the youngest member of the England team at 11, lost 3-1 to Choong.

The Green & Baig doubles combination beat Pedro and Choong in the fifth, before Green battled back from 2-0 down to take Choong to a decider, but Choong held on to win. Sao Pedro, the slightly more experienced and older Cadet beat the recently crowned Under-12 national champion Baig in three close sets to progress to the final.

Pedro and Choong faced Wales once more, and once again the doubles proved to be the crucial match. Anna Hursey & Ruby Elliott were the winners of the four-set battle and, added to the two singles wins from Hursey, guaranteed Wales the gold, despite Choong beating Elliott in three.

England B comfortably beat Jersey A 3-0 to claim the bronze.



The Under-14 Girls podium

In the Under-18 Girls, England A (Gauri Duhan and Sophie Barlow) had to settle for silver in a tough event, which saw them start with a 3-1 defeat against Wales, losing two matches in five sets.

England B (Katie Holt and Federica Bonato) also had a tough first match against Ireland A and were on the wrong end of 5-0 defeat.

Both teams qualified for the semi-finals in second place in their groups, but the B team went down 3-0 to Wales.

The other semi-final was a thrilling match in which England fought back from 2-0 down to beat Ireland. Duhan lost to Thuy Linh Cashman, and Barlow then went down to Mia O'Rahily Egan.

In the doubles, Ireland fielded Lucy Craig alongside O'Rahily Egan and the English girls proved to be the stronger pair winning in four close sets. This was followed by Duhan playing positively and consistently against O'Rahily Egan, winning in five. With the momentum going in the direction of the English girls, Barlow's determination proved too strong for Cashman, winning 3-0.

The final between Wales and England A was a repeat of their group and despite England winning the doubles 3-1, Richards won two singles and Whitton beat Duhan in four to give the Welsh team the gold medal. In the bronze-medal play-off, Ireland beat England B 3-0.



The Under-18 Girls presentation

Individual events

England won five of the six main gold medals and a clutch of silvers and bronzes as they continued their dominance from the team event.

The Under-14 boys took pride of place as they clinched a clean sweep of the podium, with Rhys Davies on the top step, ahead of Ben Piggott in silver and Joseph Hunter and Connor Green with bronze.

Davies knocked out Bertie Kelly 3-1 (11-9, 8-11, 11-7, 11-8) in the quarter-finals and then defeated Hunter 3-0 (11-4, 11-3, 11-3) in the semis. Piggott came through his semi-final against Green in four close games (8-11, 11-8, 11-9, 12-10).

In the final, Davies took a 2-0 lead and, after Piggott had pulled one back, Davies closed it out 3-1 (11-6, 11-5, 8-11, 14-12).



Rhys Davies

The under-14 girls won three of the four medals, missing out on gold to outstanding Welsh youngster Anna Hursey.

Hursey was in peerless form, defeating Sao Pedro 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-7) in the semi-finals and then Marriott 3-0 (11-2, 11-8, 11-4) in the final.

Joining Sao Pedro on the third step of the podium was Sandy Choong, who was beaten by team-mate Marriott in the semi-finals, going down 3-2 (11-8, 4-11, 13-15, 11-7, 11-7).

In the Under-16 age group, Joseph Hee beat team-mate Ryan Choong 3-0 (11-5, 11-2, 11-5) in the final to win the gold for England.

Peter Smallcombe took a bronze, having been beaten by Choong in a close semi-final, Choong winning it 3-2 (12-10, 7-11, 12-10, 8-11, 12-10). Jacob Evans went out in the quarter-finals to Martin Johnson of Scotland.



Joseph Hee

Anaya Patel was the corresponding girls' champion, though she had to withstand a comeback by Ireland's Mia O'Rahilly Egan in the final before prevailing 3-2 (11-8, 11-9, 4-11, 9-11, 11-8). Patel had earlier beaten team-mate Gemma Kerr in the quarter-finals.

Katie Holt reached the semis, beating England colleague Danielle Kelly on the way. She had to settle for bronze as she was defeated by O'Rahilly Egan in the last four.



Anaya Patel

In the senior age group, England won both golds through Gauri Duhan in the girls and Sam Chesterman in the boys.

Duhan came through 3-0 (11-7, 11-8, 11-8) in the final against Wales' Beth Richards. Sophie Barlow reached the quarter-finals, where she was beaten by Thuy Linh Cashman of Ireland. Federica Bonato added the girls' consolation gold to the English haul.



Gauri Duhan on the top step of the podium

In the boys, Chesterman took revenge over both Danny Bajwa and Dylan Curry of Scotland, who had beaten him in the team event semi-final. His win over Curry in the last four was by a margin of 3-2 (11-8, 9-11, 11-9, 5-11, 11-8).

In the final, Chesterman played team-mate Naphat Boonyaprapa and recovered from losing the first set to take the gold with a 3-1 (8-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-7) victory.

Harry Watson lost in the first round to Ben Foss of the host nation.



Sam Chesterman

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