

Cadets win in Belgium

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Daniel McTiernan on the podium

Daniel McTiernan won the Boys Cadet Class and Michael Tunubu won the Boys Under 11s Class at the 33rd Flanders International Table Tennis Tournament in Ostend, Belgium last weekend.

Representing the Our Lady of Peace TTC (Reading), 12-year-old Daniel entered the Cadet competition at a low seed and promptly won his group of four, dropping just one end in the process. He received a bye in the last 16 and in the quarter-finals beat Jorg Debie (Belgium) 3-1, having impressively come back from a set down. In the semi-final he defeated Jules D'Hollander, again by a 3-1 score line. The Belgium Cadet simply had no answer to Daniel's speed and variety of shots as he attacked with consistency down both flanks.

In the final Daniel faced the six foot tall 14-year-old French Cadet Aymeric Villette. A tough match ensued in which Daniel struggled to return his opponents spiny serves. The boy from Lille was always on top and at two sets to one and 9-7 up in the fourth with two serves to close out the match. Daniel won both points and with renewed optimism, he went on to secure the set 11-9 and level the match.

It was now he who started the stronger in the decider but the set remained close throughout and at 10-9 up and the atmosphere around the table reaching fever pitch, Daniel promptly sealed the match 3-2 as Aymeric netted after a short but exciting rally.

Daniel's victory by the closest of margins against a player who was vastly more experienced at this level, was his best to date. There have only been two previous English winners of the Flanders Cadet Class since its inception in 1980, the last of whom was Gavin Evans in 2003.

Young Michael Tunubu was representing Dulwich TTC and also exceeded expectations by taking the Under 11 title, beating Jeyso Van Cauwenberghe (Belgium) in the semi-final and Jitse Wouters (Belgium) in the final. This was a terrific achievement for a seven-year-old, who clearly has huge promise.

By winning in Europe at their very first attempt, both boys showed that they have the potential to go on to be successful at international level.



Michael Tunubu on the podium



Daniel McTiernan in action

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