

School Games Day One Report

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The defending boys and girls champions at the School Games made the perfect start at ExCeL when they topped their respective groups on day one in London.

England South East boys and Wales girls both won three times apiece as they recorded a perfect beginning to the defence of their 2011 titles.

However, It wasn't all one-way traffic in their three fixtures as both had to content with difficult second matches before they topped their groups.



Both sides opened their account with comfortable wins; South East boys recording a 6-1 win over Wales, while the Welsh girls dominated Scotland 7-0 with all seven matches being won by 3-0 score lines. However, both their second matches proved much tougher.

The Welsh girls won 4-3 thanks to a hat-trick on wins from London GP runner-up Charlotte Carey. Her double over Maria Tsapsinos 3-0 (11-7, 11-9, 12-10) and England number one junior, Vicky Smith 3-1 (7-11, 11-9, 11-8, 12-10) proved crucial to the end result.

The South East boys meanwhile were involved in a big tussle with potential title-rivals, South West.

South West went 2-0 ahead before they were pegged back level but when Liam McTiernan beat Igor Morais 3-0 (11-7, 13-11, 11-5) it left them just one defeat from losing their unbeaten status which they had held throughout 2011.

However, Daniel Lawrence's win setup an all-or-nothing decider between Helshan Weerasinghe and George Downing. Downing led both 1-0 and 2-1 and has a chance at 11-11 in the fourth but when Weerasinghe levelled it proved the turning point. To roars of approval from the South East bench, Weerasinghe duly won the final game 11-6 and thus maintained their unbeaten record.

After winning their final matches, the respective reigning champions will face tough opposition in the last four. South East boys will play Scotland while the Welsh girls face Midlands.

Scotland beat North West 5-2 in their opening match despite Chris Wheeler's 3-2 (9-11, 6-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-8) defeat to Tom Hill. They lost to their group winners; Midlands in game two before coming back strongly to secure their place with a 5-2 win against North East.

The Midlands girls began with a routine 6-1 win over North East before falling 4-3 to South East girls. Their decisive victory against Northern Ireland meant they progressed to face Wales.

In the other half of the men's draw it will be Midlands boys who face the South West team that fell narrowly to defeat against South East.

Midlands' opening 6-1 win over North East included a great comeback victory from Sam Mabey who beat Paul Smith 3-2 (17-19, 10-12, 11-3, 11-7, 11-6). They followed that up with a 5-2 win against Scotland which included Adam Harrison's 3-2 (11-7, 0-11, 11-8, 3-11, 11-9) win over Scott Barton. Their final match was a comfortable win against North West.

The other girls semi-final will be contested between South East and South West. While South West were runners-up to Wales, South East won all three matches to progress.

Their first, a 5-2 win against Northern Ireland, had the comeback of the day. Emma Ludlow was in cruise control at 2-0 and 8-1 up against Tin-Tin Ho before the Cadet number one powered back to win the match 3-2 (7-11, 7-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-5).

In the second they survived a deciding match to beat Midlands. After Emily Bates had impressively beaten Ho 3-0 (11-9, 11-5, 11-8) it was left to Lois Peake who beat Isobel Ashley 3-1 (11-5, 11-9, 5-11, 11-8) to seal the match 4-3.

Their final win was a more straight-forward 5-2 win over North East.



In the disability event, the first day's play gave a good indication of those challenging for the title.

Both Midlands and South West ended their four games at ExCeL unbeaten with their match, due last on the final day, looking ever-more likely as the title decider. South West recorded four consecutive 2-1 victories while Midlands managed to win one of their games 3-0.

The South West trio of Billy Shilton, Lucie Bouron and Jason Reynolds will hope that they can overcome the Midlands team of Craig Allen, Daniel Bullen and Archie Taylor.

However, don't rule out the Welsh team who won three of their four matches and could still be in contention with four more games tomorrow. Kieran Parry, Cellan Hall and Ashley Wray could still have plenty to play for come tomorrow afternoon.

For the full results visit the School Games official website while for updated pictures and tweets from the event tomorrow keep an eye on the ETTA Twitter account and website.

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