

Briar East Midlands Junior 4* Preview

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The place to be this weekend is at the Meres Leisure Centre, Grantham in Lincolnshire, where over 200 of Britain's finest junior table tennis talents will meet to participate in the Briar East Midlands Junior 4* Open tournament.

The first major event of 2013 gets the green light on Saturday 12th January with quality table tennis matches to be played on eighteen tables and looking at the entries it will be a cracker.

The first day is set aside for the Under 18s with Danny Lawrence taking the top seed spot in the Junior Boys' event. He'll be hoping to gain his second title at this venue following his cadet success last year. He has already notched up a magnificent junior title win at Cheltenham last April and is hoping to double up on his 4* victories.

However, there are over 100 competitors hoping to trip him up along the way. Among his greatest rivals will be Liam McTiernan (S2), Adam Harrison (S3) and Scotland's dynamic player, Chris Wheeler (S4).

With such a high quality entry, players like Tom Jarvis, Joseph Langham-Ferreira, Laurence Sweeney and Marcus Giles will all be there contesting the latter stages. Lively outsiders may come from Sussex 2* winner Gabriel Achampong and watch out for the top trio of Luke Savill, Hugo Pang and Jack Bennett all looking to make their mark.

The Junior Girls' groups get under way from 1.30pm where there could be some very talented foreign players making their mark. Topping the seedings in the 34 entries are Diana Rusinova from Latvia, who has beaten Tin-Tin Ho in the team event at the Europeans, followed by second seeded Lois Peake making a welcome return from injury.

Isobel Ashley, Megan Knowles and Letitia McMullen make up the top five seeds.

Word on the street is that the unseeded Chinese pair of Yi Yang and Jinen Xu are highly talented and could take the tournament by storm. Devon's own Jazmin Johns could also surprise with her combination bat playing style. It looks to be a very interesting event.

First up to showcase their skills at 08.45am at the Meres Centre will be the Junior Boys and Junior Girls Band 1. This will be followed shortly afterwards by the Junior Boys Band 2.

The Cadets Under 15 take centre stage on Sunday 13th with six separate events that include the Cadet Boys, Cadet Boys Band 1 and Band 2. The Cadet Girls also have a trio of competitions, the Cadet Girls, Girls Band 1 and Band 2.

Referee Steve Welch, his deputy Mike Payne, Tournament Organiser Ken Eliot and the team will have a very busy time keeping the show firmly on track.

If you happen to be in or near the Grantham area this weekend then please pop along to the Meres Leisure Centre and be amazed by the talented young players taking part.

To see the full weekend's draw [click here](#)

By Geoff Ware

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