

Brooke excels in Southern Regional Qualifiers

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Kristelle Brooke enjoying more success at the weekend

Fifteen-year-old Kristelle Brook was Oxford's star performer in the South Region Junior Championships held at Cippenham over the weekend of 5th/6th October.

In her first year out of cadets, she won the Junior (Under 18) Girls event with an unblemished 5/5 record, thus qualifying to take part in the Nationals at Preston next month.

Having scraped through a tough first match against Rosalind Lane (Bucks), Kristelle gathered confidence in beating Shristi Ghosh (Bucks) in straight games and then faced the England no 8 cadet, Amy Blagborough (Hants): this fascinating battle went the full distance, with Amy striving to get her powerful attack going against Kristelle's skilful backhand defence: in the end Kristelle was glad to prevail 11-6, having enjoyed a good share of nets and edges!

She went on to win her last two matches easily, including a 3-0 against another younger top-ten ranked player, Katie Holt (Hants). At her best Kristelle executes a very effective game plan: she controls the rallies with her backhand defence and picks off forehand winners from all the loose returns she gets off her long-pimpled rubber. There are very few exponents of this defensive art out there – it needs a lot of skill to develop!

Vicky Coll's recent run of success came to an abrupt halt, as she came 4th in the Cadet (Under 15) Girls event, one place adrift of qualifying. Josh Selby (12) and Reece Chamdal (11) battled manfully in a large field of cadet boys, lasting the pace of a long day extremely well to finish 9th and 10th/32.

They showed enough persistence to suggest that down in their own age groups, later in the season, they will stand a good chance of qualifying again. The other Oxford competitors, Kavan Warrender, Fabian Audifferen, Ben Neumeier, Ed Beccle, Joe McKenna-Jones and John Ho, finished well down the field.

Thanks to Ken Phillips, who masterminded this mammoth event, with many players completing 13 matches in a single day! It is pleasing to see that the South standard is rising all the time, under the inspirational influence of Aled Howell and his dedicated team of coaches.

Written by John Birkin (October 7, 2013)

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