

2013/14 Tees Sport Sussex 4* Report

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Youngster Anna Hursey in action

Tees Sport Sussex Cadet/Junior 4 star

The night before the Tees Sport Sussex Cadet/Junior 4 star saw some of the worst gales the country has seen for many years. However 152 players braved the weather travelling from as far as Hungary, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the Channel Islands to test their skills in the 3rd Sussex Cadet/Junior 4 star. The tournament trialled a new system of 4 bands in each of the boys and girls, cadets and Juniors with mostly 5 in a group albeit some groups were depleted through absentees due to the weather. ALL players were eligible for the bands guaranteeing every player two events per day if they should choose.

Day 1 – Saturday “The Cadets”

The Girls banded 1 saw Kate Cheer and Zahna Hall against three Hungarian girls who had made the trip to Sussex. Expectations were high for some fearsome encounters, however these three squad members of the Hungarian party were not quite at the level of the English girls which meant that the crucial match between Kate and Zhana would decide the outcome of the event. Kate secured a two games to nil advantage with two 11-8 ends which were replied with two 11-8 ends for Zhana leaving the match all square at 2-2. In the final game Kate justified her superior England ranking to close the match out with an 11-3 final game.

The Girls band 2 was a round robin of 5 evenly matched girls with some really close matches. Amy Blagbrough had 3 very close 5 game matches, winning 12-10 in the 5th to Stephanie Cross, losing 13-11 in the 5th to Lydia John and losing 11-8 in the 5th to Kerry O'Mahoney. Kerry O'Mahoney also had a marathon battle against Lydia John to win 12-10 in the 5th game but unfortunately for Kerry lost out on count back to Stephanie Cross for the overall title. Stephanie's superb 3-0 victory against Kerry O'Mahoney ultimately making the difference to secure her hard fought win.

The Girls band 3 was a round robin of 4 girls with Juliette Moussaire claiming the title after a 12-10 in the 5th game win over second place Shristi Ghosh. Shristi picked up 2nd place courtesy of another close encounter against Jemma Walker where Shristi won 11-4 in the 5th game.



Juliette Moussaire & Shristi Ghosh

The girls band 4 was a round robin of 6 girls that saw Sarah Menghistab win all 5 of her matches and win the event with two particularly close 3-2 wins against Temeesha Hobbs and the 7 year old fantastic talent from Wales – Anna Hursey. Anna had a really long competition with three 5 game thrillers and finished in second place to secure her first trophy at a Sussex 4 star. Hopefully there will be many more to come.



Sarah Menghistab

The Boys band 1 had a very strong and evenly matched field of 10 boys that produced nine , 5 game matches just in the group stages. The no.2 in England u-13 talented player from Kent – James Smith topped the group 1

with Ben Cawston in 2nd place. Jack Merton also from Kent took the top spot in the second group with Joe Clark having made the trip from Cleveland in second place. James Smith was too strong for Joe in the semi-final and Jack had an epic battle against Ben in the other semi-final to win 11-6 in the 5th game. Jack continued his strong performance on the day to secure victory against his Kent team mate.

The boys band 2 had 18 participants and produced some excellent table tennis especially in a very entertaining final between Curtis Welsh and Eren Gozcu. Eren coming from 2-0 down to take the match in to the deciding 5th game only to lose at the final hurdle. Curtis a worthy winner played some superb shots in front a large crowd that had gathered to watch the encounter.

Boys band 3 had a full compliment of 20 players playing in 4 groups. Nick Mileham from Hertfordshire will have earned himself quite a few ranking points having been ranked fairly low in the event but defeated all before him including a close 11-5 in the fifth game against Ben Naylor-Smith in the final.

In the boys band 4 both finalists were drawn in the same group and therefore played each other twice with Ryan Darwen from Sussex losing 3-1 on both occasions to the undefeated Sirat Ahmad from Middlesex.

In the Cadet boys Open Josh Bennett from Sussex upped his game from some disappointing results from the morning despite some excellent performances. Having lost 11-9 in the 5th to Joe Clark in the Band 1, Josh reversed this result with a resounding 3-0 victory in round 2 of the Open. He then faced Olly Tyndall who played some superb table tennis to level the match at 2-2 after being 2-0 down. Josh kept his cool to secure the win 11-8 in the 5th game and face the number 1 seed Omar Khassal. Omar who chose to sit out the Band 1 and focus on the Open defeated the inform James Smith in the Quarter finals but met Josh Bennett in the semi-finals who had now really found his game. A classic encounter followed. Josh 2-1 down dug deep to pull off a great 3-2 victory 11-4 in the 5th set.

On the other side of the draw Liam Grant too had had a disappointing band 1 competition, having also played some strong table tennis in the morning event. Liam had a relatively comfortable passage through to the final with one exception being his quarter final meeting against Kidi Martin-Paulo where Liam found himself 2-1 down. Using all his experience he overcame this difficult situation with a 15-13 victory in the 5th set. This set up an exciting prospect of a final where Liam Grant duly stepped up and seized the day with a relatively comfortable 3-0 victory.

The Cadet Girls event witnessed the introduction of the stronger Hungarian team members Kitty Korda and Kata Fule. Both were playing some outstanding table tennis and both reached the semi-finals. Kate Cheer once again was matched up to play Zahan Hall with the same result in another close match. Denise Payet the no.1 Cadet in England played two Hungarian squad team players in round 1 and the Quarter finals to then meet Kitty Korda in the semi-final. At the same time on the adjacent table Kate Cheer was playing Kata Fule. Fantastic experience to be playing two top standard international players on home soil!

Both matches at times delivered real quality shots. Kate Cheer found herself 2-1 down against Kata Fule with Kata unleashing superb backhand top spins at will. However Kate composed herself, never lost her self-belief and turn the match around to win 5 in the 5th game. Meanwhile Denise Payet was showing why she was the no.1 in England to beat Kitty Korda -7, 12, 6 & 5 and at one stage looking seriously likely to go 2 games to 0 down. The much anticipated final was unfortunately disturb by some student hecklers who were swiftly dealt with by the organisers. However Denise continued her events good form to win 3-0 against Kate and reverse a series of defeats against Kate.



Kate Cheer & Denise Payet

The days play was completed at 19:25 almost exactly to schedule thanks to the hard work of the top table team and the umpires.

Day 2 "The Juniors"

The Sunday saw some brighter weather but unbeknown to the organiser team an air conditioning fault had occurred overnight. After an hour or so of heat being generated by a large crowd in the hall the warm air hit the cold roof and created condensation which resulted in poring water into some of the courts. Court after court was taken out of action until an emergency call out to engineers resulted in a fix to the air conditioning system and a resumption to normal working by early afternoon. However despite this, play continued on all courts where safe to do so and the Referee Steve Smith delivered an unaffected tournament.

Girls Band 1 was won by Sussex first team player and Junior International Lois Peake who had her most difficult match against second place Kata Fule from Hungary where Lois won 6,-9,9, 10.

The girls band 2 was won by Sophie Tofalides on count back on virtue of her win against Amy Blagbrough who seem to have turned the tide on some of her close loses on the previous day. Holly Holder of Sussex secured a particularly good win against Kerry O'Mahoney of Ireland 11-7 in the 5th game to finish in 3rd place.

In the girls band 3 Eda Aydin finished on the top of the pile with just one slip up against Lydia John from Wales. In band 4 Shristi Ghosh won all her matches to take the top prize in the band 4 event.

In the boys band 4 Timothy Franke who had made the trip from Germany showed some real talent after what had been a relative slow start the previous day. Timothy beat Geme Ryder 3-0 in the final.



Curtis Welsh & Artur Caltabiano

In the boys band 3 Curtis Welsh continued his previous days outstanding form showing he can play under pressure after defeating Daniel Pound 11-7 in the 5th, Gus Thomas 12-10 in the 5th and then Artur Caltabiano 13-11 in the 5th in the final.



Tom Windram & Mitchell Jones

Tom Windram from Kent had an excellent day by getting to the quarter finals of the Open event and winning the band 2 event with an 11-9 in the 5th victory over the much rated Mitchell Jones. Earlier in the rounds of the band 2 Tom had beaten Finn Morgan-Mayliss and Jack Josephs both in straight sets.



Luke Savill & Jack Bennett

Band 1 produced some very high quality table tennis with both semi-finals and final going the full distance in 5 games. Luke Savill claimed victory over Jamier Trevillion after being 2-0 down and Jack Bennett v Hugo Pang was a pulsating match which concluded 11-9 in the 5th in favour of Jack. Again the final was a brilliant match and must be justification for including the top players in a band 1 competition where Luke overcame Jack in a really entertaining battle.

This set the scene for the Junior Open events:

Zahna Hall made up for her disappointing loses against Kate Cheer in previous events by beating Denise Payet in straight sets to reach the final of the Junior Girls Open. In the top half of the draw there were classic encounters with Kitty Korda getting the better of her team mate Kata Fule 11-9 in the 5th in the Quarter final at the same time as Lois Peake dispatching her county team mate Kate Cheer 11-9 in the 4th game. In the semi-final Lois found herself 2-1 down to Kitty Korda but turned it around to win 11-9 in the 5th game demonstrating what superb wins the English cadet girls had had over the Hungarian pair the day before. In the final Lois proved her International status with a comfortable victory over Zahna 4, -6, 5 & 3.



Lois Peake & Zahna Hall

Danny Lawrence proved he was the class act in the Tees Sport Sussex Junior boys 4 star with a comfortable journey to the final winning in straight sets against Adam Jepson, Liam Grant and Luke Savill then dropping a game against the always improving Jimmy Yeung in the semi-final and also dropping a game against Jamie Trevillion in the final.



Danny Lawrence & Jamie Trevillion

The events finished at 19:30 on Sunday and I would like to thank the organising committee, Sussex County TTA,

Steve Smith, Diane Webb, Linda Sopp, Mike Atkinson, Alan White, Nico Caboleto, Shaun Haskell, George Gray, Peter Baldwin, Mike White, Rory Scott, Malcolm Kay, Charles Ho, Nick Standen, Jim Skinner, David Wiles , Philip Ware, Yvonne Pound, Brian Tait , Geoff Pyke, Michael Loveder, DE Photo, Michael Marsden, Peter Wilkinson, Tees Sport and Freedom Leisure staff at Burgess Hill for their part in delivering a cadet/Junior 4 star which without their contributions would not have taken place.

Steve Pound
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