

South East impress on School Games opening day

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England South East laid down a marker in both boys' and girls' events on the first day of the Sainsbury's School Games table tennis in Manchester.

The boys were unblemished as they raced through their matches 7-0 against Scotland, England South West and Northern Ireland.

They dropped only one set against Scotland, in the doubles, and were scarcely any more troubled against ESW, although Jimmy Yeung took both Marcus Giles and Gabriel Achampong to five.

The spirited Irish managed to take a set in each of the first three match-ups, and Zak Wilson later took Danny Lawrence to five, but nothing could stop the South East ending the day with a perfect record.

Midlands also looked in top form, following up a 7-0 scoreline against North West with a 5-2 against the North East and another 7-0 against Wales.

Wales had earlier battled into the semi-finals with hard-fought 4-3 victories over North East and North West.

Jac Jenkins won the decisive match each time, making it 4-2 against North East and then digging deep in a thrilling last-match decider against North West. Having taken the first two 11-8 and 12-10, Jenkins saw opponent Robert Barker level by taking the next two 11-9, 11-7. But the clincher went the way of Wales as Jenkins prevailed 11-8.

In the girls' event, South East were emphatic in all their matches, following up 6-1 victories against Northern Ireland and Midlands with a 7-0 margin over North East. Tin-Tin Ho led the way, dropping only one singles set all day, to Midlands' Nicole Bird.

South West also impressed, beating Wales 5-2, North West 6-1 and Scotland 7-0, with Maria Tsaptsinos their leading light, losing only one singles set, to Emily Bolton (ENW).

The first four rounds of the disability competition produced uncanny standings, with four teams – Midlands, South East, Wales and North East – boasting 100 per cent records and the other four losing every match.

Five players had 100 per cent individual records – wheelchair athletes Daniel Bullen (EM), Megan Shackleton (ENE) and Nicko Anderson (ESE), learning disability player Jordan McGarry for the North West and Wales' standing disability player Lawrence John.

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