

Ramsden, Knight and Skeggs among Hunts winners

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Alex Ramsden, who won three trophies, with Cllr Brian Luter, Mayor of St Ives, and Victoria Parchment of Alconbury Weald.

The Hunts 2 Star Open returned to St Ives over the weekend of August 30 and 31. On the Saturday the range of junior events attracted a host of young talent and proved to be a fantastic showcase of things to come in the future for English table tennis.

Fresh from a month's training in China, Alex Ramsden showed that his summer was well spent. He provided a well polished performance to take top honours in both the Junior Boys and Cadet Boys' singles. He saw off Nathan Butler 6,10,7 in the former and Erin Goscu 7,6,7 in the latter.

But match of the day was the final of the U11 Boys. This provided a fantastic display of table tennis from two very small gladiators in Jamie Liu and Aadil Anand. Aadil only arrived in the country three weeks ago from India and so was a complete unknown. He showed that he will be a welcome addition to the scene in a gladiatorial battle against Jamie. They traded blows from the first point to the last until Jamie finally took the title 8,10,-10,6.

For his efforts, Aadil was awarded the medal for Best Performance by a Young Player. The medal for Most Promising Young Player went to Arjun Basra of Great Stukeley Table Tennis Club in his first tournament.

The girls' events were dominated by Isabella Joubeyly who secured both the Junior and Cadet title. In the Junior Girls, she fought off Charlotte Boston to win -4,10,11,5 and in the Cadet finals she came up against Katie Holt whom she beat in the fourth set game 9.



Darius Knight

Darius Knight put on a fantastic display against Gavin Rumgay to retain his Men's Singles title on the Sunday. Knight was in scintillating form in the final against No 2 seed Gavin Rumgay in a repeat of last year's showdown.

With scores of 7,-9, 8, 11 it could have been anyone's game. But in the end Knight showed determination to take the first prize of £1,000. The presentation to the finalists was one to remember with both Darius and Gavin doing the Rumgay – imitating the Scotsman's memorable celebration at the Commonwealth Games.

Earlier Knight had to battle No 3 seed Chris Doran in a breathtaking semi-final. Chris, the winner of this title in 2012, was on top form and dominated early, winning the first by 11-2, but Knight fought back and pinched it game 7 in the fifth. The quarter-final was a repeat of last year's event with Knight meeting an in-form Adam Nutland. The hitting from both men was relentless and Knight came through eventually winning 9,9,12.

In the bottom half of the draw Rumgay met a resurgent Michael O'Driscoll in the semi-final. O'Driscoll treated us to a most spectacular display of loops-off-the-bounce but it was Rumgay who finally came through with -9,5,13,8. In the previous rounds he overcame Tommy Cutler in the quarters and Alex Ramsden before that.

Ramsden also prevailed on Seniors day to add to his success of Saturday by winning Band 1 against no 1 seed Adam Nutland in a breathtaking five-setter. Alex took the first, only for Adam to cruise into a 2-1 lead. However, Alex then came from behind to take the fourth and fifth and first prize.



Women's Singles winner Kelly Skeggs (left) and runner-up Kinga Oryl

The women's title was taken by Kelly Skeggs, who edged out Kinga Oryl. But Kinga crowned her day by taking the Women's Band 1 title by overcoming Jane Li.

Now in its third year, the Hunts Open is proving to be a popular alternative to the Grand Prix circuit. With a full range of junior events on day one and a generous prize fund on offer on seniors' day two, the event has grown in popularity to attract some of the best talent to East Anglia.

This event has only been made possible by the generous sponsorship for the third year running of Urban & Civic's Alconbury Weald and Topspin Sports.

Results

Junior Boys: Alex Ramsden (Np) beat Nathan Butler (Li) 8,9,8

Junior Girls: Isabelle Joubailly (Sy) beat Charlotte Boston (Ca) -4,6,8,8

Cadet Boys: Alex Ramsden (Np) beat Erin Goscu (Mx)

Cadet Girls: Isabelle Joubailly (Sy) beat Katie Holt (Hants) -8,0,10,9

U13 Boys: Sam Chesterman (Ca) beat Jamie Liu (Bk) 7,10,5

U13 Girls: Mollie Patterson (Nk) beat Amelia Chan (Mx) 7,-7,9,8

U11 Boys: Jamie Liu (Bk) beat Aadil Anand (Mx) 8,10,-10,6

U11 Girls: 1st Sophie Chiang 2nd Alana Mansfield

Men's singles: Darius Knight (Sy) beat Gavin Rumgay (SCO) 7,-9,8,11

Men's Band 1: Alex Ramsden (Np) beat Adam Nutland (Wo) 6,-8,-6,7,8

Men's Band 2: Jody Bevington (Wa) beat Rory Scott (Sx) 8,7,1

Men's Band 3: Jochen Buehrer (Avon) beat George Haining (K) 8,8,5

Veteran Men's: Paul Martindill (E) beat Keith Fung (E) 1,14,3

Women's Singles: 1st Kelly Skeggs (Ca) 2nd Kinga Oryl (Sy)

Women's Band 1: 1st Kinga Oryl (Sy) 2nd Jane Li (E)

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