

ESTTA Team Championships: Title-holders aim for repeat

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Last year's Under-13 boys' champions from St Mary's College, Kingston upon Hull with Richard Hudson (championship organiser) presenting the T Austin Harrison Cup

Butterfly 2014 School Team Champions return to Hinckley to fight to retain their crowns in the English Schools' Table Tennis Association National Finals this weekend.

Joint Under-19 and Under 16 boys' title holders, London Academy, will feel confident that their strength in depth will once again prove too much for the opposition. The Under-19 team must, however, defeat three times winners Harefield Academy together with Altrincham Grammar School for Boys, who they nudged into third place last year.

The London Academy Under-16 team once again face Morpeth School and Northfield School & Sports College, Billingham, together with St Mary's College, Kingston upon Hull, who won the North Region play-off to reach the final.

The north may strike back with both current Under-13 trophy holders returning to defend their titles. The girls from Conyers School, Stockton on Tees, and the boys from St Mary's College will be playing hard to once again become champions.

The other four titles are up for grabs with new names to be engraved on the cups. In the Under-11 events the boys from Bramley Sunnyside Junior School, Rotherham, together with the girls from Great Wood Primary School, Morecambe and Barnes Primary School, Richmond upon Thames are all hoping to do better than last year, but other teams will also be looking to be title contenders.

The girls' senior competitions – Under 16/19 – are more open affairs with teams from Merseyside, Lancashire, Somerset, London, Cleveland, Devon and Essex all trying to make a name for themselves.

The 27 competing schools have fought their way through county, zone and regional finals to fill the 32 places in the Butterfly National School Team Championships. This is the 49th year that these championships have been held, now at Under 11/13/16/19 levels for boys and girls for teams of four players. The finals are to be staged at Hinckley Leisure Centre, Leicestershire on Saturday May 9.

Reports and results will appear on May 11 on both the Table Tennis England and ESTTA websites with links to photographs.

John Arnold MBE

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