

Smith leads roll of honour on Jack Petchey finals day

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Under-11 girls' champion Sophie Chiang is congratulated by Jack Petchey CBE. Picture by Mark Lees

It was an awesome foursome for James Smith and a hat-trick for Amelia Chan as the winners of the Jack Petchey London Schools' Table Tennis individual finals were crowned.

James took the under-16 boys' title to add to one under-11 and two under-13 crowns from previous years, while Amelia was the under-13 girls' champion.

Isabelle Joubely also retained her under-16 girls' title in a repeat of last year's final against Sarah Menghistab.

Under-11

Joseph Durling of Barnes Primary was the boys' champion, defeating Matthew Pang of Fircroft in the final.

Joseph had to battle to get into the final, defeating Harry Derecki (Ashburnham Primary) 14-12 in the fifth set in the semi-final, having already come from 2-0 in the quarter-finals to beat his school-mate Kian Shayegan.

Joseph said: "It feels really good. I thought I had a chance at the start but I wasn't completely confident. It was difficult – I won when I was 2-0 down in the quarter-finals and then in the next match I only won by two points in the fifth."

In the girls' event, National Championships runner-up Sophie Chiang (Woodford Green Prep) went one better as she defeated Laura Wharton (Fox Primary) in the final, though it was a closer match than the 3-0 scoreline suggests, particularly in the third, which Sophie took 13-11. It was the closest she came to losing a set in the entire competition.

She said: "I feel proud. I think I played really well and I enjoyed all the games."

Under-13

Channing School student Amelia Chan took a title for the third year running, stepping up from under-11 but still proving the class player on the day.

She dropped a set in the semi-finals to Hannah Buckley (Burlington Daines Academy) and was pushed by Feiyang Wang (George Green's) in the final, taking the third 15-13 to seal her triumph.

Amelia said: "It feels good, I'm very proud of myself. It was harder this year because when you grow older you have to play new players who you don't know."

In the boys' competition there was a first title for Zaiim Premji of QE Boys School. He did not drop a set in the competition, though the final against his school-mate Jamie Watkin-Rees was always close before Zaiim won it 11-9, 11-9, 13-11.

The champion said: "I feel really pleased because I haven't won it before and I think I had some really good competition.

"It's always hard when you play someone from the same school, and we train at the same club as well (Urban)."

Under-16

Whitgift School's James Smith ensured he took home a trophy for the fourth year in a row, beating Jamie Dignum (Morpeth School) in the final.

Yassin Seddik (Burlington Daines Academy) took a set off him in the quarter-finals but otherwise James did not skip a beat.

He said: "Jamie is a good player but I played really well in the final and didn't let him play his best game. If I had let him play his big shots it could have been different.

"I'm happy to win for the fourth year in a row."

Isabelle Joubely (Wallington Girls) defended her title but did not always have things her own way as Medha Verma (Godolphin & Latymer) took a set off her in the groups and Sarah Menghistab (Capital City Academy) did likewise in the final.

Isabelle said: "I played well today. It was quite hard because I had a big break between matches and I had to keep warming up and keep my focus.

"It was more difficult as well because I didn't have my dad here and didn't have that moral support. It was good for me though and I realised how I have to improve my mental game."

Under-19

Richard Pelc came from 2-1 down to defeat Kevin Fang in the only final to go to five sets.

It was a first title for the 17-year-old from Cheam High School and he said: "I went in confident but I actually thought I could have played a bit better but I'm glad to win it.

"It was quite challenging – I felt my backhand wasn't working and it was a difficult match in the final, he played really well."

The girls' event was a round-robin competition which was won by Anna Navicka of Coulsdon South Sixth Form College.

There was also a surprise for Jack Petchey CBE himself as he was made an honorary vice-president of Table Tennis England in recognition of his services to the sport.

Sandra Deaton, Chair of Table Tennis England, said: "It's an honour and a privilege to be able to have such an esteemed character as a vice-president.

"He's such a great guy and it's our way of saying a small thank you for all he's done for the sport."

Jack once again congratulated and posed for photographs with all the winners and runners-up and many of the other players as another hugely successful and popular event came to a close at the University of East London's SportsDock.

[Click here to view to albums of photos](#) from the day, by official photographer Mark Lees and by Michael Loveder.

Final results

Under-11 Boys: Joseph Durling bt Matthew Pang 3-0 (11-7, 12-10, 11-5)

Consolation: Edward Small bt Abed Rahman 3-1 (11-6, 9-11, 11-9, 11-5)

Under-11 Girls: Sophie Chiang bt Laura Wharton 3-0 (11-4, 11-9, 13-11)

Consolation: Rose Bourdier bt Molly Lavin 3-0 (11-8, 15-13, 11-6)

Under-13 Boys: Zaiim Premji bt Jamie Watkin-Rees 3-0 (11-9, 11-9, 13-11)

Consolation: Daniel Valdavicius bt Liam Smith 3-2 (11-9, 15-13, 9-11, 10-12, 11-2)

Under-13 Girls: Amelia Chan bt Feiyang Wang 3-0 (11-8, 11-6, 15-13)

Consolation: Nicole Castillo-Ortiz bt Yasma Hawbash 3-1 (11-7, 6-11, 11-5, 11-8)

Under-16 Boys: James Smith bt Jamie Dignum 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 11-8)

Consolation: Leon Griffith bt Tyrell Brown 3-0 (11-6, 11-3, 11-7)

Under-16 Girls: Isabelle Joubely bt Sarah Menghistab 3-1 (11-7, 8-11, 11-6, 11-4)

Consolation: Yassmine Al-Amrie bt Mya Sutton 3-2 (9-11, 12-10, 7-11, 11-7, 11-7)

Under-19 Boys: Richard Pelc bt Kevin Fang 3-2 (11-5, 8-11, 7-11, 11-6, 11-9)

Consolation: Tom Beales bt Ben-Smith Bortey 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-7)

Under-19 Girls: Anna Navicka (round-robin winner)

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