

Simonsen a great Dane at Cippenham festival

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Daniel Simonsen shows off his trophies

Daniel Simonsen was the undoubted star of the Cippenham Young Players' Summer Festival, a two-day extravaganza of table tennis attended by players from all over the south of England, from Wales and beyond.

Simonsen had one of the longest journeys from his base 45km from Copenhagen in Denmark where he plays for the Hillerods GI club. He and his mother were guests for the weekend of Geoff Ware, who coached him to two titles and a runners-up position in his three age groups.

Simonsen, who is the national under-13 champion in Denmark, began his trophy haul on the afternoon of the first day. After winning his group, the blond Viking went through the knockout rounds of the Under-14 Boys' Singles without dropping a game until top seed Theodore Achampong took the third game to delay proceedings in the final.

The following day the 12-year-old Simonsen tasted defeat for the only time during the weekend when top seed Eren Gozcu beat him in the final of the Under-16 Boys' Singles. Cippenham's Ben Naylor-Smith was the Dane's victim in the semi-final, although the player from the host club did take the first game. At the same stage, Gozcu beat Achampong.

Simonsen and Naylor-Smith met again the same day but this time it was one round later as they faced each other in the final of the Under-18 Boys' Singles. Again, Naylor-Smith took the first game but then Simonsen raised his game and won the next three in quick fashion. Gozcu and Achampong were the semi-finalists in the event, making it a memorable day's play for both boys.



Under-12 boys' finalists Shae Thakker and Louis Price

The other boys' event, the Under-12s, was won by Avon's Louis Price, who beat young Cippenham starlet Shae Thakker in the final. Thakker was the top seed but was pushed to four games by Matthew Stanfield in the semi-final while Price was similarly extended at the same stage by Felix Thomis.

The girls' events produced four different winners. The first event, the Under-12 Girls' Singles was played as a round-robin for the seven players. Patricia Ianau emerged the winner by virtue of her very close 11-9 fifth-game win over the runner-up Lara Whitton.



Under-14 girls' winner Beth Richards

Later the same day, Ianau made it all the way to the final of the Under-14 event but then had to settle for the runners-up position, beaten 3-1 by Beth Richards. Cippenham's top players, Shristi Ghosh and Gemma Walker, were seeded in the top two positions for this event but were both eclipsed in the semi-finals.

The Under-16 Girls' Singles included two entrants from Hungary, Lilla Schreiner and Petra Ronafalvi, and they played each other in the semi-final. Unknown, and consequently unseeded, they dominated the top half of the draw and their only real competition came from Patricia Ianau. Ianau beat Schreiner in the preliminary round group but when the two met again in the final the tables were turned and the Hungarian eventually won 11-9 in the fifth after having surrendered a two-game advantage.

Ianau capped off a successful weekend by reaching the semi-final of the Under-18 Girls' Singles. The previous day's under-12 champion then fell to Rhoda Boadu who went on to win the title by defeating Nina Kadir in the final.

Results

U18 Boys' Singles: Winner – Daniel Simonsen (DEN); runner-up – Ben Naylor-Smith (Bu)

U18 Girls' Singles: Winner – Rhoda Boadu (Mi); runner-up – Nina Kadir (Av)

U16 Boys' Singles: Winner – Eren Gozcu (Mi); runner-up – Daniel Simonsen (DEN)

U16 Girls' Singles: Winner – Lilla Schreiner (HUN); runner-up – Patricia Ianau (Mi)

U14 Boys' Singles: Winner – Daniel Simonsen (DEN); runner-up – Theodore Achampong (Mi)

U14 Girls' Singles: Winner – Beth Richards (WAL); runner-up – Patricia Ianau (Mi)

U12 Boys' Singles: Winner – Louis Price (Av); runner-up – Shae Thakker (Bu)

U12 Girls' Singles: Winner – Patricia Ianau (Mi); runner-up – Lara Whitton (WAL)

U18 Boys' Consolation: Winner – Mathew Pearce (WAL); runner-up – Callan Parkins (Av)

U18 Girls' Consolation: Winner – Beth Richards (WAL); runner-up – Natalia Ianau (Mi)

U16 Boys' Consolation: Winner – Matthew Stringer (E); runner-up – Mathew Nariel (E)

U16 Girls' Consolation: Winner – Beth Richards (WAL); runner-up – Jamie Lee-Harley (WAL)

U14 Boys' Consolation: Winner – Ben Pearce (WAL); runner-up – Nathan Enstone (Mi)

U14 Girls' Consolation: Winner – Nina Kadir (Av); runner-up – Lara Whitton (WAL)

U12 Boys' Consolation: Winner – David Avery (WAL); runner-up – Leon Kashdan-Brown (Av)

Graham Trimming

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