



## Hackney players top of the pile at youth festival

**Author:** Paul Stimpson

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Youth clubs from Hackney took top honours in a new table tennis event run by London Youth in partnership with Table Tennis England.

Youth clubs from Lambeth, Hackney and Haringey came together for the first Table Tennis London Youth Festival at Morpeth School, Tower Hamlets.

This event forms part of a new Table Tennis England pilot programme for 2015–2016 run under the banner of the Jack Petchey Foundation Table Tennis Programme. It was designed to offer young people a fun, friendly and informal competition aimed at those who have not had a chance to play in matches.

The event was made up of teams of two or three players, sometimes mixed, playing in Under-13 and Under-16 categories, plus individuals playing in the Under-19 category with nine youth clubs taking part.

Winners of the Under-13 Boys' and Girls' categories were Malique Hamilton and Palgeey Gayle, both aged 13, from The Crib Youth Club based at the De Beauvoir Estate. Palgeey said: "I really enjoyed the Festival because I'm good at table tennis. I relish challenges and the opportunity to test my skills. The best part was the chance to meet new people and learn new styles of table tennis."

Winner of the Under-16 Boys' category was Fionn Mcdiarmada aged 14, playing for Springfield Youth Club based at Big Hill, Mount Pleasant Lane. Fionn said: "The competition was strong, a much better standard than I was expecting. There were several talented players in our category so I'm delighted we managed to win. It's refreshing to have mixed categories with boys and girls playing together and against each other. But we need more girls to try out this type of event."

Winner of the Under-19 Boys' category was Shaquille Eusebe, aged 16, who played for The Crib Youth Club. He said: "I've been playing table tennis for seven years and I want to play at the highest level I possibly can, which means taking part in as many leagues and competitions as possible. Games today were mixed some were relaxed and others were very competitive. It's been a good day and a good competition."



Shaquille Eusebe

The Table Tennis London Youth Festival pilot also included the donation of two table tennis tables to 15 youth clubs, plus equipment and young leader training. The new partnership with London Youth, a vibrant network of youth organisations across the capital, is giving even more opportunity and greater outreach to young people in London to play table tennis.

This compliments the existing Jack Petchey London Schools' Table Tennis Championships, a prestigious event aimed at increasing participation and awareness of table tennis in schools in London and now Essex.

The donation of indoor and outdoor table tennis tables is also helping to bring more girls into the sport. Over four years 1,000 table tennis tables have been donated to London Schools and 21,000 players have taken part in the competitions.

Sara Sutcliffe Chief Executive of Table Tennis England said "Thousands of young people have become more active, learned new skills and made new friends thanks to the Jack Petchey Foundation's support of table tennis in London and Essex.

"The table donation scheme and the team and individual competitions have taken the profile of the sport and the standard of play to new heights. They have created a lasting legacy and we look forward to thousands more youngsters benefitting from the programme in years to come."

Jack Petchey CBE, the 90-year-old founder of the Jack Petchey Foundation, is passionate about giving young people freedom and opportunity.

"I've been a fan of table tennis since my own youth," he said. "It's a fantastic sport and I am delighted to see this partnership develop with more young people from London and Essex taking part."

[Click here to see more pictures from the event on Flickr](#)

For further information about the scheme visit [www.londonschoolstabletennis.co.uk](http://www.londonschoolstabletennis.co.uk)

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