



Serial winner Smith leads Jack Petchey roll of honour

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James Smith extended his impressive record at the Jack Petchey Schools' Table Tennis Singles Finals, while there was also a second title for Sophie Chiang.

More than 90 players from 41 schools across London and Essex competed in U11, U13, U16 and U19 events at Brunel University in Uxbridge.

Six events had already been held in Essex, North, East, South, West and Central London, resulting in nearly 500 players from 100 schools taking part in the championships' qualifying stage.

Whitgift School student Smith is a veteran of this competition since it was established in 2011, having played and won titles at every level in both team and singles events. Despite being only 15 this time he carried off the Boys' Under-19 title, beating Ryszard Pelc from Sutton's Cheam High School 3-0 (11-1, 11-8, 11-3) in the final.

Smith, currently ranked England No 1 Cadet said: "I am pleased with my game today and I do enjoy winning in this competition. With the Rio Olympics not far off I would love to represent my country at that level. That's my dream."



Mikaeel Toosy with Table Tennis England Head of Development Emily St John

Smith was not the only Whitgift winner as Mikaeel Toosy won the Under-11 competition, beating Harry Derecki, from Croydon's Ashburton Primary school 3-0 (11-4, 11-6, 11-9) in the final.



Sophie Chiang receives her prize from Tin-Tin Ho

Chiang took the Girls' Under-11 singles title for the second year running, beating Alana Mansfield from Freshwaters Junior School in Harlow 3-0 (11-3, 11-8, 11-3).

Chiang said: "I love playing and winning. This is a good competition for meeting new people and making friends. I want to be the best I can in table tennis."



Aadil Anand with ESTTA president John Arnold MBE

In the Under-13 age group, the titles went to Aadil Anand, from the American School in London and Amelia Chan from Channing School.

Anand, aged 11, played Valero Bucci from London Academy in the final, winning in three (11-6, 11-8, 11-5).



Amelia Chan with Darius Knight

Chan, aged 13, played Patricia Ianau from Barnet's St James Catholic School and also needed three sets to take the title (11-9, 11-5, 11-3). On her way to the final, Ianau had beaten her sister Natalie in the quarter-finals.

There was an all-Burlington Danes Academy final in the Boys' Under-16s as Cacharel Mirjah-Mercer and Israel Awolaja, both 15, played out a close match.



Cacherel Mirjah-Mercer with Table Tennis England president Doreen Stannard

Mirjah-Mercer won it by a scoreline of 3-1 (4-11, 11-5, 15-13, 11-8), having earlier come through a close five-set semi-final against London Academy's Jonathan Mainzer.

Mirjah-Mercer said: "I have been playing for about three years and I am always coming up against Israel in competition finals. I am glad I won as all my games were competitive."



Tiana Dennison with Tin-Tin Ho

The Girls' Under-16 crown was won by Tiana Dennison from Highams Park School. The 15-year-old overcame Gracie Edwards from Tendring Technology School 3-0 (11-2, 11-8, 11-4).



Rebecca Lowman and Darius Knight

Burnham-on-Crouch student Rebecca Lowman, from Ormiston Rivers School, carried off top honours in the Girls' Under-19s.

The 16-year-old beat Rhoda Boadu from Barnet's London Academy in a spirited final, winning it 3-1 (11-9, 12-10, 7-11, 11-9).

Essex champion Lowman, who plays and trains at the Batts Club in Harlow and Fusion Table Tennis Club in Southwark, said: "I love table tennis, it's complex and challenging."

Players and spectators were also treated to an exciting exhibition match between England stars Tin-tin Ho and Darius Knight, who also helped present awards. There was also a competition to win a table tennis bat signed by Team GB Olympians Paul Drinkhall, Liam Pitchford and Sam Walker.

Doreen Stannard, President of Table Tennis England, helped to present awards. She said: "I would like to thank the Jack Petchey Foundation for their tremendous support for this event and for the table donation scheme. This is a strong partnership and we have all been treated to a great day of excellent table tennis."

As well as the London and Essex schools' championships team and individual competitions, the Jack Petchey Table Tennis programme includes the donation of tables and equipment to secondary schools in London and Essex; four table tennis Academies in London and one in Essex, plus donation of tables and equipment to youth clubs in London.

As the programme moves into its sixth year, 1,365 table tennis tables, indoor and outdoor, have been donated to 273 secondary schools and colleges in London and Essex. This year another 87 equipment packages will be donated to schools and colleges in the same area.

For more information on the Jack Petchey table tennis programme, please visit

www.londonschoolstabletennis.co.uk

To download photos of the event, please visit www.jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk/gallery/gallery-login.php

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