



East Midlands 4*: Kerr at the double

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Gemma Kerr won two singles events when 180 competitors from all over the UK travelled to Weavers Leisure Centre in Wellingborough (home of Westfield TTC) to compete in the East Midlands 4 Star Tournament. This year also saw the introduction of a Junior Team event.

Saturday

U13 Girls

Samadhi Udamulla beat third seed Helena Dicken in four close ends to progress as group winner into the knockout stages. Her progress was halted in the semi-finals by top seed Anaya Patel.

Third seed Mari Baldwin also made the semis but second seed Lara Whitton had the answers to Mari's pimples and won in three ends. In a very close and entertaining final, Whitton came from 2-0 down to beat Patel 18-16 in the fifth game.



Winner Lara Whitton receives her prizes from Kevin Bird of Westfield TTC

U13 Boys

No real surprises in the group stages and the top four seeds eased into the semi-finals. Louis Price (S4) beat second seed Thomas Rayner 12-10 in the fifth to progress to the final, where he met Jamie Liu (S1). Jamie had beaten Naphong Boonyaprapa (S3) 3-0 (9, 9, 7) in the other semi. Louis lifted the title by beating Jamie 3-0 (10, 7, 3).



Winner Louis Price (left) and runner-up Jamie Liu

Cadet Girls Band 1

Holly Smithson beat second seed Helena Dicken to go through as group winner but lost 3-1 to Samadhi Udamulla in the knock out stages. Samadhi was beaten 3-2 by Erin Greensmith, who in turn was beaten in the semis by Devon's Mari Baldwin.

In the top half of the draw Gracie Edwards (S3) beat Lara Whitton (S1) to progress to the final. In the final, Mari beat Gracie 3-0 to claim the title.



Cadet Girls Band 1 winner Mari Baldwin

Cadet Boys Band 1

The top eight seeds all won their groups. Joe Newman reached the semi-finals, first by beating Robert Pelc (S4) 3-0 and then Harry Boston 3-1. Harry had beaten Niket Sajiv (S5) in the last 16. Ricardo Bolanos progressed to the final with wins over the higher ranked Edan Regan (S7) 3-1, Jack Rogers (S2) 3-2 and Joe Newman 3-1.

In the top half of the draw, Branislav Zivkovic (S3) beat Chamika Weerasinghe (S1) to play Ricardo in the final, with Branislav winning 3-0 (7, 8, 9).



Branislav Zivkovic receives his prizes

Cadet Girls

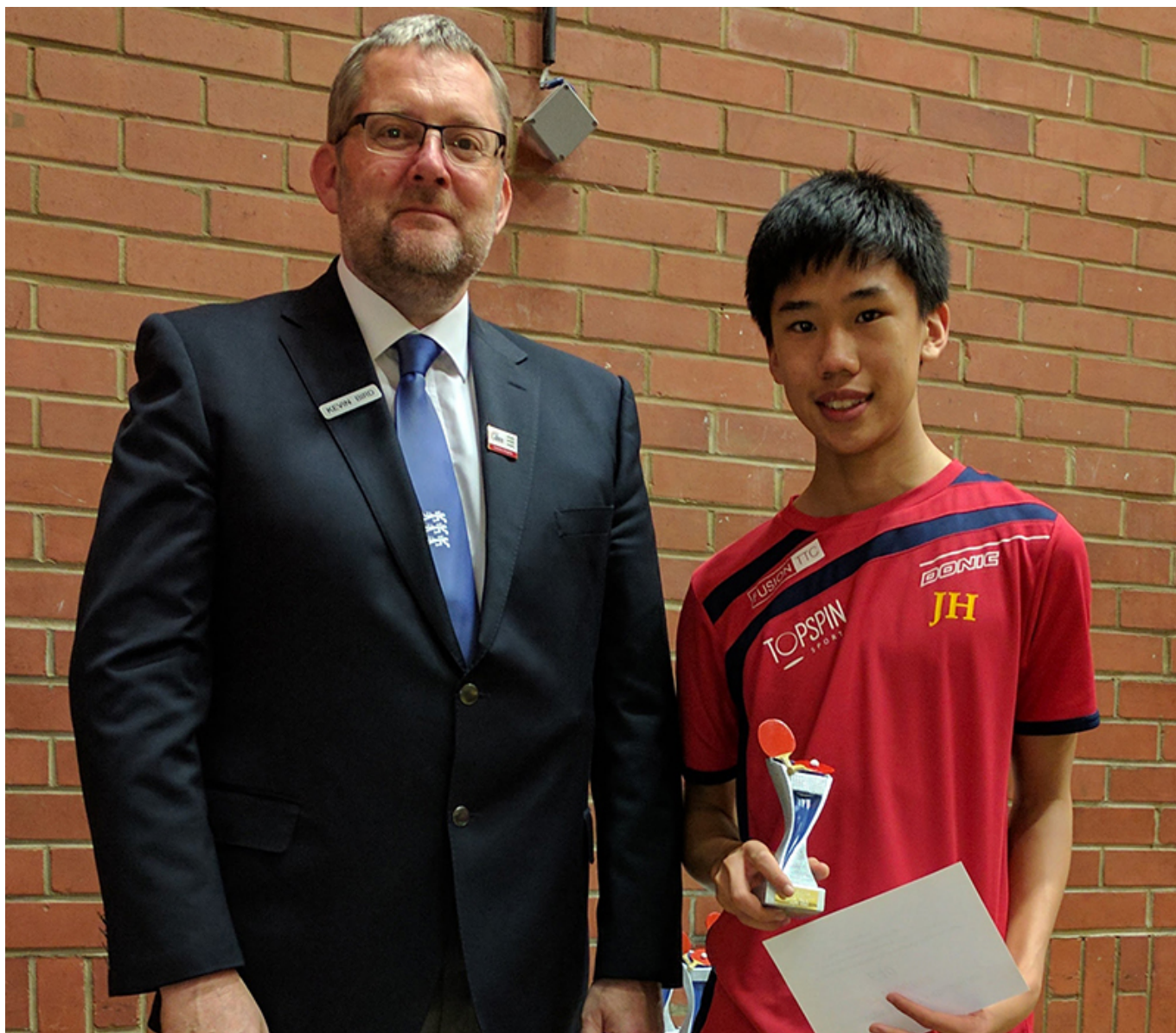
Upsets aplenty in the group stages with Lara Whitton beating top seed Gemma Kerr, Beth Richards beating Hannah Ward and Helena Dickie defeating Charlotte Weatherby. Darcie Proud progressed to the semi-finals but was then beaten 3-1 by top seed Gemma Kerr, who was now in the bottom half of the draw.

In the other semi, Lara Whitton beat Gracie Edwards 3-1. There was to be no repeat of the group result as Gemma beat Lara 3-0 (6, 2, 3) to become Cadet champion.

Cadet Boys

In the groups, seven of the eight seeds won their respective groups, the only casualty being Reece Chamdal (S7) who was beaten by Zaiim Premji. Naphong Boonyaprapa reached the semi-finals by beating Joe Cope and Amirul Hussain 3-2 but found Jamie Liu too strong, going down 3-1 (3, -11, -4, -14).

Joseph Hee made his way to the final without dropping a leg in either the group or knockout stages. The final followed the same pattern, Joseph beating Jamie 3-0 (7, 7, 7) to lift the title.



Cadet Boys winner Joseph Hee

Sunday

Junior Team Event

This was a new event for 2017, with eight boys' teams in a straight knockout. In the quarter-finals, Harefield Academy had a very close match with Joola Plymouth, eventually losing 2-3. James Chappell's loss to Edward Haskell (8, -11, -11, -14) showing how close this match was.

The top two seeds, Grantham College and Ackworth School A won their respective matches to meet in the final. Alex Ramsden defeated Ethan Walsh 3-0 to put Grantham 1-0 up but back came Ackworth with Amirul Hussain beating Matthew Leete 3-1 to level. Olly Tyndall beat Sam Chesterman 3-1 and Alex Ramsden sealed the victory with a 3-1 win over Amirul.



Team winners (from left) Olly Tyndall, Matt Leete and Alex Ramsden

Junior Girls Band 1

Performances of note in the group stages were Mari Baldwin defeating Lara Whitton, Sophie Newton and Charlotte Weatherby to top her group. Faye Leggett beat Charlotte Marsden and Emily Haskell. Mya Sultan beat third seed Hannah Ward.

In the top half of the draw, Hannah Ward beat Darcie Proud 3-2 and Holly Williams 3-1 to reach the final. Gemma Kerr reached the final beating Gracie Edwards, Beth Richards and a w/o against Faye Leggett. Gemma won her second title with a 3-0 win (8, 9, 8).

Junior Boys Band 1

Twenty-one groups of three players battled it out for the Band 1 title. Jamie Nordin reached the final with two full-distance wins, first coming from 2-0 down to beat Cachere Mercer (-8, -8, 6, 8, 9) and then Joshua Stacey (-6, 7, -6, 10, 7).

Connor Whitehead was the other finalist, seeing off Max Stevens, Tyrell Brown, Fraser Riley and Sam Hume. In a tight final, Jamie beat Connor 3-0 (8, 10, 14).



Winner Jamie Nordin and runner-up Connor Whitehead

Junior Girls

In group two, Mari Baldwin and Anaya Patel both defeated Sophie Barlow (S2). Lara Whitton beat Isabelle Joubely and Georgina Lister to top group five. Faye Leggett defeated Stephi Cross in group six. Hannah Ward beat Tiana Dennison in group seven and Rachel Scott beat Amy Blagbrough in group nine.

Zahna Hall (S1), Bhavika Mistry (S3) and Sarah Menghistab (S4) reached the semi-finals along with Anaya Patel, who had beaten Isabelle Joubely and Stephi Cross. Hall and Menghistab were both comfortable winners of their semi-finals and Hall justified her top seeding, winning the final 3-1.

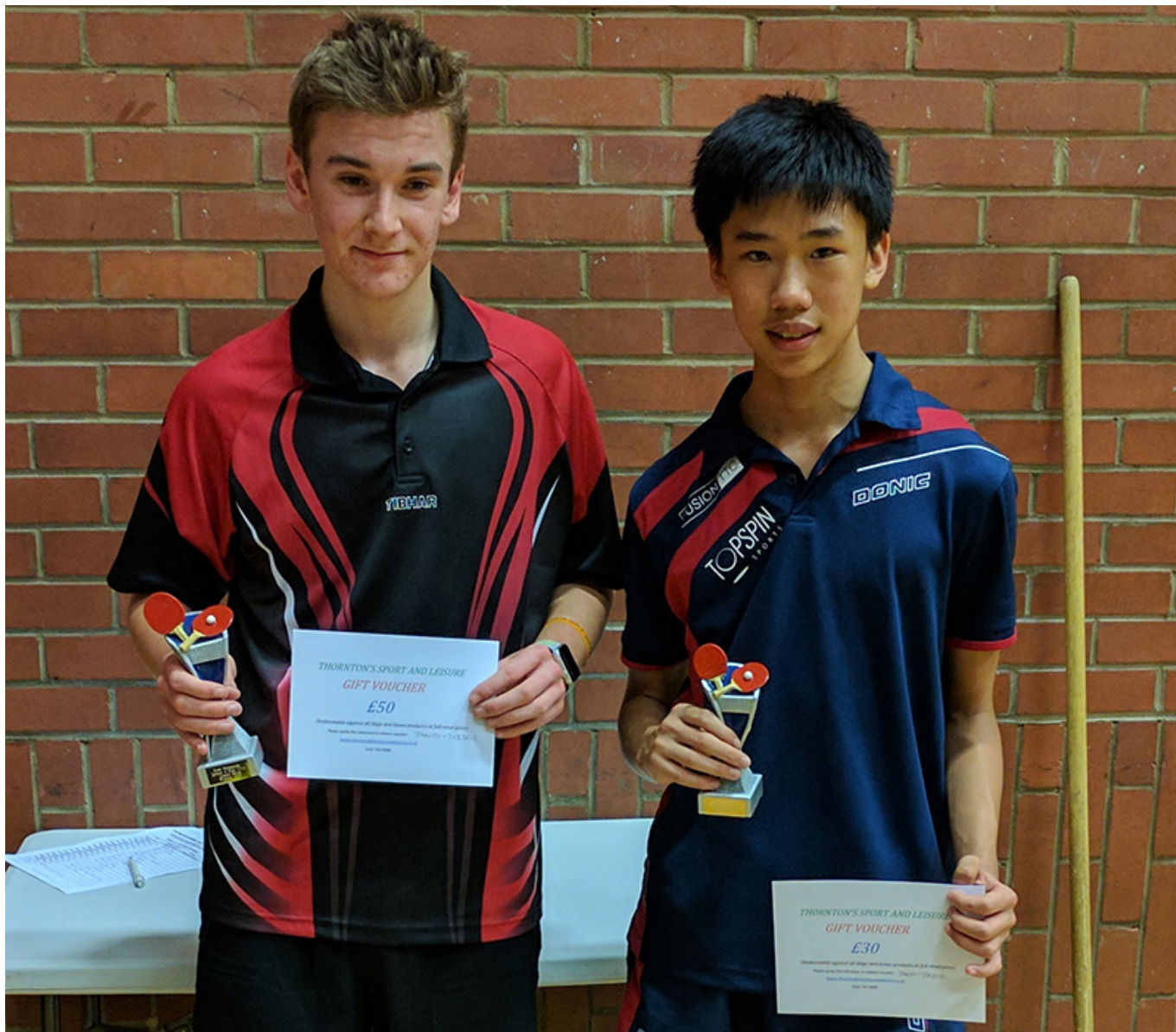


Winner Zahna Hall and runner-up Sarah Menghistab

Junior Boys

Twenty-one groups of four players contested this event. Only two of the 16 seeds did not top their groups. Israel Awolaja beat Ethan Walsh (S8) and Joshua Stacey beat Joshua Weatherby (S16). In the knockout stages, Reece Chamdal beat the higher ranked Naphat Boonyaprapa 3-1. George Hazell reached the semi-finals, beating Sam Chesterman, Josh Harland and Joshua Weatherby but found Matthew Leete (S2) in fine form, losing 3-0.

Saturday's Cadet winner, Joseph Hee, met Leete in the final after despatching Alex Ramsden (S1) 3-1 in the quarter finals and Josh Bennett (S3) in the semi-finals, also 3-1. In the final, Leete played with patience, choosing his attack wisely and overcoming Hee 3-0 (7, 7, 10) to become the Junior Boys winner.



Winner Matt Leete and runner-up Joseph Hee

Also at the tournament, Table Tennis England Chairman Sandra Deaton presented Margaret Welch with the Ivor Montagu Award, for service to the administration of Table Tennis England.



Table Tennis England Chairman Sandra Deaton (left) presents Margaret Welch with the Ivor Montagu Award (picture by Chris Rayner)

The Organising Committee would like to Thornton's Sports & Leisure for sponsoring the event and providing a trade stand over the weekend, all the officials for volunteering their time and expertise and the Westfield Table Tennis Club members for their help in setting up, clearing away and general administration.

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