



Harefield seal thrilling double at Jack Petchey finals

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Harefield Academy, Burlington Danes Academy and Barnes Primary School were all double winners at the Jack Petchey London Schools Table Tennis Team Finals.

University College School and Ernest Bevin College completed the roll-call of champions as 188 youngsters representing 41 teams played their hearts out across four age groups at the University of East London.

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The most thrilling final was the Under-19 boys, in which Harefield Academy and Whitgift School could only be separated by countback. And with the score at 4-4 and the set score at 18-18, it had to go all the way down to points, with Harefield shading it 334-322.

And to add to the drama, Harefield also had to battle from 3-0 down as England Youth Squad member James Smith, George Hazell and Reiss Vydelingum had won their opening matches. Israel Awolaja put Harefield on the board against Jason Kwok, James Chappell beat Smith to make it 3-2 and Gaurav Aravind levelled by defeating Vydelingum.

When Awolaja saw off Hazell, Harefield led for the first time. But Kwok came from 2-0 down to beat Lee Clark to tie up the scores and ensure calculators were needed to declare the winners after a match in which five of the eight individual matches went to a deciding fifth set. For Harefield, it was a step up after finishing as runners-up last year.

Harefield made it a double in the top age group when their line-up of Zahna Hall and Sarah Menghistab won the round-robin group without dropping a match, thereby retaining their title. The format included four singles and one doubles match. Morpeth School beat Eastbury Comprehensive 3-2 to seal second place.



Harefield Academy receive the Under-19 Girls' award from Jack Petchey Foundation chief executive Trudy Kilcullen (left) and Paralympic medallist Aaron McKibbin

At the other end of the age scale, Barnes Primary School won both Under-11 titles, overcoming reigning champions Asburnham Community School 5-3 having trailed 1-0, 2-1 and 3-2 before winning the last three matches.



The Under-11 Boys' winners Barnes Primary, with ESTTA President John Arnold (left) and Aaron McKibbin

The Barnes girls improved on last year's second place, defeating Ashburnham 6-2. The winning line-up was Annelise Williams, Riva Hemsall, Lauren Hodgins and Hannah Chaudhury.



The Barnes team receive their Under-11 Girls' medals

Ernest Bevin College took the Under-16 Boys' title but not before a superb semi-final in which they needed countback to see off Burlington Danes Academy. Trailing 3-1 and 4-3, Howard Onweng won the crucial match against Ryan Stewart to make it 4-4 – Ernest Bevin winning by 16 sets to 14 on countback. The final was more straightforward as they defeated Sacred Heart Catholic College 5-1.



The winning Under-16 Boys team from Ernest Bevin College with Jack Petchey Foundation ambassador Dean Milton (left) and Aaron McKibbin

In the Under-16 Girls, Burlington Danes retained their title with a 5-1 victory over Holland Park Academy. The third-place play-off was another close one as Sacret Heart edged out London Academy 13-12 on sets after coming from 2-0 and 4-2 down to force a 4-4 draw.



The winning Burlington Danes Under-16 Girls team

Burlington Danes also came out on top in the Under-13 Girls round-robin, a competition in which no team was unbeaten. Burlington beat Morpeth School and Richmond Park Academy but lost to Barnet, meaning countback was needed to place the champions above Richmond Park, who won their other two matches. Barnet were third.



The Under-13 Girls champions, Burlington Danes, with Aaron McKibbin and Emily St John of Table Tennis England

The Under-13 Boys' event went to University College School, who came from 3-2 down to defeat Ernest Bevin in the final. It was Ben Barbarash's win over Jeremiah Prempeh which proved key, as he took the deciding fifth set 12-10 to put his side 4-3 ahead.



The Under-13 Boys champions, University College School

Results

Under-19 Boys

Harefield Academy 4-4 Whitgift School (Harefield win on countback); 3rd place – Ernest Bevin College

Under-19 Girls

Round-robin: Harefield Academy (winners); Morpeth School (runners-up); Eastbury Comprehensive (third place)

Under-16 Boys

Ernest Bevin College 5-1 Sacred Heart Catholic School; 3rd place – Burlington Danes Academy

Under-16 Girls

Burlington Danes Academy 5-1 Holland Park Academy; 3rd place – Sacred Heart Catholic School

Under-13 Boys

University College School 5-3 Ernest Bevin College; 3rd place – London Academy

Under-13 Girls

Round-robin: Burlington Danes Academy (winners); Richmond Park Academy (runners-up); Barnet (third place)

Under-11 Boys

Barnes Primary School 5-3 Ashburnham Community School; 3rd place – City of London

Under-11 Girls

Barnes Primary School 6-2 Ashburnham Community School

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