



## Josh Bennett reflects on superb Nationals display

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Sussex-born Josh Bennett was one of the stars of the first two days of the PG Mutual National Championships, culminating in him reaching the semi-finals of the Under-21 Men's Singles.

After coming through the Men's Singles group and reaching the quarter-finals of both the Under-21 Singles and the Men's Doubles yesterday, Bennett was up against even sterner competition at the University of Nottingham's David Ross Sports Village.

An early start for the 17-year-old brought a mixed doubles defeat for him and partner Kate Cheer against Chris Doran & Hannah Hicks. Undeterred, Bennett then immediately faced off against the sixth seeded Doran in the Men's Singles last 16.

Bennett admitted that he felt "a little more free because the pressure was off", but was wary of relaxing too much, saying that when going into a game against a higher ranked player "you've got to go in thinking you're going to play your game, whilst also not letting them play theirs."

Blistering rallies in the Men's Singles between Chris Doran and Josh Bennett here at the [#PGMutualNationals](https://pic.twitter.com/MUKPMartP5) [pic.twitter.com/MUKPMartP5](https://pic.twitter.com/MUKPMartP5)

– Table Tennis England (@TableTennisENG) [March 4, 2017](https://twitter.com/TableTennisENG/status/828111111111111111)

However, it wasn't to be, as although Bennett made Doran work for every point, the giant sixth seed eventually saw off the youngster 4-0 (11-7, 11-9, 12-10, 11-6).

Next up for Bennett was a re-match against Luke Savill in the U21 Singles quarter-finals, a player he had beaten

in a fiercely contested match on the previous day of the Championships in the Men's Singles group. Their second encounter was of the same ilk as their first, the two players going toe-to-toe in a heavily competitive fixture with Bennett eventually taking charge to win 4-1 (-6, 6, 13, 10, 9).

The Bexhill College student said: "being able to pull through again and beat him for a second time in as many days was great." His excellent shot selection and defensive display in that fixture rewarded him with a semi-final against the highly-rated Tom Jarvis.

Unfortunately this was as far as Bennett would go, but he did not go down without a fight. The young man from Eastbourne pushed Jarvis all the way, eventually losing out 4-2 (11-8, 9-11, 11-7, 11-8, 9-11, 11-5).

The teenager felt that he must have been playing well to be able to take a couple of games off Jarvis, revealing that the weekend had been brilliant for him and his confidence, whilst also providing a springboard to push on from in the following weeks and months.

A great tournament for Josh Bennett including u21 men's bronze. [#PGMutualNationals pic.twitter.com/5rGZvZ87XS](https://twitter.com/5rGZvZ87XS)

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