



Anand and Smith star again at Jack Petchey finals

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Posted On: June 13, 2017

Aadil Anand and James Smith were again among the winners at the Jack Petchey Schools' Table Tennis Finals, with the eight competition victors representing eight different schools.

More than 90 players from schools in London and Essex competed at the event, held at the University of East London's SportsDock, with Sir Jack Petchey himself in attendance for part of the day, including the prize-giving.

Anand, of the American School in London retained the Under-13 Boys' title which he won last year, beating Yacine Boubekeur of London Academy 3-0 (11-2, 11-2, 11-2) in the final.



Anand said:

I love table tennis and really wanted to win so I am pleased. This is a good competition and you get to meet and play new people.”

Whitgift School’s Smith is a regular winner at the event, last year having claimed the Under-19 crown. This year, he was back at his more usual Under-16 level and he faced Whitmore School student Branislav Zivkovic in the final, prevailing in three close sets – 11-9, 11-9, 12-10.

Smith said:

I really enjoy this competition and even though I dropped two sets along the way I’m still glad I won. I hadn’t played for over a month and I needed a break from studying for my GCSEs.”

The other boys to taste success were Harry Derecki in the Under-11s and Gaurav Aravind in the Under-19s. Derecki, representing Ashburnham Primary, defeated Trishton Kite (Barnes Primary) 3-9 (11-9, 11-7, 11-8), while Aravind needed four sets to see off Harefield Academy school-mate Israel Awolaja 11-8, 11-9, 7-11, 11-8.



Aravind said:

I'm pleased to win because I lost last year in the quarter-final. I played well and held my confidence through some tough matches."



Derecki's verdict was:

I was unbeaten through the competition. This is my third time here and I came third and then second last year. It feels good."

In the Girls' events, two of the finals went to five sets. Alana Mansfield of Burnt Mill School won the Under-13s 3-2 (8-11, 11-5, 9-11, 11-7, 11-6) against Yuvrathi Kumar (Wallington Girls), while the Under-19s went to St Michael's Catholic Grammar pupil Jasmine Chan, who beat Natalia Ianau of London Academy 4-11, 14-12, 9-11, 11-9, 11-9.



Chan said:

The competition is really good but it's not just about winning. I like meeting people and encourage others to play. It's a great sport."



Mansfield said:

This is a good competition and I was runner-up last year so I am very pleased to win."

There was a victory for the Ianau family, however as Patricia, also representing London Academy, beat Gracie Firkins of Tendring College 3-0 (11-5, 11-4, 11-4) to win the under-16s.



Ianau, a winner at this competition at the third time of asking, said:

This was a great competition and I am so glad I won at last. I love table tennis and can't wait to defend my title."

The Under-11 title went to Maliha Baig of Warren Juniors in Chadwell Heath, who defeated Earls Hall pupil Sadie Daymar 3-1 (10-12, 11-8, 12-10, 11-8).



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