



Schools aim for top-class performances

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No fewer than five schools will be aiming to defend their titles at the Butterfly School Team Championships on Saturday.

The event at Hinckley is the first national finals since the merger was completed between Table Tennis England and the former English Schools' Table Tennis Association.

A total of 32 teams will compete in four age groups, with both boys' and girls' titles up for grabs.

Both the Under-19 competitions feature the defending champions as Whitgift School boys and Tudor Grange Academy girls return.

Whitgift are spearheaded once again by England Youth Squad member James Smith, but among those up against them are St Mary's College, Hull, who have former Cadet national champion Harry Dai in their line-up. Indeed, Dai beat Smith in the final when he won that title.

The Tudor Grange team comprises sisters Lisa and Sophie Rinnhofer, and the team from Lancaster Girls' Grammar also has a pair of sisters – Alice and Megan Dillon.

Ackworth School boys go again in the Under-16s, and look a good bet to retain the title, featuring as they do the members of the Table Tennis England National Academy. George Spencer Academy will be among those looking to upset the form guide and feature a strong line-up of their own.

No defending champions in the U16 girls, where Charles Read Academy, led by Mollie Patterson, look strong.

Sacred Heart Catholic School from Southwark have the opportunity to win both boys' and girls' events at the U13 age group. They will be up against defending champions St Mary's College in the boys' side of the draw.

And at Under-11s, there are two schools going for a double – St Peter's CE Primary Academy from Nottingham and Earls Hall Primary from Westcliff on Sea. The former are defending the title in the boys' competition.

The teams competing are:

Under-11 Boys

Earls Hall Primary (Westcliff on Sea), Great Wood Primary (Morecambe), St Laurence Church Junior (Birmingham), St Peter's CE Primary Academy (East Bridgford)

Under-11 Girls

Earls Hall Primary (Westcliff on Sea), Greenway Primary and Nursery (Berkhamsted), St Bede's Catholic Junior School (Widnes), St Peter's CE Primary Academy (East Bridgford)

Under-13 Boys

Carlton Le Willows Academy (Nottingham), Sacred Heart Catholic School (Southwark), St Mary's College (Hull), University College School (Camden)

Under-13 Girls

Bredon Hill Academy (Evesham), The Priory Ruskin Academy (Grantham), Sacred Heart Catholic School (Southwark), Wade Deacon High School (Widnes)

Under-16 Boys

Ackworth School (Pontefract), Ernest Bevin College (Tooting Bec), George Spencer Academy (Stapleford, Notts), Tanbridge House School (Horsham)

Under-16 Girls

Charles Read Academy (Lincs), Dane Court Grammar School (Broadstairs), Lancaster Girls' Grammar, Okehampton Community College

Under-19 Boys

Carlton Le Willows Academy (Nottingham), Eggbuckland Community College (Plymouth), St Mary's College (Hull), Whitgift School (Croydon)

Under-19 Girls

Ackworth School (Pontefract), Bromsgrove School (Worcs), Lancaster Girls' Grammar (Lancs), Tudor Grange Academy (Solihull)

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