

Sussex 4* Junior Open Table Tennis Tournament

The trio of Jack Mills, Max Tupper and Hugo Tupper from Jersey's APPLEBY ACADEMY performed well in the inaugural Sussex 4* Table Tennis Tournament at Burgess Hill.



In the **Junior Boy's Under 18 Singles** both Max Tupper and Hugo Tupper proceeded to the knockout stages. Hugo, despite winning the first set struggled to get into his stride against Top 40 England Junior Emre Ibatoglu and went down 3-1. That disappointment only served to fire him to a comfortable 3-0 win over Ryan Williams, setting up what proved to be a thrilling winner take all encounter with England's No 3 ranked U13 Hugo Pang for a place in the knockout rounds. Hugo Tupper took the first set 12-10, but Pang turned the match around to take a 2-1 lead. However Tupper was determined to show that he was the No 1 Hugo at the table in this contest taking the fourth and fifth sets 11-7 and 11-5 respectively with some quite superb counter hitting. Firing on all cylinders Hugo Tupper carried on his good form into the first round match with a 3-1 win over George Cox to find himself facing the No 1 seed and England No.5 Junior Lewis Gray in the second round. Eventual tournament winner Gray won 3-0, having to raise his game against young Tupper who pushed him all the way.

Max Tupper in his first group match against England Top 30 Junior Ashley Facey-Thompson took the first set 11-9. Facey-Thompson then got into the game to take the next 3 sets. Max had to win his next match to progress, and was in no mood for an early exit with a comprehensive 3-0 win over David Prinover to set up a first round tie with England Top 30 Junior Jarred Knowles. Knowles defensive style saw him take the first set 11-7. Max then came back and started hitting some strong loops to counter the defensive style taking the next two sets both 11-9. Knowles then launched his come

back, taking the fourth 11-5. Agonisingly for Tupper the fifth set went to Knowles 11-8, in an encounter that could have gone either way.

Jack Mills just missed out making it a hat-trick for Jersey. He started off well against No 7 seed and England No 13 Junior Tyrone Wells, causing all sorts of problems for Wells with his defensive chopping play. There was no reward for Mills' good play though who must still be wondering how he did not manage to win. Mills then won his next game against Tommy Gritton 3-1 to set up yet another winner take all match with James Denyer. Although not feeling 100% Mills fought Denyer every step of the way, hauling back a 2 set deficit to take the match into a fifth. Mills was desperately unfortunate to find lady luck was against him at the most crucial of times, with the match poised at 11-11 it was the nets and edges that were to take his opponent across the finishing line and into the knockout rounds.

The **Grade 1 Boy's Under 18 Boy's Singles** was more lucrative for the Jersey boys with some outstanding wins taking all three Juniors into the knockout stages. Max Tupper lead the way in his group with two 3-0 wins against Adam Corell and James Marshall. Hugo Tupper also did not drop a set in winning both of his matches against Brain Gray and Timur Hashimi. Jack Mills won the first of his group matches against mainstay of the Sussex County Junior squad Daniel Pound in a flawless performance (11-9, 11-9, 11-5) to ensure that he would advance to the knockout phase. Uncharacteristic errors by Mills against David Rahbani in a scoreline of 8-11, 11-9, 8-11,10-12 tell the tale of a missed chance by Mills to top his group.

Mills was edged out in 5 sets by Shane Clarke 9-11,11-9,11-9,8-11, 9-11, although the final set does not tell the story of Mills saving four match points only to then let his opponent off the hook with a misplaced smash.

Hugo Tupper was in great form, not dropping a set in his matches with Brian Gray, Josh Robinson and Matthew Leete on his way to securing a quarter final place.

Max Tupper beat George Cox quite comfortably 3-0 in his first round match, and also dispatched Liam Winder in similar fashion 3-0. This meant a third round match with Ashley Facey-Thompson, who he had faced earlier in the day, in the knowledge that a win would mean an all Jersey/Tupper quarter final. Max Tupper found Facey-Thompson's backhand flicks difficult to read losing the first two sets 11-7 and 11-5. Max then upped the tempo considerably, his opponent finding the pace of the game difficult to cope with in the next two sets which Max won 11-7, 11-7. Unfortunately Facey-Thomson bounced back to take the fifth, to end the dream of an all Tupper quarter final.

Although the venue was just a short distance from Gatwick, delays in the day's proceedings were starting to make matters tight for the flight home. Ashley Facey-Thompson agreed very sportingly to play his quarter final against the younger Tupper straight on after playing Max. Hugo found the first set hard going, with Facey-Thomson taking it 11-5. There was a slight improvement in the second, with the set going 11-8 to Facey-Thomson. Some strong words of encouragement from his coach saw Hugo rediscover some of the form that had been seen earlier in the day, Hugo taking the third set 11-7. However, Facey-Thompson made sure that there was to be no danger of missing the flight home when he took the fourth set 11-8 to win the match 3-1.