

## **JACK MILLS steps up to the plate to reach the Semi-Final for the APPLEBY ACADEMY in the first National Table Tennis Tournament of 2011.**

David QUINN, Philip QUINN, Jordan WYKES, Oliver GRIGGS, Chris MORSHEAD, Jack MILLS, Oren LE MARQUAND, Kelsey LE MAISTRE and Emily ROBINS from the J.T.T.A's APPLEBY ACADEMY travelled to the UK last weekend to compete in the East Midlands National 4\* Tournament held in Grantham with over 200 of the top players from all over Great Britain entering.

There were many great performances which show the progress the **Appleby Academy** is making. The greatest was Jack MILLS fighting his way through to the Semi Final Stage (last 4 players out of 78) in the Cadet Boys Band 1 (under 15's) where for the first time ever he met a fellow Jersey Team mate Oliver GRIGGS in the Quarter Final.

Both MILLS and GRIGGS came through their groups as Winners with MILLS having a great win beating the No. 14 seed Leon THOMSON who is England ranked No. 50. GRIGGS and MILLS had tough opponents in the last 16 and knew they would meet each other if they won! They both had a bad start losing the first two sets closely and amazingly they both showed the Academy fighting spirit raising their games with all the players willing them to fight back which they did both levelling the score at 2-2 to take their matches to the nail biting deciding 5<sup>th</sup> set. GRIGGS was the first to come through to book a place in the Quarter Final winning 11-8 against James GARROD Ranked England No. 85 and MILLS showing great composure to win at deuce 12-10 saving 3 match points!!!! against Tom WINDRAM Ranked England No. 92. In the all Jersey Appleby Academy Semi Final the coaches and parents watched with pride as MILLS and GRIGGS who are close friends performed with great discipline and determination in front of the British Spectators. MILLS has a defensive style who was chopping with good consistency equalising GRIGGS loops being sprayed at all angles, speeds and spins. The scores were 11-5, 10-12, 11-9 and 11-5 in favour of MILLS to book a place in the Semi Final. In the Semi Final he faced Alex PROSSER Welsh Ranked No. 9 who had a power loop game. MILLS caused PROSSER all sorts of problems tighing him in knots with his heavy backspin chops but PROSSER took the decisive points with some great power loop winners beating MILLS by the narrowest of margins 11-9, 13-11, 13-11.

In the Cadet Boys Open Event it was fantastic to see four boys who were Jordan WYKES, Oren LE MARQUAND, Chris MORSHEAD and Jack MILLS progress through their group stage to the last 64 (out of 96 entered players).

Jordan WYKES (11 years old) who had just come back from a European Training Camp in Spain training 6 hours a day for five days was so close to making the biggest upset of the competition being 2-0 up and 3 match points in the 3<sup>rd</sup> against Sam MABEY seed 4 and England Ranked No. 5 but the experienced MABEY made a comeback to deny WYKES this time. WYKES then went on to make a great win beating Jack COLLINGS (Gloustershire) England Ranked No. 47 comfortably 3-1 to book his place in the next round as Runner Up. In the next round WYKES found Kevin VANDABONA just a touch too hard going down 3-2. Chris MORSHEAD who is also a defensive style player developed in the Appleby Academy came through his group as winner with two brilliant wins beating Ollie BUDDLELL from Devon England Ranked No. 56 3-2 and Joshua BENNETT from Sussex England Ranked No. 32 winning with consistent defensive strokes mixing it up with topspin drives and flat smashing. MORSHEAD played Karim KHASSAL of Middlesex in the last 64 and came through with flying colours 3-2. MORSHEAD was last man standing of the Jersey Players in the last 32 but faced a well established Conor Edwards Welsh Ranked No. 3; first two ends were closely fought going the welsh dragons way 11-8 11-8, MORSHEAD then came back with a 12-10 win but lost the fourth and the match 11-5. But a great performance to take a set.

On the second day SUNDAY 9<sup>th</sup> JANUARY it was another early start of matches at 8:45am. All the Appleby Academy Players were at the tournament hall to warm up at 7:45am!

Kelsey LE MAISTRE and Emily ROBINS arrived Saturday for their campaign to improve their ranking in the Junior Girls Events (under 18's). There were high expectations for LE MAISTRE as she won the Band 1 Cadet Event spectacularly here in Grantham last year.

First it was the Band 1 Junior Girls where Le MAISTRE and ROBINS had very tough draws! ROBINS played Jennifer WOOD of Yorkshire after a very close first set which went to ROBINS 12-10 but couldn't repeat and after a good battle lost 3-1. ROBIN's second match was against the well known Essex Girl Ife OKAFOR and went down in three close sets but a lot of positives to take away. LE MAISTRE had to play the No. 4 seed Sayeeda MIAH first in her group. LE MAISTRE started well winning the first end 11-9 as MIAH made mistake after mistake against LE MAISTRE varied spin serves but as the game went on LE MAISTRE started to put too much pressure on herself which stopped her looping topspin shots from flowing and caused too many unforced errors so MIAH came back with the next two ends to make it 2-1. Le MAISTRE got some form back in the fourth to make it 2-2 but lost the 5<sup>th</sup> set decider 11-7. It was clear that LE MAISTRE had the ability to win. LE MAISTRE played Bekki LYCETT of Staffordshire in her second group match and again found it hard to get her mind set right which was causing more unforced errors which meant losing the first two sets but after talks with her corner coach Craig Gascoyne to help her solve some issues something clicked in the 3<sup>rd</sup> set which meant LE MAISTRE cut out all

unforced errors and her topspins were whipping with good timing taking the 3<sup>rd</sup> set 11-8 and the next two set with ease 11-4 and 11-3 to win the match. LE MAISTRE could only rely on LYCETT to beat MIAH by a 3-0 score line to go through as only 1 player progresses through to the next round. LYCETT won the first two ends but lost the third to deny LE MAISTRE progressing.

In the Open Junior Girls Event winner and runner up of the group stage go through to the knock out stage. LE MAISTRE first played Evangelina COLLIER of Essex England Ranked No. 12 and lost close match 3-1. LE MAISTRE then went on to beat Amy HUMPHREYS of Derbyshire 3-2 to book a place in the last 28 to meet the powerful England No. 15 from Nottingham Sophie NEIL. NEIL was on form beating LE MAISTRE 3-0.

Finally in the Open Junior Boys (under 18's) David QUINN only 8 years old amazed onlookers as he blasted through to the knockout stages with Oliver GRIGGS. But both lost in the last 64.

**JTTA Development Officer Craig Gascoyne said:** "It has been a great trip with superb performances. Many have come away with a lot of wins and national ranking points. It was great to see the younger members of the Appleby Academy step up to the plate as the older members couldn't attend due to commitments with their studies."