

REPORT ON THE STOCKTON-ON-TEES 4* JUNIOR OPEN

TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT.

Twelve members of Jersey's **APPLEBY ELITE ACADEMY** squad are just back from this tournament having recorded some remarkable victories against a field of some 120 youngsters.

Leading the way were the youngest players in the **Under 15 Cadet Boys Team** event. Jordan Wykes celebrated his twelfth birthday with partner Chris Morshead by beating Drumchapel 3 from Scotland with Wykes 3—1 win over Thomas Cairns, the Scottish No. 26 being decisive. This saw them through to the quarter finals to play the powerful Harefield team. Morshead got them off to a great start with a career best win 3—0 no less against the England No.9 Tyrone Wells. Miles Chan for Harefield, England No.11, hit back beating Wykes by the same scoreline. They also took the all important doubles before Wykes regained parity beating Wells 3—1. Morshead did all he could to get the win taking the first game with his chopping style and clever ball placement. Chan then hit a purple patch and ground out a 3—1 victory to narrowly take the team match 3—2. Also in the Under 15 team event, **APPLEBY ACES** represented by Jack Mills and Ollie Griggs were battling away as well. Mills was absolutely outstanding against the Irish No.3 Kevin Hutchinson losing 12/14, 3/11, 13/11, 12/14 where his defensive style caused his illustrious opponent all sorts of problems. The Irish took the match with their No.1 Ryan Farrell beating Griggs and then they took the doubles too.

In the **Junior Girls Under 18 Team** event Jersey's Kelsey le Maistre and partner England No.4 Cadet Megan Knowles were hugely unlucky not to reach the semi finals. Le Maistre beat London Progress's Laura Higham [England No.43] 11/9, 11/8, 14/12 with a powerful and controlled aggressive display of attacking shots. She lost narrowly to Isobel Ashley from Derbyshire and with Knowles converting both her matches it was the agonising loss in the doubles that prevented them from a semi final appearance.

In the **Junior Boys Under 18 Team** the Fisher brothers [aptly representing **APPLEBY ATTACK**], Matthieu and Michael, battled hard against Scotland's Drumchapel 2 side. Michael achieved his career best win so far against the Scottish No. 27 ranked Under 18, Connor Moran, with a determined and classy 3—1 victory but couldn't prevent them from an eventual 3—1 team loss. **APPLEBY ATOMIC'S** Hugo Tupper and Tom Marsay had a tough draw against Jarred Knowles and Ryan Maynard from London Progress England ranked 21 and 26 respectively. Tupper took a game off Knowles but it was the only success that they enjoyed. The top Jersey pairing of Josh Band and Max Tupper on paper and ranking points had a great chance of making the latter stages. They despatched the local Ormesby B team

3—0 but the draw then pitted them against the number 1 seeds and odds on favourites Sam Walker and Lewis Gray [England Nos. 2 and 5 respectively]. The Jersey duo gave it their all with Band losing to Walker 7/11, 8/11, 2/11 and Tupper to Gray 10/12, 5/11, 6/11 followed a narrow 10/12, 6/11, 10/12 loss in the doubles to be eliminated in the last sixteen. Walker and Gray went on to win the team event without dropping a game and then came winner and runner up in the Under 18 Open Singles as well!!

In the **Mini Cadet Under 13 Boy's Singles** Jordan Wykes continued his good run of form in his group taking a game off the England No.5 Tom Jarvis. Sadly the third player didn't show and as only the winners went through Wykes missed out on the knockout stage.

The same befell Hugo Tupper in the **Cadet Under 15 Boy's Singles** where a 1—3 loss against Duncan Alexander put him out at the group stage. Ollie Griggs had better fortune recording his best career win 3—1 against England No.16 Under 13 Ben Holland from Essex 11/6, 11/8, 9/11, 11/7. He bowed out though against the Scottish No.3, Chris Wheeler 3—0. Michael Fisher and Jordan Wykes also failed to get through their groups and it was left to Jack Mills and Chris Morshead to fly the Jersey flag. Morshead lead the charge with two utterly magnificent matches against Leon Thomson from Herefordshire and Joseph Clark from Cleveland. Morshead frustrated both players with his defensive chop and deservedly won his group for the first time ever with 3—1 and 3—0 victories. Not to be outdone Jack Mills, Jersey's other defensive style player, beat the hugely talented Billy Forster, England ranked 46, 3—2 after being 2—0 up and then having the mental toughness to serve out to take the decisive fifth set 11/6. Both young players deservedly made the last 32 but exited at this point both 0—3 against the England No.6 and No.16 respectively.

In the **Junior Girl's Under 18 Singles** more career bests were achieved when Kelsey le Maistre blasted her way through her group. In the process she beat England Under 18 No.36 Nicole Finn and then England Under 15 No. 28 Kayleigh Forster 3—0 and 3—1 with some remarkable winning shots to all angles of the table. Le Maistre then met her Waterloo in the form of the experienced Evie Collier ranked 13 in England who won 3—0 to prevent the Jersey girl a place in the last sixteen.

In the **Junior Boy's Under 18 Singles** Josh Band was the only player to proceed to the knockout stage after the group matches with only the winners of the groups qualifying. Good wins in their groups did come however from Jack Mills against Josh Bennett from Sussex, Hugo Tupper against Scotland's No. 27 Conor Moran and Michael Fisher against Scotland's Gregg Robertson. Band looked set fair for a last sixteen slot and beyond but had a disappointing performance against Lawrence Sweeney from Warwickshire which was strewn with uncharacteristic errors. The scores of 9/11, 10/12, 7/11 told the tale of a missed chance but there was still the Grade 1 Under 18 Boy's Singles to come!!

The **Grade 1 Girls's Under 18 Singles** saw a reversal of fortune for Kelsey le Maistre who was drawn purely by coincidence against the same players she had met in the Open event. Both English girls exacted revenge for their earlier defeats with Le Maistre only able to get one game in reply.

The **Grade 1 Boy's Under 18 Boy's Singles** was more lucrative for Jersey players with some more outstanding wins. Chris Morshead had another superb triumph against Scottish No. 11 Steven Grimes 3—1 and Tom Marsay despatched another talented Scot, Tom Cairns 3—0. Matthieu Fisher dug deep to beat Joe Clark from Cleveland 3—2 but none made the knockout. It was left to Max and Hugo Tupper and Josh Band to further the Jersey cause. Hugo Tupper beat Scotland's No.11 Cadet Rory Boyd 3—0 followed by a similar win over the powerful Shannon Walker from Cleveland. Max Tupper negotiated his way past Ben Russell also from Cleveland 3—1 to also reach the knockout stage. Josh Band made short work of Scotland's Under 18 No. 11 Basel Razouk and then endured a nail biter against Adam Smith another seasoned player from Cleveland. Band eventually prevailed with a gritty performance 11/13, 11/6, 11/8, 6/11, 11/9 to also reach the knockout stages. All three bowed out in the last thirty two. Max Tupper succumbed to England No.7 Cadet Adam Harrison 3—0 whilst brother Hugo went down with all guns blazing against the uber talented England No.13 Cadet Danny Lawrence 9/11, 7/11, 13/15. Band was last man standing and was brilliantly supported by the Jersey squad as he endured another five game thriller this time against a fellow top 60 ranked UK junior Jamie Molloy from Yorkshire. The match score went 11/7, 8/11, 11/5, 9/11 and reached 9/9 in the fifth with Band clawing his way back from four points adrift. Molloy got a crucial edge and with Band making an error off the end of the table it was all over. "It was one of those matches where you wished you had lost three love rather than the way it happened in the fifth but that's table tennis and you have to take the rough with the smooth," said Band afterwards.

"All of our squad had a fantastic tournament with some outstanding career best wins," said Development Officer and Head Coach Craig Gascoyne. "Our **APPLEBY** development squads are improving in ability in leaps and bounds and I am sure that it will not be long before some of the players will be registering appearances in the latter stages of major Junior tournaments and bringing home more titles to add to the three already gained by Jersey juniors," added Gascoyne.