

## **Report on the Senior Schools International Table Tennis Championships 2010 in Limerick, Ireland.**

Seven young players from Jersey's **APPLEBY ACADEMY** have just returned from Ireland after their most successful tournament ever at this level.

They competed at three age levels Under 14, Under 16 and Under 18 against the top teams from England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Guernsey and the Isle of Man.

**In the Under 14 Boys' team** event Michael Fisher, Chris Morshead and Jordan Wykes finished 9<sup>th</sup> out of twelve teams which included a great win against Isle of Man B 3—2 and a superb individual win by Fisher against the Irish No. 4 Johnny Porter, 3---2.

**In the Under 16 Girls' team** event Kelsey le Maistre and Emily Robins finished third in their group following a fantastic 3---2 victory over Scotland B with Le Maistre beating Kirsty Jones and Alice Booth and Robins taking the all important fifth rubber against Booth to seal the win. They went on to finish seventh overall out of eight teams but not before Le Maistre had added the scalp of Scotland No.2 Ciara Hayes in the play off for 6<sup>th</sup> place.

**In the Under 16 Boys' team** event Tom Marsay and Max Tupper were in a group of three of the ten competing teams. England B and Wales proved to be formidable opponents both beating Jersey 5---0. In the playoffs they recovered to finish 7<sup>th</sup> having disposed of the Isle of Man 3---0 and then Scotland B 3---1. Tupper regained some of his form with two 3—0 wins over Callum Rentin and Alex Whelan and then a well structured doubles win with Marsay leading the charge.

It was left to the “dynamic duo” of Josh Band and Luke Walker **in the Under 18 Boys team** event to search for a medal and they came agonisingly close being just *pipped for bronze!!* First match up was against the old enemy, Guernsey, represented by Ollie Langlois and

Matt Stubbington. Band despatched Stubbington 3—0 with a faultless display and then Walker was hugely unlucky not to unseat Langlois who squeaked home 2---3 to level the score. The crucially important doubles saw the all out attack of Band and Walker's left and right handed respective combination garnering points from all angles. Despite dropping the first game 10/12 the Jersey pair blasted back taking the next three games and the match with scores of 12/10, 11/4, 11/1. Band succumbed to Langlois in the reverse singles leaving Walker with the match tied at two games all seal the Jersey team win beating Stubbington 3—0 with some brilliantly taken winning shots.

Scotland B followed with Band and Walker combining superbly again resulting in a 3—2 win. Band beat Ian Johnston 3—0 with Walker falling to Neil McDonald 1—3. The Jersey pair took the doubles at a canter 3—0 and Band looked favourite to beat McDonald. Unfortunately lady luck was not on his side as the Scot enjoyed 8 let and edge winners in the fifth to nick the win!! It was left to Walker again who did not disappoint with a focused display against Johnston despite dropping the first game to take the next three to seal the team win 3—2 and a guaranteed runner up spot in the group. England A followed and despite losing all four singles albeit not by a large margin, Band and Walker combined again in the doubles with an emphatic 3—0 doubles win 11/8, 11/6, 11/6 over Tom Maynard [ranked 42nd senior in the UK] and Scott Crawford [ranked 18<sup>th</sup> Junior in the UK] !! The hosts Ireland then stood between Jersey and a certain medal. Walker threw everything at Paul McCreery the number 1 seed for the tournament [ranked No.1 at both Junior and Senior level in Ireland] losing with credit 6/11, 6/11, 5/11. Josh Band levelled the team score with a heart stopping 3—2 win against Maciek Szymanski [ranked 7<sup>th</sup> Junior and 20<sup>th</sup> Senior in Ireland] 11/6, 7/11, 11/6, 9/11 and 11/9 after being four love down in the final game !! The Jersey duo's unbeaten run in the doubles came to an end at the wrong time losing 3—0 and Band could not get the better of Mc Creery despite some breathtaking rallies losing 7/11, 5/11, 9/11. England B followed in the playoff for bronze but two 1—3 losses for Band and Walker against James Ward and Adam Nutland and an agonising 9/11 loss in the fifth game of the doubles Jersey had to settle for fourth place with the only consolation being that Guernsey finished seventh.

The **individual matches followed** with Michael Fisher having another great win this time against Isle of Man's No.2 Danny Hamill in the **Under 14 Boys** to reach the last eight in the plate consolation event before losing to Ireland's Johnny Porter. Chris Morshead also missed out on the main event but reached the last sixteen of the plate before being pipped by Guernsey's Lawrence Stacey 2—3.

Kelsey le Maistre continued to impress finishing runner up in her group of the **Under 16 Girls' Singles** beating Abigail Gray from Guernsey and Ciara Hayes from Scotland [ranked No.5 Scottish junior] both by the score 3—1. England B's Tressa Armitage then stood between Le Maistre and a medal in the last eight. Despite a valiant attempt the Jersey girl lost 3—0, 8/11, 6/11, 5/11 although with her game improving at such a fast rate a re-match in the future could see a full reversal of fortune. Emily Robins found the going tough but played with impeccable attitude on court before exiting in the last eight of the plate.

In the **Under 16 Boys' Singles** Max Tupper regained some of his form to finish runner up in his group with wins over Ireland's No. 14 ranked junior William Gallagher and Sam Clark from Guernsey before the expected loss against Matt Outhwaite from England. In the preliminary knockout match of the main event Tupper started well against Emre Ibatoglu from England taking the first game 11/7. However, the England No.46 Junior regained the initiative easing through the next three games 3/11, 6/11, 7/11 to end Tupper's chance of an appearance in the last eight. Tom Marsay was hugely unlucky in his very even group having beaten Basel Razouk, Scotland's No.10 junior only to miss out on the runner up slot pas a single point on countback after losing his other two matches. He did however make the last eight of the plate with a solid 3—0 win over Sam Clark from Guernsey before being knocked out by Ireland's William Gallagher.

In the **Under 18 Boys' Singles** Luke Walker was drawn in the toughest group and despite a heroic effort he lost all three of his matches to Adam Nutland from England [No. 18 ranked junior], Neil McDonald from Scotland [No. 7 ranked junior] and Guernsey No.1 Ollie Langlois. Josh Band continued his imperious tournament form despatching the Isle of

Man's No.1 Darren Smethurst 3---0 followed by Scotland's No.11 junior Ian Johnston also 3—0. His match against England's Tom Maynard was a great spectacle with Maynard having to be on top form to fend off the Jersey player who roared back after a 2/11 first game loss to narrowly miss out 8/11, 9/11 in the last two games. Band went through as a well deserved runner up in the group and had to face the eventual tournament winner Paul McCreery in the last eight to fight for a guaranteed bronze. The match was another stormer as Band traded booming loops and smashes with the Irish No.1 but it was not to be as the greater experience and fire power of McCreery gave him a 3—0 win.

“ This was our best tournament yet at this International level,” said Jersey Development Officer Craig Gascoyne afterwards. “ I was really pleased with all the performances with Josh, Luke and Kelsey especially unlucky not to pick up a medal.”

“ The improvement in all of our [APPLEBY ACADEMY](#) players was truly marked over and above the other countries since the last tournament,” added JTTA President Chris Band. “I have no doubt that under Craig's brilliant guidance and long hours of training our youngsters will be collecting medals in the near future.”