

Dorset players impress at Sussex.

By Geoff Ware.

The inaugural meeting of the Sussex 4 Star Cadet and Junior Open 2011 held over the weekend of Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th of September turned out to be a huge success with a 260 player entry with competitors from all around the UK taking part.

Our four Dorset players made the 2 hour trip to the Triangle Centre in Burgess Hill to compete in a very tough environment where most of England's finest young talent were on show.

Hannah McErlane, Hugo Pang, Finn Morgan Bayliss and Jamie Trevillion flew the flag for their county achieving very good results.

Fourteen year old Hannah McErlane played extremely well in her first ever 4 star tournament giving all her opponents more than a few problems, but at present lacking the experience to beat some of them.

In the Junior Girls Open she progressed through the group stage but was beaten by Yuki Wat from Sussex, playing with anti-spin and short pimples, who then just lost in a titanic battle to Megan Knowles who went on to win the event. A very difficult introduction for Hannah but one I am sure she will learn from.

In the slightly less demanding Junior Girls Grade 1 Singles Hannah won her group comfortably and progressed right through to the semi-finals where she lost narrowly to Jane Li from Essex. Hannah beat Laura Burbuleviciute in the grade 1 groups who is on 374 points and 72 places above Hannah in the rankings. She also beat Emma Sheen who is rated at 343 points, with Hannah rated on just 151 points - so a really good brace of victories.

In all a very good tournament for Hannah who went home with a fistful of ETTA ranking points and a big smile on her face.

The 13 year old "dynamic duo" of Finn Morgan Bayliss and Jamie Trevillion were particularly impressive in their respective events. However they play with hugely contrasting styles. For Jamie, like Hannah it was his first taste of a top class tournament.

Finn Morgan Bayliss has that unique ability to combine great topspin attack and counter attack on both wings with great feeling and good hands yet loves to go "fishing" in his matches.

He seems in his comfort zone when enjoying a back from the table high lobbing technique which so often causes his opponents huge problems (shades of Tom Andrews at Bournemouth Sports).

His catch of the day included some big fish none more so than local boy Josh Bennett (rated 44 places higher than Finn) in his tough starting group matches in the Cadet Open event on Saturday afternoon. He also netted another quality opponent in beating Alex Ramsden from Northampton (who was last years Under 11 National Champion) plus outplaying Thomas Moran (Middx) to go through as an unexpected group winner! Finn then eased past Ed Haskell (Devon) in the first round to then face seventh seed Daniel McTiernan (Bucks) in the last 16. This was unfortunately a possible huge catch that narrowly got away from Finn's sharp hook and broke his line, losing 1-3 in games but nevertheless a brilliant run. Morgan Bayliss had earlier enjoyed a purple patch in the morning's Cadet Grade 1 event where he reached the last four stage of an 80 player entry. Unseeded in this competition Finn took control of his group beating Jac Jenkins (Wales) then followed by victories against Tom Windrum (Kent) to progress through to the quarter final where he faced his county team-mate Jamie Trevillion. This clash was worthy of any final with unbelievably long rallies and high excitement where a crowd had gathered to savour this match. It could have easily gone either way but in the closing points of a five game thriller it was Finn who held firm to set up his semi final with Zach Bull (Middx).

A show court showdown with the Middlesex player proved just out of Finn's reach losing 1-3 fighting for every point but just could not reel in this very experienced and older player.

Finn also had his moments on day 2 where he finished runner up in the Junior Grade 1 event group stage by virtue of winning one match. He then had a tough encounter with Jamie Dignum (Middx) landing the spoils by a close 3-2 games margin. In the second round Finn had to play top seeded Mike Fraser (Yorkshire) ranked some 70 places higher in the draw and "wow" what a five game epic this turned out to be. In terms of experience and ranking Finn was dealing with a monster catch but in a nail biting climax this "big fish" somehow wriggled off the hook in a 11-13 final game belter and was really "the one that got away!". A great days play for Finn with a net full of unexpected catches.

Another young Dorsetonian taking huge steps up the rankings is Jamie "chop till you drop" Trevillion. He too, like Finn was making a name for himself in his first ever 4 star event.

Jamie has developed a style of his own that is built on a defensive core yet has an attacking option on the forehand side coupled with twiddling, creating confusion to his opponent. His chopping style gives so much backspin that most players have problems attacking his low receives and simply do not enjoy playing him.

Jamie started the Saturday morning brilliantly enjoying a group win over the higher ranked Jamie Dignum (Middx) his only opponent as the third player had scratched. He then went through the rounds in the Cadet Grade 1 outplaying all much higher ranked opposition in Jack Merton (Middx) Adam Jepson (Cambridgeshire) then totally destroyed 3rd seed William Ross (Lincolnshire) 3-0 to reach the last eight. As mentioned before Jamie had to face his county team mate Finn and the match was a cracker with the higher ranked Morgan Bayliss taking a 13-11, fifth end game, but what a great advertisement for table tennis by these two future Dorset stars.

Later that afternoon in the tougher Cadet Open event Jamie continued in his rich vein of form to win his group beating all his three opponents that included Raphael Lawanson (Middx) by 3-1 who is ranked as high as 19th in England. Jamie is at present only ranked in 111th place so a huge scalp to

take plus a bucket load of ranking points. His glory run came to an end at the hands of Senyo Owusu (Middx) in the second round.

On Sunday Jamie had the opportunity of playing top class Juniors in his group, some that were up to five years older than him but was not overawed and acquitted himself very well losing out to Joseph Langham Ferrideuceuece in the 5th game.....oh so close with the other players having to work hard to beat him.

The afternoon Junior Grade 1 competition was another success story for Jamie as he won three matches that included a brilliant win against Jack Anthony (Suffolk) which gained him even more recognition and those valuable ranking points.

For 12 year old Hugo Pang it was a mixed weekend where he played very well to reach the semi final in the Under 13's category losing to the eventual winner Tom Jarvis. In the Junior events Hugo did his very best but had very tough groups and unfortunately did not progress any further.

To sum up - a very pleasing performance from all of our Dorset players who will have gained so much encouragement and valuable experience which will stand them in good stead for the forthcoming English National Championships in November of this year.