

More “Silverware” heads to Bournemouth

No less than four “Silver Medals” were won at the recent UK School Games for junior players up to the age of 18, held in Bath University, by Bournemouth’s crop of extremely talented table tennis youngsters.

Bournemouth Sports players Joy Whitehorn, Hannah Hicks and Matt Ware can all be extremely pleased with their teams’ and also their individual performances at this prestigious 3-day Tournament.

Competing against the best juniors from all over the UK, team South West enjoyed runner-up position in both the girls and boy’s teams event.

Joy and Hannah combined with Martha Travis (Cornwall) and Ayonija Sundararjan (Berkshire) to outplay England Northwest 6-1 and a tight win over Wales 4-3, then to lose to tournament favourites England Midlands at the group stage left them in the hunt for a medal position.

Looking to collect either silver or bronze medals with a win over England North West in the play offs, and by the closest of contests, England South West came through with a 4-3 win to claim their silver medals.

The Boy’s Southwest team represented by Matt Ware, Garth Kinlocke (Avon), Richard Marshall (Devon) and Darren Reed (Cornwall) also enjoyed a great tournament. In their group matches they had a phenomenal win over tournament hot favourites and last year’s winners, England South East by 4-3, and recording victories over Northern Ireland 7-0 and Wales 6-1 put themselves into a strong position to win the entire event.

As group winners they faced the other group runners up, England Northeast. A gutsy win by 4-3, put them in the spotlight once again to face the hot favourites England South East, led by Darius Knight, but could not find their earlier top form and lost by 4-1, giving them the runners-up spot, and deserved silver medal placing.

After the two-day team event, all the players were placed in groups of four with the top two going through in each group in the individual events.

Hannah breezed through her group to put herself into the knock-out rounds, however Joy, who had beaten Robyn Mclean of Northern Ireland, but lost to Scotland’s Corrina Whittaker, needed to gain a win over Caroline Hallows (ranked 15 places higher in Junior Girls) to go through. Joy gave it her all and was so close to recording a famous victory, however it was not meant to be with a 9-11 loss in the final set.

Hannah had to pull out her best form to beat Martha Travis in the first round but her challenge grinded to a halt losing to Emily Bates (who she had beaten the day before in the team event) in straight sets, at the qtr final stage.

With no individual medals won by Hannah or Joy it was up to Matt Ware to bring home some more "silverware" in the boy's individual competition.

Matt won all his three group matches to put him up against Will Maybanks of Hertfordshire in the first round. Will was in good form and Matt had to put in his best table tennis to come through in five close sets, to set up a qtr final confrontation with Derbyshire's top junior Liam Pitchford (ranked one place higher than Matt at number3) and this proved to be a classic match.

With Matt at two sets to love down, the writing looked on the wall for a last eight exit, however a change of tactics brought Matt back to 2-2, and from then on went into overdrive taking the fifth end 11-2.

A fairly comfortable straight sets semi final win over Mark Simpson from Durham, put Matt into the final, against his England team mate Damien Nicholls from Shropshire.

With a packed arena watching both the girls and boys final matches, both these final encounters proved to be a spectator treat.

Matt's final match with Damien went the full distance, with Damien countering everything Matt could throw at him, with Damien coming through 11-5 in the final set, to collect the Gold Medal, with Matt picking up his second silver of the UK School Games.