

KENT COUNTY JUNIOR FIRST TEAM PLAY EXCEPTIONALLY WELL IN THE PREMIER DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL COUNTY JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Cippenham was the venue this year for the Junior Premier County Division matches. The first team comprised of Lewis Gray (Weald), Ross Wilson (London Progress), Andrew Lockwood (Byng Hall), Kirsty Wilson (Howard) and Jasmin Ould (Byng Hall). The event was held over the weekend of the 17th and 18th October 2009.

Their first opponents were Derbyshire. This was to be the team's toughest encounter had Derbyshire turned up with their strongest line up. But this turned out not to be the case as the opponent county sent some upcoming players instead. All Kent team members played brilliantly. Lewis Gray was the first to step up to the mark and comfortably beat Peter Baker in 3, 6, and 2. Andrew Lockwood, who had saved the weekend by agreeing to play at the last minute due to James Glass falling ill on Saturday morning, did himself justice beating his opponent, Daniel Burton, 6, 6, and 6. Unfortunately, Abbie Milwain got the better of both Kirsty and Jasmin beating them both in 3 straight sets. Both girls, however, beat Isobel Ashley. Although Andrew lost his next match to Peter Baker 1-3, Lewis and Ross won their next two matches against Ronan Kelly and Daniel Burton, respectively, leaving the overall score 7-3 to Kent.

Their second opponent was Devonshire. Again, the team performed really well. Ross and Lewis never dropped a leg winning both their matches with ease. Andrew Lockwood again produced good results by beating Devonshire No.3 David White 3-0 (13, 8, 10) before losing in a close encounter against their No.2 Dominic Sussey in the final match. Kirsty managed to up her game and win both of her matches. She had a good game against Vicky Smith, where she went two games down (-6, -7) before turning the corner to take the next 3 games (5, 3, 8) to win the match 3-2. Jasmin was not quite so lucky against Vicky Smith losing in 3 straight sets (-5, -6, -6). Both Kent girls beat their other opponent, Naomi Jackson 3-0. The overall score was 8-2 to Kent.

The final match of the weekend was against Essex. Ross was up first to face Oscar Selfridge and beat him 3-1 (3, 7, -4, 5). Andrew Lockwood had a tight battle with an upcoming youngster Alexander Holland, narrowly losing out in the 5th game. Having said that, Andrew's effort has to be commended, especially as he had been called up at the eleventh hour. Kirsty went on to beat Evangeline Collier comfortably in 3 straight games (6, 9, 4), whilst Lewis showed no mercy upon Matthew Mulley (5, 7, 4). It looked as though Jasmin was going to continue the array of victories for Kent as she went to face Nicole Sydorenko, but, like Andrew, had a tight five setter and just lost out in the 5th. Ross then confidently beat Alexander Holland 3-0 (5, 7, 5) and Jasmin defended her ranking by beating Evangeline Collier, who is currently 2 places below Jas on the National Junior Ranking List, 3-1. Lewis and Kirsty then won their next two matches against Oscar Selfridge and Nicole Sydorenko, respectively, whilst

Mathew Mulley got the better of Andrew in the last match beating him 3-0. This meant the final score was 7-3 to Kent.

Lewis and Ross proved to be the stars of Kent, finishing the weekend with a remarkable 100% record, whilst Kirsty produced a brilliant 83% average. Jasmin wasn't quite so lucky and finished on 50%, whilst Andrew exceeded his expectations by winning 2 games and therefore finishing the weekend with a 33% record.

Based on the results achieved by the Kent players, the county ended the weekend in the second position of the Premier division, only narrowly behind Sussex who also won all 3 of their matches but finished with a better game difference. With Middlesex being just 1 point behind, the battle will continue at the 2nd weekend in March 2010.

Special thanks have to be given to Jurate Brazaityte, who captained and coached the Kent side, and, once again, Andrew Lockwood, who turned out at the last minute. His contribution was vital to the side and this is not the first time he has put himself forward when the team have needed somebody urgently. Thank you Andrew.

Well done to all the players. You were the assets of your county.