

Stockton on Tees Junior 4 Star Tournament

13 year old Yolanda King, a member of the Angley School, Cranbrook based Weald Table Tennis Club, had a very successful weekend (17 and 18 November 2007) at the Stockton on Tees Junior 4 Star Championships at Thornaby Pavilion, but she could have done even better.

Representing The Weald TTC, Yolanda and Kirsty Wilson reached the final of the cadet (under 15) girls' team event, overcoming Wales 'A' 3-1 in the semi-finals, Yolanda taking her two singles and Kirsty winning a singles, the pair losing only the doubles.

Although they lost 3-1 to England 'A' in the finals, Yolanda, ranked no.9 in England cadets, beat the England no.4 Martha Travis (Cornwall), and actually led at the beginning of the deciding game against England no.1 Karina Lefevre (Cleveland) before narrowly losing 9-11.

In the cadet girls' singles knockout, she lost 3-1 to England no.2 Emily Bates (Lincolnshire) but should have won a second game, which would have taken her to a deciding game. The next day Yolanda was close to causing another shock in the junior girls' (under 18) singles: she led Reena Adeshana (Lancashire), the England no.11, 9-4 in the fifth game (5-2 when Reena's coach called 'time-out'), before getting nervous and going down 10-12.

Her good form in Cleveland followed her biggest win to date last Thursday evening when she overcame England senior no.12 women, Rose Rainton, in straight games in a Hastings League match.

Yolanda's father Steve commented, "Yolanda had one very good win over the weekend, but very nearly had two more excellent wins. She worries about being seen as showy when she is in winning positions and isn't always brutal enough to win. She can also be put off by opponents' stalling tactics. However she is gaining in confidence all the time and now knows she can beat the top players. She also has just been invited to her 5th consecutive England training camp."

Lewis Gray, 13, from Benenden, a pupil at Angley School, also played well at Thornaby. Ranked no.9 in England cadet boys, he gave a strong challenge to the England no.4, Daniel Lowe (Derbyshire) before going down 3-1 in the singles quarter-finals.

Helsham Weerasinghe, who is also a member of the Weald TTC, lost in the under 13 boys' singles semi-finals to the eventual title winner, Zac Zilesnick (Middlesex). He reached a second semi-final, playing with Ross Wilson (Kent) in the under boys' team event. Wilson lost to Sam Walker (Derbyshire) in the other under 13s singles semi-final.