

# Brazaityte slogs it out in Slough

Jurate Brazaityte, coach of the Byng Hall Table Tennis Club, based at the St John's CE Primary School in Tunbridge Wells, extends her lead and strangle hold in round 4 of 5 of the women's Cippenham Grand Prix Series held in Slough on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> March.

Jurate went to the event currently the top seed with a commanding lead in points over the number two Catherine Chen. Jurate started this round with 65 Grand Prix points, 18 above Chen, and 32 ahead of her teammate Jasmin Ould. Jurate would need good results to maintain her lead and stay at the top of the leader board with her eye on the £200 prize fund.

A new comer to the country, Catherine Chen from Hong Kong, was the possible fly in the ointment to Jurate's crown. Chen had beaten Jurate in the final of the last round back in February so Jurate was ready for a rematch! But it was not to be as Chen's performance on the day wasn't good enough to even qualify in the group stage where she was comprehensively beaten by juniors Jasmin Ould, a pupil at St Greggs School in Tunbridge Wells, also from the Byng Hall club, and unknown Saloni Shirwaiker of India, as well as Julie Furber of Wales.

Being seeded at No.1, Brazaityte had no problems qualifying to the knockout stages and went through her group un-beaten to face Shirwaiker in the semi-final, who had previously lost to Julie Furber in the group stages and qualified as a Runner-Up. It looked like it was not going to happen for Jurate as she found herself being 10-2 down in the first set against Shirwaiker. However, she put her experience into practice against this unseen junior from India to pull the game back to 10-9. Unfortunately, this is where it ended for her as she lost the first set 11-9. Brazaityte was not going to give up being at the top of the leader board this easily as she went to comfortably win the next three games 11-5, 11-8, 11-6.

Brazaityte then had Julie Furber of Wales to contend with in the final, who had beaten Julie Thorn of the Isle of Wight in the semi-final. Jurate made short work of the final only dropping one leg, winning 3-1 to maintain an unassailable lead in the points tally, winning her the Cippenham series with 95 points. Chen, her nearest rival, after a disappointing performance of the day retains her 47 points, so Jurate cannot be caught even if she didn't enter the last event. A Superb performance!

Jasmin Ould, having ended the group stages in the 3<sup>rd</sup> place, went on to win the women's consolation event, beating Claire Ford of Wales in the final 3-2. Jasmin managed to secure sufficient grand prix series points to be in the fourth place overall, just five points short of Chen and only 1 point behind Furber, who is in third, so all to play for, for Ould, in the last round of the series in May.

On Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, the second round of the junior Cippenham grand prix series was contended. Jasmin Ould is currently in the second spot in the points tally with Fei Fei Pei of Surrey at the top with only 3 points separating them. Ould made a flying start winning her group matches, easily beating Hannah Merlane and Sayeeda Miah. This gave Jasmin a bye in the quarter-finals' stage, straight into the semi finals, where she succumbed 2-3 to Saloni Shirwaiker, an unknown from India.

Fei Fei Pei's luck ran out earlier on in the event, only qualifying as runner up in her group matches and then losing 0-3 in the next round to the same Indian girl that Jasmin lost to in the semi final. This gave Ould sufficient points to overtake Fei Fei and go to the top slot in the grand prix junior series points tally. With just one event to go in May, Ould will need to maintain her winning performance if she wants to take home the £100 prize money. Current standings Ould top with 42 points, Pei on 40.

Adam Simpson and Andrew Lockwood also from the Byng Hall club did well and gained some valuable experience in open tournament play. Lockwood reached the semi final of the consolation event.

Truly a magnificent result from the Byng Hall ladies!!!!