

GOOD WEALD SHOWING AT COTSWOLD JUNIOR 4 STAR OPEN

Players from the Angley School, Cranbrook based Weald TTC, featured strongly at the Cotswold Junior 4 Star Open Championships at Cheltenham over the weekend.

The defending champion Yolanda King, the England Junior Champion and no.4, seeded 1, duly reached her allotted place in the junior (under 18) girls' singles final, via Edele O'Reilly from Ireland who she beat 11-13, 6-11, 12-10, 11-4, 11-7 from 2 games down in the quarter-finals, and Vicky Smith (Devon) in straight games in the semis. Unfortunately the St Bede's, Hailsham pupil then suffered a surprise 11-8, 8-11, 7-11, 11-4, 9-11 loss to 'long pimples' Welsh international Megan Phillips, after winning the 4th game 11-4, and leading 3-0 in the decider.

Displaying growing maturity, Weald member Dan Lawrence from Tonbridge had a good weekend, losing in the cadet (under 15) banded singles final to Welsh no.1 Lewis Williams, and in the semi-finals of the under 13 boys' singles to Judd School, Tonbridge pupil, Helshan Weerasinghe. Dan had an excellent 3-1 win over the England no.40 in the last 16 of the junior banded singles, and was two games up against the talented no.27, Luca Mariano (Essex), before going down 11-9 in the 5th game in their quarter-finals clash.

The star of the tournament was Helshan Weerasinghe, who although no longer a Weald Club member, still trains at the SE Performance Centre at Angley School. Not only did Helshan win the under 13 boys' singles, overcoming Tyrone Wells (Middlesex) in 5 games in the final, but he also lifted the junior boys singles, putting out the England junior no.14 James Ward (Staffordshire) in the semis, and Igor Morais (Middlesex), ranked no.12 in the final, both also in 5 games.

Another SE Performance Centre member, Jack Bennett from Polegate, East Sussex, reached the semi-finals of the cadet banded singles, where he lost to Lewis Williams (Wales). However, en-route he had knocked out the Welsh no.2, Lee Morgan. Jack also reached the under 13 boys' singles quarter-final where Tyrone Wells (Middlesex) stopped further progress.

Weald Club member Lewis Gray, from Benenden and an Angley School pupil, has been chosen to represent England juniors in the Spanish Junior Open at Barcelona from 5-9th May. This weekend Lewis Gray and Yolanda King will be playing in the important England Junior Masters event at Grantham.

Weald coach Ken Muhr said; "The Masters is a gruelling Round Robin event for England's top players and a really good performance in it would increase Lewis and Yolanda's chances for selection for the European Youth Championships in the summer. However, at this stage both must be considered outsiders, Lewis because of his current England ranking, and Yolanda, although England champion and ranked no.4, because she hasn't been favoured in the past."