

Major 4 star junior event victory for Jasmin Ould in Liverpool

Jasmin Ould, 15, a pupil at St Gregory's School, who trains at the Byng Hall Table Tennis Club in Tunbridge Wells, way out played her seeding at the Liverpool Junior 4 Star event, one of the most prestigious junior events in the country, last weekend. This Liverpool 4 Star event is a major junior selection tournament on the England circuit. Jasmin played way above herself to secure a very lucrative title, but it did not come easy. Her route to the final saw a dreadful start to the day in the junior banded event where Jasmin struggled to get herself going and only just qualified through the group stages, having been taken really close by much weaker opposition. Ould was expected to go through to the semi-final. However, she performed below par in the first round where she met a much lower ranked player Charlotte Spencer of Warwickshire. Ould was surprisingly knocked out of the banded event in the first round when she lost to the above player 1-3 – not a great start by any means.

However, Jasmin was not deterred by her woeful performance in the morning and bounced back in the afternoon in the event that really counted. The open event, which includes the top junior players in the country, started off slowly for Jasmin as she struggled to win her games at the group stages 3-2, 3-2, 3-1. Having qualified through the group stages as the Winner of her group, Jas had then to contend with an upcoming player from Middlesex, Majada Yasmin. It looked as though Jas could not pull this off as the game was just not going her way and she went 1-2 down in games. However, after losing the third game, Jas got her determination back and fought back strongly to take the fourth and the fifth game 11-4. Having qualified through the first round of the knockout stages, Ould had then to contend with a higher ranked player from Wales, Megan Phillips, in the quarter-finals. Having lost to this opponent the last few times, Jasmin was determined to fight Phillips' awkward and varied style of play and beat the opponent 3-2 after some outstanding rallies that attracted a lot of people's attention.

Being in the top half of the draw, it meant that Ould, currently ranked at No.20 on the National Junior Ranking List, then had to contend with Rachel Baker, currently No.11 on the ranking list, and the top seed at the event, in the semi-final. Ould has never beaten this player before and it was going to be a tough task as Baker was definitely up for justifying her seeding. Just when it looked as if Baker got the upper hand of the match

going 2-1 up, Ould went another gear up to fight back and even the score at 2-2. Baker was not going to give up but found it hard to keep up with Jasmin's speed and spin and went down 2-3.

The final was an unpredicted one, as Ould, unseeded in the Open event, had to play another unseeded player, Sophie Neil, of Nottinghamshire, who beat Laura Robinson, currently No.15 in England, from Yorkshire. The first final of the Junior Open event was a daunting task for Ould as she lost the first two games 5-11, 4-11. It looked as if it could not go any worse, but credit here to her corner as Jurate Brazaityte's encouragement and coaching advice helped turn the tables and Ould's determination not to let it go so easily as she fought hard to take the third and fourth games to even the score at 2-2. Ould then continued with her strong attacks and tactical game to claim the fifth game and the overall victory at the Liverpool 4 Star Junior Open tournament.