

# Table Tennis Ulster

Nov 2009



## Five Gold Medals at Ulster Junior Open

Ulster won a fantastic 5 gold medals, 3 silvers and 2 bronze medals at the Stiga Ulster Junior Open held at Shankill Leisure Centre on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November. With 145 players from all over Ireland competing and 220 entries this is a superb achievement by Ulster's young players.

Double winner Ashley Given (Dungannon) will surely dominate junior girls table tennis over the next three years as she has just too much power and tactical awareness for her opponents having already represented Northern Ireland at senior level in the Commonwealth championships and Ireland at the recent Six Nations. In the under 14's final she was pitted against combination bat specialist Edel O'Reilly (Cork) and displayed great patience before unleashing thunderous drives to overcome her tricky opponent in straight sets while the under 17's final was much more open with free flowing attack the order of the day and

Givan was forced to dig deep to beat the talented Rebecca Kenny in four fast and furious sets.

Meanwhile Irish Senior No1 Sam Hanley (Dublin) was hot favourite to the sweep the boards in the under 17 boys and looked to be on course after seeing off a game challenge from fellow Dubliner Sam Logue in the semi's but the spectacular Ashley Robinson (Clogher) had different ideas. Having just come through a venomous topspin encounter with Fermanagh's Stephen Slater in the semi, Robinson was simply brilliant in the final using a well rehearsed game plan to outfox the lightning fast Hanley who showed great sportsmanship in defeat.

Ryan Farrell was dominant in the Under 14 Boys, taking the title without dropping a set. Neil Irwin put up a fight in the final but Farrell was coolly efficient as he swept to the title.

Topspin wizard Jonathan Porter claimed gold when he

just got the better of his Clogher teammate Mark Gordon in an entertaining four setter while Glenburn club who have produced an abundance of talent over the last 30 years saw their Irish No1 under 12 Laura Finn keep this trend continuing on Saturday with a superb win over Sarah Cooney (Cork).

There was further success for the Finn family, when younger sister Rebecca finished 2nd in the Under 10 girl's losing in a close match to Katie Hayes (Leinster). A huge thanks go to the tournament organizer Tony Philips who ensured that everything ran smoothly and efficiently, as well as help from John Nelson and Noel Smith at the top table and the various umpires. Mahaffy, Roy Coard and Alvis Wright for transport of tables, and Pat Hunter, Jennifer Thompson and David Kyle for refreshments. TTU decided this year to run a ballot as a fundraiser which was very successful, and

thanks go to Tom McCreery for organizing such fantastic prizes.

### **Ulster Medal Winners**

U17 Boys  
Gold: Ashley Robinson

U17 Girls  
Gold: Ashley Givan

Cadet Boys  
Silver: Neil Irwin  
Bronze: Jonathan Porter

Cadet Girls  
Gold: Ashley Givan  
Bronze: Annalise Walker

U12 Boys  
Gold: Jonathan Porter  
Silver: Mark Gordon

U12 Girls  
Gold: Laura Finn

U10 Girls  
Silver: Rebecca Finn



Ashley Robinson: Junior Boys Winner

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“IN THE FIFTH PAUL UPPED HIS LEVEL AND HIS INTENSITY TO WIN 11-8 AND SHOWED WHY HE IS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE TOP JUNIORS IN THE UK”.

## Two Gold Medals at Bristol GP

Paul McCreery and Claire Nelson both won Gold medals at the prestigious Bristol Grand Prix, which is part of the English Grand Prix Circuit which attracts many of Great Britain’s top players as well as players from further a field.

Paul McCreery raced through to the semi-finals in Band 1 where he met the talented Mike Marsden who has excellent deceptive serves. However Paul was equal to them and ran out a worthy 3-1 winner. His opponent in the final was Zac Zilesnick who earlier had finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Band 2 Event. Paul went ahead 2-1 in sets, however Zac clawed back to win the fourth. In the fifth Paul upped his level and his intensity to win 11-8 and showed why he is regarded as one of the top juniors in the UK.

Paul also had a magnificent run to the semi finals of the Men’s Singles defeating Lewis Williams, Sean Cullen and then a close 4 set match to beat David McBeath (who had in the previous round

knocked out 3<sup>rd</sup> seeded Niall Cameron at the last eight stage to set up a semi final confrontation with Po Huang Chen (Chinese Taipei). After an excellent match with many fantastic rallies, Chen completed a 3-1 victory. Po Chen went on to win the event after a hard fought win against English man Damien Nicholls.

Claire Nelson was equally as impressive, winning the Under 21 Girls after a series of hard fought victories. Fifth setters were the order of the day, with a series of impressive wins over Angharad Phillips, Melissa Wright and Yolanda King to set up a final showdown with Natalie Slater who halted the progress of 2<sup>nd</sup> seed Emma Vickers in the semi-final.

The final lived up to expectations with the pendulum of power swinging one way then the other. Claire clawed her way back into the match after trailing 1-2 in sets to turn it around in her favour after some devastating play to win 11-6 in the fifth.

Amanda Moge had an ex-

cellent run to the semi finals in the Women’s Singles, with good wins over Melissa Wright, Vicky Smith and Sally Smith to reach the semi-final stage. Her opponent in the semi-final was Welsh number 1 Naomi Owen. A shock looked on the cards when Amanda won the first set, however Naomi won the next three sets after some enthralling rallies to book her place in the final. Naomi went on to win the Women’s Singles defeating Egle Adomelyte in a hard hitting final.

Mark McGuiggan in his first ever English Grand Prix tournament did well to finish 2<sup>nd</sup> in Band 6, and will have learnt a lot from watching and competing with such a high calibre of players.

Keith Knox who is returning from injury after a two year break played well in reaching the quarter-finals of the Under 21 Men’s Singles. This was much needed match practise for Keith after such a long lay off.

“SHARPSHOOTER SULKOWSKI HAS AN AMAZING REPERTOIRE OF SHOTS AND ENTERTAINED ONLOOKERS THROUGHOUT THE TOURNAMENT”.

## Ulster Open Veteran Championships

The lightning fast Pawel Sulkowski (Poland) gave a topspin masterclass at the Ulster Open Veterans championships in Glenburn at the weekend on a day when reigning champion Willie Cherry made a shock exit in the preliminary rounds of the blue riband over 40’s event and it was left to the incredible Ted Mahaffy to spare the Ulster blushes with an over 70’s win.

Sharpshooter Sulkowski has an amazing repertoire of shots and entertained onlook-

ers throughout the tournament. He was devastating in his semi final clash with Balbriggan legend Tommy Caffrey running out a straight sets winner with a series of vicious smashes. Giantkiller Mark McAllister (Cookstown) knocked out fancied runners Cherry and seasoned campaigner Norman Nabney (Belfast) but his impressive run was ended by Peter Clarke (Annahilt) in the semis. In the final Clarke took the game to Pawel but

was left battered and bruised by the silky skills of his opponent who really went into overdrive to record a 3-0 victory.

Athlone attacker Karim Sabir was a class act in the over 50’s class beating Gormans-town defender Brian Finn in three closely fought sets to take the title and the multi capped Caffrey came from two games down to just get the better of combination bat supremo Martin Pickles in an entertaining over 60’s final.

**Cont...**

The evergreen Ted Mahaffy has retained his swiftness of foot over the years and had a great battle with Ronnie Drayne (Newtownards) coming out on the right side of a 3-1 scoreline to add yet another over 70's title to his impressive roll of honour.

**Results**  
**Over 40's**

**Semi Finals**

Pawel Sulkowski (Poland) bt Tommy Caffrey (Leinster) 3-0

Peter Clarke (Ulster) bt Mark McAllister (Ulster) 3-0

**Final**

Sulkowski bt Clarke 3-0

**Over 50's**

Karim Sabir (Connacht) bt Brian Finn (Leinster) 3-0

**Over 60's**

Caffrey bt Martin Pickles (England)

**Over 70's**

Ted Mahaffy (Ulster) bt Ronnie Drayne (Ulster) 3-1

Report by Peter Clarke

**Table Tennis Golf Classic in aid of Action Cancer**

Kyle Carrett (Edenmore), Lesley Allen (Dunmurry) and the Powerteam captained by former Christchurch topspin ace Graham Hutchinson were all winners at the inaugural Table Tennis Golf Classic in aid of Action Cancer at a sun soaked Dunmurry course recently. The event was organised by Broomhedge man Ivon O'Rorke who has never lost his zest for table tennis, a sport he excelled at while playing for 1<sup>st</sup> Lisburn in the 1970's so he matched his two favourite pastimes together for charity and the end result was a fantastic £4300 raised for Action Cancer.

The consensus amongst the golfers was that the course was tough but fair, rewarding the accurate shot and punishing the wayward therefore Brian Mills (Clandeboyne) must have been delighted with his level round which gave the former Glenford battler a credible 39pts however if a high handicapper is playing well and can hold their nerve they can sometimes post an unbeatable score and such was the case for Carrett who hit greens in regulation and putted well to post a magnificent 44pts. Mark Crowe (Dunmurry) led the chasing pack with 40pts while

Mills took bronze on count-back. The ladies was won by Lesley Allen (Dunmurry) who overcame the challenge of Lisburn's Daphne Bailey while the Powerteam piped Ivon's O'Rorkers to the team prize by a mere two points. Before the prize giving took place Na Liu, Jing Yi Gao, Paul McCreery and Karen Walker delighted the large audience with an exhibition of quickfire table tennis. In his closing speech Ivon thanked his committee of Derek Weir, Alistair Cairns, Jimmy Hamill and Peter Clarke, his sons Aaron and Keith, all the sponsors and made special mention of former Ulster table tennis coach Eric Coster who had travelled from Australia to take part.

**TT Golf Classic Top 10**

- 1 Kyle Carrett (24) 44pts
- 2 Mark Crowe (10) 40
- 3 Brian Mills (3) 39
- 4 Willie Cherry (12) 39
- 5 Eric Coster (24) 39
- 6 Noel McPuitty (14) 39
- 7 Graham Hutchinson (8) 39
- 8 Billy Rogan (19) 38
- 9 Roy Donnan (9) 38
- 10 Brian Laverty (16) 38

**Ladies**

- 1 Lesley Allen (14) 35pts
- 2 Daphne Bailey (25)

**Team Event**

- 1 The Powerteam 103pts
- 2 Ororkers 101
- 3 Maurice Ferguson Select

Longest Drive: Brian Mills  
Nearest the Pin: Neville Neill

Report by Peter Clarke



Jimmy Hamill, Ivon O'Rorke, Peter Clarke and Alistair Cairns present a cheque for £4300 to Norma Bell MBE of Action Cancer

# Table Tennis Ulster



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Table Tennis Ulster is sponsored by STIGA and Fitzgerald Table Tennis. The STIGA agent for Ireland is Tommy Fitzgerald and can be contacted at 00353-1-8428744 or by email at [tfft@eircom.net](mailto:tfft@eircom.net). You can also view a range of his products at [www.tfft.ie](http://www.tfft.ie). STIGA sponsor a number of Ulster's elite players and will have a stand with all the latest equipment and clothing at most of the major tournaments held in Ulster throughout the year.

## Upcoming Events

### December

- 3-6 Finland Open
- 12 Ulster Championships (Ulster Ranking 1) F'town
- 19 London GP
- 28-31 Christmas Training Camp
- 29 Valley Leisure Centre U'21 Championships
- 30 Valley Leisure Centre Christmas Cracker Junior Invitational Event

### January 2010

- 2 Ulster Senior Open, Valley LC
- 9 TTU Development Camp, F'town
- 9 National Veterans Championships
- 9-10 Doncaster GP
- 16 Antrim Open, Sixmile LC (Ulster Ranking 2)
- 16-17 East-Midlands 4 Star
- 22-24 Munster Open, Cork
- 30 TTU Ability, Clogher
- 30-31 TTU Elite Squad Training, Rockport

## Other Stories

### Current Ulster Junior Rankings: Top 5

#### U17 Boys

1. Paul McCreery
2. Ashley Robinson
3. Stephen Slater
4. Kieran Reilly
5. Darren Reilly

#### U14 Boys

1. Neil Irwin
2. Jonathan Porter
3. Kieran Reilly
4. Ryan McConkey
5. Edwin Lewis
- = Trevor Knox

#### U12 Boys

1. Jonathan Porter
2. Mark Gordon
3. Eric Shekleton
4. Ryan McConkey
5. Shane O'Reilly

#### U17 Girls

1. Ashley Givan
2. Roisin O'Reilly

3. Annalise Walker
4. Susie Ferguson
5. Cherith McBride

#### U14 Girls

1. Ashley Givan
2. Annalise Walker
3. Emma Ludlow
4. Laura Finn
5. Sally McConkey

#### U12 Girls

1. Laura Finn
2. Hannah Dawson
3. Rebecca Finn
4. Emma McSorley
5. Megan McConkey

### Ulster Championships Entry

Entries are still open for the Ulster Championships to be held at **Fivemiletown College on 12th December**. The closing date for entries is Saturday 5th December.

This is an Ulster Ranking event.

Playing numbers will be restricted to 60 players therefore entries will be accepted on a "first come, first served" basis.

Further information and entry forms can be found here:

<http://www.irishtabletennis.com/itta/news/article/ulster-senior-closed-entry-form/>

### Affiliation

Affiliations are due before 30 November. If you require forms, please email Amanda at [admin@ttulster.co.uk](mailto:admin@ttulster.co.uk)