



Primary Schools International – Guernsey, 8-10 April

Table tennis history was made last weekend when Jersey fielded both a girls and boys team for the first time at the Primary Schools International in Guernsey and the team, sponsored by Altair Partners, flew back clinking 3 medals into the bargain.

Theo De Poerck, who first competed in a local primary schools competition several years ago and caught the eye of JTTA coaches, clinched the Gold in the Boys Plate event. His fellow team mates (Seb Posea, Callum Allaway, Oscar Karwowski and Aiden Cieminski) despatched Guernsey B 8-2 and took 2 matches off Scotland, a tall order in their first off Island competition. The boys team was coached by Miguel Freitas, supported by Mariusz Cieminski (Jersey's current Men's champion) and the girls' coach was Martin Tupper, assisted by Paul Routier.

After the lockdowns there was a major initiative to re-boot junior numbers and, thanks to sponsorship from Altair Partners & the Jersey Community Foundation a girls training squad was set up just last November. With a concentrated programme since the start of the year Jersey not only had 4 girls tee'd up for the team (Maia Bowden, Ruby and Ella Devlin and Anna Middleton), but they were able to supply a fifth player to make up the Mixed Nations team, Esther Lewis who went on to win Bronze in the Team and Silver in the Plate event.

Martin Tupper, Head of Coaching said "Not even Ireland, Isle of Man or Wales could field a full girls team so it is very encouraging. It could have been a baptism of fire for both the boys and girls but every player gave it their all. I have never seen such fabulous team spirit before, celebrating each other's performances. They have been inspired by the competition and understood the level they need to be working towards."

JTTA President, Paul Routier MBE was delighted with the team's performance. "Most of the players have at least one more year competing in this age group so they can only go from strength to strength. It was a brilliant experience for them and in turn they proved great sporting ambassadors for Jersey".

After the inter insulars at the end of April, the older juniors of the Altair Partners Junior Academy will travel to Largs, Scotland for the Senior Schools International in June.