

2020 U13 Celtic Challenge Competition Report

Sat 8th Feb 10am Leinster v Wales

First up saw Fionn & Senan play brothers Amay & Eshaan Patil in a tight 3 setter. Our boys were slow to start after the morning drive and lost the first to 14. However, as they grew into the game, they showed once again that they are a formidable doubles pairing and won the next 2 sets to 16 & 15. This is now 2 for 2 against the talented Patils after a similar win last season. Aman & Darragh won their match 21-13 22-20 against Cramp & Varghese. Having led easily in the 2nd set, our pairing let the Welsh back into the game. However, our boys held their cool and finished in two. Pranav & Praneel put on a dominant display and outplayed Bult & Morris to come away with the win 21-3 21-8.

The girls were not to be outdone by the boys! Siofra and Nicole lost the 2nd set to Balu & Morris having had a straightforward win in the 1st. However, the 2 girls steadied the ship and fought back in the 3rd to take the game 21-11 19-21 21-12. Chloe & Michelle were the stronger pairing against Chandran & Salvador, and took the game 21-3 21-3. Orlaith & Ciara continued the girls' winning ways beating Halsey & Thomas 21-4 21-5. At this stage Leinster were in the comfortable position of being 6-0 up.

Next up were the singles, which proved to be more challenging to Leinster than the doubles. It wasn't to be Fionn's day against Amay, and he lost 13-21 7-21. Next up in the singles was Darragh, who also had a tough match against Cramp and unfortunately lost 8-21 9-21. The final game of singles was between Praneel and Eshaan and was one of the most exciting encounters of the entire match against Wales. Praneel lost the 1st to 16, however, showed great resilience to come back and win the 2nd to 10. The final set was a nailbiter, and the 2 boys battled it out, point for point! But Praneel kept his cool and took the 3rd in an exciting finish 22-20.

Siofra kicked off the girl's singles against Saffron Morris. Unfortunately, Siofra was unable to find her groove in this match and lost this encounter 19-21 14-21. Nicole was up next against Balu and had an extremely convincing win 21-2 21-6. Finally, Ciara played the 3rd singles against Thomas and played a great match to take the win 21-7 21-6.

Going into the mixed, Leinster were now holding a comfortable lead 9-3. First mixed up was Chloe & Senan, and this seasoned pair were extremely comfortable against Halsey & Varghese to take the match 21-3 21-8. Aman & Michelle were up next and beat Morris & Salvador 21-9 21-4. Pranav & Orlaith played the 3rd mixed against Bult & Halsey, and continued the Leinster mixed win 21-5 21-9.

The match finished 12-3 in Leinster's favour. And this team's strength & depth was easily evidenced in the match results.

Sat 8th Feb 2pm Leinster v Alpha

The 2nd match of the day for Leinster was against Alpha. Most of these players were fresh off the courts from the U15 Nationals last weekend, and know each other's games inside out. First boys doubles saw Fionn & Senan play Joshua & Jeffrey. These 2 pairs, have met before and always have a great game of doubles. Leinster won 21-15 21-11. Next up saw strong pairing of Aman & Darragh

play Daniel and Ross with our boys taking the match 21-11 21-6. The final boy's doubles of the day was another exciting 3-setter where Pranav & Praneel beat Chris & Carrig 21-19 14-21 21-12.

All of our girls proved to be too strong for the Alpha girls in the doubles. Siofra & Nicole beat Ciara & Kimberley 21-11 21-6. Michelle & Chloe beat Amber & Zoe 21-13 21-6. And Orlaith & Ciara beat Neve & Anna 21-10 21-3. Conclusive wins across the board for the girls.

Next up were the singles! Senan & Joshua had a repeat of last week's National's quarterfinal, and once again, Senan took the match 21-16 21-11 in convincing fashion. Pranav played Chris in the 2nd singles and unfortunately, Pranav lost to a faultless Chris 7-21 14-21. The 3rd singles saw Aman beating Ross 21-16 21-10.

In the girl's singles, our Leinster girls proved themselves to be too strong and too experienced for the girls from Alpha. Siofra, Michelle & Orlaith beat Amber, Anna & Neve comprehensively.

Next up was the mixed, which saw Fionn & Chloe step up to beat Jeffrey & Kimberley 21-11 21-4. Nicole & Darragh continued Leinster's winning ways, beating Daniel & Zoe 21-6 21-12. Finally, Ciara & Praneel had an exciting match against Cara & Carrig and took the win 21-17 26-24!

Our Leinster players showed how talented and hard-working they are today. Manager, Kirsty and coaches Jack, Kate & Sam were able to give our players the benefit of their experience when matches were tight or not going the way we expected. Leinster will play Lothian Sunday at 10am and continue to aim for Gold!

Sun 9th Feb 10am Leinster v Lothian

The team woke on Sunday morning, all set and ready to go for the final match against Lothian. First up was Senan & Fionn against McDonald & Tait. Our pair showed no hesitation nor mercy in this match, and a shell-shocked Lothian pair went to the break 11-1 down in the 1st set. Fionn & Senan went on to win 21-9 21-13. Darragh & Aman started slowly against Senthilrajaram & Xiao but got into their stride to have a real battle against their opposition. They fought point for point until the very end to take the match 21-19 19-21 21-16. Next up, Pranav & Praneel beat Jack & Vinjam 21-12 21-18. Our boys were looking a little fatigued in the 2nd set, but our coach, Sam managed to provide some motivation at the break to make sure that the boys took the match in 2!

All of our girls were ruthless in their demolition of the Lothian girls pairings. Siofra & Nicole beat Bent & Xiao 21-7 21-12. Michelle & Chloe overpowered Feng & Shell 21-2 21-4. And Orlaith & Ciara beat Morrice & Wallace 21-7 21-15 to give Leinster a 6-0 lead going into the singles.

Siofra was first up in singles against Xiao and put on a commanding display to take the match 21-5 21-3. Michelle then disposed of Shell with ease on a scoreline of 21-4 21-6. In the final match Orlaith beat Bent 21-19 21-14.

In 1st boys singles, Senan met Tait for the 2nd time, having beaten him last May in Glasgow. Senan's high quality movement ensured the win 21-15 21-7. Pranav was next up against Senthilrajaram and once again showed his skill to take the match 21-14 21-17. The final singles match of the day was between Aman & Vinjam. The 1st set was a closely fought encounter, however, Aman took decisive control of the 2nd and won the match 22-20 21-11.

Leinster now had a 12-0 lead against a reeling Lothian as they headed into the mixed. There was to be no solace for the Lothian team as Leinster continued to compete in the final set of matches as they had done all weekend - no mercy, no compassion shown! Fionn & Chloe beat Feng & McDonald 21-9 21-10. Nicole & Darragh beat Jack & Morrice 21-8 21-9. And finally, Ciara & Praneel beat Wallace & Xiao 21-8 21-10.

Leinster emerged victorious 15-0. However, the scores of many of the matches belied the quality of the games. This Leinster team showed talent, perseverance & ability beyond their years. Furthermore, it is not over-stated to say that the Management & Coaching team also brought the full weight of their experience and skill set to bear to produce this fantastic result. Kudos to Kirsty, Jack, Kate & Sam!

Leinster are once again U13 Celtic Challenge Champions. Jeff Kearon, of Alpha Badminton Club, presented the Cup to Team Captains Darragh & Chloe, and stated that not only did the competition have to deal with Storm Ciara, but also had to cope with Storm Leinster! Thanks to everyone at Alpha for running a great competition. And thanks to the teams from Alpha, Lothian & Wales for providing such enjoyable matches.

As we all know, it is only possible to produce teams & coaches of such high calibre with the overarching support of Leinster Badminton. Thanks goes to David Murphy, Chairman of Leinster Badminton for his continued support of all things juvenile. Thanks to the Youth Activities Committee and YACs Chairman, David Hogan for all the Youth Activities that are run throughout the season. It is also important to say Thank You to Yonex Ireland for the continued. Finally, the last word of thanks must go to the Parents – the unsung heroes of all things Juvenile Badminton!

