

## Devon 14 and under Boys County Cup Captain's Report. Harlow. 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> May 2018

The Devon team which consisted of Matthew Rutter, Ben Johnson, Zac Brown, Lucas Urquiza and Leighton Starkie arrived at Harlow Lawn Tennis Club on Friday afternoon for practise on the slow, high bouncing hard courts in glorious sunshine. Playing Captain Matt Rutter did a brilliant physical warm-up which became the daily morning routine before practice and really got the players in the zone each day. All players practised well on Friday ready for 2 matches against Northumberland and Kent on Saturday.

**Saturday:** we went 3-1 up against Northumberland after singles, good wins for Rutter against Ronan Lunn at one, Johnson beat Matthew Nice in straight sets at two and Urquiza had a straight forward win at 4.

One hour rest for lunch, and then the boys were at it again against Kent (strongest team in group on paper with top 3 boys ranked inside top 30 in GB). Brown and Urquiza put up a good fight at 3 and 4 but lost in straight sets. Rutter and Johnson were both a set and a break down against Kent. Rutter saved 2 match points 4-5 down in the second set against Harrison (Kent number 1) coming back to win the second set and won 6-0 in the third! Johnson fought back to win second set against Pickering, and then won 6-3 in the third! Great turn around. Urquiza and Brown played 2<sup>nd</sup> pair doubles against Kent and lost in straight sets, and the first pair doubles was rolled over to Sunday.

The boys went on against Northumberland in doubles at 7.30pm, and Rutter and Starkie won at second pair 11-9 in the third set match tiebreak, and Johnson and Brown won at first pair 11-9 in the third set match tiebreak. The matches had to be finished under floodlights and the boys came off court at 9.10pm and ended up eating Chinese takeaways in their room at 10pm as there was no other option and they had to be back on court at 8.30am in the next morning for warm-up ready for a 10am start! Devon 5-1 win vs. Northumberland. Devon 2 vs Kent 3. End of Day 1.

**Sunday:** Devon won all four singles against Cambridgeshire. Great win for Johnson at 2, after being 5-4 15-0 down and a break down in final set. He went on to win 12 points in a row and win the match 7-5 in the third. Brown won at 3 in three sets and came from well behind, to come through a tough mental and physical battle. Rutter beat Cambridgeshire number 1 (ranked 10 in GB) comfortably in straight sets and Urquiza hammered the Cambridgeshire number 4 in singles. Starkie and Brown lost to the second pair doubles, but Rutter and Johnson won at 1<sup>st</sup> pair comfortably. Devon 5-1 win against Cambridgeshire.

Now the 1<sup>st</sup> pair doubles left against Kent; Rutter and Johnson put in a very disciplined effort to win comfortably in straight sets. Draw is tied at 3-3! Match tiebreak shoot out time, where one player from first pair doubles teams up with one player from second pair doubles in a tiebreak of first to ten points. Brown and Rutter played Harrison and Coquelin and put in a brave performance and won 10-7!! Devon win the tie against Kent! Devon are top of the group going into the last day against Essex! Players leave the court at 7.15pm and head to the local Beefeater next door to the Premier Inn where we are staying to eat, and the team moral is great. Boys had a good evening and were in their rooms by 9.30pm ready for 10am start! Warm-up at 8.30am!

**Monday:** Devon go down 2-0, Brown and Urquiza losing in two tough battles! Rutter and Johnson both put in two clinical performances to win in straight sets. Johnson won 1 and 0 against Wright and Rutter beat Weingarten at 1! 2-2 going into doubles. Brown and Starkie lose to the second pair doubles and then Rutter and Johnson draw the tie 3-3 with a very good win at first pair doubles.

Match tiebreak time! If we win we qualify for National Finals in Nottingham in two weeks time! Rutter and Brown against Weingarten and Wright. It didn't go our way, we lost 10-2! Essex wins the tie. Interestingly Kent beat Essex, so there was a three way tie. We had to wait and watch the last four doubles which Kent had to play as they had to win all four to beat us on rubber count back. They did well winning all four and two of them were in match tiebreaks.

Kent beat us by one rubber and go through to Nottingham. Tough one to take! We leave the club after presentation at 7pm and get home to Exeter Services at 11pm after stopping for some food at Reading.

The team atmosphere was brilliant over the whole weekend. I just want to say thank you to John Cooksley who did a fantastic job as assistant coach in preparing players for matches, supporting players and going on court at the change of ends to help the players in their matches. I am extremely proud of the boys. They all busted a gut and showed real determination and Devon are right up there nationally in county tennis in this age group! To beat Kent is a great victory! Come on Devon!! Next Year!!

**Liam Storey**  
**Team Coach**

	<b>Points</b>	<b>Played</b>	<b>Rubbers</b>	<b>Sets</b>	<b>Sets %</b>	<b>Games</b>	<b>Games %</b>
1 Kent	6	4	17-7	37-17	68.5%	263-191	57.9%
2 Devon	6	4	16-8	32-22	59.3%	249-203	55.1%
3 Essex	6	4	15-9	32-19	62.7%	240-209	53.5%
4 N'umberland 2	4	4	8-16	20-33	37.7%	189-221	46.1%
5 Cambs	0	4	4-20	11-41	21.2%	160-277	36.6%