The West Midlands Inter-Regional Qualification tournament was held at Wood Green on February 20th with a number of Leamington based players taking part, three of whom finished the day as winners of their events.

Ricardo Bolanos, of Lillington Free Church, overcame the disappointment of finishing third in the Under 13 Boys and bounced back in style to win the Under 15 Boys from the third seed position. Despite losing a close five-setter in the group, Ricardo progressed to the knockouts where he had to endure another five set match, this time emerging victorious against Nathan Birch. Ricardo dropped the first set in his semi-final against Kyle day, but ran off the next three to set up a final with Jake Price.

Jake had conquered Ricardo’s club mate, Nikit Sajiv in the semi-final. Nikit, seeded one for the event, had dropped a match in the group but still went through. In his quarter final he had seen off Luke Gittins in four, but second seed Jake won the semi three straight.

In the final, playing some excellent table tennis, Ricardo went 2-0 up before dropping the next set. Jake was unable to capitalise on that, with Ricardo cruising to an 11-6 fourth set and with it the Under 15 Boys title.

Other Leamington players in the Under 15 Boys were Callum Ball and Robbie Fitchford (Lillington Free Church). Of these, only Callum was able to make it out of his group, before falling to beaten finalist Jake Price.

In the round-robin Under 15 Girls, Lillington Free Church’s Ciara Hancox grabbed the title with five wins out of five matches. It wasn’t all plain sailing for Ciara though, with her first match of the day against Kirsty Maull going the distance. Ciara found herself two set to nil down against Kirsty, before turning the tide and taking the momentum in to the deciding set. The fifth set didn’t start well, with Kirsty racing into an early 5-1 lead. Showing great determination and remaining calm under pressure, Ciara proceeded to claw her way back in and triumphed 11-9 in a very tight match. That match proved to be the title decider with Kirsty going on to win four straight matches and clinch the runner-up spot.

Angel Chen (Rugby) and Emily Beasley (Lillington Free Church) were also competing in the Under 15 Girls and their match decided the finishing order between the two. Angel won a close opening set, before doubling her advantage with a more comfortable second. Emily kept her focus and persevered with her attacking play to come storming back into the match by taking the next two sets and set up the decider. In the fifth, it was Angel who found the consistency and with it the match to finish in fourth place overall, with Emily one behind in fifth.

The final Leamington winner of the day was Under 11 Girls Champion, Erin Darwen of Lillington Free Church. In a round-robin group of four, Erin started a little slowly and dropped the opening set of her first match against Megan Jones. Erin put that to rights and battled back to level the match with a 12-10 second set, before holding her nerve in the next two 11-9, 11-8 to win the match.

In her second match, against Teertha Nitin, Erin got off to a better start and took the first set. Teertha levelled at 1-1, but Erin gradually raised her game to take the match 3-1 with a comfortable 11-3 fourth set. By the time Erin played her last match against Anya Sompura, she was well and truly in the zone and secured the Under 11 Girls title with an 11-2, 11-6, 11-8 straight sets win to cap an excellent day.

Eduardo Bolanos (Lillington Free Church), played well to finish second in the Under 11 Boys, finishing second to the only player who beat him on the day, Nathaniel Saunders. Sophie Rinnhofer (Colebridge) finished third in the Under 13 Girls, falling to eventual winner Amillia Baker in the semi-final. In the Under 13 Boys, William Chen (Rugby) made it to the quarter finals and Ricardo Bolanos (Lillington Free Church) fell to Alex Lee in the semi.

Having played in the qualifiers, the next step is to compete in the Inter-Regional Championships, which are to be held in Kettering on 21st/22nd May. The Inter-Regional Championships include team events on the Saturday and individual events on the Sunday. The following Leamington players have qualified for the team and individual events:

Under 11 Boys: Eduardo Bolanos (Lillington Free Church)

Under 11 Girls: Erin Darwen (Lillington Free Church)

Under 13 Girls: Sophie Rinnhofer (Colebridge)

Under 15 Boys: Ricardo Bolanos, Nikit Sajiv (both Lillington Free Church)

Under 15 Girls: Ciara Hancox, Emily Beasley (both Lillington Free Church ), Angel Chen (Rugby)