English junior open champion Jimmy Stokes enjoys his moment of triumph.

League and Championship tables... from Jaques
Editorial

Best foot forward

It has been a long season and one which has restored faith in English table tennis. Internationally our players have scooped 14 medals in senior competition and there is certainly cause for optimism.

Carl Prean secured his first Open title in Belgium, Desmond Douglas finished an honourable 2nd in the fiercely contested Europe Top 12 and Lisa Bellinger took her first step onto the European Championships rostrum.

With Sweden’s Jorgen Persson at 19 and Hungarian Csilla Batorfi a mere 17 years old, capturing the European titles it has certainly been a year of youth and in this respect we should feel some confidence.

Michael O’Driscoll, our leading Cadet, from Yorkshire, has earned his first major title in France and Reading’s Jimmy Stokes leaves the junior ranks with a clutch of titles, including the English Junior Open and his second Beneficial Trust Grand Prix.

Talking of Beneficial Trust, it is with some sadness that we bid them farewell. They have given tremendous support to junior table tennis during the past three seasons — needless to say great efforts are being made to secure a replacement sponsor and it is hoped that we shall be able to make this welcome announcement before the new season gets underway.

Another sponsor leaving us after six years is Halex, the Hertfordshire based equipment manufacturer. In their place we welcome Schildkrot of Germany who are to support the ‘Schildkrot British League’. Formerly known as the national league this competition promises to be even bigger and better next season with a highly commercial approach being given to its promotion.

Newly crowned premier division champions, Steelstock Wolverhampton, have secured the services of Desmond Douglas for a further twelve months and English table tennis will undoubtedly be the benefactor.

Although table tennis is essentially about those who play, leading coach Tony Russe has offered, in this issue of Table Tennis News, an interesting insight into the world of coaching at the highest level — the frustrations and the rewards of a knife edge existence. John Prean questions the system of selections and reassesses his opinion of the national trainer coach. While many sports now place selection in the hands of their professional staff, table tennis has, thus far, elected to maintain the time honoured format of “the committee”. But change is not a million miles away — indeed the new approach to grant aid document recently presented to the Sports Council, calls for this very move.

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Young champions but no pretenders

John Woodford at the 15th European Championships in Prague

Jörgen Persson, 19, and Csilla Batorfi, 17, are the new European champions. Young heads to wear the crowns but it needed strong teenage legs and an abundance of skill to reach the final rounds.

Both are worthy young champions. They kept their heads high and their top-spin shots booming away when the older men and women felt their legs would never be the same again.

Famous names, some old, some young - Desmond Douglas, Jan-Ove Waldner, Erik Lindh, Mikael Appelgren, Dragutin Surbek, Milan Orlović, Jacques Secretin - crashed out long before the final curtains.

The Polish challenges from Andrzej Grubba and Leszek Kucharski were there until the last gasp. However Grubba is not the player he was. Kucharski has certainly improved.

Although, astonishingly the Swedish Big Three - Waldner, Lindh and Appelgren - had shot their bolts before the late rounds. Sweden always seems to have an ace up its sleeve, in this case Persson.

No doubt there are readers who have barely heard of the names of the new champions Persson and Batorfi. In fact, when I arrived home to a series of telephone calls and supplied the names of the winners to enquirers, the usual reply was "Never heard of them". Happily, I feel, they will be with us for the next decade.

Some would say that the strength of Sweden is that they have four men stronger than Desmond Douglas and although individuals might fail, Sweden will still rule.

It did at the 15th European championships, I think it will in Paris. Further than that we have to wait and see.

Reflection

Seated uncomfortably on most occasions or squatting Red Indian style behind the England captains on the cold concrete of the Prague stadium floor, British hearts like mine had time to ponder on the rising tide of table tennis success on the continent whilst in England our sport suffers a lean time.

The wind of change is in the favour of table tennis on the continent. The strength in numbers, the tumultuous but usually fair applause from the huge crowds up to 8,000 strong, the many hours of television coverage and the new young champions Persson and Batorfi, could almost have had some of the 40 Brits in Prague wishing they could stay on the continent! I have covered four European events in the past two and a half years, two championships and two Top 12's. With the possible exception of Moscow, the support from the crowds and the media, television, radio and the press has been exceptionally good.

I cannot recall the crowd figures for the 1977 World Championships in Birmingham, but I am sure that the size of the crowds in Prague went beyond it.

My theory in a nutshell is that there are so many other things going on in Britain by way of entertainment both in sport and in other fields, music, the arts, theatre, the enormous boom especially on TV of snooker, darts and another dozen sports or pastimes that TV producers seem to like as all media people like something new.

And of course, a lack of Chester Barnes type personalities. Skylet Andrew is the nearest we have come to an extrovert character that appeals to all sections of the media.

In communist countries like Czechoslovakia and indeed communist countries in Asia, the amount of entertainment is only a fraction of what is available here. Ninety-two teams in the Football league is a good example of that and the laziness of the average Brit is well known worldwide.

He would rather sit back and watch it all happen in his lounge on the box where he can watch a selection of sports in warmth and comfort - who wants to stand in a draughty stadium watching the same sport for hours on end?

Team improvements

Former Table Tennis News editor George Yates wrote in May 1984 that the England team returning from Moscow had "met with abject failure", no medals and relegation for the men.

Happily, this was not the case in Prague. Some will say that the vast improvement was the result of strategic planning by the England selectors, top administrators and coaches. Some will dispute that.

Whatever the truth, there were no flounders in the mens team event this time - like resting Desmond Douglas and playing him in the wrong order.

England men cut seven nations down to size, 5-0 against Holland, Scotland, Spain, Wales, Faroe Islands and Turkey. Only Belgium took a game - this down to Skylet Andrew but he had two set points for a two straight win.

Belgium have gained promotion along with England mainly through the skills of their young star Jean-Michel Saive, so Belgium will become one of England's chief targets to stay in the top flight in Paris in 1988.

Our women did not have such a happy time but they proved strong enough to finish in sixth position, the same as before.
stopped Yugoslavia and Finland but lost to Hungary, Czechoslovakia and France.

Later in the second stage they beat Holland who were without Vreeseboom due to a shoulder injury.

The mens final when Sweden predictably lashed France 5-0 was disappointing. But watch for the new French star Jean-Philippe Gatien. He could be the next Secretin.

Hungary finally triumphed 3-2 over Russia in the womens final with Edith Urban overpowering the classy defender Elena Kovtun 21-16, 21-18 in the fifth deciding set. Interesting that the Russians often produce female defenders.

The three best female choppers in the hall were Fliura Bulatova, Kovtun and Lisa Bellinger.

Joy Grundy

The reigning English champion from Preston who has made a remarkable recovery from injury in the last twelve months had an impressive tournament. She was called on to replace an off-form Alison Gordon in the team events.

Joy performed well and looked as professional as many of her opposite numbers in the teams of the 28 nations competing.

She had a bad draw in the womens singles going straight in but losing with honour to Zsuzsa Olah of Hungary.

It was said in Prague (and I cannot reveal the source) that "Joy is really our best player" - in the womens team. Her problems are that she has no sponsor and no ETTA contract.

She helps out in her parents’ fruit and vegetable shop in Preston, but there is a strong feeling that instead of weighing up the potatoes people should be assessing her excellent chances of joining Lisa Bellinger amongst the Top 12 in Europe.

Desmond Douglas

Books could be written and no doubt will be on Des and his career and why he still has yet to win a really major title. The closest he has ever been was one step away at the last Top 12.

In Prague there were the highest hopes ever that this was his opportunity. As the tension mounted and the late rounds of...
The mens singles approached, it looked “all systems go for Des”.
He had just managed to hold off the old warhorse Dragutin Surbek; Waldner had been capsized by Mazunov; and Orlowski was powered out by Ulf Carlson.
So, in the quarters it only remained for Des to stop what appeared to be a tiring Carlson but he went under in four games. Once again, the team had suffered a blow just when they were hoping that Des was going through. The pressure was too much, mentally and physically.
Said Des, “Playing three big games a day and some doubles at this level is absurd”.
Tournament schedules will always be criticised. In Prague, the final rounds of the singles were the top attractions and they were pushed into the week-end much too close for comfort for the older players. It could be argued that is why the youngsters triumphed. Des, for one, would support that theory.
John Souter
"Sooty" is a young man of few words who fully earned his place in the England squad. In Prague he was also an impressive player - calm on court with positive strokes that had opponents dashing all over the rear of the courts often in vain. He recorded a fine win over Nemeth of Hungary but lost to Bela Mesaros of Yugoslavia in the second round.
The Prague experience will, I believe, help to further mature his game although of course he has young rivals waiting to step into his England squad place say for New Delhi next February ... they are Nicky Mason and now Jimmy Stokes to name but two.
Alan Cooke
"Cookie" was another second round filler in the mens singles. In the first round the Derbyshire ace eliminated the Swiss No 1 Theiry Miller in four games and then also in four went down fighting hard to the top-seeded Waldner who at one stage looked extremely hard-pressed indeed.
Alan Cooke is a sheet-anchor at No 3 in the England team, also as it happens No 3 on the computer rankings. He is the man to rely on when possibly his great rival Skylet Andrew is digging holes and often escaping.
Fiona Elliot
Before Prague I had only seen Fiona Elliot on court on two brief occasions, though I had watched her improving results. Having no chance to display her talents in the team events she went into action in the womens singles and returned home with two fine wins - against Suzanne Wenzel (FRG), the stocky blonde, and then against the willowy Barbara Wiltsche from Vienna.
Resigned by then to have to face someone with a high ranking she even played gallantly as she lost to Bettine Vriesekoop (HOL) who then beat Marie Alboiu (ROM) but lost in the quarters to Csilla Batorfi.
My verdict is that Fiona protected well her position in the team and it will need some tremendous form by Mandy Sainsbury or someone else to shift Fiona down. In fact she could even move up.
The Captains
Few people envy the workload of an England captain. Don Parker really did all a captain and head coach could be expected to do on the courts and off. He seemed to weld the team together, engaging discipline in a situation where it would be easy for a player to succumb to the pressures. Paul Day did a similarly good job for the womens team with Jill Parker heavily engaged with the video equipment but still managing on occasion to coach her fellow chopper Lisa Bellinger.
Bad press
The press centre at the European championships in Prague was well appointed; the telephone and telex services were magic and a further plus were the press refreshment facilities.
But quite unforgettable, unheard of at any major racquet sport event was the lack of draw charts on the press centre walls showing the progress of the players in the individual events. Journalists had to employ a runner if they could find one, to check players progress or wait an hour or more for the results on paper, or walk to the public display which was usually two hours behind play.
I am sure Dennis George the new chairman of the ETTU Press and Publicity will make sure that does not happen again, anywhere.
John Woodford
Daily Telegraph correspondent
## European Championships

### Mens team
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### Womens team
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## Mens team
#### Semi-final Round
**First category**

- 1-4 Play-offs: SWE 5 TCH 1; FRA 5 POL 4. 5-8 Play-offs: URS 5 FRG 1; HUN 5 YUG 1. 9-12 Play-offs: BEL 5 NOR 0; ROM 5 AUT 4.

- 13-16 Play-offs: ENG 5 DEN 6; BEL 5 ITA 2. 17-20 Play-offs: TUR 5 SUI 2; HOL 5 FIN 4. 21-24 Play-offs: GRE 5 SCO 3; WAL 5 LUX 4. 25-27 Play-offs: IRL 5 FAR 0.

**Final Round**

- Final: SWE 5 FRA 0. 3/4 Play-off: POL 5 TCH 1. 5/6 Play-off: HUN 5 URS 3. 7/8 Play-off: YUG 5 FRG 1. 9/10 Play-off: BUL 5 ROM 3. 11/12 Play-off: AUT 5 NOR 0. 13/14 Play-off: ENG 5 BEL 2. 15/16 Play-off: DEN 5 ITA 1. 17/18 Play-off: TUR 5 HOL 3. 19/20 Play-off: FIN 5 SUI 2. 21/22 Play-off: WAL 5 GREE 1. 23/24 Play-off: SCO 5 LUX 2. 25/26 Play-off: ESP 5 IRL 2. 27th: FAR

## Womens team
#### Semi-final Round
**First category**

- 1-4 Play-offs: HUN 3 FRG 1; URS 3 TCH 0. 5-8 Play-offs: FRA 3 ROM 6; ENG 3 HOL 1. 9-12 Play-offs: YUG 3 SWE 2; BUL 3 FIN 1. 13-16 Play-offs: DEN 3 BEL 0; POL 3 ITA 1. 17-20 Play-offs: AUT 3 SCO 0; SUI 3 NOR 0. 21-24 Play-offs: ESP 3 TUR 1; GREE 3 WAL 1.

**Final Round**


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*International Roll of Honour, see page 33*
European Championships

Individual Events Results

English results only for early rounds:

Mens singles
Qualifying rounds

Jimmy Stokes (ENG) b Daniel Wöhrmann (GER) 12, 12, Stokes b Rob Turk (HOL) 18, 19.

First round:
John Souter (ENG) b Karoly Nemeth (HUN) 9, 15, 16, Stokes b Patrick Reverse (FRA) 18, 18, 18.

Second round:
Alan Cooke (ENG) b Jan-Ove Waldner (SWE) 20, 14, 14, 14, 14.

Third round:
Douglas b Dragutin Surbek (YUG) 13, 15, 15, 15, 15.

Quarter-finals: Jorgen Persson (SWE) b Borgen (SWE) 18, 18, 18, 18, 18.

Semi-final: Persson b Borgen; Kuchar b Carlsson.

Final: Persson b Kuchar; 19, 10, 16, 16.

Womens singles
Qualifying rounds

First round:
Joy Grundy (ENG) b Karja Nalen (FIN) 18, 12, 19, 13, 13, 13.

Second round:
Fiona Elliott (ENG) b Suzanne Wenzel (FRG) 20, 20, 20.

Third round:
Fiona Elliott (ENG) b Barbara Witsche (AUT) 18, 16, 16, 16, 16, 16.

Quarter-finals: Tina Kristiina (FIN) b Vera Kottek (HUN) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

Semi-final: Bellinger b Patricia de Groot (HOL) 21, 18, 18, 18, 18.

Final: Bellinger b Patricia de Groot (HOL) 21, 18, 18, 18, 18.

Mens doubles
First round:
Souter/Stokes lost Christian Ignat/Calin Toma (ROM) 13, 17; Douglas/Prean b Thomas Buaini/Thierry Miller (SUI) 19, 19.

Second round:
Andrew/Cooke lost Tibor Klumpar/Krinson (HUN) 17, 17; Douglas/Prean b Pasini/Reverse (FRA) 22, 22, 22.

Semi-finals: Battenburg b Maria Kalinci/Zorana Bock (YUG) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

Final: Bellinger/Walder b Battenburg (YUG) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

Womens doubles
First round:
Douglas/Gordon b Ingrid Gagunse (HUN) 15, 15, 15, 15.

Third round:
Douglas/Gordon b Ingrid Gagunse (HUN) 15, 15, 15, 15.

Quarter-finals: Douglas b Maria Kalinci/Zorana Bock (YUG) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

Final: Bellinger/Walder b Battenburg (YUG) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

‘Well done England, but now forward into the 20th Century!’

John Prean congratulates the England Team and its Captains.

Whilst Moscow (1984) was an unmitigated disaster, Prague was an undisputed success. Our girls retained their sixth place in Category 1. I heard some criticisms which I find difficult to understand. If sixth place was good in Moscow, why is it bad in Prague? Lisa’s semifinal was a stupendous performance after all that hassle with the rule change.

The men did all that was asked of them and returned to Category 1 in some style. Only Belgium, the surprise package in Category 2, held them to 5-1. The rest were beaten 5-0. I exclude the meaningless place match, won 5-2.

Back where they belong

It showed how ridiculous and avoidable was the failure of Moscow. Our men are back where they belong. Friends who were there (I was not) tell me that they played well enough not just for Category 1, but for a medal. It was not to be. The sins of 1984 had to be paid for.

Dreadful scheduling

The Douglas jinx continued and the title again eluded Europe’s most consistent player of the last decade. After a 5 game epic against a still magical Dragutin Surbek he had to go on again after quarter of an hour. For the previous two days very little went on. Then everything was rushed.

Administratively convenient no doubt, but was it fair to the players? Do I hear the old parrot cry: “It’s the same for everybody?”

It certainly is not. It penalises the players who have fought the hardest in the previous round. Everybody is entitled to a reasonable rest and a minimum of two hours is not much to ask in a championship that goes on for more than a week.

Semi-finals: Hrachova/Vriessebroek b Alboiu/Badescu 8, 13; Bubocla/Elena Kavun (URS) b Svensson/Barebro (SWED) 12, 8.

Final: Bubocla/Kovtun b Hrachova/Vriessebroek 13, 16, 16.

Mixed doubles
Qualifying rounds

Andrew/Elliot b Frank Bourke/Patricia de Groot (HOL) 13, 16, 16.

First round:
Douglas/Cooke b Lesia Florea/Olivia Badescu (ROM) 18, 18, 18, 18, 18, 18.

Second round:
Prean/Gorton lost Maria Kalinci/Bocci (YUG) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

Semi-finals: Battenburg b Maria Kalinci/Zorana Bock (YUG) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

Final: Bellinger/Walder b Battenburg (YUG) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

Semi-finals: Hrachova/Vriessebroek b Alboiu/Badescu 8, 13; Bubocla/Elena Kavun (URS) b Svensson/Barebro (SWED) 12, 8.

Final: Bubocla/Kovtun b Hrachova/Vriessebroek 13, 16, 16.

Mixed doubles
Qualifying rounds

Andrew/Elliot b Frank Bourke/Patricia de Groot (HOL) 13, 16, 16.

First round:
Douglas/Cooke b Lesia Florea/Olivia Badescu (ROM) 18, 18, 18, 18, 18, 18.

Second round:
Prean/Gorton lost Maria Kalinci/Bocci (YUG) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

Semi-finals: Battenburg b Maria Kalinci/Zorana Bock (YUG) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

Final: Bellinger/Walder b Battenburg (YUG) 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19.

Semi-finals: Hrachova/Vriessebroek b Alboiu/Badescu 8, 13; Bubocla/Elena Kavun (URS) b Svensson/Barebro (SWED) 12, 8.

Final: Bubocla/Kovtun b Hrachova/Vriessebroek 13, 16, 16.
Des was not alone. Erik Lindin, victor in 5 games over young Carl Prean (who led 11-7 in the 5th) was similarly disadvantaged. It is not a European problem. The same thing happens here. Time for officials to get their act together.

Waldner

Europe's Player of the Year went earlier. Nobody can do it all the time. It seems almost impossible to win the Top 12 and this title in the same year.

England's other hero

It was a triumph for England's captain Don Parker, who brought the players to the table fit to play for their lives after two very good training camps. When they appointed him, the ETTA did something right for once.

I was - some years ago, in junior days - among his critics. I feel offered to make himself Prean (who led 11-7 in the 5th) themselves. There never was any certainty together. and modern manner.

Waldner was similarly disadvantaged.

It was not a task remotely suited to the committee environment. In Prague we may have been spared the consequences of such inefficiency, because the teams, in the main essentials, picked themselves. There never was any need for five people to travel the country at some expense as a prelude to selection debates. Let us now do things in the rational and modern manner.

I have no doubt that Don would continue to seek advice when he feels he needs it, but the final responsibility must be his and he must stand and fall by his own achievements and, if they continue on this level, he must be recognised and rewarded.

With honour and dignity

The proposal is not new. It draws on the experience of other sports and more on what was advocated by Ron Crayden, one of England's best captains, who, when Chairman of Selectors in effect decided to make himself redundant, because he preferred the principle of one team manager selected by so many successful sports.

Let's do it. There is plenty of work for the members of the selection committee in other fields. Today they can depart with dignity and honour. There will never be a better opportunity to accept this historical inevitability.

I hope my proposal will be regarded as completely non-controversial as a step forward, not as a slap in the face for selectors past and present, who should see this is an opportunity for greater service to the sport.

Joy milks the Irish

Joy for Joy Grundy, the Lancashire Lass, is an understatement after her ravaging of the Wedgie Irish Open in Belfast in February

Grundy/Elliott b Fiona Elliot 12, 17; Joy Grundy b Ellen McManus 15, 18; Elliott/Grundy b Fiona Elliot/McManus 11,13; Bel 3 0; Fra 3 Wal 1; Hol 3 Irl A 0.

Fiona Elliot, under the tutelage of David Fairholm, had easily eliminated Ireland B (3-0) and, in a 2-1 victory over Fiona Elliot (ENG). Grundy and Elliot, under the pressure of David Fairholm, had easily eliminated Ireland B (3-0) and Belgium (3-0) before the 3-1 win over the Netherlands.

Elliot and Grundy accounted for their British partner Emmanuell Coubat and Isabelle Delpeinte in the women's semi-finals, with Grundy using her left-handed guile and power to oust the Wolverhampton girl in the final. The English pair took the women's doubles and fought out an enthralling mixed final for John Souter to join Grundy on her fourth trip to the winners rostrum.

In contrast Saive's progress through the Wedgie Cheese Irish Open was less consistent. He allowed his spectacular returns to rule his head in the men's team final such that Didier Menssemin had to win the all important rubber to give the French a 3-2 victory over Belgium.

The young Saive, under criticism from Belgian coach Milan Stencel, left his opposition in no doubt of his will to take the title.

He stormed past title holder Nigel Tyler (WAL) in the quarters, and added to the dismay of John Souter in the semi (Souter and Nicky Mason had failed for England in the team event, losing to France 3-1).

Meanwhile, Irish eyes were smiling for their own German-based Column Slevin had taken out Mason in the quarters and Dutchman Frank Boute in the semi.

In a thrilling final, Saive ended Slevin's run with an army of Secretin-like lobs and Klampar-like smashes. Saive's glory was crowned when he partnered Danny Christophe to the mixed doubles title with a win over surprise finalists McIlroy/Wright (SCO).

The Wedgie Irish Open is well and truly back on the table tennis circuit, with fine organisation and a galaxy of satisfied international stars.

WOMEN'S TEAM

Quarter final

ENG 3 IRL B 0 (Fiona Elliot b Nora McEvoy 12, 17; Joy Grundy b Ellen McManus 15, 18; Elliott/Grundy b McEvoy/McManus 11,13; Bel 3 0; Fra 3 Wal 1; Hol 3 Irl A 0.

Semi-finals

Eng 3 Bel 0 (Grundy b Nathalie Higuet 14, 6; Elliot b S. Thirion 15, 14, 19; Grundy/Elliott b Higuet/Thirion 19, 17; Hol 3 Fra 1.

3rd/4th play-off

Fra 3 Bel 1

Final

Eng 3 hol 1 (Grundy b L. Noor 18, 13, 9; Elliott b Patrice de Gaulle 16, 17; Grundy/Elliott b Noor/De Gaulle 18, 16; Grundy/Elliott b Noor/De Gaulle 19, 18, 17).

MENS TEAM

Quarter final

Eng 3 hol 1 (John Souter b Frank Boute 19, 25; Nicky Mason b Van Haren 16, 19, 16; Souter/Mason lost Boute/Van Haren 18, 16; N Mason b Boute 14, 17; Bel 3 SCO 0; Wal 3 Irl B 0; Fra 3 Irl A 0.

Semi-final

Fra 3 Eng 1 (Olivier Marmurek b Souter 18, 18, 20; Didier Menssemin b Mason 10, 12; Monsieur/Momensin lost Souter/Mason 15, 15; D Monsieur b Souter 14, 16, 21; Bel 3 Wal 1.

3rd/4th play-off

Eng 3 Wal 0 (Souter b Nigel Tyler 14, 16, 13; Mason b Alan Griffiths 19, 20, 9; Souter/Mason b Tyler/Griffiths 19, 20, 9).

Final

Fra 3 Bel 2

Mens singles

Semi-finals

Saive b Souter 15, 14, 8; Slevin b B Boute 19, 15, 17.

Final

Slevin 9, 19, 19.

Womens singles

Final

Grundy b Elliot 17, 17.

Mens doubles

Final

Saive/D Christophe b Darren McIlroy/ David Wright (SCO) 19, 17, 12.

Womens doubles

Final

Grundy/Elliott b Higuet/S Thirion (FRA) 15, 14.

Mixed doubles

Final

Grundy/Souter b Elliot/Mason 18, 19.
Second success for Stokes

Fiona Brown

English Junior No 1, Jimmy Stokes, earned his second national title of the season and his second successive Beneficial Trust Junior Grand Prix title with victory in the boys singles of the 1986 Beneficial English Junior Open Championships at the Mountbatten Centre, Portsmouth on Sunday 11th May.

Although hopes of an English success in the ten nation team events, held on Saturday, had been high, it was a story of ‘nearly but not quite’.

England’s boys team of Jimmy Stokes and Bradley Billington edged into the semi-final with a 3-2 victory over the French second team of Charles Bourget and Nicholas Chatelan but a 2-0 semi-final deficit against Federal Germany dampened their aspirations. Success in the doubles kept English hopes alive but the deceptively casual approach of the quiet German No 1, Rudiger Klein, proved totally effective as he swept back to take the last two games against Jimmy Stokes to ensure a 3-1 victory.

The Germans went on to win the International Club Trophy in an entertaining final against the Netherlands; despite the latter’s 3-0 semi-final defeat of the No 1 seeds, France.

In the final, Dutch No 1 Frank Boute, who had earlier been elevated to the No 1 seed in the boys singles event when Belgian Jean-Michel Saive failed to appear, made a spectacular recovery to claim the opening set from the astonished German, Peter Auwarter.

Leading 19-11 in the final game Auwarter was left standing as Boute smashed eleven consecutive winners to scrape home 21-19. For the Netherlands this marked their solitary final success as Rudiger Klein took control of the German challenge.

A narrow victory over Bart van Haren was followed by deft German teamwork in a two game doubles victory. Klein concluded the proceedings with a businesslike demolition of the demoralised Boute who could not repeat his Houdini routine.

In the girls team event England had two teams in the semi-finals but neither could offer any effective resistance to their continental adversaries. England’s first team of Andrea Holt and Claire Haren was despatched by the Netherlands, whilst our second team of Juliet Houghton and Debbie Soothill made their exit at the hands of Federal Germany.

In the final the Netherlands team of Patricia de Groot and Gerdie Keen were in a class of their own as they advanced to a 3-0 victory without the loss of a single game.

In Sunday’s boys singles Stokes benefited from the luck of a draw which brought Boute and Klein together in a fierce semi-final battle whilst he faced the promising but less experienced Dutch cadet, Bart Van Haren.

Van Haren had earlier despatched Federal Germany’s Peter Auwarter with a demonstration of the natural flowing movements and excellent anticipation which led England’s Chairman of Selectors, Peter Charters, to prophesise a bright table tennis future for him. But Stokes, with the final in his sights swept the young Dutchman aside in convincing fashion.

By the time Stokes came to the table to meet Boute in the ultimate final of the day he could have been deemed to hold a double advantage. While Stokes, playing with Israel’s Tal Mitrani in the boys doubles and England teammate Juliet Houghton in the mixed doubles, had exited from both events in the early stages Boute had exerted himself to reach both finals only to suffer the psychological damage of defeat on each occasion.

Against Stokes he raced to a 21-13 win in the first game - taking advantage of his massive reach and power — but thankfully for Stokes and the eager English supporters, Boute’s accuracy deserted him in the second game and the score levelled with a 21-15 Stokes victory.

The final game started with a point for point challenge but Stokes pulled away after the change of ends. As he stood poised to capture the title the crowd held its breath, half expecting a repeat of Boute’s magnificent recovery against Auwarter - he could not do it and Stokes celebrated yet another magnificent victory in what has been his most successful season to date.

Despite this victory the overall junior ranking by adding the girls singles crown and looked to be well on her way to triumph in the girls doubles before the aggravation of an old injury to her left leg which forced the Dutch girls to concede to Belgian rivals Elke and Els Billen.
Nicoile Struse and Jurgen Hegenbarth - German winners of the mixed doubles

BOYS TEAM
First Round
FRA I 3 ENG IV 0; FRG I 3 IRL I; ENG II 3 NOR I 6; HOL I 3 SCO I; FRG I 3 WAL I 6; BEL I 3 ENG IV 1; FRA II 3 NOR I I; ENG I 3 ISR I 0.
Second Round
HOL I 3 ENG IV I (Van Haren b Dixon 16, -20, 18; M Syed b Bourget 12, 13; Van Haren/boune b Dixon/M syed 20, 19; Bourget b Dixon 19, 8)
ENG I 3 FRA I I.2; Stokes b Bourget 9, 15; Chatelain b Billing ton 12, -16, 19; Bourget/Chatelain b Stokes/Billing ton 9, -15,10; Stokes b Chatelain 21, 13; Billing ton b Bourget 19, -13,10.
Semi-finals
FRG I 3 ENG I I (Klein b Billing ton 19, 18; Auwarter b Stokes 17, 17; Billing ton/ strokes b Klein/Auwarter 13, -18,11; Klein b Stokes -17, 18, 14).
GIRLS TEAM
First Round
ENG I 3 BEL 2; FRA I 3 IRL 0; ENG I 3 SCO 0; FRG II 3 FRA II I; ENG IV BYE.
Second Round
HOL Bye.
SEMI-finals
ENG I 3 ENG I (Stose b HoughtonThill 16, -11,11; Houghton b Thill 18, 14; Soave/Houghton b Gaubert/Tholl 12, -15,14)
ENG I 3 FRG I I (Potts b Lux 12, 20; Holt b Praedel 13, 14; Lux/Praedel b Potts/Holt 15, -12, 17; Holt b Lboy 16, 19)
HOL ENG IV 0 (Keen b Carey 10, 14; De Groot b Toole 16, 17; Keen/De Groot b Carey/Toole 7, 18)
Semi-finals
FRG 3 ENG II (Stose b Houghton 18, -19, 20; Faltermeier b Soave 16, 11; Struse/Faltermeier b Houghton/Soave 14, 11)
HOL ENG I (De Groot b Holt 17, 19; Keen b Potts 12, 7; De Groot/Keen b Holt/Potts 16, -13,13).

BOYS SINGLES
First Round
Frank b Houghton b Shane Preminger (FRG) b Shai Preminger (ISR) 16, 18; Roux b Michael Kider (ISR) 12, 13; BIergson b Bourget 13, 13; Hegenbarth b Sonnet 11, -16, 12; Houghton b Thill 11, 16; Van Haren b Thill 18, 12; Soave/Houghton b Gaubert/Thill 12, -15, 14).
Second Round
Hogenbarth b Houghton 12, 14; Klein b Bourget 13, 13; O'Driscoll b Sonnet 11, 13; Auwarter b Sonnet 11, 13; Van Haren b Chila 13, 14; Eloi b Franzel 20, 11; Stokes b Dixon 16, -19,12.
Quarter-finals
Boute b Hogenbarth 12, 19, 14; Klein b O'Driscoll 11, 19; Van Haren b Auwarter 22, -20, 15; Stokes b Van Haren 19, 15, 14; Jimmy Stokes (ENG) b Tali Mirami (ISR) 9, 14.
Semi-finals
Boute b Keen 16, -17,12; Stokes b Van Haren 9, 15, 13; Stokes b Boune 13, -15,15.
GIRLS SINGLES
First Round
Nicole Struse (FRG) b Kristina Cox (MI) 14, 17; Unnati Houghton (ENG) b Claire Plume (Fr) 9, 19; Lisa Haiden (E) b Julie Norman (Bk) 7, 13; Helen Lower b Christane Praedel (NOR) 15, 16; Patricia Auwarter (HOL) b Melanie Carey (ENG) 14, 17; Andrea Holt (ENG) b Lisa Crick (Bk) 10, 7; Sarah Hurry (SCO) b Nathalie Morgan (FRG) 15, 19; Helen Perrett (AV) b Julie Billington (ENG) 19, -21, 15; Charles Bourget (ENG) b Damien Eloi (FRA) 11, -16, 12; Eloi b Franzel 20, 11; Stokes b Dixon 16, -19, 12.
Quarter-finals
Boute b Hogenbarth 12, 19, 14; Klein b O'Driscoll 11, 19; Van Haren b Auwarter 22, -20, 15; Stokes b Van Haren 19, 15, 14; Jimmy Stokes (ENG) b Tali Mirami (ISR) 9, 14.
Semi-finals
Boute b Keen 16, -17,12; Stokes b Van Haren 9, 15, 13; Stokes b Boune 13, -15,15.
GIRLS DOUBLES
Quarter-finals
De Groot/Keen b Toole/Truman (HOL) 20, 11; Eloi b Franzel 16, -14, 16; Bart Van Haren (HOL) b Sean Cibbons (ENG) 18, 19; Damien Eloi (FRA) b Chris Oldfield (ENG) 13, 13; Christian Franza (FRA) b Heinrich Hegnestad (NOR) -19, 18, 14; Adrian Dixon (ENG) b Damien Holland (ENG) 15, 14; Jimmy Stokes (ENG) b Tal Mirami (ISR) 9, 14.
Semi-finals
Boute b Keen 16, -17,12; Stokes b Van Haren 9, 15, 13; Stokes b Boune 13, -15,15.
BOYS DOUBLES
Quarter-finals
De Groot/Keen b Toole/Truman (HOL) 20, 11; Eloi b Franzel 16, -14, 16; Bart Van Haren (HOL) b Sean Cibbons (ENG) 18, 19; Damien Eloi (FRA) b Chris Oldfield (ENG) 13, 13; Christian Franza (FRA) b Heinrich Hegnestad (NOR) -19, 18, 14; Adrian Dixon (ENG) b Damien Holland (ENG) 15, 14; Jimmy Stokes (ENG) b Tal Mirami (ISR) 9, 14.
Semi-finals
Boute b Keen 16, -17,12; Stokes b Van Haren 9, 15, 13; Stokes b Boune 13, -15,15.
MIXED DOUBLES
Quarter-finals
De Groot/Keen b Toole/Truman (HOL) 20, 11; Eloi b Franzel 16, -14, 16; Bart Van Haren (HOL) b Sean Cibbons (ENG) 18, 19; Damien Eloi (FRA) b Chris Oldfield (ENG) 13, 13; Christian Franza (FRA) b Heinrich Hegnestad (NOR) -19, 18, 14; Adrian Dixon (ENG) b Damien Holland (ENG) 15, 14; Jimmy Stokes (ENG) b Tal Mirami (ISR) 9, 14.
Semi-finals
Boute b Keen 16, -17,12; Stokes b Van Haren 9, 15, 13; Stokes b Boune 13, -15,15.
BOYS TEAM - Plate Competition
Final
BEL 3 ENG IV 0

Farewell Beneficial
After three years and eighteen top class junior table tennis events a final farewell to sponsor's Beneficial Trust was bid in Portsmouth.

As we have come to expect of Beneficial their parting gesture of a three week training scholarship in Duisberg, awarded to Jimmy Stokes and girls Grand Prix winner Andrea Holt, marked the generous way in which they have interpreted their sponsorship. As they depart the table tennis scene it is with the good wishes of players, parents and administrators nationwide.

BOYS TEAM - Plate Competition
Final
BEL 3 ENG IV 0

GIRLS TEAM - Plate Competition
Final
BEL 3 ENG IV 0

Farewell Beneficial
After three years and eighteen top class junior table tennis events a final farewell to sponsor's Beneficial Trust was bid in Portsmouth.

The sponsorship, covering three Grand Prix series, has brought £50,000 into junior table tennis in England - ensuring not only substantial prizes but that our leading young players could enjoy their competitions in prime venues throughout the country.

As we have come to expect of Beneficial their parting gesture of a three week training scholarship in Duisberg, awarded to Jimmy Stokes and girls Grand Prix winner Andrea Holt, marked the generous way in which they have interpreted their sponsorship. As they depart the table tennis scene it is with the good wishes of players, parents and administrators nationwide.

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European League

Bulgaria on top

Bulgarian No. 1's Mariano Loukov and Daniela Guergueltcheva, both unbeaten during the 1985/86 European League season, have led their team into the Premier Division. The Bulgarian team completed the season with an impressive 100% record which included a 4-3 victory over England at Mansfield in November 1985.

Although England went on to complete the season with four consecutive wins their second place finish means that they must fight the promotion battle once again in 1986/87 when their most serious rivals for the coveted Premier Division place are expected to be newly relegated Federal Germany.

Super Division

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Poland: Champions 1985/86
Federal Germany: Relegated to First Division

First Division

1st Round (21.9.85)

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2nd Round (16.10.85)

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3rd Round (23.11.85)

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4th Round (14.12.85)

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5th Round (18.1.86)

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Bulgaria: Promoted to Super Division
Belgium: Relegated to Division Two

Division Two (Group A)

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Division Two: Turkey: Promoted to First Division after beating Switzerland 5-2 at home and again 4-3 away.
Greece: Relegated to Third Division after losing 3-4 to Scotland.

Division Three

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Guernsey: Promoted to Division Two
Magazine Concern
Tom Blunn, ETTA Chairman

It would be useless not to acknowledge that many subscribers are very dissatisfied with the arrangements for the magazine this season. Where the question of content is not an important issue and in any event is a matter of opinion, delays in publication are a matter of great concern, along with the reduction in reading content.

During the previous nineteen years of George Yates’ editorship the magazine had been financially viable except in the last year 1984/85 when financial stability disappeared and the magazine lost £6,083. In fact, the last issue before the change contained fifty-six pages and alone lost £1,500.

Drastic action was required, particularly as a further loss of advertising was projected. The Management Committee therefore decided to increase the subscription price from 60p to 80p per issue for this season and to restrict the content to thirty-six or, at the most, forty pages, including cover.

For a long time the magazine relied heavily upon the goodwill of first Wallace’s and then Sluggs printers. It meant that when the last printers were invited to submit a new quotation the estimated cost of production had risen considerably for this season and much was reliant upon the new editor to reduce costs to a minimum by typesetting material personally.

Although the higher subscription rate had brought in an additional £3,000, each issue was losing money and a potential loss even higher than in the previous season was possible.

The delays in publication were causing complaints but the main problem was still a financial one and once again drastic action was necessary. With the agreement of the editor and the treasurer, I therefore negotiated advantageous terms with a new printer - their first issue being the March/April issue. The saving on production costs in a full year will be significant.

Meanwhile, the question of advertising was still a matter of great concern and in need of attention. In 1984/85 the total revenue from advertising was only £9,000 and, even under the new conditions, it was going to be necessary to raise at least £15,000 to break even.

I approached our friends in the trade who have come to our rescue on so many occasions in the past. The first agreement was to sell the front cover for a full eight issues as an advertisement. The next step was to secure regular advertisements for every issue rather than to wait and see what turned up each month. This meant coming to arrangements for special prices and to date the position is looking good.

I am quite confident that the revenue from advertisements for the eight issues commencing October 1986 will reach the target of £15,000. These measures will allow the magazine to break even and eliminate the losses that would otherwise have accrued on an annual basis but the extra advertising will be to take up some of the reading matter.

I expect the magazine next season to be thirty-six or forty pages - of which advertising will take up approximately one third, leaving about 27 pages for reading content.

If finances permit the Management Committee to agree to an annual investment in the magazine of £1,000 per annum, then additional pages for reading matter will be available.

There is little alternative to these proposals if the magazine is to continue in its present form. I am not conducting an inquest or putting the blame onto anyone. Circumstances changed for the worse and action was needed to put the matter right.

On publication delays the new editor, Rob Oldfield, has had a difficult job to do along with his other commitments and has fought a losing battle. Acknowledging those commitments he does not wish to continue beyond the current season and a new editor is being sought for next season - to commence with the October 1986 issue. Anyone interested should write to the ETTA office at 21, Claremont, HASTINGS.

Rob Oldfield deserves our thanks for offering to take on the job in the first place and I can sympathise with him in his disappointment at not being able to meet publication dates at the high level he sets himself. Reduction in reading content inevitably brings increased editorial effort.

I hope subscribers will understand the situation I have described and will put it behind them. With the new changes we can look forward to stability once more next season.

There is no point in calling for the old days ... costs and lead times have increased. We cannot put back the clock but hope to make the best of present circumstances.

A full report regarding the magazine finances and editorial problems was circulated to National Councillors in April. Copies of the document NC539 may be obtained by members from the ETTA Office.

Officers re-elected

All the Officers were re-elected at the recent English Schools’ Table Tennis Association Annual General Meeting.

ETTA President Tom Matthews was elected as the Association’s fourth Life Member with best wishes to him for a speedy recovery from a recent major operation.

Arrangements are well advanced for the annual Dunlop Schools International Championships (England v Ireland v Scotland) which are being staged at the Broughton Recreation Centre, Salford on July 5th and 6th. Almost 100 players will be taking part.

Nine times English national champion, Desmond Douglas has confirmed that he will be playing regularly in England during the foreseeable future and has renewed his contract to play for Steelstock Wolverhampton in the Schildkrot British League.

Des has also agreed to extend his endorsement contract with equipment manufacturers, Butterfly UK Ltd.

Butterfly produce a range of Des Douglas bats for the mass market priced between £15.99 and £24.99. Their lone rollaway table which Des endorses is the company’s biggest selling table.

Douglas stays home
The Golden Oldies

Reviewed by Mike Watts

The 3rd World Veterans table tennis championships were held in Rimini, Italy, from the 2nd to the 7th June 1986 a record entry of over 1000 players from 38 countries competed. 87 players went from England but, with standards improving all the time, the tally of medals for England was the lowest yet. However there were many sterling performances from the English players particularly Ron Etheridge (Kent) who fought so hard to hold onto his Over 60 mens singles title which he had won in both the previous championships. Peter D'Arcy pulled a calf muscle in the opening encounters of the over 50 mens doubles final and struggled on with Henry Buist before finally going down in a close third game.

This was the first championships that I have attended but the camaraderie from players of every country made it a visit never to be forgotten and already plans are being made for the 4th World's in Zagreb, Yugoslavia in 1988 but that is another story.

What a pity that the organisation did not come up to the standard expected of a championships of this nature. On the first day we arrived - five days before the beginning of the World's - it took six of us nearly two hours to book in with the organisers and at 9.00 a.m. on the first morning of the championships there was a long queue of players most of whom had only arrived late the previous evening trying also to book in.

The writing on the individual draw sheets was appalling and Matt Sheder was scratched twice when on Friday morning he turned up at a table only to find that the writing was so bad he should have been at another table. Hardly any of the officials spoke English which made communication almost impossible. Other complaints centred around refreshments - almost non-existent and a free shuttle bus service that never arrived when you wanted it and did arrive when you didn't want it. However, the organisers did manage to keep the tournament running reasonably smoothly on 60 tables and finals started to time on the last day.

Of the 38 countries present Sweden proved to be the most successful followed by Federal Germany and Japan.

English successes

Over 40 mens singles

Both Connie Warren (Sy) and new VET Roger Hampson (Ch) reached the semi finals. Peter D'Arcy pulled a calf muscle in the opening encounters of the over 50 mens doubles final and struggled on with Henry Buist before finally going down in a close third game.

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Over 70 mens singles

Whilst no English player excelled in the main event, Dick Satchell (S) reached the final of the consolation singles before losing to a very useful Japanese player.

Over 40 mens doubles

Also won by Yugoslavs. No English successes beyond the last 32. Biggest hopes Ralph Gunnison (Wa) and Connie Warren beaten in the 3rd round by Schreiber/Grasserbauer (AUS).

Over 50 mens doubles

Derek Schofield (Ch) and Matt Sheader were beaten in quarter finals. David Jones and Brian Halliday (Bk) also did well to reach the quarters before losing to Peter D'Arcy (Ch) and Henry Buist 18, 16, 15 who then beat another English pair in the semi finals Stan Battrick and Fred Lockwood (E) 16 and 15. In the final D'Arcy pulled a calf muscle early on and eventually they lost to Mellstrom and Larsson (SWE) 29, 18, 15.

Over 60 mens doubles

Ron Etheridge (second medal) partnered Les D'Arcy (Y) only to lose to Forsberg and Lanz 14, 12, 13 in the final.

Over 70 mens doubles


Over 40 womens singles

Ex world women doubles champion Marie Alexandru was untouchable but what a performance Gill Knightley (Bk) put up against her in the group before losing - 26, 12. Gill went on to reach the last 16 and Doreen Schofield (Ch) went one better, reaching the quarter final.

Over 50 mens doubles

This event was won by the Japanese. No England successes.

Over 70 womens singles

Phyllis Launder (Ex) just failed to make it three medals when she went down at the quarter final stage.

Over 40 womens doubles

Alexandru with Tegner (SWE) won this event. Our main hopes Schofield and Connie Moran (Li) lost first time out.

Over 50 womens doubles

Pam Butcher and Joan Beadle (K) fought their way through to the quarter finals before losing. Ito/Omari (JPN) being the eventual winners.

Over 60 womens singles

Dolly Harmer (Bu) and Margaret Jones (Ch) did well to qualify but lost in the first round.

Over 70 womens doubles

Phyllis Launder was paired with Lillie Dahlberg (SWE) but lost in the quarter finals.

Over 40 womens doubles

Janet Hunt and Linda Reid (Wo) were delighted to win the Consolation Doubles in this event.

Over 50 mens singles

Another ex World champion Kazuko Ito (JPN) won this title. The best English performance came from Mary Symes (Mi) who reached the quarters before losing to Ito.

Over 60 mens singles

This was won by the Japanese. No England successes.

MEDALS

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Of the 1100 players competing the Federal Republic of Germany had 218 players in attendance, Sweden 216, England 87 and the host country Italy 97.

Maria Alexandra in her younger days.
O'Driscoll triumphs in La Roche-Sur-Yon

Paul Day

Michael O'Driscoll was the star of the England Team which won the cadet boys singles in the French Junior Open held in the ice rink at La Roche-Sur-Yon, 30th May/1st June 1986.

This was Michael's first international tournament win and was achieved in fine style. He won all seven of his matches, defeating the French No 1, Tran, the German No 1 Hong, and Philip Saive of Belgium in the final, all two straight. The semi-final win over Hong - a Chinese resident in France - was particularly impressive. The final itself was completely whitewashed Leicester 5-0. This was Michael's first international win and, I believe, showed the standard of the boys from Sweden, Czechoslovakia and Germany, France and Russia was exceptional and, I believe, showed the rate of improvement that will be necessary to maintain a strong challenge in the mens game in a few years.

The girls events were dominated by the Czechs Kasalova and Komrachova although challenged by Katja Nolten and Ilka Bohning of Germany and Timina and Komrachova of Russia.

Although Hungary did not have their best junior girls competing in this tournament, they unveiled another brilliant player in the 13 year old girl, Witha. She was by far the best cadet and her service and topspin technique were the most advanced I have ever seen from a girl so young, I believe she will reach the standards of Barses Benes and Cilla Batori and continue the eastern European domination of junior girls table tennis.

There is no doubt that Hungary have shown tremendous improvement in their female players and they have achieved this by concentrating even more time on developing services. The Bulgarian girls are now practising services only for up to one hour every day and some of their girls have developed exceptional services. Since the general standard of serving is relatively poor in the European womens game, this development has had a tremendous effect on their performance and resulted in them becoming the No 1 team in Europe.

We travelled to La Roche-Sur-Yon, which is 50 miles south of Nantes by ferry and car. We arrived without problems but the car would not start on Saturday evening and, on top of this, we lost the car keys, there were several worried English people! However an announcement over the referee's microphone produced our keys and a kind Frenchman recharged our car battery.

There were no further mishaps and all the players benefited from this enjoyable trip.

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Bradley and Andrea — First among equals  

By Mike Watts

The Junior and Cadet Top 12 ranking tournament took place in the majestic surroundings of the National Sports Centre at Lilleshall over the weekend of 5th/6th April 1986.

This was the third year the tournament has been held - twice before in Shotley - and on each occasion the standard of play has been good. Tension, nerves and tiredness all played a part in the endeavours of each of the contestants but all gave of their very best and were a credit to themselves, their parents and coaches and to the sport in general.

From the original invitations Jimmy Stokes (Bk) withdrew from the junior boys to go to the European Championships in Prague and his replacement was Matthew Connell (Y). On the day before the tournament Andrew Syed (Bk) withdrew through injury but at that late stage it was not possible to replace him.

In the junior girls Louise Davies (Wo) and Tanya Holland (E) withdrew and were replaced by Julie Billington (Dy) and Nicola McGrath (La). And with the top two cadet boys and girls opting to play in the junior events Andrew Eden (La), Graham Cook (Y), Tina Sadler (So) and Alison Ledwich (Wa) happily replaced them.

**Day One**

**Junior boys**

Matthew Syed headed the boys after the first day being untroubled in winning all his seven games for an impressive 14-0 games average. Adrian Dixon (St) came next with a single defeat to Shaun Gibson (La), and he was closely followed by Bradley Billington (Dy) with five wins from six matches; his only loss being Chris Oldfield (Y).

**Junior girls**

Julie Billington (Dy) caused the first big shock beating top seed Andrea Holt (La) 21-19, 21-16 in session two but at the end of the day there was a four-way tie with Claire Potts (Ch), Debbie Soothill (La), Juliet Houghton (K) and Holt all level on six wins from seven games. Kerry Hall (Dy) and Billington were close behind with five wins.

**Cadet boys**

No real surprises on the first day with the three top seeds ahead. Leigh Jeffries (Wa), Damian Holland (E) and Jonathan Taylor (Ch) all unbeaten with seven straight wins with Jeffries only dropping three single games and Taylor two.

**Junior girls**

Syed started day two in the same fashion winning two straight but then ran into trouble losing to Billington 22-20, 21-18 and then finally Dixon 21-14, 9-21, 21-19 to finish third. The category therefore rested on the confrontation between Billington and Dixon which Billington won 22-20, 21-18 to round off a great weekend for the Derbyshire lad. Dixon took the silver medal with Syed and Gibson the two bronze medallists.

**Junior boys**

The morning session saw Soothill and Holt advancing their claims with two wins each but Potts lost both, first to Hall 22-20, 21-17 then to Soothill 21-11, 21-17, 21-14. While Billington and Hall both remained close, Houghton lost ground after losing to Holt but with two sessions left any of the six girls could take the title.

In the afternoon Holt made certain of the top slot when beating Soothill 21-14, 21-14 and rounded this off with a 21-10, 15-21, 22-20 win over Potts.

Soothill finished second with nine wins ahead of Julia Houghton; the second place being decided by virtue of a 21-13, 19-21, 21-11 win by Soothill over Houghton in the sixth session on Saturday night.

**European League**

**England vs Turkey**

Saturday 27th Sept., 1986
at Mary Webb Comprehensive School, Pontesbury, nr. Shrewsbury, Shropshire
commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Tickets: £2.50 available from
JOHN MORRIS 0743 796303 (th)
0743 796303 (th)

**Cadet boys**

The tension continued to mount as Jeffries, Holland and Taylor all produced their eighth win in the first morning session but Taylor was the first to go, beaten by Holland 21-14, 22-20 in the next match. However Taylor immediately struck back after lunch downing Jeffries 21-17, 15-21, 21-14 and Holland followed this up beating Jeffries 21-11, 22-20 to clinch the top spot.

Taylor took the silver with ten wins whilst Jeffries had to content himself with a bronze on nine wins. Fourth place went to Neil Bevan (Co) with six wins just getting the better of Neil Simms (Y) also with six wins.

Some consolation for last place Graham Cook (Y) who up to the very last session had lost all ten sets with a 3-20 games average but always smiling. In the last session, to his great delight, he finally broke the ice with a 23-21, 17-21, 21-14 win against Mark Bawden (Co).

**Cadet girls**

No doubt about the winner here; Toole continuing in her winning sequence with four more wins and a final tally of eleven straight wins and a 22-0 games average. A truly remarkable performance.

However the remaining positions were entirely different and with two sessions to go any of eight players could have clinched the seven places. Needless to say that the final results were too close for comfort with the calculator needed to sort out seventh and eighth places - the difference being 0.005.

For the record Pashley maintained her consistency with eight wins with Ellen Meddings (Y) third on seven wins and Caroline Buckley (Bd) fourth also on seven wins. Four players tied for fifth place on six wins.
**Junior Top 12**

**RESULTS**

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<tr>
<th>Junior boys</th>
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**Cadet boys**

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**Junior girls**

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**Cadet girls**

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Stokes flies high at Farnborough

The Sigas South Of England 3-Star championships held at Farnborough over the weekend of 15th/16th March produced some sensational upsets writes Michael Green.

The mens singles sponsored by Lambeth Building Society witnessed seed after seed fall to unseeded opponents. Fifth seed Graham Sandly (Mi) lost in the first round to New Zealander Malcolm Temperley. Dave Wells (Mi) seeded at three could not overcome former European Champion John Hilton and also went out at the first hurdle.

But the most sensational performance of the season let alone of the tournament was to come from the unseeded Berkshire youngster Jimmy Stokes. This Boris Becker of the table tennis world cruised past Phil Bradbury (Bu) the sixth seed and Adrian Moore (Sx) seeded at sixteen on his way to the quarter-final. There, he amazingly tore the second seed John Souter (Mi) apart deciding game could not have much too good for Andrew Syed here.

Could an unseeded player win a major 3-Star title...the final was absolutely gripping. Stokes narrowly won the first game. Han­nah narrowly the second. The deciding game could not have been closer.

Hannah saved two match points having trailed 20-18. He himself had two match points before trailing 22-23. Then Hannah had some luck. Trying a forehand loop he hit his fingers and went in entirely the opposite direction wrong footing Stokes completely.

Hannah saluted the heavens. But Stokes would not be put off with some breathtaking play he took the next two points and the South of England singles title.

There was also a major surprise in the womens singles. This involved Jane Barella from the Graham Spicer Club in Surrey. In the second round Barella faced the awesome prospect of playing Alison Gordon (Bk).

Amazingly the Surrey player was always in control. Well known for being of a nervous disposition at times, she had the luxury of having five match points in the second game and won 21-17, 21-18. Kent's Julie Houghton put a stop to any thoughts of further glory comfortably defeating her in the next round.

Top seed Lisa Bellinger (Bd) won the event with some considerable ease.

MENS SINGLES

Final
Jimmy Stokes (Bk) b David Hannah (Sy) 19-18, 23.

WOMENS SINGLES

Final
Lisa Bellinger (Bd) b Jill Harris (Sx) 13-13.

MENS DOUBLES

Final
David Wells/Philip Bradbury (Mi/Bu) b Nigel Eckersley/Horatio Pintea (Ci/CAN) 15-16, 17.

WOMENS DOUBLES

Final
Fiona Elliot/Harris (Sx) b Alison Gordon/Mandy Sainsbury (Bk) 14-8.

VETERANS SINGLES

Final
Percy Collinno (Mi) b Bobby Brown (K) 17-17.

CLASS TWO SINGLES

Final
Percy Collinno (Mi) b Bobby Brown (K) 17-17.

Cooke champion

In the last of Lancashire's open tournaments - the Donic Lancashire 2-Star Open at Lastock - Alan Cooke was the winner of the mens singles with a final victory over Jimmy Stokes, writes George Yates.

Joy Grundy took the equivalent womens title with a final win over her Preston colleague Jean Parker.

RESULTS

MENS SINGLES

Final
Alan Cooke (Dy) b Jimmy Stokes (Bk) 18-17.

WOMENS SINGLES

Final
Joy Grundy (La) b Jean Parker (La) 18-17.

MENS DOUBLES

Final
Cooke/Steven Mills (Dy/Y) b Steve Docking/Nicky Mason (E/Sy) 16-19.

WOMENS DOUBLES

Final
Grundy/Parker b Jane Barella/Jill Har­ton (Bu/Sy) 16-16, 17.

VETERANS SINGLES

Final
Derek Schofield (Ch) b Matt Sheard (Li) 20-22, 19.

CLASS 2 MIXED JUNIOR SINGLES

Final
Seán Gibson (La) b Brian Carney (La) 20-16.

Bristol's drive to attract visitors to the city had a considerable boost by 300 competitors entering the first Sun Life Open Championships at Thornbury sports centre on 17/18 May 1986.

Players from thirty counties and three countries, including David Hannah, Scotland's No 1 and England No 1 Kevin Satchell took part. With the England duo of Alison Gordon and Fiona Elliot - fresh from success in Prague - they all enjoyed first class competition and conditions in this tournament organised by England's largest and most capable by support from Bristol-based Sun Life Assurance.

In Saturday's junior events, West country girls excelled, producing four of the last eight quarter-finalists in Jane Wright (Plymouth), Melanie Carey (Bridgwater), Kirsty Withymann (West) and Helen Perrott (Bristol).

But Carey and Perrott clashed in the semis, preventing an all South West final. Hannah narrowly won the final against Perrott.

However, South West success came in the cadet finals with Tina Sadler's (Yeovil) sparkling win against the Welsh No 4 Sian Evans and the boys finals where Michael Aucilich (Wi) disposed of Yorkshire's Gary Knights in straight sets.

The junior boys finals was as much of a physical struggle as skillful. Early favourite Jonathan Goode (Mi) appearing drained of energy after his tough semi-final with John Holland (No) and could not produce the extra effort needed to penetrate Steve Slater's immaculate control.

Highlight of Sunday's senior events was the very high standard of play maintained throughout. Accurate seeding and tournament organisation was shown in the final rounds - despite hiccups caused by John Hilton's non appearance and Carol Butler's fine result in disposing of England No 6 Mandy Sainsbury in round two.

But the greatest cheer was reserved for local veterans finalist Tony Brown - a Bristol league player of 30 years standing - when he defeated Babs Acedayo to take the title. A victory that must rank as a career best for a very worthy competitor.

RESULTS

MENS SINGLES

Semi-finals
Nicky Mason (Sx) b P Ginn (Wa); David Hannah (SCO) b Keven Satchell (Wi).

Final
Mason b Hannah.

WOMENS SINGLES

Semi-finals
Alison Gordon (Bk) b Dorking (Mi); Fiona Elliot (Sx) b Carol Butler (Dy).

Final
Elliot b Gordon.

MENS DOUBLES

Final
David Dodd/Hannah (K/SCO) b Steve Docking/Mason (E/Sy).

WOMENS DOUBLES

Final
Elliot/Harris b Gordon/Mandy Sainsbury (Bk).

JUNIOR BOYS SINGLES

Semi-finals
Steve Slater (Si) b Peter Harris (Hi); Jonathan Goode (Mi) b John Holland (Bk).

Final
Slater b Goode.

JUNIOR GIRLS SINGLES

Semi-finals
Helan Lower (Dy) b Nicola McGrath (La); Helen Perrott (Av) b Melanie Carey (Sc).

Final
Lower b Perrott.

JUNIOR BOYS DOUBLES

Final
Robert Fearns/Holland (N) b Vendra Chauhan/Darren Smith (Wo).

JUNIOR GIRLS DOUBLES

Final
Katrina Baker/McGrath (La) b Kristina Cox/Lower (La/Wa).

CADET BOYS SINGLES

Final
Michael Aucilich (Wi) b Gary Knights (Y).

CADET GIRLS SINGLES

Final
Nina Sadler (Sx) b Sian Evans (WAL).

U12 BOYS SINGLES

Final
G. Knights b B. Forster.

U12 GIRLS SINGLES

Final
S. Hughes b H. Wright.
Essex Junior Open
An outstanding match caught the eye at the Beneficial Trust Essex Junior Open writes Laurie Darnell. It was a quarter-final between the No 2 seed Matthew Syed (Bk) and Chris Oldfield (Y).
Oldfield showed how a defender should be played when he won the first 21-17, but I suspect that the Berkshire lad needed more spin-back. A challenging comeback with a counter-hitting ploy from Matthew made spectators wonder and hope for a third game.
But it was not to be. Oldfield took the set 21-19 although he later fell to his Yorkshire teammate Michael O’Driscoll 18-21, 15-21 in the semi-final.
Neil Pickard (Nk) suffered from cramp during his semi-final against Andrew Syed (Bk) who won 11, 11. Pickard had a hard fought victory over Sean Gibson (La) – 20, 20, 19 to earn the right to face Syed.
The finalists were not overawed by the occasion and displayed their shots without any inhibitions in the staged arena. In the end the consistent play of Syed showed the value of maintaining composure and, by sticking to a game plan, how to wear down an opponent. The final started strongly with the third seed O’Driscoll and Oldfield in the final of the junior boys doubles.
In the first game the Yorkshire pair let 5-0 and 7-3 leads erode to 11-9 but then won ten points to four.
In the second, the unseeded partnership never lost the lead. The third game, however, turned 10-9 when O’Driscoll and Oldfield cruised ahead to win 21-13, 17-21, 21-17.
In both games of the junior girls doubles between Andrea Holt (La)/Houghton and Lisa Hayden (E)/Rachel Knight (Mi), the points were evenly shared for the advantage to the Lancashire and Kent pair and a comfortable 14, 16. The ECFTA wish to thank Beneficial Trust Ltd, for sponsoring the Junior Grand Prix and regret that they are leaving the table tennis scene.
The Essex Junior Open will return next year on a different date - 14th/15th February 1987.
Stokes powers through

Chesterfield's Bradley Billington was again amongst the medals in the Beneficial Trust Derby Junior Select on 26th-27th April, writes Mike Payne. He beat Matthew Syed in the junior boys semi-final which was a wonderful exhibition of attacking and defensive play.

In the final the title holder Jimmy Stokes powered through to win a match full of attacking play. The crowd particularly enjoyed the angle shots from both players and their sportsman-like attitude to each other.

The girls singles saw a procession of seeds going out earlier than expected. In the bottom half Claire Potts was beaten by Helen Perrott leaving Debbie Soothill a clear run to the final.

And in the top half Kerry Hall lost to Katrina Baker in her group while the unseeded Nicola McGrath beat Andrea Holt (1), Melonic Carey (6) and Louise Davis (7) before losing in the final to Debbie Soothill in three close games.

In the junior boys doubles Michael O'Driscoll partnered with Chris Oldfield to beat unseeded Adrian Thorp and Stephen Slater.

Chesterfield's Kerry Hall and Julie Billington had local success in the cadet girls doubles with a fine run to the final. They were in action again on the Sunday in the junior girls doubles beating No 2 seeds Julie Houghton and Andrea Holt before losing the final to Claire Potts and Debbie Soothill.

The cadet boys singles was dominated by the two leading cadets - Michael O'Driscoll retaining his title by beating the No 1 seed Chris Oldfield in two straight games.

In the cadet girls singles Sarah Hurry extinguished local hopes by beating in turn Julie Forster, Kerry Hall and then Julie Billington in the final.

Both under 12 singles justified the seedings as far as the finals. Whilst top seed Gary Knights (Burton) won the boys event, it was No 2 seed Helen Potts who beat top seed Ellen Meddings in two tight games in the girls.

The cadet boys doubles provided the upset of the day from local boys Robert Scott-Birchall and Stephen Hanks. They beat Brian Mileham and Andrew Eden (seeded 4) after a tense start in the quarters. They then overcame top seeds Damian Holland and Michael O'Driscoll. In the final they succumbed in three games to Chris Oldfield and Chris White.

The tournament was the biggest staged by the Derby Association and local players had probably their best performances since the start of the event 9 years ago. The inclusion of an under 12 singles event played a great part in bringing the total entry up to 355 and forced a programmed earlier start on both days.

RESULTS

JUNIOR BOYS SINGLES
Jimmy Stokes (Bi) b Bradley Billington (Dy) 20, 15, 15.

JUNIOR GIRLS SINGLES
Debbie Soothill (Cu) b Nicola McGrath (La) 18, 11, 15.

JUNIOR BOYS DOUBLES
Chris Oldfield/Michael O'Driscoll (Y) b Adrian Thorp/Steve Slater (Si) 14, 9.

JUNIOR GIRLS DOUBLES
Claire Potts/Soothill (Ch/Cu) b Julie Billington/Kerry Hall (Dy) 15, 16, 19.

CADET BOYS SINGLES
Gary Knights (St) b Brian Mileham (K) 11, 13.

CADET GIRLS SINGLES
Ellen Meddings/Debbie Toole (Y) b Claire Potts/Soothill 12, 13.

CADET BOYS DOUBLES
Oldfield/Chris White (Y) b Robert Scott-Birchall/Stephen Hanks (Dy).

CADET GIRLS DOUBLES
Billington/Hall b Ellen Meddings/Debbie Toole (Y) 12, 13.

U12 BOYS SINGLES
Gary Knights (St) b Brian Mileham (K) 11, 12.

U12 GIRLS SINGLES
Helen Potts (Cu) b Meddings (Y) 18, 17.

L-R ETTA Treasurer, Aubrey Drapkin, Chris Oldfield, Chris White and Derby President Jack Hughes. Stephen Booth.

£25,000 Schildkrot boost for British League

Schildkrot Managing Director Klaus Albrecht (L) joins English Table Tennis Association Chairman Tom Blunt (R) to finalise the £25,000 deal which will give the Schildkrot British League a real boost over the next twelve months.

(L-R) League Administrator Keith Ponting, ETTA Competitions Vice Chairman Colin Clelland and Alan Ransome, Managing Director of Butterfly Schildkrot's UK distributor, look on.

Full details next issue

Nichola 9, wins Open title

Malcolm Allsop

Have Derbyshire produced the smallest Open tournament champion in the country following the success of nine-year-old Nichola Deaton in winning the U12 girls singles at the Devon and Exeter 1-Star Open?

Nichola was certainly the youngest competitor in the tournament, according to her father Colin Deaton, and she did not drop a game during the event.

Nichola is already an experienced competitor having taken up the sport two years ago whilst on a world cruise with her father, a former Derbyshire county player and England junior international. Nichola is the Derbyshire Schools U11 champion.

Colin has coached many leading players during his career, and considers Nichola to be the best prospect Derbyshire has ever had. This is strong praise indeed since Alan Cooke is now ranked No 3 in England, whilst Julie Billington and Kerry Hall are ranked No 1 and 2 in the England cadet ranks.

Lucky for some

The 1986 Lincoln Handicap ETTA Lottery achieved nearly £6,900 in ticket sales and, of this, nearly £3,500 was returned to participating leagues and counties to help their finances.

The No 1 sales spot was retained by the South West Middlesex League with a magnificent £917 or 2468 books or 12,340 tickets - congratulations to them and their band of dedicated and enthusiastic helpers. Their rebate cheque for £318 should prove very useful.

Second spot went to Norwich with tremendous sales of £380, and Reading again achieved over £300.

Lady Luck smiled on 45 people at the Draw, performed by Hastings league chairman Colin Hyland, though only 26 horses actually ran on the day.

The winner was K-Battery and the first prize of £500 went to Mr P Smith of Bucks with the second prize of £250 going to Mr C Downing-Waite of Sussex. Total prize money distributed was £1130.

As a method of fund-raising the lottery could not be easier as: 1) you risk no financial loss at all, 2) the ETTA provide the prize money and, 3) the ETTA pay all printing costs.

Full details are circulated each September to member leagues. What could your league have done with that £318 rebate cheque?
Time and a place
Geoff James of the National Umpires and Referees Committee appeals to players and coaches to stop time-wasting.

Play is required to be 'continuous during a match' - so says the ITTF's "Handbook for Match Officials". Umpires know all about this part of the good book, but do the players? Surely this is not another 'them and us' case although some umpires have been known to suggest that players have sufficient knowledge of laws and regulations to stretch regulations to the ultimate and what they think are particular umpires' limits.

There are special regulations about towelling. Unfortunately, they do not seem to cover the escalation of apparent need for it. Some umpires have been known to suggest they do not seem to cover the particular umpires' limits! There are special regulations about towelling. Unfortunately, they do not seem to cover the escalation of apparent need for it by the losing player at a critical stage. Also nothing seems to cover the head start the bespectacled contestant has, knowingly or unwittingly, breaking his opponent's concentration by delays for wiping glasses - few players seem to turn to contact lenses.

The responsibilities of the leading players are obvious. Undoubtedly lesser lights follow the stars and a new delaying tactic seems to have crept in. Following our older brother sport tennis, where the server frustratingly delays his service by continually bouncing the ball before launching his onslaught, our own is now following suit, with the ball, prior to being served, being bounced from hand to racket, hand to table or on to the floor.

But here there is a difference between the two sports. In one the size of the ball and area of the court might be said to allow the conclusion that the server is 'composing' himself and not seeking an unfair tactical advantage by confusing the receiver as to when the service will be made. Also, with several balls being used against our one, perhaps he is assessing any variation.

Unsettling
In our sport the margin of size and time factor are so small that however innocent the mannerism may be its effect must be unsettling to the receiver. Perhaps, however, more serious is the frustrating effect it has on the spectator.

Few players appear to be concerned about this compared with 'in the old days', because competition is much greater for the small winnings available and the game is admittedly much more difficult. But our public, albeit a small one, is important and must be respected. Any mannerisms tending to distract or detract from the spectacle have to be discouraged.

How does the poor umpire handle this? One can sympathise with those who call "fault" on the premise that the ball is in play from the moment it leaves the hand. And, of course, the umpire, as sole judge of fact, decides when an action is a service and when it is not.

But such judgements can become based on opinions which can vary and lead to inconsistencies between different umpires. Because of this, there is hesitancy to issue any official decree in support of this interpretation. Obviously some actions cannot possibly be said to be mistaken for a service, particularly the bouncing of the ball on the table or even the floor - so evident by the two Soviets in the English Open women's singles final. Then it seems that the only remedy is to fall back on the time wasting provisions and warn the offending server in a quiet and unofficious way. If it persists then report to the referee who has far wider powers of dealing with offenders than does the umpire.

Players & Coaches
However, it is the players with whom the main responsibility lies. They need public support just as much as officials and to alienate with this irritating and time wasting habit is in no one's interests.

Surely we do not have to ape those from another sport where money is in such abundance that little consideration needs to be given to those who provide it?

So, an appeal to the top players that others follow: please set the right example by removing at least one of the frustrations of our modern game.

And an equally strong cry to coaches who are vital to the process that turns the promising junior into a top player and bear a heavy responsibility for the ultimate conduct of the finished product.

Please see that those most susceptible to the actions of the seniors are discouraged from imitating them.
The long awaited return of National No.1 Desmond Douglas to regular competition in England has certainly brought welcome rewards to National League team GKN Steelstock Wolverhampton. Desmond took over the GKN helm which was vacated by the departure of fellow international Skylet Andrew. He has certainly set a precedent. A series of fourteen matches makes competition. Third Division South all Welsh squad is an even match.

GKN Steelstock Wolverhampton.

Des does the trick

By Fiona Brown

The China Syndrome

The chance of a lifetime, an all expenses paid trip to China, proved too great a temptation for the Byker Newcastle squad who sacrificed their second division north title and certain promotion to Des Desmond.

Knowing that the absence of the entire Byker first team would jeopardize the chance of a win in the final match of the season an appeal was made for permission to alter the date of the fixture. As usual the Committee sympathised, who in favour of the Byker boys, common sense dictated that the match must go ahead as planned.

Although this may appear harsh, consider the chaos which would have ensued if an exception had been made. A win of such a dangerous precedent has ensured the status quo which, for all its oddity, serves us all quite nicely.

Going up again

Top form from the two teams promoted in 1985 has led them to success in their first season of second division north play. Both Pengeley Sports Torbay, in the shape of Malcolm Francis and runner up, EAE Waveney in the shape of Trevor Bunn, provided players who earned Halex National League player of the Month awards.

Torbay manager Brian Penny is naturally delighted with the success which has vaulted his squad from 3rd to 1st division status in 2 seasons. Plans are already underway to introduce local youngsters through the ranks in order to sustain the south western successes. In East Anglia, Waveney captain Russell King is not too disappointed by his teams second place which he feels was an honourable finish to their first season in a higher division.

Second bite of the cherry

Twelve months after completing what could only be described as a fairly miserable season in the second division north, Stockton side Kingbro Insurance Services have something to smile about. They remained undefeated throughout the past season. Two timely Kingbro defeats of young pretenders, Oldham, dispelled the Lancastrians title hopes but a second place finish in their opening
season of national league play remains an achievement worthy of note.
Recent match reports suggest that Oldham veteran Derek Schofield is improving with age, an idea which gives the term 'seasoned campaigner' a whole new meaning. Joking aside, though Oldham may find it difficult to retain Schofield's services in the coming season unless they can offer him the top half place which his abilities obviously deserves.

Ashford's firecracker
The neck and neck battle of the bats between eventual 3rd division south winners, Ashford, and runners up Nittaku Ruislip is exemplified by the domination which their players displayed in capturing the first nine places in the end of season averages.
Ashford, strengthened mid season by the arrival from Abeng Warriors Stiga of Glen Baker, secured the title with the eleventh Mall Sheader (CL) 16 12 75.0.

Plymouth on top of world
It has been a high scoring season in the third division west as Leominster will testify. Despite the accumulation of a hard earned twenty-five points they find themselves beaten into second place by Global Sports Plymouth, the team who took the only three points which Leominster conceded.
It has been a successful but, I imagine, difficult season has been a high scoring season for the Plymouth team which completed all but one of their fixtures with the same four man line up from a five man squad - a tale to encourage the smaller clubs amongst you.

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Oldithus Philip Aspinall, an award in his first National League season. Photo courtesy of Oldham Evening Gazette.

see page 33 for March & April awards.
Stiga County Championships

Yorkshire triumph
Doug Moss

The second series of matches were again played and well staged at St. Neots. I predicted there would be a good deal of excitement with Yorkshire or Staffordshire, who had met in a drawn match in the first series, likely to win the championship.

This was certainly how things worked out. There was a tremendous atmosphere with matches well fought and a competitive spirit throughout; even from the teams not involved in the final outcome.

Three boys - Bradley Billington (Dy), Adrian Dixon (St) and Matthew Connell (Y) did very well to win 13 of their 14 singles matches. In boys doubles Michael O’Driscoll and Chris Oldfield won 6 of their 7 matches.

In the girls doubles Derbyshire did the best by winning 6 of the 7 events. Kerry Hall won four matches with Julie Billington and two out of three with Julie Forster.

Sussex and Middlesex, are the teams due for relegation. Ironic, considering that Middlesex’s senior team won that Premier Division! Nottinghamshire and Glamorgan are the teams destined for promotion to the premier division.

With the last round of matches Staffs had to make up three sets on Yorkshire. It went to the very last set to decide the issue with Yorks leading 7-2 and Staffs at 9-0 against their opponents.

Yorkys lost the first game. Across the hall, the Staffs player won his first game. It was touch and go. Yorks then went on to win the next two games and the Staffs player lost his two. The championship went to Yorkshire by one event over Staffordshire.

There were just two drawn matches of the 28 played, one being that between Yorks and Staffs. However, a further 10 matches ended at 6-4. The only players with 100% wins over the whole series of matches were Andrea Holt (La), playing as No 1 girl, and Helen Lower (St), playing as No 2 girl.

1985/86 Final League Tables

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JUNIORS

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**A New Approach**

**Things are about to change says ETTA chairman Tom Blunn**

"A three year plan is to be submitted to the Sports Council hopefully for complete approval and implementation - shortly," says ETTA chairman Tom Blunn.

"We are already starting to implement the two most important aspects of the plan.

The first was the appointment of a full-time Director of Coaching David Fairclough who, in the first instance, will be based in Hastings and will be in full control of the national coaching scheme.

His job is to see that the members derive as much benefit as possible from the activities of the national and local coaches and to assist all coaches to become more effective.

The national coaching scheme at present costs about £75,000 per annum and the bulk of the activities are directed towards benefitting the members at league level", continued Blunn. "Some leagues participate more than others but it is not a reality to show that the areas with good coaching facilities produce the best players."

"International coaches now come from all over the country but essentially from those areas with good coaching schemes and a league with a good player reaps benefits in media coverage, local interest, and spectator levels and inevitably becomes larger and stronger. The Director will see that the leagues are given every opportunity to benefit from the national coaching scheme."

"The new development in the Dunlop Skills Award scheme is well under way, with around 3,000 badges having been awarded in just over a year. The Director will be taking a very keen interest in developing this scheme much further!"

The second exciting development will be the appointment of a Chief Executive at head office in Hastings towards the end of the year. "The appointment will require a lot of re-thinking in the manner in which we currently conduct our business and some important decisions may have to be made and some very necessary changes accepted," says Blunn.

"Both these appointments are expected to be made possible by the financial support of the Sports Council and without any call for further funding by the members," he said. "The Sports Council will expect to see expansion of the game in the future, particularly when other aspects of the plan are brought into operation."

"The plan itself is to be circulated to the leagues for information. It is not confined to national affairs but puts great emphasis on regional administration and local priorities. Every member should be able to benefit."
The Barrow league once again dominated the Cumbria closed championships held at Kendal with nine winners out of the ten events and also nine runners-up.

Honours were shared however between the senior and junior players in that the mens and women's singles went to well established players, Neil Smith (B) and Clarice Rose (W) while juniors Karen Griffiths, John Backhouse and Jonathan Lowes (all B) showed their potential in taking seven titles between them.

Four titles, namely the mens doubles, junior boys singles, junior girls singles and women's doubles were retained by their previous holders.

Smith beat Roger Stewart (C) by the narrowest of margins in the mens singles final 22-24, 21-18, 24-22. Stewart had an equally narrow win over Tim Pachul (B) in his semi-final with the score 24-22, 16-21, 22-20. Smith beat Ian Sharp (B) 21-19, 21-18 in the other semi-final.

Clarice Rose proved she is still as hard to beat in taking the women's singles title beating Julie Billington B 21-15, 21-9. Rose also did well to register three wins from six played.

Second division leaders Dallam A could well be pipped at the post by Queen Katherine C with 100% record and just three matches to go. Natland A, Queen Katherine B and Melling are left to fight out the runners-up position. Dave Hillebeck reigns supreme at the top of the averages with 100%. Queen Katherine A teammate Geoff Barnes is second on 91%.

Second division leaders Dallam A could well be pipped at the post by Queen Katherine C who has won four of her six singles matches and has been overshadowed by the performances of Karen Backhouse who has won four out of her six singles matches and is by far the best player in the team. Backhouse made the transition from junior to senior level look easy.

Kerry (B) and Jonathan Lowes (all B) both established players, Neil Smith (B) and Margo Lewis.

The county championship teams in contention for promotion in their respective divisions this season are virtually sure to make the transition from junior to senior level look easy. The team that wins the league and fails to make the transition is likely to be the only title to elude the Billingtons. The two juniors are the drug of the day.

The junior side was weakened somewhat by the senior inclusion of Karen Griffiths. Griffiths has done well in the seniors but has been overshadowed by the performances of Karen Backhouse who has won four out of her six singles matches and is by far the best player in the team. Backhouse made the transition from junior to senior level look easy.

Tim Pachul has battled hard in the No 1 position on the male side and has been rewarded with four wins out of ten singles. Andrew Pachul also did well to register three wins from six played.

Westmorland league leaders Westmorland A are virtually sure of the league title with a 100% record and just three matches to go. Natland A, Queen Katherine B and Melling are left to fight out the runners-up position. Dave Hillebeck reigns supreme at the top of the averages with 100%. Queen Katherine A teammate Geoff Barnes is second on 91%.

The honours are being spread around the county in the Derbyshire Inter-Towns League, with Matlock looking certainties to win senior division one and the veterans titles. Geoff Gill led Matlock 1st to an 8-2 victory over Burton 1st with nearest challengers, Eastwood 1st being held to a 5-5 draw, despite Billingtons winning three singles and combining with Tony Holland to win the doubles. Matlock were idle in the veterans division allowing Eastwood to go to the top of the division with a 4-1 victory over Chesterfield. Chesterfield, despite their possible veteran strength, have not won a match in this division for three season (1) and were quickly 0-4 down before staging a comeback. Eastwood were denied victory until the ninth set when Colin Chestham overcame Geoff Levers 21-16, 10-21, 21-10.

Ron Rapley was in good form for Buxton in a 7-3 victory over Derby which ended Derby's hopes of regaining the veterans championship. Buxton have won the veterans division, but the support for this is disappointing with only Burton (2 teams) and Matlock competing.

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Tournament Travel

Devon girls were prominent in the closing stages of the Cornish 2-Star. Twelve year old Helen Wright reached the semi-finals of both the Cornish 2-Star and the Devonshire in November. However, Tracey Logg won both events, falling in the final to Sarah Pengelly in three sets.

Snowed up

Devonian players in particular, look forward to the T.S.B. Exeter 1-Star Junior Open tournament, so it was most unfortunate that heavy snow stopped many of our promising players from attending.

But it was encouraging to hear that the entry was up by 30% on previous years and that the under 11 entry had actually trebled.

Even without some of our top players, we had four representatives in the finals. Sarah Pengelly lost to Tina Sadler in three. Richard Atken made his second appearance running the under 17 final, only to lose to Phillip Payne, and Chris White and Kevin Rowe lost to the Cornish pairing of Kevin Stevenson and Howard Williams in the junior doubles.

Results:

New name

The North Devon league has now adopted the title of 'North Devon Motor' in recognition of the sponsorship gained from them. This season the league is running three divisions with thirty-one teams competing.

It is hoped that Devon will host the popular team and individual event of the Western Counties Championships rather than let the inter-regional tournament drop from the calendar. The proposed date is the 31st May.

Closing note

One five year old aspiring table tennis player to her father during their 'play session'. "Daddy, we've played on top of the table, can we play underneath now please?"

DURHAM

by Harry Black

Peter McQueen, won the mens singles title at the Durham County Closed championships sponsored by the Sun Alliance Insurance Group when he beat Philip Stafford in the final at Seaham Leisure Centre.

Number one seed McQueen beat the holder Tony Gelder in the semi-finals while Stafford the seventh seed beat second seed Darren McVitie.

Of the eight seeds only one failed to reach the quarter finals, Tom Robson, the No 8 seed. His place was taken by Chris Blake after his 21-17, 21-15 victory over Robson.

Lyne Yarnell, last years runner-up, won one better when she beat team mate Shirley Gelder in the womens singles final.

The mens doubles holders, No 1 seeds Cliff Olsson and David Godbold lost to second seeds Peter McQueen and Tom Robson.

In the women's doubles final - a repeat of last year - holders Lyne Yarrell and Lynn Bainbridge lost their title to Linda Spensley and Shirley Gelder.

The veterans singles final also involved last years finalists but this time Tom Bainbridge retained the title when he beat Gordon Bissett.

The junior events were a personal triumph for Washington's Paul Swift, 14, who cleared the board in the three events. In both the U15 Youth Singles and U17 Youth Singles the No 2 seed beat the top seed 12 year old Ian Collier.

Swift and his partner Ian Telford, who were the top seeds defeated the unseeded pair of Ian Collier and Greame Sanderson in the junior doubles.

Durham won their first match of the season when they defeated Northumberland II in the bottom of the table local derby by six sets to four.

Thanks again are recorded to the ladies, Lynne Yarrell and Lynn Bainbridge who were unseated and accounted for three of the sets, the others being Philip Stafford and Tom Robson's victories over Malcolm Lusk plus a mens doubles to add to the total.

Durham County League

As I write these notes it looks likely that a play-off is needed to decide the junior division title as both Sunderland's A and B teams are level at the top with one match each to play. On paper both the sides should gain maximum points but tennis can open up some surprises.

Petereck are the new title holders of the Senior Division. In their last match of the campaign they defeated Sunderland C 7-3. Last seasons champions Sunderland A finished runners-up.

Senior Division

**Peterlee**

P W D L Pts
7 7 0 0 28

**Sunderland A**

7 5 0 2 20

**Philadelphia A**

7 4 0 3 17

**Darlington**

7 4 0 3 14

**Sunderland B**

6 1 0 5 5

**Philadelphia B**

7 0 1 6 3

**Sunderland C**

6 0 1 5 2

**Bishop Auckland**


Junior Division

**Sunderland A**

P W D L Pts
7 6 0 1 24

**Sunderland B**

7 6 0 1 24

**Bishop Auckland**

7 3 0 4 12

**Petersfield**

7 2 1 4 10

**Philadelphia**

8 0 1 7 2

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

by Alf Peppert

As this report is actually being written at the end of yet another season I am indeed pleased and proud to mention that our sport is without question or doubt - on the up and up in Gloucestershire.

Visiting the Glouce Schools Championship for a few weeks in Cheltenham not only was I greatly impressed by the high entry but equally by the high standard of enthusiasm and play shown by all of the youngsters that were taking part, perhaps the better displayed certain elements not quite akin to the game, but the important thing is that - "THEY WERE THERE", enjoying themselves and above all keeping the game alive, and that's what table tennis is all about.

A little under two years ago, The Rudford & Highleaden T.T.C. in the City League took top playing premises, prior to this the Sports Council had enough faith in the club and its Administrators of the day to advance a £2000 cash grant. The E.T.A. Chairman - Tom Blunn came down and opened this old club, with a new building. Today this clubs sports eleven teams in the Gloucester City League, can also truthfully say that the County's No 1 - 2 & 3 ranked men all belong to it, this season alone Rudford have won the Providence Capitol County Premier League completely unbeaten, and where-as last year were Runner's-up in the City 1st Division this year they have won that also, quite a success story.

Late in January Cirencester formed a T.T. League after about 26 years, Andrew Allfield was appointed Chairman, Mike Savage Secretary and Bob Davis got the job of Chairman of the Treasury. At the present time they have nine teams taking part in one Division. I'm told that for next season plans are afoot for another Division - Cirencester at the moment are not affiliated to Glsire, they are still finding their way and treading carefully - but hopefully well prior to next seasons start, I for one sincerely hope that they will Affiliate. To further improve their status quo, Cirencester simply cannot afford to remain OUTSIDE the affiliation zone.

Yes Gloucestershire is far from being a dead table tennis County as I think my previously mentioned facts point out.

County Teams

The seniors at the moment are top of their respective Division 3C and with Beds 1sts and 2nds and Oxford yet to play, are in with a very good chance, but we must not count our chickens before they are hatched.
The juniors are not doing quite so well and currently lie around fifth place. Norwich league had a real disaster match with Dorset losing 3-7 to a team who had not won one game this season. Now, with one game left to play against Avon, my guess is that they will finish up in fifth of all teams. Craig Saunders and Lawrence Symonds age-wise will be out of junior status next season and will undoubtedly be missed, whoever takes their place will have to raise their game considerably to do anything at all in this respective division.

Severn Sound Independent Radio

I have once again enjoyed broadcasting all aspects of our sport on a regular weekly basis this season. ETTA Deputy General Secretary Mike Watts gave a 9½ minute interview during the Cisswold Junior Select at the Gloucester Leisure Centre in February, which, Severn Sound played twice over the air in the sports programme.

NORTHANTS

Ray Hogue

Fourteen hours of play in the Kettering Closed tournament ended with Graeme McKim clinching the men's singles for the fourth time in succession. And he did it in style, to sustained applause from an appreciative crowd, after a first-ever tournament confrontation with Keith Nicoll - the only other player ever to record four straight wins. Earlier, spectator acclaim had been limited by the speed of the rallies and the eagerness of the participants to gain the initiative. But in a contest which illustrated all that is best in the modern game, it was McKim's slight edge in speed and confidence which enabled him to maintain the upper hand.

For once the winner's passage had not been such an easy one, and in the quarter-final he had dropped an end to Steve Kendall, while, at an earlier stage, Nicoll was taken the full distance by Richard Elliott. In the semi-finals both big guns had anxious moments against Andy Trott and Andy Edmonds respectively, before emerging to embark upon their classic confrontation.

Edmonds and Trott who seem destined to join McKim and Nicoll as the country's top quartet of players also had their successes. Edmonds joined McKim to take the mens doubles, while Trott retained the boys singles and also linked up with Richard Ambrose to lift the doubles, an event which has fallen to those three times in a row with a different partner on each occasion.

Trott also came through in the premier division handicap where in the final he conceded one point to Chris Hardshaw and after losing the first end fought back to a hard-earned success.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Pauline Long

Peter McQueen and Clare Mouzon retained their mens and womens singles titles in the Northumberland county closed championships at Scotswood Sports Centre. They also combined to win the mixed doubles, and McQueen completed a notable hat-trick by also taking the Premier/Div. 1 handicap title.

### Results

**MS:** McQueen b Ian Robertson 20, 12. **WNS:** Mouzon b Christine Burke 15, 9. **YS:** Fred Short b Maurice Cheek III. **MD:** Robertson/Neil McMaster b McQueen/Thomas Blackman 11, 12, 18. **WD:** Burke/Caron Guthrie b Mouzon/Pauline Long 19, -13, 21. **XD:** McQueen/Mouzon b Robertson/Guthrie 22, 18.

**H/Cap (Premier/Div. 1)** McQueen (scratch) b Robertson (+2) 13, 19. **H/Cap (Div. 2, 3 & 4)** Steven Higgins b Steven Lumsden 4, 6.

In the Wilmot Cup the Northumberland League side of McQueen, McMaster and Robertson advanced to the quarter-finals with a comprehensive win over Bradford League, and were next due to meet the Warrington League. The Rose Bowl and Carter Cup sides, however, both went down 4-5 to Bradford and Ormesby respectively, but not without a fight. Mouzon's two wins in the Rose Bowl match included an outstanding performance to beat Melody Hill (9 in the third), while Darren Shaw scored a fine five in the junior match. It was unfortunate that in both cases their efforts were not quite enough.

The Kent County ranking lists show very few of note being in the junior boys list, where Shaw has taken over the top position from Stephen Pennman, who is pushed into second place. However, the top five mens (McQueen, McMaster, Robertson, Smith and Blackman) and the top three women (Mouzon, Guthrie and Burke) were involved in the trip to a lifetime during April, when they visited Newcastle's twin town of Taiyuan in China.
They spent two-and-a-half weeks
18-21, 1-11, 11-1. The incident happened at the

County Notes

The trip was linked with a civic

COUNCIL, and officials included the
Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress as well as some local councillors and other ofﬁcers.

It is hoped that the journey will have

Saturdays

by Jack Chilley

The trip means that Mouzon (DHSS) and
Burke (Inland Revenue) missed both their Depart­
ments.

Rasul Farhat, Rue Bole, Michele Hams and Debbie Simmonds their remaining games were most signifi­
cant.
If only junior talent was emerging at the same rate as star players are suddenly appearing in the ranks of the veterans, Sussex would have few problems. There are one or two hopeful signs for the young ones. Scott Greenbrook and his brother Marcus are at last emerging as powerful players at Crawley, the town where no-one can be found willing to run their closed championships, so there will not be one this season.

Over at Hastings and Bexhill two girls are emerging as fine prospects. Rosemary Rainton, the Hastings ladies champion at 16 and Bexhill-based Julie Lawrence, the Sussex No 1 junior and victor at the recent Hastings Youth Championships. I have lost count of the number of veterans teams Sussex is running in the county championships, possibly it is three. The first team is running up with three other leading teams and can now call upon the services of the newcomers from Robin Stace (who recently up-ended Henry Buist), Keith Horton and Roger Chandler should he elect to be available. Not to mention the men with a fine record over the past ten years as a Sussex veteran Alan Rowden and of course Mike Watts the intrepid ITTF Deputy General Secretary whose admin duties frequently interfere with his playing ambitions.

Phil Smith has finally gained his reward for a great campaign by being awarded the Sussex No 2 ranking under Adrian Moore, a move that should have taken him to the final of the all-Sussex championship under Adrian Moore, a move that should have taken him to the final of the all-Sussex championship at Lancing on 16th April. Stephen Moore is now No 3 so the Smith wedge operates between the brothers for the first time.

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<td>Lucy Lucas</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Lynn Trusell</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Angela Masket</td>
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It was all change at the Swindon senior closed table tennis championships. The absence of last year’s mens and womens champions signalled changes in every name on the trophies - the first time for years this has happened. And two players steamed in to line-up a couple of trophies each. Ray Hughes and Claire Hunter both scored double tops. Hughes became the new mens champion when he defeated Steve Davies in the final.

But it was Hughes’ semi-final against Ernie Howell which will be remembered as the match of the championships.

Howell, who last won the title more than 20 years ago, sheds the years to take the opening game.

And it looked as if the whole was to come true for the veteran who was out of the game for years through injury. He held a match point with the second game only to see Hughes snatch it away from him with some searching forehands.

Howell battled back to 2-all in the deciding game - and then served a fault, it was a shattering blow and Howell never recovered.

**SUSSEX**

John Woodford

A commemoration award was made to George Halversen after the Midland Open in appreciation of his valuable work as chairman of the executive committee of the Warwickshire Association.

Congratulations to Mrs Veronica Jackson (Birmingham) Stan Lenton and Jack Elliott (Coventry) whose nominations for the Merit Award have been approved by the ETTA’s National Council in recognition of their hard work in promoting table tennis in the Warwickshire Area.

**County Defeats**

All three matches were lost 6-4 on March 1st due, in the main, to the inability to field the strongest teams; one reason being closed tournament events clashing with county fixtures.

The senior A side lost to Worcester, junior A to Staffs, and the junior B to Clwyd.

As both junior sides have had to play reserve players making their county appearances, they performed very creditably.

The reluctance of some players to play for the county has caused disappointment and it is apparent from the latest results that there is little hope of any teams winning their division.

**WARWICKSHIRE**

Mary Rose

**Ranking list amendments**

**Boys**

1. Ray Friers
2. Chauhan
3. Smith
4. Thomas
5. Todd
6. Singh
7. Felton

**Girls**

1. A Ledwith
2. T Green
3. L Spilsbury
4. K Ryan
5. N Meddings
6. C Woodward
7. Hollihan

Twelve boys and five girls participated in a junior trial at Coventry. Missing were Leigh Jeffries, Williams, Rashid, Liza Spilsbury and Alison Ledge.

The finishing order was:

Boys: Chauhan, Smith, Todd, Singh, Felton, Thomas, Ameghino, John, J Perry.

Girls - Green, Meddings, Woodward, Hollihan, R Ledwith.

A feature of the trial was the tremendous improvement of Nicola Meddings (Birmingham) who at 16 years old should have a very bright future.

**WILTSHIRE**

Laurie Selby

Claire Hunter was quick to take her chance to grab the women’s singles title in the absence of Claire Maye - winner of the previous three years.

Claire’s greater control and patience put her in the driving seat against Brenda Lee in the final. Brian Powell, the top seed, took the veterens singles with Howell again the runner-up.

And it was third time unlucky for Howell in the mens doubles final. He and Brian Powell went down to Hughes and Graham Osley.

The mixed doubles went unexpectedly to the young pairing of Raymond Powell and Jenny Neale who beat veterans Brian Powell - Marya - and Sylvia Morse.

Claire Hunter picked up her second title when she teamed with Helen Wilson to win the womens doubles which was played on a new basis.

The divisional singles final, for players in the second, third and fourth divisions, turned out to be an all-junior battle between Paul Timms and Neil Evered. Paul won in straight games.

Only one trophy stayed in the same hands in the junior tournament.

That was the under 13 championship which Nathan Pickett kept firmly in his grasp.

He grabbed the title for the second year in a good, sporting, final against Stuart Fry.

Raymond Powell, runner-up last year, stepped up to take the major prize in the under 17 singles.

He was much too sharp for Jasvinder Singh, the improving left-hander who ended the chances of last year’s winner Paul Tuck repeating his success.

Singh had the consolation of taking home the boys doubles trophy with Steve Ely.

Colin Worgan snatched out in two deuce games against Paul Timms to take the under 15 singles.

Sarah Devine snapped up the under 13 singles which was played on a round robin basis.

The most exciting final was between Peter Fry and Peter Collar for the junior divisional trophy. Fry just collared it in a three game thriller.

Raymond Powell has been finding out about the ups and downs of the Wiltshire rankings which, like the national rankings, are now done on a points basis.
County Notes

He raises up the senior list to number three after winning the latest ranking tournament. But he is toptopped from another spot in the under 18 section by Michael Auchterlonie who won the junior tournament.

Satchell and Miss Maisey show no sign of releasing their grip at the top of the senior sections.

Getting there

Dad was chuffed and his son was puffed when the British Rail Western Region All-Line table tennis championships were decided.

Dad, Brian Powell of Swindon, beat his son Raymond in the finals to get the trophy back again.

It was sweet revenge for Brian who saw Raymond take the cup after beating dad in last year's final.

Brian reached the final by beating Oxfordshire's Gerry Collins and Raymond scored a narrow win over Berkshire veterans' champion Johnny Morris.

This set the scene for a family confrontation between the Swindon junior and senior champions.

This time dad's steady play and wise head tamed the brilliant but patchy hitting of Raymond.

But Raymond was on the winning side when he teamed up with his father and Maurice Neate to take the team title.

The Swindon side beat the home team, Didcot, 5-2 in the final.

Gwen clocks another honour

There was an honour for another Swindon player at the tournament. Gwen Hazell, eight times winner of the Swindon singles championship, was presented with a pendulum clock to make her 25 years playing for the Western Region.

Gwen has also played for Great Britain in the railways world championship. She first played in York in 1964 and was in the team which played in Yugoslavia in 1970 and in Czechoslovakia in 1978.

She has competed in the intercounty championships for Wiltshire for 20 consecutive years.

In that time Gwen, who now plays for the veterans' team, has chalked up 12 county titles, including the singles championship three times.

She was also in the Wiltshire side which won the South West championship in 1964.

Bitter defeat

Wiltshire table tennis teams salvaged only two points in their latest round of county championship matches.

The senior and junior teams each picked up points with 5-5 draws but the veterans went down 4-5 to Berkshire.

And that was a bitter defeat for the home side who were neck-and-neck with Berkshire in the race for their championship. Neither had previously lost.

Ironically Berkshire sneaked home with the help of former Swindon player Mike Harris who won both of his singles for the visitors.

Brian Powell, Swindon's veterans champion, was the only undefeated Wiltshire player in the match which was played at Churchfields School.

The seniors travelled to Essex where they were made to battle hard for a point.

Kevin Satchell - now a full-time table tennis player - was in superb form, snapping up his two singles matches with a class display.

Clair Hunter, playing in her first county match of the season, also did well to finish the day undefeated.

There was little between the two sides throughout the match and Wiltshire snatched a point when Kevin Edwards won the last with a cliff-hanging 22-20 win in the deciding game against Stuart Gibbs.

And it took a tremendous last-ditch effort from Wiltshire juniors to get them out of a hole in their game against Cornwall in Swindon.

The home team were 3-5 down but Lorraine Cox and Ray Powell chalked up wins in the last two matches to pinch a point.

Powell had a good day, winning his other singles and partnering Paul Tuck to victory in the doubles.

SPOTING SCHOLARSHIPS AT SWANSEA

The University College of Swansea have established six cultural and sporting scholarships (worth £500 per term for up to three years) for undergraduates students entering into the college during 1986.

The scholarships, available to those who have already reached a high national standards of excellence, allow students to pursue and develop their natural talents while reading for a degree.

Bath University and Edinburgh already have similar schemes for leading sports men and women.

Fairholm family favourite

Director of coaching, Dave Fairholm and wife Cheryl with daughter Elisha

MARK'S DAY AT HALIFAX

Yorkshire's Rea Balmford

Robertshaw added the women's doubles with Hayley Gillespie and the mixed doubles with Stansfield to a singles success in which she beat Barbara Gee.


The signing of England's top cadet player Michael O'Driscoll from Mirfield by Unity only emphasizes that the Bradford league is the Mecca for the top players in Yorkshire. Unity, who currently lead the race in the top division, can now call upon Tim Dyson (Huddersfield), Steve Sharpe (Wakefield), and Matthew Connell (Leeds), in addition to O'Driscoll.

Their closest challengers - the two sides of Clayton Heights and a more native Bradfordians, but also number Harrogate's Mick Emmerich in their ranks.

Top players playing outside their home league have long been a bone of contention, but every credit must go to Bradford. They have the razor keen competition to offer which attracts players to the city from as far afield as Harrogate in the North and Sheffield in the opposite direction.

Grass Roots enthusiasm at Leeds

In a national magazine banquet usually find their way in the direction of the top players, whether it be at national, county, league or even club level. But table tennis is played just as enthusiastically at the grassroots, and a story of dedication comes from division B of the Leeds league.

Alison Hardy, Ray Wildman and Graham Spackman, representing TSB No 2, returned to competitive play at the beginning of the 1982/3 season and, midway through that season earned their first draw.

That one minor success apart, the side played some 73 matches without a win to their credit, but the enthusiasm of the players never waned as they continued their fixtures in a true spirit of sportsmanship.

An unenviable record after 3½ years came to an end recently when TSB ran out winners for the first time.

The Leeds league are rightly proud of the Bankers' trio and, in these days of diminishing leagues and decreased commitment, Yorkshire add their warm congratulations.
Horses for courses
Tony Russe explains the trainers role

The close proximity of the dates of the English senior closed and the Cheltenham national hunt festival may be accidental but it did remind me of the similarity of the job of the table tennis coach and the racehorse trainer. The object of the exercise being to get one’s charges to the races fit enough to do themselves justice and to ensure that final preparation before the off has them ready to win. So it was with a heart full of hope and no little confidence that this coach set off for Oldham on 7th March, 1986. My runners, Adrian Moore, Colin Wilson and John Souter travelled in separate boxes.

The first indications were good. The journey was uneventful, the put up a great fight but Colin runs is doing the business and he wins at a tournament is that you can’t afford to let up and Adrian Curry for the evening repast. Adrian, who is up against Andy, is doing the business and he wins first comfortably. In the second, Adrian falters at a vital stage and its one all. I remind him again of his tactics and Adrian is back in business to be 2-1 up at the break.

As his coach I did not want the break but it is not up to me. Both Andy and Adrian are highly intelligent young men. Andy has, or appears to have, excellent composure. Adrian can easily go over the top by trying too hard. I try to work on this during the interval but Adrian has dreamed up some tactic of playing into Andy’s backhand. I advise against it — remember the ‘knee’. The fourth almost starts to become a backhand to backhand exercise and Adrian pays the penalty. I try to get Adrian settled and compos­ed for the fifth - switch the angles, remember the ‘knee’. Off we go backhand to backhand. Have I lost the power of speech? Do I think one thing and say another? No, the player’s stress can undo all the plans that the coach lays.

Adrian pays the penalty, he is full of self deprecation — “I’m a bot­ter!” No he’s not, he’s a good player who tries too hard. He still has improvement in him and Adrian pays the penalty, he is full of self deprecation — “I’m a bot­ter!” No he’s not, he’s a good player who tries too hard. He still has improvement in him and wants to get Adrian settled and compos­ed for the fifth - switch the angles, remember the ‘knee’. Off we go backhand to backhand. Have I lost the power of speech? Do I think one thing and say another? No, the player’s stress can undo all the plans that the coach lays.

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in the quarters. Worry about that tomorrow!

Sunday brings another good breakfast and a certain reluctance to pack the bags and leave the comfort of the hotel. Could this but go on for ever, etc., etc., etc.,

Anyway, 10.40 a.m. seems a civilised time for John to play Skye. John has already had a warm up winning the quarter final doubles with Colin over Adrian and Steve Moore. Stayed well away from all parties and let them get on with it.

Now Skye has matured into a hardened campaigner, naturally talented, able to deliver the goods in a five setter. He is now a business player and consequently must be respected as such. Remind John that Skye is prepared to take the long view and that he must not burn himself out over the first two. We decide that 80 percent effort for a couple of games might be beneficial. John wins the first reasonably comfortably but is suitably chastened when Skye replies by winning the second. Now urge John to step up his work rate, which he prefers anyhow, and he takes the third and the break. Time for straight talking, remind him to stay sharp, play the previously discussed percentages and above all, that he has the right to win. John is a 100 per cent man. Skye is similarly revived and, no doubt, advised and the two lads play a blinder with Sky winning the leg to 'deuce'.

So its all down to the fifth. Remind John again of the 'plan' and his right to win. Sky serves and John goes 5-0 down. I am aware of him and I tell him so. Later I spot Peter Charters shaking hands and guess the good news. He's off to the Europeans. My job is done - for a while, John's begins.

Time to relax and enjoy the finals. Good crowd and well staged. Joy Grundy and Jean Parker turn a first game loss into victory in the ladies doubles and Des Douglas and Carl Prean take the men's doubles. The ladies final is Lisa Bellinger and Joy Grundy. Lisa settles in the first and takes the game as Joy struggles mentally with her tactics and her touch. Lisa is coasting steadily in the second and then somehow lets her lead slip away. Assurance becomes not so certain, accurate snap hitting turns to "I've got to break her rhythm, bell I missed another!" Joy takes the second. I wonder if her resolution can last for five games. It can and it does, for she takes the next two to win comfortably. All praise to Joy. Lisa has done much already and we tend to forget yet youth. Another three to four years before we see the complete player. Meantime she must continue to work on her game - chop and float from preferably middle distance, maximising spin variation and keeping in touch with the table to launch counter attack. It'll come, she works.

The mens final after an initial spurt by Carl Prean was all Desmond Douglas. Des is in no mood to be dethroned and he will abdicate when he's ready, not before. Carl's turn will come, but all honour to Des for being the true professional, setting an example to all who care to learn from him.

So a happy coach's farewell to Oldham. Thanks, must thank the umpires for their forbearance of a noisy corner man. Now let my thoughts turn to Cheltenham.

Simpson succeeds in East Anglia

writes Club Coach, David Holland

Lowestoft Table Tennis Centre was a hive of activity on 7th-9th March 1986. This was the result of senior National Coach Peter Simpson's first visit to the town. Eighteen enthusiastic players were instructed on advance techniques within the game, also a video was shown and throughout the course general discussions on stroke play took place. Peter had the assistance of Lowestoft's own club coaches Bill Sisson, Trevor Pull, Bob Peek, Cindy Peek and David Holland.

The enthusiasm that Peter generated all through the weekend has hopefully given Lowestoft a foundation to build on and to enable the town to put forward more of these or other selected types of weekend courses.

Note: As a matter of interest, in a local cadet league match a game was played up to a score of 45-43 under genuine competitive circumstances. Could this be the longest ever duce recorded or has anyone recorded higher?

Positive play

Ken Muhr Coaching Officer of the Milton Keynes league takes a personal view

Whilst thoroughly agreeing with Paul Day (Table Tennis News, January 1986) about the need for young players to develop stronger backhands and a two wing power attack, and to play point winning shots rather than relying on safety first, I don't think that he takes into account of the practical difficulties inherent in this. The influences towards negative play should not be underestimated. How often under pressure players revert back to it!

The emphasis of English table tennis at league level and, to a lesser extent, at inter-league, county and minor tournaments' level, is on playing safe. A young player who 'goes for his shots' in the local league is more likely as not advised by an experienced team mate to "push more", "just push", "take your time", "wait for the right ball", "work for the point", "don't rush", "don't smash", "slow down", etc etc, particularly if the player in question is losing.

The dilemma in criticising this kind of advice which comes from team mates, coaches and parents etc., is that it is sound advice to some extent. Clearly a player should not charge wildly into a game trying to crash a winner off every ball. (Being positive does not mean that).

But it is a matter of emphasis or degree. Too often the balance veers towards stifling a player's aggressiveness, risk taking and flair and, therefore, his/her future development.

Secondly, the encouragement of negative play often does lead to short term (and short lived) success, as Paul himself notes. If you play safe at cadet or local league level you are more likely (initially) to win and, if you win, you are more likely to continue playing safe. Moreover, successful players around you will be seen doing the same thing.

But the player's horizons will not be limited as he/she has taken a positive attitude to go far and, if her/she is talented and positive, it won't be long before there are few in the local league to stop him/her.

However, although not theoretically affecting future prospects adversely, frequent losses are discouraging for the player and those associated with him/her. It may be no good an enlightened coach saying to that individual "keep on playing positively, even though you are now losing, and you will be much better in the long run", if success never appears to come. The youngster may even rely on this advice as an excuse. "You told me it doesn't matter if I lose!"

The dilemma for coaches, therefore, is whether the confidence and encouragement a child gains by winning by playing the 'wrong way' is more important for him/her than losing playing the 'right way'. The youngster may also be confused and torn between a coach who advises positive play and, for example, a locally respected player who, not having been on the open tournament circuit for many years to know the different disciplines this is nonsense. Parents and players who want instant success may quickly see that the latter is 'proved' to be correct.

I have been considering the kind of youngsters who have the potential to make at least a mark on the national scene. Realistically, however, most young players will not/cannot make this grade. Perhaps, for some of these, a more negative style of play would be more suitable so that they can go on enjoying the game at a more local level.

This has all sorts of implications for coaches. Should a different playing approach be instilled in players not so much according to their natural inclinations, but according to their ultimate potential? Can we spot this potential?
Boost for women's table tennis

The National Federation of Women's Institutes is to organise and promote a national table tennis event for its membership, commencing in September 1986.

Many Institutes have their own facilities but it is hoped that entries will also be forthcoming from those who do not. Copies of the ETTA address book are to be circulated to the participating Institutes and members advised to contact their local league for advice on possible venues and coaching opportunities.

"Nationally, the Women's Institute is becoming increasingly prominent in the area of sports promotion", says ETTA Development Officer Fiona Brown. "Indeed this table tennis event is one which has been made possible by their sporting sponsorship from the Milk Marketing Board. It is most encouraging that table tennis has been selected as a part of this programme and naturally we hope that this 1986/87 season will be the first in a long partnership between our two organisations."

Join the professionals by Derek Baddeley, ATTP coordinator

A very successful and constructive meeting was held with principal officers of the ETTA at the English Closed Championships and the ATTP Committee were pleased with the positive response given to several of our proposals. The discussions were felt by both sides to be so helpful that it was agreed to arrange further meetings on a regular basis in order to make continuous progress on a number of initiatives, particularly the proposed new County Championships format, Stiga sponsored 3 Star tournaments (scheduling of matches, prize money distribution, advertising etc) and general development of the game.

Our AGM was held earlier at the same venue, the past year's progress reports were given by the Chairman, Secretary and Coordinator, various aspects of our work and future efforts were discussed. There were no new nominations for the officers posts or to the committee and all were therefore elected to serve for the next year. Keir Donaldson was appointed as assistant to Secretary Colin Wilson, and assistants to the Chairman and Coordinator will be appointed shortly.

The ATTP intends to run its own inaugural tournaments towards the end of this summer, probably incorporating changes in the scoring system and an increase in net height as an evaluation experiment. ATTP printed sweatshirts and T-shirts are now in stock and can be obtained from Colin Wilson or Keir Donaldson. These are royal blue with our table tennis ball logo central on the chest in white, approximately 6" in diameter, and our slogan "we are on the ball" beneath in ¼" white lettering.

All members are now entitled to a free box of new type "Halex" balls - see Colin or Keir or ask them to post to you. Our President Johnny Leach would be pleased to have your comments when you've tried them.

Our membership is steadily increasing, and in view of the benefits we are now to give, this isn't surprising. More importantly, we hope our members (and all you non-members!) can see from the actions we are pushing on a number of fronts that we really are determined to live up to our slogan!

So why don't you join us and show your support even if you're not prepared to take an active part - remember we are always pleased to receive constructive suggestions and ideas!

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**ATTP MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Enclose £2.00 cheque or postal order made payable to "ATTP" and post to: Colin Wilson, Hon Sec ATTP, 25 Brookside Crescent, CUFFLEY, Herts.

Name ........................................

Address ........................................

Postcode ...................................... Tel. ..................................

Club .......................................... Signed ..................................

League ......................................

You will be issued with a numbered membership card.
**Rubberneck**

**Sky rise**

Dear Rubberneck,

I personally think that your column is good for table-tennis because it adds a bit of spice and interest to the sport. But honestly; although I expect to get more stick than anyone else, your article in the March/April issue was not fair.

You said in that article that I had got ranked in Europe and had not had an international result of any note to warrant it. Well I'm afraid that your informant is manipulating your ignorance of the international circuit because to get ranked I beat a fair player called Boris Rozenberg of Russia in the Hungarian Open who was ranked at No 15 in Europe at the time.

You may have seen him at the English Open; he was the one that beat Des Douglas 3-0. And on top of that I beat another European ranked player Bruno Parietti of France in the English Open. I also beat Englebert Huging of Germany (who was ranked 22 in Europe) in the World Championships.

So, as you can see I accumulated quite a few points and contrary to what I was supposed to have said, deserved my ranking.

It makes me laugh to think that there are certain people who would do anything to try and bring me down but, anyway, your column like I said before is generally good. But don't be scared to write about everybody although you know as well as I do that most people can't take it.

Good luck with the column,

Skylet Andrew
30 Ranellagh Road
Stratford
London E15 3DP

**Marathon man**

Success is the key to new vice chairman public relations Brian Spicer's appointment. Working in sales and marketing, he has a track record second to none as he clocks up the miles on table tennis admin in his spare moments.

England players make themselves scarce at training camps when "Brian" turns up. The Sussex fitness fanatic was seen crossing the line at the recent Mars London marathon in just under three hours!

**Aggressive play**

George Bohm from West Germany found himself sent home in the middle of the Prague tournament after being accused and admitting "violence of the tongue" to the top German coach.

The former Rumanian was invited to withdraw the remark applied to the gentleman in question but declined. Indeed, Rubberneck applied to the gentleman in question but declined. Indeed, Rubberneck manipulated your ignorance of the international circuit because to get ranked I beat a fair player called Boris Rozenberg of Russia in the Hungarian Open who was ranked at No 15 in Europe at the time.

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**TV coverage**

Two days after the start of the European championships in Prague Rubberneck was collapsed with laughter at the predicament of top journalist Richard Eaton.

Eaton had jetted in from the European badminton championships in Sweden, dumped his luggage at the Hotel Olympic and then rushed to the stadium to join fellow press correspondent John Woodford already at the tournament.

Hours later, arriving back at the hotel around 1.30 a.m., he opened his case to find piles of ladies underwear. Worse still, they were not even the right size! Frantic phone calls and the careful of knickers was on its way back to the airport where a distraught Czech lady was waiting almost in tears.

But in a country where lingerie opens doors faster than the local lube, it was debarred who was the more upset.

**Professional photographer**

The British contingent and indeed the whole tournament had the pleasure of the intrepid Scottish photographer from Dundee, Brian Webster, a man who once seen is never forgotten.

Webster took some 400 photos at the tournament but a plot to keep him out of the finals night party did not succeed. He eventually got in resplendent in tuxedo on the ticket of Alan Griffiths the Welsh national coach.

The deputy prime minister of Czechoslovakia was presenting some of the prizes at the finals party. But he was under-dressed compared with our Scottish friend!

Webster is always good value for a laugh - well-known for his penchant for kissing attractive ladies. Swedish eye-witnesses saw him doing just that in a Prague nightspot during the championships.

But his companions were not interested in a photo-modelling career it seemed. The photographer took his leave when friends advised that the ladies attentions were neither voluntary nor honorary.

England international Fiona Elliot got stuck at Manchester Airport on her way to the Wedge Irish Open earlier this year. And all because of some table tennis rubber glue.

Despite Fiona's explanation that it helped her play better, air officials refused to allow it on the Belfast British Airways flight believing it to represent a fire hazard.

Earlier in the week, at Heathrow, John Souter was able to keep his glue. But only after he had shown air staff the tin was clearly labelled "non-flammable".

Meanwhile, table tennis players are waiting anxiously to see whether inhalation of the glue fumes while changing rubbers between matches might cause them problems under the new drug and doping regulations to be introduced by the English association.

**Stuck up**

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Few upsets at schools championships

David Lomas

Upsets were few and far between as the seeded players shared the honours at the Dunlop English Schools Individual Championships which took place at Mansfield Leisure Centre on Saturday, May 3rd.

Only one of the eight titles was successfully defended. Bradley Billington retained his U16 crown in a close-fought final against a rare finalist in local Nottinghamshire player, John Holland, with a score of 22-20 in the third game.

John - No 5 seed - had seized his chance when No 2 seed, his cousin Damian Holland from Essex, had been forced to withdraw because of an injury sustained a few days earlier.

The other seven winners are all new names on the list of honours gained since the championships began in 1974.

The established format of the championships was again employed — contestants being county champions from a possible 50 ESTTA county association areas playing in a straight knockout competition.

The biggest upset came in the senior (U19) boys event where No 1 seed, Mark Randle (Wa) was eliminated by Martin Stanley (Co) in the quarter-final. Stanley then went on to eventual winner Jonathon Bult (Humb) in the semi-final.

The withdrawal of No 1 seed, Joanne Shaw (WY) left the way clear for No 2 seed, Debbie Soothill (La) to lift the girls U19 title.

Another Lancashire player, Nicola McGrath, had a good day but lost to Helen Lower (W Midd) in the girls U16 event. Caroline Buckley (Bd) confirmed her No 1 status in the U13 event. And in the boys U13 category a west country final between Michael Auchocherlonie (Wi) and Neil Bevan (Co) went Wiltshire's way. Darren Blake of Croydon - at the tender age of nine - took over the U11 boys title held by brother Jason, without losing a game. Organiser Paul Birch looked back with some satisfaction in seeing the four seeded players in each of the U11 events reach the semi-finals.

There was keen competition amongst the 250 players involved, as places for the Dunlop Schools International Championships teams (Salford, July 5th and 6th) were “up for grabs”.

RESULTS

**U19 BOYS SINGLES**

Semi-finals
Jonathan Bult (Humb) b Martin Stanley 12, 13; Andrew Ball (WY) b Peter Harris (Bu) 22, 11.

Final
Bult b Ball 7, 15, 15

**U16 BOYS SINGLES**

Semi-finals
John Holland (Ng) b Gavin Black (Bd) 19, 15; Bradley Billington (Dy) b Matthew Perrott (Surrey County) 7, 12.

Final
Billington b Holland 15, 18, 20

**U13 BOYS SINGLES**

Semi-finals
Michael Auchocherlonie (Wi) b Gary Knight (Si) 18, 19; Neil Bevan (Co) b Andrew Eden (La) 18, 10, 12.

Final
Auchocherlonie b Bevan 16, 12, 20

**U11 BOYS SINGLES**

Semi-finals
Darren Blake (S Met) b Rod Manwaring (La) 13, 15; David Baker (Mi) b Martin Dawson (Dy) 17, 17.

Final
Blake b Baker 18, 19

**U19 GIRLS**

Semi-finals
Helen Perrott (Av) b Louise Davies (Sp) 18, 20, 19; Debbie Soothill (La) b Susan Butler (Dy) 16, 12.

Final
Soothill b Perrott 16, 17, 13

**U16 GIRLS**

Semi-finals
Nicola Meddings (W Midd) b Melonie Carey (Sc) 19, 18, Helen Lower (W Midd) b Julie Billington (Dy) 21, 17, 10.

Final
Lower b McGrath 17, 13, 15

**U13 GIRLS**

Semi-finals
Caroline Buckley (Bd) b Samantha Malling (Humb) 17, 18; Joanne Roberts (WY) b Sarah Pengelly (Dy) 18, 20.

Final
Buckley b Roberts 15, 13

**U11 GIRLS**

Semi-finals
Sally Malling (Humb) b Caroline Watt (Ch) 12, 11; Katherine Goodall (WY) b Nicola Weddings (W Midd) 19, 15.

Final
Goodall b Malling 20, 19, 10

**Consolation event winners:**

**U11 BOYS**

Owen Sherborne (WY)

**U13 BOYS**

Paul Carter (Sy Midd)

**U16 BOYS**

Scott Greenbrook (W Sc)

**U19 BOYS**

Paul Smith (W Midd)

**U11 GIRLS**

Kerry Shaw (E Cty)

**U13 GIRLS**

Sally Hughes (Ox)

**U16 GIRLS**

Jane Woodcock (Dy)

**U19 GIRLS**

Karen Bish (Cu)

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Spelman the Irish wizard

15 year old Sean Spelman, last season's Irish No 1 cadet, has been selected in the Irish junior team for the forthcoming European Youth Championships in Belgium, 20th-27th July.

The other junior boys are Andrew Dennison (Ulster) and Anthony Redmond (Leinster). The junior girls are Ellen McManus and Lorraine Cullen (both Leinster) and the cadet boys are James Mullan and Gary Nielson (both Leinster).

Sean's selection is somewhat special however, as he comes from a Connacht club, almost a “backwoods” as far as success at table tennis is concerned. And also for the fact that, of all five juniors, he is the only one who will be a junior again in 1987, and in 1988!

He was bitterly disappointed last season, when after totally dominating Irish cadet boys tournaments, it was decided not to send any team to the Europeans. This year he has his just reward!

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Girls' U19 (l to r): Louise Davis, Debbie Soothill (Winner), Mr. Paul Birch (ESTTA Competition Sec), Helen Perrott (2nd), Susan Butler (Devon).

Girls' U16 (l to r): Melonie Carey, Helen Lower (1st), Mr John Arnold (ESTTA Chairman), Nicola McGrath (2nd), Julie Billington.

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Sean Spelman.
**Mailbox**

**1,2,3 testing**

We used the experimental scoring system for our hard bat tournament in May.

In a brief survey of the players' views 90% expressed a definite view and 85% were in favour of the system of playing up to 11 points, best of seven games. There was some confusion as to whether we were just referring to the hard bat event, but on rechecking only a few changed their minds. It certainly would be worth trying out on a wider scale.

As to the more general impressions — it also keeps a match more lively in the spectators' eyes. There seems to be a lot more happening, and, even in a one-sided match, the weaker player has an occasional purple patch to take a game.

When the match goes to the seventh game it's almost equivalent to a draw out the deuce-in-the-third game and it becomes very tense and exciting. Matches were very entertaining — but of course this was partly due to the use of hard bats and perhaps a slightly more good humour approach to the tournament.

The scoring system seemed to discourage players from excessively long rallies of defensive play. This may be due to creating a mental attitude that each game, by itself, does not have that 'all-costs' level of importance. But, on the other hand, there were still many good, skillful and exciting rallies with the hard bats.

One other point made was the advantage that would be given to a player with a strong server serving first. I am not sure that this is significant, it is not often that the server goes into a 5-0 lead. But it does prompt some thought on a change in the serving pattern, such as serving alternatively, or in threes, or the first server serving twice and then five a piece. Some of these ideas present problems of mental arithmetic!

I think this scoring system has some merit in moving table tennis towards becoming more of a spectator sport. In this tournament we had the double interest of using hard bats which in itself many believe is another move in the right direction.

Some spectators might like to try out the system.

Yours sincerely,
Jack Chakley
Chairman & Tournament Secretary
Staffordshire CTTA
Churnleigh, Cross Street,
Gnosall, Stafford ST20 0BX

**Colour Crazy**

Multicoloured equipment to replace the traditional dark green and white colour scheme and a new system of scoring to limit games to a target of 11 points and 21 — that's the crazy pattern some English officials have dreamed up to try and attract interest in the Stiga National Top 12 tournament scheduled to take place at the Soham Sports Centre from 10-12 October.

Frankly, it's a load of rubbish. Smacking of desperation. There's nothing whatever wrong with our traditional scoring system and dressing up players and their equipment in all colours of the rainbow won't make a scrap of difference to the skills, thrills and entertainment value of the play — which is what the fans come to see.

There is a far superior and simpler formula for selling the Top 12 to the crowds, the media and hopefully to the rulemakers for the benefit of our sport as a whole. You do it by insisting that all those selected to contest the £2,100 Stiga tournament use a bat standardised by having the same type of covering on either side of the blade. Players would then be obliged to rely on their own ability instead of switching from one side of the bat to the other to vary pace and spin artificially.

I've just returned from the very successful and enjoyable Veteran World Championships in Rimini, Italy where the majority of us 'golden oldies' used old-fashioned standard bats to produce a taste of table tennis the way it was. We made spectators bubble and squeak with enthusiasm at the spectacular rallies which entwined with the scope for such modern magicians as Des Douglas and Carl Prean, Lisa Bellinger and Alison Gordon under similar conditions.

Imagine the scope for such modern magicians as Des Douglas and Carl Prean, Lisa Bellinger and Alison Gordon under similar conditions — believe me, TV, the press, the crowds and the players would love it. And the Stiga Top 12 would set an example the rest of the world might soon be persuaded to follow.

Johnny Leach MBE
15 Manor Links
Bishops Stortford
CM23 5RA

**Pointer for success?**

We have been carrying out experiments with the 11 point game similar to Mike Prior's thoughts on the scoring system in Table Tennis News (March/April) and recently staged a full 'German style' national league match at the expense of player and spectator reaction.

Seventy-five spectators, good for a sunny Sunday at the end of April, watched Ashford's National League team, strengthened by John Green of Errey's Print, take on a specially formed team called Surrey Internationals. The latter consisted of three current players: Dave Hannah, Nicky Mason and Max Crimmins, and three past players: Dave Welsman, Connie Warren and Emile Emezz.

This was deliberate to see how the views of current tournament players compared with those of the past. In fact we have to report that the message received from all the players and the spectators was an 'unreserved yes' and 'when will it come into general use?'.

The games were certainly more exciting to watch and the players had to concentrate throughout.

In the final half of the match, played on two tables, the sets were the best of five games of 11 points and in the second half the best of 7 games. Players and spectators agreed that the best of 7 games will be the minimum required at whatever standard of play.

As to the result, Ashford, led by new No 1 Kenny Jackson, did well, losing 6-9 in the end after holding Surrey 4-4 at the half-way stage.

It is now most likely that the 11-point game will be played in the coming season of the Playrite Premier League. Presumably we will be the first league to introduce it.

Our, new extensive, 'market' research indicates that it will be welcomed and warranted. We firmly believe that it could just possibly be a turning point in the history of table tennis.

**Protest**

Yet again I feel I must protest about the so called official magazine of the ETTA. Your editorial in the March/April edition complains bitterly about the lack of coverage in the national press — agreed. But what about the coverage in our own magazine — to put it mildly it's disgusting. Reports that are months out of date ie. Europe Top 12, Des. Douglas great achievement we read about in May — over three months after the event. Hardly any tournament results, just the barest county championship results and no match reports so far. Perhaps the views of the ETTA that the magazine is worth the price. Surely these are more important than a half page spread about a 14 year old acting as an umpire!

We wonder why secretaries are reluctant to forward copy as they just do not know as and when the next issue will be coming out. Look at this latest issue (March/April) copy for the June edition is required by the 30th April, yet my copy was not delivered until the second week in May.

Articles such as International News, and Official News from ETTA have been dropped in preference of comments by Rubbenbeck — nothing but rubbish. With the hap-hazard issuing of our magazine the subscriptions will fall and keep on falling.

The season is now over and done with, yet we do not yet know half of what has gone on — a thoroughly disgusting state of affairs. Bring back the old style of the magazine and lets have an issue on the 10th of each month October to May as in the old days. This new move has failed miserably to awake new interest, in fact you have put us back twenty years or more.

I am sorry to be so critical at your first efforts but this is what the grassroots of our sport are saying especially when we receive the draw for the English Open only when the tournament has been played.

Yours behind the times,
Frank Jackson
8 Crabby Grove
Scarboro
Grimsby
South Humberside DN33 2NP
A Thank You to Beneficial Trust

Select watches
People leave all sorts of things behind - I have two watches from the Beneficial Trust Derby Junior selection tournament that could be returned to their owners if they would care to contact me.

Mike Payne
534 Duffield Road
Allestree
Derby
DE3 2DL

CLASSIFIED ADS

For Sale

ITTF BOOKS. Official Handbook (constitution, laws in full and international regulations) £3.00; Handbook for Match Officials £5.00; Rules Booklet (laws and international regulations) £3.00. Prices (c.w.0) include p&p from ETTA, 21 Claremont, Hastings TN4 1HF.

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Stop the knock

I found it interesting to read the articles by Mike Prior and Keith Davies under the "Grassroots" section of the March/April edition of the magazine, if only to realise that their articles expressing concern over the future of the game were similar but viewed from a different angle.

Reading on further one notes Mr John Prean, yet again, felt the need to write a destructive article in what he obviously feels is a constructive form.

I think there is a saying that if you tell people something often enough and loud enough they will begin to believe what they hear and it saddens me to read the number of articles that continually appear in this magazine which appear to do nothing less but criticise the state of the game.

I can appreciate that the articles submitted are written for the best of intentions but I do not consider this magazine should be used as a platform to continually destroy and present an image which in a number of cases is completely untrue. I am sure that other sports may have similar problems but I would hope that they do not, through their own publications/magazines, take the opportunity to continually depress their interested readers with what I can only suggest is destructive material.

The downward slippery slope is a difficult one to climb back up and if you continually knock the sport you will find that those who give their time, dedication and enthusiasm may prefer to quietly fade away.

If people outside the game wish to criticise then so be it, but I would suggest that much more can be gained by promoting articles which inform their readers of the various initiatives which are continually taking place in the hope that they too may wish to be involved.

M. Sweeting
54 Paradise Road
Welwyn
Herts

What IS going on?

According to "Rubberneck" a former ETTA Staff Coach was known as "The Invisible Man", another was in line for that title and a third had let down a local league or someone felt or said that he had. If true, disturbing revelations.

Clear this cannot go on. The full-time professional coaches are part of the department of which Peter Charters is the head (Vice-Chairman Selection/Coaching). I cannot understand his silence. Let him state now what "Rubberneck" writes is true or false.

If true, further questions require asking about management, about supervision, because the buck stops at the top, not at the bottom. If false, a very handsome apology will be due. I trust it will be given unreservedly.

John Prean
12 Marlborough Road
RYDE
Isle of Wight
PO33 1AA

2-man option

I was interested to read in Table Tennis News (March/April) that the Bournemouth super league "has been more of a replacement to the usual league matches rather than a supplement to them".

This was one of the areas of concern when we at Ashford were discussing the formation of a Premier League. Our concept of a two man team playing alternate weeks, eleven matches in all, not only proved extremely popular but meant that the league was not seen as a straight replacement.

It achieved what it set out to do and that was to strengthen the standard of play in the area which had never been particularly high. Of the 32 players who participated in its first season 18 still played in one or both of the local leagues on a regular basis and 10 were from outside the area.

One of the leagues is now seriously considering introducing its own premier division because of the demand from players who want shorter matches of a consistent standard.

I hope this experience will provide further encouragement to others to rethink current formats.

Ray Tucker
Secretary
Ashford Table Tennis Club
The Centre
Woodthorpe Road
Ashford
TW15 3JX

What are the reasons for the difference in the standard of play in the areas covered by the two leagues? How can we ensure that the new premier division maintains a consistent standard of play?

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of a two-man team league compared to a traditional league?

How can we encourage more players to participate in such leagues? What measures can be taken to ensure the sustainability of these leagues?