Table Tennis News

Joanna Parker's Career Best Performance
Pages 16 & 17

Alan Cooke wins a double at the Stratford & London Grand Prix
Pages 20 to 21

Admiral Lord Nelson TTC Gain Top Awards
Page 13
The Official Magazine of the English Table Tennis Association

Issue No. 298
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FRONT COVER MAIN PHOTOGRAPH
Joanna Parker who has become both
Senior and Junior No. 1
Picture by John Wood

TTN • JAN/FEB 2004

Yasaka

The ETTA would like to
dank the following
organisations for their
support

STIGA

Bribar

TSP

Butterfly

Donic

TNT

Joola

Jarvis Sports

Danny Reed, winner of the mens Band 2 at the Butterfly London Grand Prix, page 21

Admiral Lord Nelson School
TTC's Chairman Brian Hall, received a double award on behalf of his club, see page 13.

Ellenborough's Jimmy Walsh battling to regain British League Premier Division status, page 22

Grass Roots
Has moved to pages 18 & 19
THREE young English players had their first mini taste of international table tennis in December, when they attended a training camp in Cardiff, after an invitation from the TTVV.

Mary Fuller (under 12), Martha Travis and Sarah Russo (both under 11), who are members of the ETTA’s Youth Development squad, took part in a two day camp.

This camp included a friendly training match which was staged with the right level of informality by Alan Griffiths, to make it a great experience for both sets of young girls.

Wales were represented by two under 13 year old girls Rachel Godfrey and Charlotte Godfrey, plus one under 11 Natasha Rees.

The match score was a 7-2 victory to England, but the real winner was the experience given to these young players.

Mary Fuller and Martha Travis both won three each, whilst Sarah Russo won one.

ELINA NEEDS OUR HELP

ELINA GLADH from Sweden, who is 13 years old, will be visiting our country this summer with her mother Anette, has been playing table tennis for 3 years.

Anette is wondering whether there are any girls in her daughter’s age group, somewhere in the South/ South west, who could visit and also whether there is a club she could train at during their visit.

Responses to Rob Sinclair at ETTA HQ in Hastings.

ETTA LAUNCH UMPIRE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

The ETTA National Umpires and Referees Committee (NURC) is launching a two year national campaign in February, to recruit more Local and County Umpires. Setting the target of encouraging every Local League and Premier Club to qualify just one person over the two year period, the ETTA is looking to vastly increase the numbers of umpires. Whether umpiring at a club or league tournament, or having the ambition to become the Pierluigi Collina of the table tennis world, there are many rewarding benefits to becoming an umpire.

Further details will be available shortly on the ETTA website www.etta.co.uk.

In the meantime if you would like to register interest on how to get yourself on to the first rung of the umpiring ladder, please contact Richard Scruton (NURC Chairman) or Colin Clemett (NURC Secretary), both of their website addresses are printed below.

PUB PUNCH

THE table tennis career of Matthew Kenny has been threatened following a punch to his eye in a Sheffield pub, in December.

Kenny, who is a student at Grantham College, needed three hours of surgery to his damaged eye.

Following the operation Matthew saw a specialist in January, but will now have to wait for up to 6 months before he knows his situation.

LEG ON THE MEND

BRADLEY BILLINGTON who had an operation in December to repair varicose veins, is now on the mend.

Brad started playing table tennis again in January, and he hopes to be fit to play in the Newcastle Grand Prix and the English Senior Nationals, in Sheffield.

RETURN OF THE MACCABI GB OPEN

THE MACCABI GB Table Tennis Open Championships has not been held for four years now and in its latter years was not well attended. This year however it will be different, they are now holding the tournament in a new and modern venue on 10-12 tables and have advertised the event well among the Jewish community.

The tournament on Sunday 29th February 2004, at a venue in the London area, is expected to attract 200 or more and will include many nationally ranked (and former nationally ranked) players some being in the top 100. What with family and friends it will probably be a full house.

Further information 020 84572333.
I hope you had a Great Christmas and New Year, may 2004 be a successful and happy one for you all. Val and I enjoyed our break from work and Table Tennis, which we spent with our family. 2003 was a busy year with our two eldest boys getting married, seeing our first grandchild reaching his first birthday and of course becoming Chairman of the ETTA! 2004 will see another grandchild and I shall have the big 60 to celebrate in June, presents most welcome but a Zimmer frame is not required yet.

The start of 2004 will be the end of my first 6 months in office, which has proved interesting and enlightening to say the least. Despite many problems and obstacles, my enthusiasm, and that of my team, has not been impacted and our determination to turn our sport around remains solid and focused.

We have continued with our process of meeting players, parents and officials at various meetings and events across England and despite all of this I still have found time to play in local leagues, county matches and at a number of tournaments. This has given members an opportunity to talk to me and in many cases play and beat me on the table, I expected some quarter but none has been given.

Anyway let me try to give you some update on what has been happening and what the future will bring.

TTN

The magazine improvement programme continues and we are looking at providing 2 free copies to each league, which will be sent to the Chairman, Hon Sec/League Representative member and also a free copy to the County Member.

Increasing circulation by way of new subscriptions is critical for all of us, please complete a subscription form and send it to the office.

Articles from the members are always most welcome, due to space limitations we cannot guarantee all will be included but will do our best to use them, so why not send one in about your club, league or any item which you believe TT players would be interested to read.

AFFILIATION

The returns, to date, which have been received from the leagues with affiliation fees and registered teams, shows for the season 2003/4 that we have 7370 teams against 7606 last seasons. This decline is, regrettably, in line with the reductions in members which we have seen for many years, albeit the ETTA does not have details of individual members and can only base its numbers on team registrations, we must change this in the coming years.

Some leagues have expressed concerns about the 11 scoring system but have reluctantly decided to affiliate and give it a try. The new scoring system is part and parcel of the ETTA rules and laws of the sport and I hope that any league will invite me to their next AGM should they be considering not affiliating for the 2004/5 season.

FUNDING & DEVELOPMENT PLANS

We have recently been advised by Sport England that we do not have to generate a Development Plan for the start of the budget year April 2004 to March 2005 but will have to submit a four-year plan from April 2005.

Details of the funding we shall receive for the next twelve months will be known soon and I shall advise you of the actual money during the first quarter.

Although we have not been included in the top 20 sports, primarily because of our World Status and medal achievements, we are still in a small band of sports which are recognised by the Government and Sport England as being very important from a development perspective and meet the government agenda of Sport for All. This means we will still receive significant funding and in many case more than sports in the top 20.

In future National Governing Bodies like us will have to submit Whole Sports Plans to deliver the strategy of Start, Stay and Succeed and the funding streams have been reduced from 75 to just 2 namely community and national funding. All future funding will be with the 4 year Olympic Cycle starting in 2005.

WEBSITE

The new website will be up and running in the next 60 days. It is expected that this will be upgraded and updated on a regular bases and become a major tool in communications to members and those outside of the Table Tennis fraternity, many thanks to Malcolm MacFarlane for all his efforts.

RANKING AND RATING LIST

The changes have been implemented and the new system is effective from January 2004.

Another area being considered is to get all league results included in the ranking programme, this would give the opportunity for grass roots players who only play competitive table tennis at local league level to have an England ranking, any thoughts?

continued on the next page
COMPETITIONS

During the coming months and prior to the start of next season we shall be reviewing the whole of our competition programme and making changes, which will make them more player, coach and parent friendly. Details will be circulated in the coming months.

INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATIONS

This has been the subject of debate over the years and will be over the coming months. A paper will be sent out in the next 60 days outlining various ideas with a questionnaire to complete and return. It is your ETTA and I believe as many players and officials as possible should have the opportunity to air their views on this important subject.

ENGLAND TEAM AND PLAYERS REPORT

Just to update on results:

HUNGARIAN YOUTH OPEN

We were represented by three young players, Joanna Parker, Georgina Walker and Kelly Sibley, in the team event and lost to Rumania in the Quarter Finals. Best individual performance was from Joanna Parker who reached the quarter-final.

PORTUGUESE YOUTH OPEN

Gold Medal in the Cadet Team event for Darius Knight, Paul Drinkhall and Gavin Evans.
Gold Medal for Joanna Parker in the Junior Girls Singles.
Silver Medal for Kelly Sibley in the Cadet Girls Singles.
Bronze Medal in Junior Girls Team event for Kelly Sibley, Joanna Parker and Georgina Walker.
Bronze Medal in the Cadet Boys Doubles for Darius Knight and Paul Drinkhall.

HUNGARIAN CADET OPEN

Gold Medal in Cadet Boys Doubles for Darius Knight and Gavin Evans.

REGIONAL STRUCTURE

It is very important that the Regional Structure is promoted and grows; we are considering a number of options which will be reviewed and debated in the coming months.

FINANCE

We are on track within the budget for the 2003/4 season and anticipate making a small surplus. Planning will start on the 2004/5 budget in the next few weeks and details will be published in the near future.

Over the coming years radical changes will be made to ensure that both our paying members and our funding partners receive greater value for money. I believe that £10M of investment in our sport over the last few years should have resulted in more people participating and paying fees with our International Performance at least maintained year on year.

NEWSLETTER

My second newsletter will be sent out in February and it is intended that enough copies will be sent out to each league secretary for them to give each team captain a copy, hence increasing the circulation list to over 8000.

I hope that I have covered the issues of interest to you but if you have any questions please get in touch. Wish you all a good 2004, play well and enjoy yourself.

Alex Murdoch
ETTA Chairman

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PRESS ASSOC. AXE

THE Press Association arm PA Sport has a monopoly in Britain. They normally transmit results and stories to all national and provincial daily papers, all TV and radio stations - they even go to the extent of sending results to Teletext and web-sites. They have now cut our table tennis and are also hitting other sports like badminton and squash.

The response to our protests by Mr David Balmforth the Press Association Editor is a stock letter sent to many of the table tennis people who have protested.

The letter says that firstly they will cover all sports involved in the Olympic Games. Regrettably, this is of limited interest to British table tennis fans as none of our players qualified for the singles event.

Secondly, his staff journalists will be watching their computer screens for results of all major table tennis events and will “write two or three paragraphs if they think the news is important”.

This is a complete non-starter. The staff writers knowledge of the sport is limited. Few British names are likely to feature in the leading results - they will be mainly Chinese winners.

PA have a clear monopoly with British sport. It is quite amazing that they are accepting the views of the sports editors and paying no attention to the thousands of followers of our sport who seek information and results of all major events.

The PA axe has now fallen, as far as we can say at the moment, results of the British teams at the world team championships coming up shortly in Qatar and the English national championships in Sheffield will probably only be reported in the Daily Telegraph (on a daily basis) and possibly with the odd feature by Matthew Syed in The Times.

Please continue to send letters to David Balmforth, Sports Editor, PA Sport, PRESS ASSOCIATION News Ltd, Bridgegate, Howden, East Yorkshire, DN14 7AE.

PLEASE NOTE JOHN WOOD'S AMENDED EMAIL ADDRESS:
johnwood@macace.net
NEWS FROM THE LEAGUES

I feel sure that the suggestion by the anonymous writer (Dec. 2003) to make use of any League Newsletters by Table Tennis News is a good one. Most of the articles submitted to our Newsletter - Net and Edge - do not really date and I would say that we have dozens of articles from grass root sources that you might be able to make use of.

I cannot believe that we are alone in this enterprise. For this purpose I am forwarding two items for your consideration.

Stan Johnstone
Cheltenham, Gloucester

Editor’s Note: Thankyou Stan for the floppy disk. I will be making use of both articles soon.

IMPROVING TTN

Thankyou for the November and December issues of TTN which as usual were generally enjoyable.

A. A few suggestions for improvement of TTN:
1. Less negative letters from former Chairman (November TTN). They should have plenty of positives to offer and frankly I have no interest in petty infighting.
2. A regular quiz.
3. A straightforward crossword.
4. A page devoted to details of who’s who at TTN HQ with titles and contact details.

B. I did not quite understand Ming Majoe's letter (December TTN) which seems to hint at a possible massaging through of ITTF (please forgive me if I am wrong Ming). Why can’t we rejoice in having adopted the internationally recognised scoring system and move on (as it happens I preferred 21-up but have no hangups with 11-up).

Ming deserves much credit for highlighting the deficiencies of the current Committee system (which was of course inherited by Alex Murdoch and much criticised by him in the December 2002 issue of Sportbreak).

I am not clever enough to debate operation of the current Committee system but what is glaringly obvious is that it needs severe pruning to enable the new administration to do its job effectively.

David Humble
Chairman, Mossford TTC

RANKING POINTS SYSTEM

FEELING quite strongly about the current ETTA ranking points system, and being a coach heavily involved with juniors I would like to make the following response to Jack Boults’s letter in the November issue of TT news.

I am not sure that I can agree with the comment “will people ever stop interfering with the ranking points system”, as a structure has not been made for some time. As with all other sports, standards improve and therefore systems must be kept updated to ensure it does not stagnate. I feel there is a need for change in the following three areas:

• Accumulation of points
• Allocation of points
• Categories

Looking at the first point, I feel it wrong that points won and lost by a player are accumulated all the while that player keeps playing regularly. We have the situation that a great many players have amassed a lot of points over the years, and in many cases those points do not reflect that player’s current level of play. I am sure with the computer technology we have all points could be deleted every other year i.e season 1 + season 2, season 3 delete season 1 points. This will mean that points are only added to the previous season, thus reflecting each player’s current form.

The second point regarding allocation of points, is an area that I feel has been contradictory for some time. Transferring points from the loser to the winner is one of the problems, as many players, particularly juniors, decline entering some competitions for the fear of losing points. I have to question whether this system of deducting points for losing is in the best interest for motivation. I feel bonus points for reaching each stage of the competition could be an added incentive.

Finally, I am very much in favour of only gaining points in ones own category. Points achieved outside ones own age group should NOT be added to their own age group. Juniors playing in Senior competitions should only have the points allocated to the senior ranking list, thus ensuring players can only gain points in their own category.

The above views expressed by John Woodford, are not necessarily the views of Table Tennis News or the English Table Tennis Association.

• CHESTER BARNES, possibly the most well-known name in table tennis (a long time ago) made an appearance on terrestrial TV recently. He was interviewed after one of Martin Pipe’s horses was first past the post at Ascot.
• A WELL KNOWN investigative national journalist was also on the box over the Rio Ferdinand doping saga. He was John Goodbody (The Times) whose campaign against the ETTA former chair Alan Ransome finally succeeded in achieving its goal.
• MOST of the world’s top players and many administrators will be packing their bags shortly taking off for Doha, Qatar, where the Qatar TTA are hosting the world team championships from March 1-7.
• HEADING for a long jail sentence is Saddam Hussein!

That is assuming he is found guilty at his trial later this year.
• TALKING of the people of Islam, there has been what the ITTF describe as a “doping infraction” in table tennis. It is about three years since one of our players has been penalised for doping.
• THE last case was in the USA. Concerning a gentleman called Ahmed Ali Saleh from the Egyptian national squad, who tested positive. The ITTF have announced a two-year ban, which may suggest that Rio Ferdinand got off lightly, although the circumstances are not the same.
• THERE is now an alert for all players in every sport - do NOT attempt to evade a drugs test for any reason. In fact do not let the testing squad out of your sight, in case they disappear and then you could be accused of faking to subit to the test.
• THE STOPPAGE of almost all table tennis results and stories by the Press Association is now in operation. Protest letters are flowing into the Sports Editor Mr David Balmforth. At the moment the only newspaper on the national scene likely to feature any table tennis is the Daily Telegraph.
• EXTRA results and stories are now being sent to the Telegraph. The amount of results in the Telegraph has increased over the past two months with regular stories also showing an increase.
• MATTHEW SYED has one special aim in life - to remain on top of the England ranking list; he could lose some sponsorship benefits if he drops down. After pulling out of the European singles qualifying tournament in Luxembourg (to let in younger talent) will he play in Doha in the world team championships and the Commonwealth championships next June in Malaysia?
category.) Juniors playing in senior events, especially the older ones of the age group will wish to gain a higher position than their elders. However, juniors are using the system (nothing wrong in that) to enhance their points and position in their category. When junior players tell me they don’t want to enter a competition in their own age group because they have too much to lose, it is not a healthy situation, and one I believe is due to the system. The dictionary states “RANKING” as: To place in line. Of course, - To classify. - Comparative position. I therefore feel a ranking scheme should reflect the player’s positions on an equal playing field, which under the present system in many cases a players current form is not reflected due to points being compiled year on year. Although I am not familiar with all other sports those that I have been involved in, such a system is not employed.

I like all of us who are passionate about the sport want to see it succeed in all areas, and at all levels. As stated in the Ranking Scheme explanation of November 2001, many people dislike it while others appreciate it. With the proposed alterations I don’t feel it will cause a sudden deterioration in the scheme or in the numbers attending, in fact it may encourage those players who do not play due to the present system to enter.

Peter Arvenell
Suffolk

"SMACK THE WHITE"
A MAD idea has been running through my head recently. How about a rap song to get youngsters thinking about the game? There is so much already buzzing in our young black communities, with the Ashion project and Darius Knight etc. leading the way. Someone may already know an established rapper, (who might even play the game himself/herself?) who could lay down a track that could be sent to clubs/schools, played at events etc. Of course, it if ever made the chart, that would be something else!

As a 70 year old Surrey resident, I am the least qualified person in the world to write rap, but I attach below my starter for ten, which gives the sort of approach, even if the vernacular is hideously wrong! Maybe we could even offer a prize for the best rap song about table tennis... a free coaching session with Desmond Douglas?

"Smack the white" (a rap song for table tennis)
Me want, me want, me want smack the white,
Smack it hard with all me might,
Losing all me inhibition,
Smack it past the opposition,
Smack it all around the table,
Smack it just where he ain’t able,
And when he try to smack past me,
Me smack so fast that he can’t see,
And when he get me on the floor,
Me chop it back and get to four.
He drop one short to make me jive,
Me smack the white to make it five.
He ain’t nowhere near me when
Me smack the white and get to ten.
Me smack once more to get to heaven.
‘Cos he on four and me eleven.

Murray Glover
Surrey

“GRASPED THE NETTLE”
I THINK it’s high time that the game of table tennis and the news media “Grasped the Nettle”, of the problem of coping with all the overseas players names. Mostly those of the far east.

At present, mostly, it is not possible to make sense of the names of table tennis results. I for one cannot spell them, cannot remember the names, cannot pronounce the names, and now find reading about the names of table tennis a complete turn-off.

What is needed in table tennis is for the overseas players to be realistic.

Soccer had this problem years ago, that is why there is a Pele and a Didil.

Every overseas player that has, to our eyes, a complicated name needs a nickname, i.e. Digger, Looper, Smasher, Chopper, etc., which is instantly recognisable from one set of results or articles to the next. Then every overseas player, whether they be world class or not, can attract a following and keep the interest of the sporting public, not just the table tennis enthusiasts, and also build a image, etc.

It worked for Hollywood, Kirk Douglas, Doris Day, Judy Garland, etc.

This would make Table Tennis News, for one, a great deal more readable.

Michael Joseph Anthony O’Leary (Miko), Willesden, London

KATHLEEN BEST THOMPSON (pictured above) died on 5th October 2003 after a short illness.

“The finest player we ever had” so say the people of Wakefield. That’s where it all began. Then Leeds, where she became their top lady too, and so on throughout Yorkshire and the North.

Progress was rapid. She became an important part of the Yorkshire Premier side, which was to threaten almost all other counties, playing alongside, most notably, Brian Kennedy and Raymond Hinchliff.

Her high level of performance in match play and open tournaments led to selection for England - the first for a Yorkshire lady for many, many years. Her commitment to table tennis was soon to be tested. At that time, Kathleen had a job in the film industry. She asked permission to travel to Glasgow in the afternoon to play in the evening international against Scotland. Permission was refused - “if you do so you will be dismissed”. Story has it that Kathleen’s father, proud of his daughter’s selection, marched into the manager’s office pointing out that Kathleen wasn’t representing her street, or city, or country, but England! To no avail - she travelled - job lost.

In 1952 Kathleen became the first Yorkshire lady to be selected for the Corbillon Cup team, along with Rosalind and Diane Rowe and Ann Hayden - arguably one of England’s strongest teams.

That same quartet played in the semi-finals of the women’s doubles in the 1954 World Championships at Wembley. Whilst the Rowe twins were beating a fine Japanese pairing, Watanabe & Epishi, Kathleen and Ann were thrilling a packed arena as they brilliantly eliminated the world champions, Rozeau and Farkas. The Rowe sisters narrowly won the all English final to gain their second world crown.

Kathleen had a tremendously strong attacking game at a time when defensive play, in Europe at least, generally held the upper hand. She gained a long list of notable victories and her highest world ranking reaching No.9.

Off the table, she was courteous, friendly and modest, never seeking the limelight and magnanimous in defeat.

Kathleen was a teacher by profession, specialising in mathematics and latterly heading a project designed to “assist and adjust” children excluded from their schools. This post was suited to her temperament and readiness to help those in need, when allied to a sometimes mischievous personality. She kept a table tennis table at the school but the pupils could never understand why they kept losing to “Miss”.

She gave much time and effort supporting two particular charities - one caring for discharged prisoners and more recently one which provides permanent homes for adults with learning disabilities. She still found time for golf and bridge and to being an outstanding Lady Mayoress of the City of Leeds in 1997/8.

She leaves a husband, Alan, to whom she was happily married for 50 years, two sons, Christopher and Peter, and five grandchildren, each of whom she loved so much. They and her many friends miss her tremendously.
### How to Calculate Groups & Resolve Ties

**TABLE TENNIS TIPS**

**COMPETITION organisers and referees at all levels of table tennis are frequently asked to determine the winner of a group or round robin competition, writes Richard Scruton.**

When ITTF Regulations for International Competitions apply, such as at World, Olympic and continental competitions, open international championships, open tournaments etc., regulation 3.7.5 provides the method for determining the winner.

The basic principles are simple – results are determined at the highest possible level, for example by match points rather than by games, and that where at any stage of the calculation group members are equal, their relative positions are decided only by the matches between them. Additionally when a position has been determined and others are still equal, all the results associated with the determined position are excluded from any further calculations needed to resolve the equalities.

All members of a group, whether teams or individuals, play each other and gain 2 match points for a win, whether it is played or a walkover. The loser receives 1 point in a played match but none for a match which is not played or is not completed.

In the example shown (Figure 1), A has 6 match points, B has 4, C has 3, and D has 5, so the final ranking is A, B, C, D. A more typical example is shown in Figure 2 where B and D each have 5 match points and A and C each have 4.

A frequent mistake is to say that all the positions have not been decided at this stage and therefore the next step is to consider the ratio of games won to games lost. This is incorrect.

It has been established that on the basis of match points, B and D are contenders for 1st place while A and C are competing for 3rd, and it is necessary only to distinguish between the two players who are tying for each of these places. The relative positions of those equal at any stage depend only on the matches between them so, as D beat B and A beat C, the final order is D, B, A, C.

In the next example (Figure 3), C with 5 match points is clearly 4th but A, B and D are equal with 5 match points each. The next step is to eliminate the results of matches involving C. From the remaining matches (Figure 4), each of the players has gained 3 match points, and to resolve their positions it is necessary to consider next the ratios of games won to games lost. A has a games ratio of 4/5, B's is 5/3 and D's is 3/4, making the ranking order B, A, D, C.

However, as shown in Figure 5, if after eliminating C's matches A, B and D each have 3 match points and a games ratio of 5/5, the next step is to consider the ratio of points won to points lost. The points won/lost ratios for A, B and D are 89/95, 100/98 and 101/97 respectively, so the group order is D, B, A, C.

Finally, if in the group whose results are shown in Figure 2, D had been injured during play and had conceded the match 1-3 to C, the table would then be as shown in Figure 6. There is no change in the numbers of match points won by A, B and C but D, with no match points from the match with C, has a total of only 4 and is now in equal 2nd place.

Eliminating the results of B's matches gives the order B, A, C, D, so that the effect of the unfinished match is to drop D from 1st to 4th.

Regulation 3.7.5 provides for the very occasional situation where it is not possible to resolve the equalities, as occurred in last season's Harrogate Closed handicap singles competition (Figure 7) and the relative positions are decided by lot.

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<th>Figure 1</th>
<th>A B C D MPts Result</th>
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<tr>
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<td>B 2-3 * 3-0 2-3 4 3</td>
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EUROPEAN OLYMPIC SINGLES

First Junior World Championships

The first Junior World Championships held in Santiago, Chile was a combined team and individual event. The top ranked teams from each continent participated, boys and girls, initially in groups of four and then to a progressive knock-out to achieve places 1-15 (1 boys and 1 girls team withdrew), writes Barry Granger.

Although there were many close matches, with notably the Chinese boys’ team 0-2 down to Chinese Taipei in the final and still winning 3-2, China won both team events, and this despite their top two ranked boys not there! Japan were runners up in the girls event.

In the individual events there was little success for Europe, Asia having almost all the semi-finalists in all events except the boys’ and girls’ doubles where a European pair each won a silver. In the boys’ singles Christian Suss from Germany, no. 1 seed, was sensationally knocked out (4-3) in his first match against the fourth-rated Chinese player, after winning his group, and the Chinese no. 3 (no. 5 if you include the two missing) and seventh seed Li Hu lost to the no. 3 Portuguese player in his group. However, Li Hu went on to beat the no. 4 seed Zhang Jike. China in the quarters and the no. 1 Korean Lim Je Hyun 4-0 in the semi.

At 15 years old (the others were all 18) he did well to reach the final against the Korean Oh Eon Rae, who himself had only beaten the Chinese no. 2 seed 12-10 in the seventh in the other semi. But Li had other ideas and duly won the final 4,7,10,-9,5.

In the girls’ singles it was China who dominated, providing all four semi-finalists. Only Georgina Pota (Hungary) and Kristina Sieberesien (Germany) being any non-Asians in the quarters. The eventual winner was Li Qian, China, who beat her compatriot Peng Luyang 3,4,-6,4,-6,4.

Other results:

Boys’ doubles:
Seiya Kishikawa/Minoru Muramori (Japan) beat
Tiago Apolonia/Marcos Freitas (Portugal) -9,7,-7,8,10

Girls’ doubles:
Li Xiaoxia/Li Qian (China) beat
Gabriella Feher/Eva Tapi (Serbia) 6,5,9

Mixed doubles:
Zheng Changgong/Li Xiaoxia (China) beat
Ma Long/Cao Zhen (China) 8,8,9,6

Santiago was just reaching its Summer with temperatures over 80 degrees and there were two sessions of table tennis each day over 7 days, with finals Sunday. Sessions were morning to 1.30 and from 5 in the evening which meant a nice break in the afternoon. Play was well organised on 10 tables and the whole event ran smoothly.

Despite not being a table tennis nation, many of the people of Santiago turned out to support the players, marvelling in the fantastic play and being very supportive throughout. There were perhaps 1000 crammed in for each of the last two days and the total silence maintained by spectators whilst play was on was really great. A really good tournament in a superb location, well worth the trip.
VIEWS FROM A LOCAL LEAGUE

WHEN our new Chairman, Alex Murdoch, writes in Straight Talk “Do not go away and think that all I want to do is get more money from players …” it certainly gives the impression that that, at least, is one of his aims. This, of course, comes in the context of Individual Registrations and seems to lead immediately to the discussion on whether, again to quote Alex, “… the grass roots players and administrators feel that they are getting value for money”; writes David Martin.

At least Alex, with his local league background, has admitted that the views of grass root players and administrators not only have some importance but that their consideration of what is meant by value for money can be, and should be, discussed. There is little doubt that Alex was elected by the voting power of the local leagues and he is now being true to his election promise to listen to what they may have to say.

Value for Money?

On the question of fees, it is no good Alex saying that this amounts to less than £4 per player if the vast majority of players get nothing for it. Indeed many would consider that the ETTA has given them a negative benefit in recent years. Most were very happy to play with the smaller ball and up to 21, but all they seem to get from the ETTA for their £4 is unnecessary interference with the game they love.

Of course, before we can discuss value for money we need to understand how players get benefit from the various layers of administration they are subjected to. According to the latest Electoral Register there are 7271 teams playing in 231 leagues. Assuming that about 10% are in junior leagues (we don’t seem to get a breakdown these days) the average senior league consists of just fewer than 30 teams. As this is the size of my league I have a good idea of what sort of table tennis is played by the different types of players in such a league.

We can assume that the average league has about 120 regular players. Of these, at both senior and junior level, maybe 5% will play in Inter-League Competitions, 5% will play in ETTA Tournaments, 3% in the County Championships and less than 1% in the British League. Of course, it is likely that the same players playing in all of these higher-standard competitions. It is therefore likely that between 90% and 95% of all league players only play in their local league competitions. So what do they pay? My league charges £7 per team plus £2 per player. Our county charges over £6.50 per team and the ETTA over £1.5 per team. Therefore each player pays a total of approximately £9 of which 40% goes to the league, 20% to the county and 40% to the ETTA.

Local leagues therefore provide all the table tennis for at least 90% of all players but only receive 40% of the revenue they collect. Even those players who play a couple of tournaments a month probably play regularly in at least 2 or 3 leagues so still have about 75% of their table tennis provided by local leagues. On the other hand the ETTA also receives 40% of this revenue and yet only provides part of the table tennis for about 5% of all players.

Table Tennis Tax

So what does that 90% of all league players actually get for their £4 a year? Most would say very little. They look upon it as a table tennis tax - it gets paid each year but gives little obvious value. They get no stability in the laws of the game and have unwanted law changes imposed upon them. For the last two seasons, in contradiction to the first stated object of the ETTA in its Memorandum of Association, they haven’t even had a set of uniform laws of the game, as half the leagues were playing up to 11 and the other half up to 21!

Maybe those players believe that their league administration receives some sort of help from the ETTA for their £4. But leagues also get very little from the ETTA. They get a free copy of Table Tennis News and precious little else. In a desperate attempt to attract support from local leagues, last season the previous administration ran a series of conferences entitled “Recruit and Prosper”. Two delegates attended from my league and both were very disappointed with what they heard. It was clear that the ETTA presenters knew very little about the needs of a local league.

Elitism

In recent years the ETTA has become more interested in elitism than in helping the average league player. Everything it does is slanted to that tiny minority of players at the top of the hierarchy. A quick glance through the pages of Table Tennis News or at the ETTA web site will reinforce that opinion. There is almost nothing in either medium aimed at the lowly league player and equally nothing aimed at the local league administrators who are providing their table tennis. It is time the ETTA realised that the player languishing at the bottom of the 5th division averages is as important as the player playing for his county and needs to be treated equally.

It is a similar story at club level. There has been much pushing of the Premier Club programme and I’m sure that it is an excellent scheme. But once again it is elitist even to the choice of its name. There is also the question, not to be considered here, of whether this programme can exist within the local league umbrella. It is clear to me that there are benefits offered to Premier Clubs that are not available to local leagues and this needs to be addressed. Alan Ransome claimed that there were a huge number of members participating in this scheme who didn’t show in the league statistics. If this is true these players certainly need to pay an affiliation fee to the ETTA as the Premier Club itself pays only a pittance.

So, is the ETTA value for money? I would think that 90% of players would think not. Any attempt to increase their fees will almost certainly be met with hostility although I suspect that we will all pay up. If the new administration is to be true to those who elected it then it must really understand the feelings of that 90% and ensure that their needs are identified and met.

David Martin has served on his local league committee for over 30 years, 25 of those as General Secretary and more recently as Chairman. The views expressed here may not necessarily be those of his league.
SEVEN hundred fans, nearly a full house, came to the Mountbatten Centre, Portsmouth on January 13, not seriously expecting to see the England men's team beat powerful Germany, one of the giants of the premier division, writes John Woodford.

As expected Germany's team of young players led by the world No.6 Timo Boll were fairly comfortable winners. The fans received full value including another vintage display of long-distance defence from Matthew Syed that included a number of balls returned from outside the court barriers. Zoltan Fejer-Konnerth of Germany, one of the giants of long-distance defence from Matthew Syed that included a number of balls returned from outside the court barriers. Zoltan Fejer-Konnerth was thrilling in this way as Young came close to forcing a fifth game, but that did not happen. What did happen was a formal protest by the German coach, confirmed in writing by the referee Mick Strode on the condition of the floor. Portsmouth is an excellent centre for these matches, good crowds and a fine service combined to stage the match, masterminded by Brian Hall, the "top table tennis gentleman" in the city.

However, protest made, the Germans obviously thought they would win on the glass-like surface, so they played on. It would seem that the ETTA will have to look more carefully in the future and possibly use the portable flooring that is available and should have been used at the Mountbatten Centre. Two other events completed the evening - the Admiral Lord Nelson club TTC received an award - they are the first club to gain the Premier Club status.

The night ended with a comedy exhibition session by Alan Cooke and John Hilton - some 600 fans stayed on to watch the hilarious antics of comedian Hilton and the "straight-man Alan Cooke."

Admiral Lord Nelson School TTC is a terrific example of how through good organisation and lots of effort the sport can grow and strengthen. Five years ago, before the club existed the city of Portsmouth did not have an open club with extensive playing opportunities. The club has nurtured young (school) players who are now playing in the Portsmouth & District League, the National Junior League and some feature highly in the Hampshire junior rankings.

A POWERFUL GERMAN TEAM TOPPLE ENGLAND

The photo (above) shows Admiral Lord Nelson School TTC. Chairman Brian Hall receiving the Premier Club Advanced (Gold) certificate from ETTA Chairman Alex Murdoch and the Clubmark award from Sport England's Steve Padfield at the England versus Germany international match held at Portsmouth in January.

A double first in England for Admiral Lord Nelson School TTC

Admiral Lord Nelson School Table Tennis Club from Portsmouth are the first club to be awarded Premier Club Gold status by achieving the criteria set for Advanced level as written in the ETTA National Development Manager. Premier Club is the ETTA national programme for club development and is directly aligned with Sport England's Clubmark scheme. The programme is a step change for Table Tennis club development where clubs are set challenging criteria to aim for and receive help and support from the ETTA to help achieve high standards. The objective is to build a brighter future for the sport in England through the creation of a network strong of clubs.

Clubmark is a Sport England cross-sport scheme with a nationally adopted set of standards that recognises safe, effective, child friendly sports clubs.

To achieve Clubmark, clubs must reach high standards in four main areas:

- Playing programme - coaching, competition and open play
- The protection and safety of children and young people
- Sports equity and ethics
- Club management

Admiral Lord Nelson School TTC is a terrific example of how through good organisation and lots of effort the sport can grow and strengthen. Five years ago, before the club existed the city of Portsmouth did not have an open club with extensive playing opportunities. The club has nurtured young (school) players who are now playing in the Portsmouth & District League, the National Junior League and some feature highly in the Hampshire junior rankings.

Club Chairman Brian Hall commented "if Table Tennis is to develop a decent foundation and consolidate, then the model and structure provided through Premier Club is the way forward. We believe in the "safe, effective, child friendly philosophy and though have had to comply with challenging paperwork we are pleased with the support and resources provided from the ETTA via our Regional Development Officer".

Clubs interested in the Premier Club programme or Clubmark scheme should contact their Regional Development Officer or Sheila King (Development Secretary) at ETTA in Hastings. Tel: 01424 722525. E-mail: Sheilaking.etta@talk21.com

TTN • JAN/FEB 2004
‘eXtreme’ Championships

One of the complementary pleasures for many this eXtreme weekend was the sometimes raucous involvement in the flamboyant spectacle of the Sport’s best professionals giving their all to entertain the huge December 29th evening crowd at the UIC Pavilion. Thousands of multi-ethnic enthusiasts, including many who’d enjoyed competing in that other Blackwell extravaganza, the Killerspin Open, were wowed—and wowed on a grand-scale by counter-counters curving around rather than over the net, or given a three-ring-circus-high by this or that champion’s lobs that stretched both ball and player’s limits from table…to outside…to barriers-be-damned beyond. I hope all reading this are aware of the upcoming 10-week ESPN airing (in 30-minute spots) of this colourful show, with voice-over by 2004 U.S. Olympic Coach Dan Seemiller, for it’s sure to hold the attention of viewers everywhere and so bring some much-needed recognition of our Sport to the masses.

Serious FUN—that’s what the unprecedented four-tournament-in-one hosted December 27-29 in Chicago by Robert Blackwell was for me, and for hundreds of players, and thousands of spectators. Everyone’s efforts to come out and participate should have gladdened the hearts of those in the Windy City and the State of Illinois who’ve so successfully continued to support Killerspin. It’s historic, it’s dramatic, that these supporters recognise value in Robert’s reach beyond the clouds to the Sport’s Olympian heights, writes Tim Boggan in Chicago.

Killerspin Open

Robert Blackwell’s 28-event, 54-table Killerspin Open, highlighted by 410 entries competing for over $40,000 in prizes, was run under the very capable direction of Danny and Val Seemiller, with help from Sarah Seemiller and Mark Nordby among others.

In the top half of the Men’s Singles Draw, South Korea’s current World finalis, Joo Se Hyuk, advanced to the semi’s, but was 7-game threatened in the quarter’s by 4-time Indian National Champion Chetan Baboor, just recently the recipient of an MBA degree in the States. Think it’s ‘cheatin’ to say that the former Commonwealth Games runner-up, who has the reputation of being able to hit low-ball chop, wasn’t at all intimidated by World No.17’s long-pips defensive prowess? Consider that by the time Joo was down 3-2 in games, he had to rely more and more on his balancing bird-wing, swoop-in forehands. Up 9-8 in the 6th, Joo might have faltered, but didn’t, when Baboor cracked in a fearless forehand to tie it up at 8-all. Instead, Joo had a smash finish of his own—to which Chetan could only say to admirers of his gritty effort that it was always difficult to adjust to choppers he hadn’t been accustomed to playing, especially one at this high level (the first defensive star to reach the World final since Germany’s Ebby Schoeler in 1969).

On the other side of the Draw, World No.44 Lucian Blaszczyk knocked out Peter-Paul Pradeehan after Pradeehan had to play fellow Canadians—juniors Peng Guo and Pierre-Luc Hinse, twice a w/o winner and so, without playing a match, by his mere presence in the 8th’s, $250 richer. Because of a decision to seed by the World Rankings rather than the USATT Ratings as indicated on the entry blank, U.S.

The Joo/Matsushita semi’s starts as if they’re playing an exhibition, each willingly taking turns at mildly attacking, mildly defending. As play progresses I’m surprised to see Matsushita’s sustained offense. Down 1-0 and 9-8 in the 2nd, he chops, lobs, counters to 9-all, then furiously whacks ball after ball in. Though he continues to mix chops and forehand topspins he sometimes seems to swing a little wildly (misses two would-be killers from 9-all in the 3rd), something Joo never does. Down 3-1 and 9-2 in the 5th, Matsushita, expressionless as ever, signals by returning a ball between his legs it’s all over.

Waldner, World No.24, looks anything but that in the opening minutes of his semi’s against Poland’s Blaszczyk. Down 8-2 in the 1st, he climbs to 10-8 before losing, then takes an 8-4 lead in the 2nd, and wins it 11-7. Play is really spotty, for both players aren’t sharp. In fact, I don’t think I’ve ever seen a player of Blaszczyk’s stature perform at times so badly—in the 4th he’s down 6-1. Ordinarily Waldner is ready for any out-of-this-world shot that rockets in, but the Pole does catch him with a fast down-the-line serve (the only one fast and long I saw in my two-day stay at the McCormick Arena). Up 3-1 and 7-5 in the 5th, J.O. appears ready for a KO. Then—how does it happen?—he loses 13 of the next 14 points! And we’re suddenly into the 7th game. But with the opportunity for a $10,000 win on the line, Waldner reactivates himself with a stretch counter-get and tracer-like backhand follow that stops Blaszczyk’s initial attempt to get back in the match. J.O., then, advances to the final.

World No.17 Joo, from the time he’s down 4-0 in the opening game, never looks like he has weapons enough to even wound the 38-year-old Waldner. J.O. while reflexes are instantly there to block a wonderful whir-around-the-net ball by Joo, doesn’t need to be “The Magician” to win this match. In the 2nd game, Waldner serves an edge—and the guy next to me says, “Did he do that deliberately?” Such is the stuff of legend. Though Joo doesn’t take a game, he does in the 4th make some side-to-side acrobatic gets, then finishes the point by walloping in a winner, which gets him warm applause. It’s Waldner’s Championship though and he receives a standing ovation.

In the Women’s final Wang Chen of the USA, who is currently World No.30, overcame the challenge of World No.13 Mihaela Steff. Steff held her own, losing the opener from 9-all but winning the 2nd from 10-all with the help of an edge and a finishing forehand. More of the same in the 3rd: at 9-all, Steff mishit, then topped a ball long—which prompted her to try to take a bite out of her bat. In the 4th she was a goner. And in the 5th, down 10-9, she gave away a finishing error, thus echoing her loss to Wang in the recent Brazilian Open. No ITTF points won or lost though, for the matches here didn’t count in the World Rankings.

The other events were a great success, resulting in a tremendous boost for USA table tennis. This tournament commanded considerable TV airtime.

TIM BOGGAN is a former International Table Tennis Federation Vice-President, and a former three term President of the United States Table Tennis Association (now USA Table Tennis). For 14 years he served as Editor of the National Publication, and he is currently the USA Table Tennis Historian, as well as the Association’s Secretary. He has received the ITTF Order of Merit Award, the USTTA Barna Award, and was inducted into the USTTA Hall of Fame in 1985. He has been on the Hall’s Board of Directors since 1979. He was a member of the 1971 U.S. “Ping Pong Diplomacy” Team to China.
HISTORY OF U.S. TABLE TENNIS Vol. II: 1940-1952
by Tim Boggan

THIS nostalgic book by Tim Boggan, not only takes the reader down memory lane of table tennis in the USA, but also England and Europe as well as World Championships around the world, writes John Wood.

The introduction of this historical book states that “Everybody’s playing table tennis”, that included the likes of Jimmy Durante, who said “The game is dynamite”. It then goes on to report on events that happened during the Second World War, where it mentions that the celebrated Victor Barna, who had won the the Mens World Doubles Championship in 1933 with Sandor Glancz, had safely immigrated to England, but his younger brother Tibor, Hungarian Champion in 1941, perished in the holocaust.

Chapter One relates how Barna lost his unbeaten tag in the USA in 1939, when he lost to Izzy Bellis the USA’s No.3 player in Philadelphia during a tour match, in what was supposed to be an exhibition match. After the first match it developed into a dog-eat-dog battle, in which the famed Barna flick finally succumbed to the poisonous Bellis chop.

The first chapter informs readers that many Hollywood film stars played table tennis, like the famous actress Ginger Rogers, who was pictured on the front cover of the US Table Tennis Topics magazine, with a sandpaper bat, serving a karate cut slice side spin to her costumed opponent Santa Claus. She even penned a lead article in the magazine, where she said that she depended on the game for “exercise and diversion”, and how she and her movie-star friends, Jimmy Stewart and Henry Fonda played table tennis for fun.

History of U.S. Table Tennis is as it’s title suggests primarily about US table tennis, but there is plenty of information on English table tennis players and events to satisfy the ardent English table tennis fans. As in Chapter 18 where the book records that Johnny Leach beach Richard Bergmann in the English Open in the 1945/46 season 24-22 in the fifth, at Wembley Town Hall, London.

There is a section on the 1938 World Championships at the Royal Albert Hall in London, where a very unusual tale is told, that of Czechoslovakian Bo Vana. Vana had come from Czechoslovakia alone, and couldn’t speak a word of English. Worse yet, for some reason whoever was to meet him at the railway station didn’t show up. So Vana didn’t know what to do - he just walked around saying “Ping Pong?” ... “Ping Pong?” Of course the police soon picked him up (“Ping Pong?” ... “Ping Pong?”) as a vagrant and a loony.

“Ping Pong?” ... “Ping Pong?” Finally somebody made the connection and called the English Association and later Vana came back to that same train station as the World Champion.

This fascinating 395 page book which is full of interesting stories and photographs is a must for table tennis enthusiasts. A must for the table tennis library, or a great present for a friend.

History of U.S. Table Tennis Vol. II: 1940-1952 by Tim Boggan costs $30, and is available from the author. Please contact Tim on his email: timboggan@aol.com

Vol. I (1928-39) has been published and Vol. III (1953-62) will be out in a couple of months time.
Preparation for the Portuguese Junior Open weekend began on the preceding Monday with a training camp at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham. The full England Junior and Cadet squads were in attendance together with coaches Steen Hansen and Jia Yi Liu, writes Joanna Parker.

The next four days involved intensive physical and on-the-table training, and on Thursday evening I was feeling a little tired, but looking forward to Friday mornings 4am alarm call! That said, however, the training camp had been a success. I knew I had done my preparation work well and I travelled to Portugal with increased confidence and a positive frame of mind.

Friday morning duly arrived and we travelled to East Midlands Airport to take our flight to Portugal. On arrival in Portugal, I was still feeling tired, but after a quick nap I practised during the afternoon and was ready for the start of the tournament the following day.

The team championship was our first event and the first round group matches against Portugal ‘C’, Sweden and Spain ‘B’ started at 9am. We all played well and won all of our matches to finish top of the group. Our reward for this achievement was a quarter-final match against France ‘B’. Again we played well, dominated the match and won comfortably 3-0.

An early start was again the order of the day on Sunday morning and we prepared thoroughly for our 11am semi-final match against Hungary ‘B’. On this occasion, however, we were unable to repeat the form shown earlier and lost the match 3-0.

The play off match for 3rd and 4th place came next and we had to beat Belarus to win the bronze medal. This we did 3-2 and we completed the team championships pleased with our results and individual performances.

The singles championship started on Saturday evening and I had already won my first group match, 3-0 against a Swedish girl, when the championship recommenced on Sunday morning. By lunch time I was feeling good. I had won my group and felt that I was playing well. We had lunch and afterwards received the knockout draw for the singles championship.

In the first round I had to play the Hungarian girl who I had lost to in the semi-final of the team event. I was, however, not overly concerned, because I knew I was playing much better than I had been the first time I played her and I was determined to put the record straight.

I went to the table confident and determined to win a place the next round. The match was tough, but I played the critical points well, and won 3-0. Having beaten her I knew I was now playing very well and this gave me more confidence for the quarter-final match.

We quickly learned that I was to play a French girl, from their ‘B’ team, who I had previously beaten in the quarter-final of the team event. From this result I felt quietly confident that I could beat her again and sure enough I won the match and progressed through to the semi-final.

In the semi-final I was drawn against a girl from France’s ‘A’ team who I hadn’t played before. Going into the match my confidence was again high. I knew that the result would be down to me and if I played well I could win. I was determined to give it my best and go for my shots. If I had lost I would have been bitterly disappointed, but I didn’t lose. I fought hard for every point, won the match and I was in the FINAL!

In the final, I had to play Timai Viski, one of the top Hungarian juniors. With my confidence at an all time high, I now believed that I could win the tournament. I had come this far and I was not about to give in. With support from the coaches, the cheering and encouragement from the squad and the brilliant parents, a very hard and long match followed. Again I played the critical points well, varying strong defence with decisive attacking shots and I won the match 3-2. I had won the Portuguese Junior Open!!

I can’t say how I felt at that point. I was overwhelmed and couldn’t take it all in quickly enough. I think that I was just so happy. Happy that everybody’s sacrifices and hard work of the past four and a bit years finally produced the results that I had previously only dare dream about.

When I phoned home to tell my parents, my Mum answered, and not surprisingly, she didn’t believe me. I had to pass my phone to Sally Shutt, my coach, who confirmed the result to Mum. Both of my parents were thrilled. Mum has always said she wanted to see one of the English players on the podium and listen to the National Anthem being played; she didn’t mind which player, just so long as an English player won. For that player to be me was the icing on the cake for her. When I was presented with the medal and stood on the podium my team mates phoned home so that my parents could listen.

This report has been mostly about me but I must praise the rest of the squad. Everybody had played well in this tournament and between us we took home two gold medals, the Cadet boy’s won their team event; one silver medal, Kelly Shibley came runner up in the Cadet girl’s singles; and 3 bronze medals, Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight both lost in the semi-finals of the cadet boy’s singles.

I think this was England’s most successful European open tournament for quite a while, it certainly was for me! Hopefully, with all the hard work that we have planned, we will continue improving and the 2003 Portuguese Junior Open will be a mere stepping stone to bigger and better results in the future.
England’s star cadet and junior players, boys; Darius Knight of Battersey and Paul Drinkhall of Cleveland and girls; Georgina Walker of Nottingham, Joanna Parker of Chertsey and Kelly Sibley of Leamington Spa show both their team spirit and individual improvement, and success in a fine team and individual event under the management of Jia Yi Liu, the Men’s Team Captain and Sally Shutt, the Ladies’ Team Captain in Tavira, at the 11th Portuguese International Youth Championships, writes Brian Spicer.

Darius and Paul retained their Cadet Boys’ Team title with an epic battle against France winning 3 games to 2. Georgina, Joanna and Kelly lost to Hungary 0-3 in the semi-final, but raised their game in a tense decider for a bronze medal against Belarus winning 3-2 with Kelly Sibley recovering from a 0-2 deficit to win 3-2 in the final match.

Kelly Sibley maintained her high level of attacking play on both wings in the cadet girls event, reaching the final at the expense of C. Costa, Portugal 3-2, S. Rask, Sweden, and E. Troshneva, Russia 3-0, before losing to champion V. Lemeshevskaya, Russia 0-3.

In the singles events, Joanna Parker; England’s leading junior defender landed a career best performance winning the Girls’ Singles and beating Hungarian Timea Viski 3-2, bringing into play her counter-attacks with powerful forehands and backhands. Joanna beat E. Juhasi of Hungary 3-0, S. Lascols of France 3-0 and D. Coulibaly of France 3-1 in the semi-final.

In the Cadet Boys’ Singles, Darius Knight beat A. Rigoriev of Russia 3-0, P. Bezard of France 3-2, but lost to Jiang Peng Fei of Turkey, the eventual winner 0-3 in the semi-final. Paul Drinkhall beat A. Silver of Portugal 3-0, G. Menge of Turkey 3-2, but lost to A. Outochain of Russia 0-3 in the semi-final.

The quintet will continue now with their coaches for one month’s training in China throughout 2004 that will prepare them well to repeat such successes at the European Youth Championships in Budapest and the Cadet Six Nations event that is scheduled to be played in England this summer.

It is clear that with Captains, Jia and Sally that a team effort worthy of the predictions that these players could well fulfil England’s dream of Olympic medals by 2012.
MOSSFORD TABLE TENNIS CLUB

Mossford TTC started as part of Mossford Residents Community Association in Clayhall, Ilford, Essex when young men returning from the second World War created a table tennis section in 1948, writes David Humble.

It is an unpretentious club but it’s main claim to fame over the years is that it has bucked the trend of so many other clubs and leagues by steadily expanding, rather than withering and dying. There are reasons for this which become self-evident below; the main message arising is that anyone can do it, there is no magic or luck involved.

In 1948 metal trophies were either unobtainable or unaffordable, so team members and their families donated blazer buttons which were melted down and recast into the Mossford Cup—the internal club trophy. The cup has long since worn out and fallen into disuse but has been kept by the club as a folklore reminder of not so plentiful days.

The club was very unusual when set up because most local clubs were attached to companies and played on company premises or company sports grounds. Mossford played in a school. Over the next couple of decades the club thrived at Gilbert Colvin School and grew to 3 teams. There were no outstanding players. Nevertheless matches were contested very keenly.

In the late 1960s it was recognised that the club should change from it’s reliance on one very talented person who organised everything to more of a committee structure to try to eliminate the obvious vulnerability of the club. It was not the easiest of changes but works well and has endured.

By the early 70s the club expanded to 4 teams with 4 players in each team, playing 2 singles and 2 doubles each per match. There was also a highly successful club night where it had use of the gym on Fridays for two and a half hours. Friendly games were played up to 31 points one game only and everyone had to play everyone else in strict rotation order ie no self selection of opponents. The main reason for the success however probably is due to the post practice visit to the Unicorn PH for a bevy!

The club had been very lucky in that the school caretaker Les Cleland was a marvellous chap who helped to clear the classrooms where we played, put up the equipment and then helped restore the status quo at the end of the evening but most importantly turned a blind eye to our frequent late finishes. Eventually Les retired and his replacement was quite understandably less accommodating. This, together with the restriction that only four teams were possible at the school, forced the club to look elsewhere.

It obtained use of a gymnasium at Wanstead Leisure Centre on Wednesdays. The club night in season was lost but the club was now able to run more teams because the gym could house 4 tables.

The club had almost never been involved with juniors, apart from President Bill Dawson’s son Steve mainly because we had been told that youngsters were not interested in table tennis, and the club always believed what it was told!

In the late 1980s all that was to change. Club chairman Dave Humble was foolhardy enough to enter a world veterans tournament. After such a chastening experience he wanted to get his act together and improve. His friend Stuart Gibbs suggested that he go to Brentwood club as a helper and get some direction as a quid quo pro. The result was a revelation! As the Brentwood club gym door opened Dave was greeted by a vibrant mass of people of the junior kind. Is that where they had all been hiding! Graham Moon (now sadly deceased) was an inspiration in running Brentwood Club.

After a couple of years Dave decided to try to replicate the
Brentwood phenomenon at Mossford. It started in a room built at the end of Dave’s garden with just 3 youngsters, including Neil Fineberg and Maryn Cantale. Success was immediate and so the club decided to expand the experiment. Dave Playford was approached as he was Wanstead Leisure Centre’s Director of Leisure. He supplied use of a hall on Saturday mornings at reduced cost and also put some posters round to local schools (the only advertising the club had ever had for juniors). Dave Humble managed to obtain the assistance of club members Phil Ashleigh and Tony Cantale (Dave was by now a level 2 coach). Success was again immediate as a dozen youngsters turned up on day 1. It was and is hugely stimulating for all who took part. After a couple of years the club felt that it was outgrowing its premises and wanted its own identity. This coincided with the conversion of an old dance hall at the Aldborough Centre into a dedicated table tennis facility and Mossford TTC moved there in 1993 and remain to this day, renting space for both junior and senior activities.

The club now runs 10 senior teams consisting of 8 in the Ilford League spread over the 4 divisions and teams in the first and second divisions of the West Essex table tennis league. There are also 3 teams of youngsters competing in the Junior British League, National Junior and Cadet Leagues.

A natural spin off has been that the average age of the senior side has progressively reduced over the years as youngsters have come through.

Junior sessions have increased to 3 hours on Saturday mornings and 2 hours early on Tuesday evenings. There is a total of about 60 youngsters. Fortunately they do not appear all at the same time!

Numerous County juniors have been produced over the years, a few of whom are Martyn and Daniel Cantale, Matt Spero, Robin Ashleigh, Hannah and Ruth Ashleigh, Karla Bryant, Daniel Bronziet, Will Thoresby, Robin Glassberg, Paul Hizer etc.

Matt has gone on to represent Essex at senior level; numerous other players have represented their leagues at junior, senior and veteran levels.

Additionally many club members have taken on official roles for leagues and county.

Obviously things do not always go smoothly and over the years 2 groups of players have gone off to form other clubs, neither of which is now in being, but happily one group returned to the club.

The Juniors forte must be the London Youth Games where, representing the London Borough of Redbridge, the boys have not finished out of the top 3 in any of the last 10 years events and the girls have had a number of top 3 performances. There are 33 London Boroughs competing in the 3 performance.

So what are the magic ingredients for this club’s ongoing growth and longevity? The answer is that there is no magic and any club could replicate or even improve on Mossford’s performance and no doubt some already do. The inescapable fact however, is that if all clubs had followed the Mossford approach, there would be no worries about overall ETTA affiliated "membership".

To that extent it is appropriate to examine how Mossford ticks.

The club is properly constituted, with a strong committee consisting of people with successful careers outside of sport. As many members as possible are given additional roles eg team captains, Newsletter editor (yes the club produces it’s own newsletter!), Newsletter Producer (to professionalise the presentation), B qualified coaches-including a number who have come up through the junior ranks, numerous helpers for the club youngsters, a specific junior sub committee.

A tight rein is kept on club finances and the overall running of the club. Trivia is rarely discussed at club meetings.

Club members are encouraged to take pride in and have loyalty for their club and its traditions. Every member is given the opportunity to assist and comment on club decisions. Rules are kept to an essential minimum and rigorously but fairly enforced. Parents are kept up to date with progress and each receive the Newsletter.

It says a lot for the club that it still has its founder member as President-Bill Dawson who is now 87 and only packed up playing a few years ago.

Any disagreements (and with the best part of 100 members it would be very unhealthy not to have any), no matter of what severity are faced up to and dealt with. All in all a well organised club with shared responsibility which engenders a sense of belonging.

Finally, Mossford continues to be outward looking, offering help to other clubs, league and county eg on setup and/or junior development as required.

It is a great hobby and almost a way of life for some and the best news is that it is not rocket science and as already said, any club can do it and if we all did "it", the ETTAs financial worries would likely evaporate!
YOUNG players like Paul Drinkall, Craig Gascoyne and Craig Bryant should now be reaching the finals on the grand prix circuit. They are moving up the England ranking list but it was two coaches and the top seeds who crashed in the final round of the mens singles at Stratford-upon-Avon. Alan Cooke, 37, landed his first win on the circuit this season 4,10, 4 against Brad Billington, writes John Woodford.

Both finalists overcame foreign opposition in the later stages. Billington took out Bryant 5, 7, 9, 6, after stopping Balazs Palocs in the quarter. Cooke is in semi-final, started slowly but gradually got to grips with Kou Lei in his semi-final before breaking through 9, 15, 11, 5. The final was less exciting as the 'Cooke' pair took TOSP in proved too difficult for Billington, with his has a leg problem. Brothers Paul and Ben Drinkall debuted in Round 3, Paul came through to the quarters 9, 9, 11. Craig Bryant is making more headway - he reached the semi-finals losing 7, 5, 4 to Billington.

Four Chinese players, all far from their homeland, were the quarter-final and semi-finalists. Tong Feiming, based in Wang Yanan 8, 12, 2 in the round of the mens singles at Stratford-upon-Avon. Alan Cooke was the most likely winner the star singles 11,6,10 final and semi-finalists. Tong Feiming based Wang Yanan 8, 12, 2 in the Billington.

But Feiming earned some more cash for their players to come to England mainly to learn the language which as we all know, it regarded as THE international language. China can send a batch of their best players in the 15-18 age-group, male and female. The young English players are unlikely to benefit by learning Chinese when in China but they can of course benefit by playing their players and receiving coaching. China is regarded in many quarters as having the best coaches on the planet.

Back to the once proud Crystal Palace - huge entry, 290 players accommodated, 60 turned away. In the mens quarters Jenkins beat Tim Yarrell, Kou Lei stopped Andrew Rushdon 6, 5, 4, 7, Gergely Urban defeated Clive Carthy and Cooke brought down Gavin Ramugger 78, 5. Cooke showed his class hammering Urban 4,4,7 in the semi while Kou Lei provided the shock of the day, captasing Ryan Jenkins 7, 11, 6. Not a happy defeat for the Welsh ace who a few weeks back defeated the world No.1 German ace Peter Koenen in the U.S. Open Team Championships, in Baltimore.

Just as Chinese women smother all opposition at top world level, the Chinese young teenagers now in England are doing the same here.

The womens singles semi-final line-up was two Chinese, one Czech and a Russian, Marta Zarmoky who after spending the last 12 years in Poland is now based in Windsor. She has a splendid aggressive game. She held four match points in the semi-finals but lost 11 in the fifth to Shuang Zhao.

Also making a name for herself is Marketa Moskovka who now seems to be permanent resident of Devon, but even with her defensive qualities, Marketa was well beaten by the 15-year-old Wang Yanan who lives in Kent - that was in the semi. In the womens final Wang lost the first 7, but came back to beat Shuang Zhao 5, 7, 8. Master-winning the Chinese players in England is of course Ian Marshall, whose coaching activities take him all over England every week and round the world as he edits the ITTF magazine "Table Tennis Illustrated". Play on the first day at the Palace was out finished, due mainly to players required to score falling to appear at the control table - referee Mick Strode was not amused. The centre staff granted an extra hour but four of the finals were postponed until the following day and one hand abandoned with joint winners.

John Hilton was the most likely winner of the mens singles for men, but a bizarre decision by the driver who brought him to the venue meant they had to leave before the event started. This left Nigel Ekersley as the winner. He defeated not so well-known Surrey player Henry Medellin 10, 5, 10 in the final. Predictably, Lancashire's Brenda Buxey took the womens veterans prize 9, 7, 9, against Kent's Kim Mudge.

A quick look at the Under 21's - Stephen Bailey (Cleveland) continued in his role as one of the most improved young men after winning the final against the very young Lithuanian Vytas Rybakas 9, 9, 7.

The Under 21 event saw Shuang Zhao fighting hard to beat the very determined Welsh lady Naomi Owen, but only at 8 in the fifth. Keith Wilson's shining light Michael Marsden (Yorkshire) won the winner of the Band 1 event but only 4 at 5 in the fifth against Stephen Bailey.

Jenny Harrison (Essex) saw her name in the Daily Telegraph results section, possibly for the first time, after winning Band 1 (women) stopping Kim Mudge 6, 9, 11.

Footnote: The fact that Crystal Palace National Sports Centre has a huge question mark over it is a nifty problem on its future, one is that developers could make millions if the land was used for boosting...

Words by JOHN WOODFORD

Steven Bailey (Cleveland) who has recently zoomed twenty places up the England mens list from 87 to 67. Denny won the match 7;12,5.

 tegen Wang in the final. Billington also had a consolation win in the mens singles 3,11,10, 9 against Kou Lei who is still a junior. Keith Williams (Lancashire) had a day to remember when he lifted the veterans singles title 7,5, 7, 6 against Eddie Boffle in the final. Williams' victims included Anthony Isaac and Clive Carthy at 11 in the fifth.

Rose Bainston (Sussex) was the winner of Band 1, 8, 7, 8 in the final against the 'Welsh international squad player Swan Davies. In the semi-final the Sussex champion eliminated one of her greatest rivals Angie Konnerth in the U.S. Open Team Championships.

Shuang knocked out that battler Natalie Rawdon 9, 9, 10, 5, 10 in the final. There was some unacceptable behaviour at Stratford. Several yellow cards were shown and there was a red card by the referee Mick Strode against the Lithuanian Leo Vereinreder. After losing to Shaun Bubb he flew into a screen-kicking, but only at 4 in the fifth against Stephen Bailey.

There are a nifty problem on its future, one is that developers could make millions if the land was used for boosting...
IT was a great weekend for “Club efficiency” as British League Administrator Aubrey Drapkin was delighted to report that there was not one single case of teams playing out of order or with unregistered players. Thanks are extended to all concerned - it makes the Committee member’s jobs so much easier.

The battle to regain their Premier division status features some of the most famous Clubs in English Table Tennis. Ellenborough whose squad has featured Jon Nilsson, Eric Hammond, Gary Tendler, Jimmy Walsh, Simon Phillipz and Matt Spero have opened up a three-point lead in division One (South). In division One (North) Ormesby I (Bryn Drinkhall, Paul Drinkhall, Keith Rodger, Steve Bailey and Mark Simon) have still to face defeat but find their lead pegged back to a single point by an all-star Grove side that featured Lei Kou, Chinese import Thierry Tran and Walsh, Simon Philipz and Matt Ellenborough their 5-3 success. Ellenborough’s 6-2 victory over London Progress II was probably their best performance of the four as they stormed into a 5-0 lead before Progress managed to hit back. Nilsson and Jimmy Walsh were both undefeated although the two Progress wins also stand out. Henry Medellin excelled as he beat Gary Tendler 3-0 whilst the ever improving Umair Mauthoor secured a fine 3-1 victory over Simon Phillipz. Second-placed DML Plymout’s challenge subsided in round no. eight when they were well beaten 6-2 by an identical London Progress II side. Progress no. 1 Derek Zukowski out to be a great weekend for “Club efficiency” as British League Administrator Aubrey Drapkin was delighted to report that there was not one single case of teams playing out of order or with unregistered players. Thanks are extended to all concerned - it makes the Committee member’s jobs so much easier.

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But in what must go down as the biggest shock of the weekend it was an inspired Freeman (ranked no. 503 nationally) who came up trumps with a tremendous 11-9 in the fifth game win. Progress's experienced Yacov Bogen played his part playing at No.2 on the Saturday by taking his four singles in his team's two victories against Generation Two (5-3) and EBS Orange Northampton (6-2).

Division Three (Midlands): This division had "Grove II Success Story" written all over it but it was not the case against Ajax Wolvey and an impressive maximum points return from Bedford Modern I means that both teams still have everything to play for. It has to be said that Grove II were not at full strength but the defeat against Ajax Wolvey must still go down as unexpected as the Grove side did include the England no's 1 and 3 lady players - Shuang Zhao and Georgina Walker. By their high standards neither player had a match they will wish to remember.

Georgina appears to have coasted past Alan Hewitt 3-0 but in her second encounter she became a shock victim of Matthew Hobday 13,9,-9,-10. England no. 3 Senior Man Alan Hewitt gave a fantastic account of himself against Ms Zhao, as he stormed into a 2-0 lead and held his own all the way to the fifth game. He will remember his battle with England's top lady player fondly as he finally succumbed 6,11,-9,-11,-4. A magnificent effort. Grove just didn't have "enough petrol in the engine" on this occasion as Dave Grundy saw off Siwan Davies 3-0 and Andy LeButt defeated Gemma Yarnley 3-1 to secure a memorable Ajax 5-3 victory.

Bedford Modern I on the other hand never put a foot wrong all weekend. With players of the calibre of Mick Harper, Dave Welsman and Andy Trott at their disposal they too would grace any division two encounter. Steve Silk was their only loser as they disposed of Rotherham Scorpions 6-2, and they went one better in disposing of Birmingham University 7-1. Their final 6-2 victory over Ajax Wolvey in round no. eight certainly marked them out as serious contenders as Dave Welsman, Mick Harper and Andy Trott again took all six singles they were involved in.

Division Three (North): Two very strong teams are going to fail to get promoted from this division as Grove III find themselves tied on 14 points with Darlington II. Third-placed Club Mid-Cheshire (12 points) with Mike Johns at no. one are no one's idea of your archetypal division three side but already they look out of contention. Darlington's charge was led by England no. 44 Cadet David Meads who impressed so many observers in the last round of British League Premier division matches. He made short work of the best that Club Mid-Cheshire had to offer as he saw off both Phil Biggs and Mike Johns 3-9, not bad for a boy who has only been playing three years. Club Mid-Cheshire were never really in this match as they crashed 7-1. Meads's team-mates Andrew Leighton and Chris Close also stayed undefeated against England no. 20 Junior Leighton also getting the better of Mike Johns. Dewsbury II also felt the full force of the Darlington charge, as they also succumbed 7-1. Meads, Leighton and Close were again undefeated as Darren Page became the only Dewsbury player to get his name on the scoresheet but he achieved this with a 3-0 victory over Kevin Wilson. Page also fully extended Meads before succumbing -7,7,8,-7.

Division Three (South): York Gardens totally dominated this round of matches and their squad of Steve Holloway, Volodomyr Chornobab, Marc Burman, Peter Barrow and Hung Kei Li are almost certain to gain promotion.

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THE change of regulation concerning the format of the Veterans Divisions has apparently caught out some Counties. At the County Championships Conference last year it was agreed to extend Veterans matches to ten sets by incorporating a second mixed doubles, the intention being to allow for a draw and to give an extra set to the woman player. In order to offset the possibility of teams using their best player in as many sets as possible it was decided that only one man could play in four sets and that no man could play in both mixed doubles sets, that is where some teams have been making a mistake, so please read and understand the relevant regulations, in this case Regulation 27.1 on pages 37/38 of the County Championships handbook, writes Stan Clarke.

SENIOR DIVISION IA

The division played its first round of matches way back in November of last year, when your correspondent was sunning himself in Marbella, much warmer than Wolverhampton, where these matches were held at the Woodfield Centre.

Team of the weekend were without doubt Durham, who won all four of their matches, dropping only four sets out of a possible forty, on the way. They faced Cheshire in their first match and the only resistance they encountered was from Claire Peers, who beat Claire Wilson and Joanne Meads and Karen Shepherd who also beat Claire Wilson, the only man to prove a problem was Ray Jackson when he took Andrew Leighton all the way, only to loose 10/12 in the fifth game.

In their second match Durham opposed South Yorkshire, who were soundly trounced 10/0, only Stephen Horsfield and Andrea Baldi offering any threat when they pushed Michael Marsden, Claire Wilson and Joanne Meads to a fifth game, but were unable to produce the provide the killer touch.

On the second day of play Suffolk were the first team in the firing line and were promptly dispatched 9/1, Aimee Sparks proving too strong for Joanne Meads. Their final match of the weekend was against host County Worcestershire who, without Jill Harris proved no match for the Durham team and were promptly dispatched 10/0. It is quite remarkable that Durham used four men over the weekend and all four finished their matches with 100% wins.

Yorkshire 2nd are in second place tied on six points with South Yorkshire but with a superior sets difference, they started their campaign with a 7/3 win over Lincolnshire, Lesley Keast, who has transferred from her long time attachment to Middlesex to her new home County of Lincolnshire, was unbeaten with wins against Emily Dearing and Nicola Silburn. The only other success for Lincoln came when Andy Wignall beat Richard Smith.

In their second match Yorkshire faced a very under strength Lancashire team, who fielded three reserve men, but they proved good enough to beat their old rivals, on this occasion the war of the roses was won by the good guys as Lancashire romped home 7/3, thanks to doubles by Louis Rosenthal, Alice Howard and Cherith Graham and one from Michael Moir, who strangely beat No1 Richard Smith but lost to No3 Simon Pugh. On the Sunday Yorkshire returned to winning ways when they thumped Worcestershire 8/2 before edging out Cheshire 6/4 in their last match when with the score at 5/4 Simon Pugh brushed aside Ray Jackson to seal the win. All four of Cheshire's wins coming from their women Claire Peers and Karen Shepherd.

South Yorkshire started with a match against Suffolk which they won 7/3, before meeting Durham who brought them down to earth beating them 10/0, they then managed two wins by the smallest margin when they defeated Lincolnshire and Lancashire by 6/4. Against Lincolnshire they found Alex Green and Lesley Keast too hot to handle, whilst against Lancashire Alice Howard was undefeated, beating Andrea Baldi for the first time in several attempts.

Lancashire finished the weekend in fourth place and must thank their late reserves for their efforts in winning two and losing two, they are on level points with Lincolnshire but have a superior sets difference.

The bottom three places are occupied by Cheshire, Worcestershire and Suffolk, Cheshire and Worcestershire will need to look at their team strength before the final round of matches, as one of them will almost certainly face the prospect of relegation unless they can improve the strength of their squads.

Suffolk appear to have little hope of avoiding relegation, they will need to win all of their remaining three matches to avoid the drop.

CADET PREMIER

The first ever Cadet Premier Division competition was held at Grantham in December, the eight teams playing four matches in one day.

Durham are the only team to emerge with a 100% record after this first encounter, having won all of their matches, they beat Derbyshire 6/4 then Surrey and Suffolk by 9/1 and Lancashire 7/3. Their squad, David Mears, Mark Simpson, Chris Dixon, Samantha McCormick and Sarah Robinson is very strong and they must feel confident of becoming the first ever Cadet Premier Champions.

Suffolk are in second place with three wins and one defeat, level on points with Derbyshire but with a superior sets difference, they beat Surrey 7/3, Gloucestershire 9/1, Lincolnshire 6/4 and lost to Derbyshire 4/6.

I suspect that Derbyshire will be a little bemused by their third place, having taken Durham very close and beaten Suffolk they must feel that second spot should be theirs and I strongly suspect that when the dust dies down at the end of the season they may well finish in second place as Suffolk have yet to play Durham.

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COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS continued

JUNIOR PREMIER

 Held at the Cippenham centre on 1/2nd November, the teams played three matches over the weekend, with some unexpected results. Only one team, Derbyshire, emerged with a 100% record having won all of their matches beating both Essex and Lincolnshire 6/4 and Devon 7/3. On the way, mainly due to the efforts of their boys Adam Frost and Allan Fullwood who emerged unbeaten in all six sets and Shaun Marples who dropped only one set. In second place are last years champions Glamorgan, with two wins and one drawn match, they beat Bucks 6/4 and Devon 7/3 before being held to a draw by Yorkshire, mainly due to the efforts of Stephen Gertson who beat Simon Noutch and Stephen Denny, whilst Yorkshire owed their point in a 100% record having won all of their efforts of Stephen Gertson who beat Simon Noutch and Stephen Denny, who beat Emily Tucker and the ever dangerous Gemma Chapman were the heroes for the Tykes.

Cheshire are in fourth place, level on points with Yorkshire, but with a slightly inferior sets difference, although they lost to Buckinghamshire they did beat Essex 6/4 and Devonshire by the same score and will have a mighty fight on their hands if they are to emulate their runners-up spot of the last two seasons.

In fifth place, rather surprisingly I thought, are Buckinghamshire with three points from one win and a draw, I really thought they would be in the fight for honours but I'm afraid that seems beyond them now.

The relegation places are far from clear cut, Devonshire seem, at this stage to be fated for the drop, with Leicestershire who are yet to see that three of their team from their draw against Middlesex and are level on points and are separated only by games count back. Simon Noutch is the only male player to remain undefeated after the first three matches, while Natalie Bawden and Naomi Owen are both at the top of the women's averages and are still unbeaten.


Yorkshire are in third place with two wins and one defeat, interesting to see that three of their team from the Junior Premier also played in the senior division, Simon Noutch, Stephen Denny and Nicola White. They beat Glamorgan 6/4 and Leicestershire 7/5, some great wins here for the youngsters from the "Red Rose" County, Stephen Denny beat Dave Gannon and Chris Rogers Simon Noutch beat Keith Fellows and Dave Gannon and Nicola White beat Bettina Letzmann and, arguably the best win of her career to date, Karen Smith, to round off the win Shi Guang beat Keith Fellows. Middlesbrough had a traumatic weekend, winning against Kent 7/3 drawing 5/5 with Surrey and losing 4/6 to Essex. Glamorgan and Kent both won one match each and suffered two defeats, they are level on points and are separated only by sets difference. Surrey have one point as a result of their draw against Middlesbrough and are firmly in the relegation places along with Leicestershire who are yet to register a single point.

VETERANS OVER 60's TABLES

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BRITISH LEAGUE continued from page 23

certainly bound for division two. They were without their No.1 player Mark Smith but on this showing he wasn’t really missed. Their 6-2 victory over second-placed London Progress IV emphasised a point as Chorlton and Ken U both stayed undefeated. Progress "livewire" Matt Staines was responsible for both of his side’s successes as he got the better of Steve Holloway and Peter Barrow, both times in the fifth end. Horsham II’s Chris Mundy gave his team a great start as he got the better of Holloway 3-2 but it wasn’t enough as York Gardens raced through the next seven singles as the score went 7-1. Proof of this side’s quality can surely be found in the National rankings. Peter Barrow’s current national ranking of 175 is high for division three, yet in the York Gardens side he often finds himself playing at No.4. Man-of-the-Match Barrow showed his quality against Horsham with three straight victories over both Sally Weston and Chris Mundy.

Horsham II did well to come out on top in the Sussex derby against old rivals Hastings despite the fact that it was Hastings’ Stuart Hobden who stayed undefeated. Barrie Gilbert who had lost to Hobden nevertheless took the Player-of-the-Match Award for his impressive 3-2 victory over Paul Barry whilst Sally Weston emerged as a winner against County colleague Rose Rainton after a typically tight struggle -11,11,9,9.

Division Three (South & West): After the first round of matches you had to conclude that this division had yet to sort itself out as five teams had scored at least six points. There does appear to be a trend for teams to use widely different line-ups on the two days. Now there would appear to be four sides left in contention - JAGS II, Brighton University, Guildford II and OLOP Impact II. Only Horsham III have fallen away. The quality JAGS side with 14 points look to be the most likely Champions although they failed to do themselves justice against an inform OLOP side. It was left to Farhat Rasul to carry their challenge in this match as he beat both Mark Banks and Tony Reynolds. Robert Davies and Graham Outram were both defeated for OLOP. JAGS also had to work hard to see off Guildford II 5-3. Rasul was again undefeated but he was edged out in the Player-of-the-Match deliberations by JAGS no. 2 Martin Smith who also won twice.

Guildford’s Devesh Shete proved to be a formidable no. 4 beating both Rodney Farquharson and Alfred John.

Fourth: Ormesby II with a perfect record of 16 points out of 16 look absolute certain winners of this division. Their crushing 7-1 victory over Northfield, who were in second place after the first round of matches further emphasised their level of superiority. Their squad of Tony Wilson, Mark Simon, Danny Welsh, Danny Reed and Martyn Clarke also breezed past Rotherham Scorpions II (7-1), ELGRE Nottingham II (8-4) and Grove IV (8-0). Northfield turned out to be their toughest set of opponents with Mark Walpole getting the better of Martyn Clarke. Northfield also managed to prolong three other games to a fifth end, with Walpole also giving Mark Simon all kinds of trouble before bowing out 15-11 in the deciding set. Without wishing to burden Ormesby with unfair pressure it must be said that this side has a reasonable chance of going through the whole season without dropping a single point. Grimsby moved into second place, whilst equally interesting was the fact that Bryn Tyler jumped from no. four to no. one in their line-up in round eight. It didn’t seem to matter too much as he won both of his singles in that match against Isle of Man, the same as he had managed in his side’s other matches against Bedford Modern II (4-1), Grove IV (5-3) and ELGRE Nottingham II (6-2). Bedford Modern II proved to be their trickiest set of opponents with England no. 45 Junior Boy Hamish Yeung making his mark with wins over John Hancock and Nicola Massingham. Hancock’s five game win over John Camilleri went a long way to securing Grimsby’s point.

ELGRE can be pleased with their showing against Ormesby, they may have lost 8-4; but only two games were decided three-straight.

Happy New Year to all British League players.........
COUNTY NOTES - A look around the country

BEDFORDSHIRE
by Derek Willis

OUR County teams have been in action, with mixed results for all teams.

Seniors Division 2C – played at St Neots TTC

Suffolk 2nd 5 Bedfordshire 5
Bedfordshire 8 Norfolk 2
Bedfordshire 2 Northants 8

Starring for Bedfordshire was Sandra Harper who won all 6 singles, ably backed up by Val Murdoch who won 4. Well done the ladies!

Vets 1st Division 2A – played at St Neots TTC

Bedfordshire 1st 6 Warwickshire 4
Yorkshire 3rd 2 Bedfordshire 1st 8
Bedfordshire 1st 2 Essex 2nd 8
Essex 3rd 7 Bedfordshire 1st 3

Vets 2nd Division 3B – played at Ashford TTC

Middlesex 4th 5 Bedfordshire 2nd 5
Bedfordshire 2nd 1 Essex 4th 9
Kent 4th 4 Bedfordshire 2nd 6
Bedfordshire 2nd 3 Cambridge 7

The facilities and playing conditions at Ashford TTC are excellent.

Junior 1st – played at Batts, Harlow

Played 3 matches; won 2 and lost 1. Our star player was Daniel Anderson, who was making his County debut and won his 6 singles.

Junior 2nd

Played 3 matches; won 1, drew 1 and lost 1. A special mention must go to Imandeep Sehme who on his debut won 2 singles against Cambridgeshire 1st to enable the team to gain a draw. Imandeep is also a Cadet, so this was a very good performance.

BERKSHIRE
by John Cunningham

COURAGE REWARDED

Over sixty members and staff of the Reading Resource Centre in Waylen Street gave their table tennis team a standing ovation at a recent special awards presentation. Alan Dines, the director and table tennis coach of IMPACT presented each member of the team with a medal in recognition of being awarded the Cunningham Cup for Courage in the face of Adversity, from Wokingham and Bracknell District Sports Council. Andrew Syed, brother of England Number One Matthew Syed received a special mention from Our Lady of Peace correspondent and local club official Robert Allchurch.

BERKSHIRE: Reading Resource Centre Table Tennis Team (Left to right) Elvis Duncan, Stephen Lebons, John Cunningham, Sue Hutchinson, Mark Kennedy, Joyce Crockford, Chris Norris, Andrew Syed, Neil Havard, Nicki Porton, Alan Dines and Maureen Allchurch.

BERKSHIRE: Reading Resource Centre Table Tennis Team (Left to right) Elvis Duncan, Stephen Lebons, John Cunningham, Sue Hutchinson, Mark Kennedy, Joyce Crockford, Chris Norris, Andrew Syed, Neil Havard, Nicki Porton, Alan Dines and Maureen Allchurch.

BERKSHIRE: Ian Schwartz

Schwartz, who lived in Woodley, had once worked for local firm Business Seating.

In his younger days he was a keen footballer, playing for Wokingham Town and Newbury Town.

He also had trials with West Ham United.

Ian and Jenny Schwartz had three children and three grandchildren.

Brother Ray said: “He lived and slept table tennis.”

Ian often took one of his grandsons, 8-year-old Thomas, to coaching sessions.

Reading and District Table Tennis Association Chairman, Nigel Maltby said: “We were saddened to hear of the death of Ian Schwartz and our thoughts are with his family during this sad time.”

He won numerous honours in Reading Association tournaments. He was the Reading Veterans champion in 1996, 98 and 99 and won the senior veterans title on six occasions.

One of the proudest moments of his career came in 1990 and 1991 when he partnered his niece Gemma to the Reading mixed doubles title.

He regained the tile in 1994 when partnering Isabel Walker.

On his last appearance in the Wokingham and Bracknell League, he was in outstanding form for OLOP IMPACT A.

He remained unbeaten, defeating Mick Dorrington, Trevor Organ and Alan Cummings in the singles as his side eased to a 9-1 win over Kingsbridge B.

Schwartz also partnered fellow maximum man Graham Outrim to an emphatic victory in the doubles.

CHESHIRE
by Alan Blears

RAISE money for the Cheshire teams and provide a high quality tournament at the same time – now isn’t that a good idea? Who thought of it I don’t know, but the result was the Cheshire Open Grand Prix Satellite at Knutsford. Hopefully this will be reported in detail elsewhere, so I will highlight those performances of particular interest to Cheshire folk.

JOHN HILTON predictably won the Men’s Veterans, but was especially pleased to finish as runner-up to ALAN COOKE in the Men’s Open, nothing up wins against KEVIN DOLDER and protege LOUIS ROSENTHAL along the way.

KAREN SHEPHERD took the U-21 title from ZOE CHEESEMAN, but found top seed HELEN LOWER too strong and too steady for her in the Women’s Open final.

RAY JACKSON took runner-up spot in the Men’s Band 3, while the...
WEATHERBY brothers, KEITH and JOHN – back in competition after a long absence – contested the Men’s Band 5 final. Keith won at deuce in the fifth, but both were too exhausted to play on the Sunday. Get fit guys! Incidentally, watch out for the next generation of Weatherbys – Andrew, Matthew and the microscopical Sarah.

A cold-sticken LORNA HARPER beat ANDREA HARRISON, the Women’s Band 2 winner, in the groups but lost a tight semi-final to the Wirral’s JORDYN LAYFIELD, who was runner-up. Jorjyn was also runner-up in the Band 3 to the wily JULIE RICHLEY.

Thanks go to GAIL McCULLOCH, MIKE JOHNS and their team for a long but successful weekend.

Blackpool Junior 4 Star Select
Karen Shepherd came runner-up to her friend JOANNA PARKER in the junior Girls’ Singles after a thrilling 5­-game final. It’s darned hard work playing against Jo, and Karen was the first to admit that fitness played its part at the end as she now trains seriously only once a week.

Though suffering some lapses in concentration, together they won the doubles from fellow Stockport girl CAROLINE HALLOWS and Derbyshire’s EMMA VICKERS.

Caroline and Emma had themselves won a famous victory against the older pairing of JOANNE MEADS and CLAIRE WILSON. Caroline and Emma obviously “click” together, as previously they had won the cadet team event in the Stockton 4 Star Select.

National Junior League – N.W. Area South

There are no Wirral teams this year, with some players having moved into the Junior British League, and others having prematurely retired – sadly an all-too-familiar story. Their place as leaders of the top division has been taken by Stockport ‘A’, who at the half-way stage have won all their matches. Of their 54 sets the team of GEORGE YARDLEY, ADAM SLATER and RYAN COSTELLO has dropped just five, four of those to Tameside ‘A’, with part-timer George unbeaten. Maybe they should have been in the new N.W. Premier Division.

Leading girl is Stockport ‘B’s AMY WALKER, with 11 wins from 16, most of them against boys.

Mid Cornwall League Annual Christmas Hard Bat competition

CORNWALL: The youngest 11 year old RYAN BOWLER (left) and the oldest 82 year old GEORGE DUANE, who competed in the highly successful Hard Bat tournament held at the St.Austell Table Tennis Centre in December

Cleveland View

by Alan Ransome

TABLE TENNIS returns to the Tees Valley Youth Games, a multi-sport competition organised by the government’s sports partnership, Tees Valley Sport, when the competition is next held on 19 June 2004. Table tennis has been given up to 90 places for teams from the five local authority areas, middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool, Redcar & Cleveland and Darlington. There will be three age groups, under 16, under 13 and under 11 with boys and girls team competitions in each category. Play will take place at Eton Leisure Centre complex with 24 tables in operation.

Table tennis was previously in the Games in the year 2000 for the Millennium Games, but then lost its place due to our sport not being included in the Sport England Active Sport programme. Now that the opportunities have been widened, table tennis is the first sport to be admitted into the competition in Tees Valley.

Another benefit from our link with Tees Valley Sport is the creation of a Tees Valley Wide Development Forum for table tennis consisting of officers from Tees Valley Sport, development officers from each of the five local authorities, representatives of the five specialist sports colleges including Northfield and Kings Manor, and from each of the school sports co-ordinators, together with representatives from the local table tennis leagues and clubs. The Forum is in the process of producing a Table Tennis Development Plan for the Tees Valley area, which would involve participation from all of the parties and would introduce the sport in many schools and programmes that have not been active before.

Further good news in the county was a decision of Sport England to support the ETTA’s nomination of the Ormesby Club for a £500,000 grant to upgrade the Club’s new centre on Cargo Fleet Lane, Middlesbrough and give first stage approval. The grant, which is subject to a second stage approval, is designated to upgrade the hall including specialist lighting and renewal of the heating system, upgrade changing rooms, social area, main road access and car park. If all goes according to plan, the work could start as early as August with completion by the end of this year.

CORNWALL by John Wood

The annual Mid Cornwall League hard bat competition took place at Tregorrick Park St Austell, on Tuesday 16th December 2003. Some 25 competitors took part ranging from the oldest competitor aged 82 to Ryan Bowler the youngest player in the League at 11 years old. Following round robin group stages the quarter final line up saw Paul Meadows beat Kerry Lewis, Kate Aiken beat Andrew Broad, James Broad beat Martin Adams and Tim Bowler defeat his son Ryan. In the semi final in a one sided affair James Broad easily beat Paul Meadows whilst the solid defence of Kate Aiken saw her come through against Tim Bowler in a close fought semi.

In the final James Broad – a Junior of 14 with a handicap start of 10 was always in control to take the title following on from the success of his older brother Andrew the previous years winner.

National Cadet League

Cirencester

Following the first round in November the Cornish Kidz of Ryan Bowler aged 11, James Broad aged 14 and David Wetherill aged 13 were in joint second place behind a very strong and experienced Southampton team.

In the second round on the 14th December an excellent performance by all 3 Cornish players saw them race 12 points clear of Gloucester City in second place only trailing Southampton. In the match against Southampton Cornish Kidz became the first to win the two rounds to hold them to a 3 – 3 draw with all 3 Cornish Kidz winning 1 match each. David Wetherill narrowly lost to the Southampton number 1 in the 5th end and Ryan Bowler narrowly losing 10–10 in the fourth to the more experienced Lloyd Jamesion and so missing an excellent chance of inflicting a first defeat on Southampton.

Merit Table

The first Merit Table of 2004 started in January (report next month), under the guidance of John Jermyn. The next one will be on Sunday 21st March, commencing at 1.30pm.

Veterans County Championships

Our Veteran County Championship team of Rob House, Austin Chapman, Mike Fisher and Elaine Lewis, had a great unexpected victory over highly fancied Wilshire, 6-4, in Division 4D.

Bob, Austin and Elaine all won a singles each, with the victory being secured by winning all three doubles. Bob and Austin won the mens doubles, whilst Elaine won the other in partnership with firstly Mike then with Austin.

Cumbria by Gordon Brown

BARROW-IN-FURNES area dominated the 30th annual Cumbria Schools’ Table Tennis Association team championships in Barrow Table Tennis Centre taking all five events. Dowhales, of Dalton-in-Furness, won both the Under-16 boys and girl and Askam Village also did the double in the Under-11s.

St Bernard’s (Barrow) collected the Under-13 boys group, beating Queen Katherine (Kendal) in the final match after narrowly overcoming Parkview to get there.

Parkview, from Barrow, had drawn
4-4 with St Bernard's but went through 16-13 on games. A mainstay of Cumbria's county team over many years, Julie Stich was placed 35th in the veteran women's ETA rankings for November.

Despite Cumbria's lowly standing in the county world, Julie won 9 out of 12 singles games in last season's county championships and has frequently appeared among the honours in Cumbria's own closed championships. Born in Yorkshire and now 44, Julie started playing at the age of 9 at Beckett's in Hull where her parents Brian and Vera Mclean were closely involved in the game.

She continued her table tennis when she attended Leeds Polytechnic on her way to a teaching diploma and eventually made the Yorkshire junior second and first teams.

Julie became a teacher at Selby High School and then St Aidan's School, Carlisle, in the area from where her husband hails and where they now live at Langwathby. Cumbria have been fortunate to have Julie's services since 1986, but while raising a family with three children in 29 months, she was out of the game between 1992 and 1995, when she soon won back her place in the county team.

She played for Scoby in the Carlisle League and now turns out for Burton in the strong Kendal League, rushing off to play as I finished my interview.

A supply teacher these days, she is always keen to encourage the game among the youngsters and plays with her own children and on the dining table, almost reminiscent of her own junior days when she played table tennis with her mum and dad on a table they had in the garage.

Ranked 370 in the ETTA veteran men ratings at the same time was Cumbria's Chris Knowles, who was also 102 in the Veterans English Table Tennis Society men over 50 list, in which county colleague Colin Pratt was 152. He was 77 in the men over 60, in which another Cumbrian, Charles Usher was 117. Charles was ranked 45 in the men over 70.

DERBYSHIRE
by Colin Deaton

SOME real encouraging results have been achieved by the young under 11 boys and girls from Chesterfield. Competing in the Chalmers One Star at Grantham, Daniel Lowe emerged as the champion defeating school mate and club colleague Shaun Cullen.

Ten year-old Liam Pitchford has been in outstanding form winning the East Midland Four Star and also the Chalmers One Star at Grantham. A significant feature at the Grantham event was that three of the four semi-finalists in the Under 11 boys' event were from Staveley Club. But the talking point at Grantham in these events has been the form of Staveley's 9-year-old Lucy Davidson. The young 'Pocket Rocket' zoomed into the National Under 13 girls' ranking list by winning the Chalmers One Star event demonstrating a good technique backed with some tremendous powers of recovery. The head of Under 11 is that the Staveley Club has now accumulated are amongst the best that Derbyshire have produced for years and as a club their membership makes one of the biggest clubs in the country. The Staveley Club's no. 1 junior is Allan Fullwood, who continues to make progress in the National Junior Ranking List and his Butterfly sponsorship will act as some real encouragement for the Derbyshire juniors.

Shaun Marples is the Town and Counties top junior and is working hard in his game to get to the top in what will be his last season as a junior.

Our Derbyshire Junior Team have got off to a flying start having played 3 and won 3 on the first weekend with victories over Devan, Essex and Lincolnshire. Our squad of players comprises of Shaun Marples, Adam Frost, Allan Fullwood and David Arrowsmith with Emma Vickers and Sarah Bayliss providing good support for the girls.

However, in this junior premiership there are still some good teams to play before we can emerge as champions.

Neil Houghton played his junior Captian role with his usual efficiency and the team throughout enjoyed some good team spirit.

Neil is the senior coach to the Burton League and is producing and developing a crop of youngsters. Amongst the hopefuls are Burton School's champions, Laurie Shand (Under 13 girls) and James Ward (Under 11 boys). Apparently according to the dedicated Neil both could reach the top if they continue to work.

In the Derby League, Marilyn O'Sullivan has about 40 youngsters involved in the game at the Community School venue, all of whom are most enthusiastic and each will receive a certificate on their training day.

The Derby League have 3 teams more competing in the league this season with a division three which mainly comprises of youngsters. Their pride and joy, Emma Vickers, is a regular around the open tournament circuit and I think she is already a force to be reckoned with playing against men players in the Derby League.

Finaly Nicola Deaton, still studying at Nottingham University in her final year taking a psychology degree, was nominated by her University as the "Sportswoman of the Year." Nicola reached the last 8 and attended the function in London, which was sponsored by the Sunday Times.

The 5 times English Singles Champion resumes light training in the New Year after recovering from a disc injury problem. This injury has prevented her from playing for her club, Metz, in the French League.

ESSEX
by Steve Kerns

CONGRATULATIONS ANDY
IT seems like a good idea if we mentioned here Andy Dosher's notable victory in the Men's Singles in the Suffolk Closed Championships in this column. It has to be said that it is doubtful if there will be sufficient room to chronicle this meritorious achievement in full in the Suffolk Notes! Also making his mark in this tournament was former leading Essex Junior Tony West. Now aged 34, and playing in the Bury St. Edmunds League Tony fought his way through to the Men's Singles Semi-Finals before losing 3-1 to the ubiquitous Dosher.

SOUTHEND & DTTI
The Southend & DTTI has shown something of a resurgence this season with the Premier division teams featuring large squads of players, many prepared to travel long distances for their matches. The League which has 48 teams is the third biggest in the County and its Closed Tournament is always one of the best supported within Essex. Last year over 100 players participated with every player guaranteed a minimum of three games. The League have remained enthusiastic supporters of the Essex Inter-League and run four Veterans, two Super-Veterans and two Junior sides. Unlike some other local Leagues they have retained a large base of Clubs with nineteen different Clubs registered this season.

So far this year 72 players have played for the twelve Premier teams featuring an extremely high number. With Chris Sladden having a rest from the game the indefatigable Middlesex veteran John Holland has proved to be the top player, undefeated in his 19 singles. His side, Essex Police lead the way with only one defeat from their eleven matches, ironically when Holland was absent. Police's defeat was by a 5-4 margin against second-placed Hadleigh Forum A. England no. 15 Junior Vytas Bybakas took his three singles in style but doubles for Kerian Lilly and Tony Halling against Steve Kerns and Brian Adams and a singles win for Fred Dove over Kerns gave Hadleigh their narrow success.

Police hit back well a week later with a convincing 8-1 victory over third-placed Rawrth A. Former England Junior International Ryan Savill suffered his first defeats of the campaign succumbing to both Bybakas (3-2) and Holland (3-1). Savill's 3-0 win over Kerns was all his side could muster on this occasion as George Reeves and Graeme Hurry both failed to get their names on the scoresheet. Leading Essex players appear throughout the Individual averages with the likes of Holland (100%), Ray Murray (93%), Vytas Bybakas (90%), Hamish Innes (91%), Duncan Taylor (88%), Ryan Savill (87%), Kevin Read (85%), John Monk (81%) and Keith Phillips (81 %) leading the way. Supporting this resurgence is a rapidly expanding Junior set-up with Coaching taking place at no fewer than five different Centres. Dave Nunn with support from George Reeves are looking after Rawrth TTC's venture at the Warehouse Centre in Rayleigh whilst. Paul Reed is in control at SETTS (Basildon) and Deanes School (Thundersley). Elsewhere further Coaching is taking place at Clements Hall (Hockley) headed by Hill Dowsett and Graeme Hurry and at the Hullbridge Table Tennis Club where Howard Grant is in charge.

ISLE OF WIGHT
by John Press

OUR new scoring system, adopted only in our 3rd division, has, as I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous column I feared and predicted, produced controversy not dissimilar to the 11 up situation. To me, wearing my hat as league press officer, it seemed a great success. You will recall that in the previous
On the positive side, no parents have had to complain that their children returned at ridiculous hours, midnight arrivals not unusual, if a lot of matches go to 5 and players arrive at 20 to 8 and then start knocking out interminably. Such days some seem to see as the golden age of table tennis, the decline from 7 divisions to 3 overlooked. As usual, the forces of reaction are more volatile, at any rate in our Newsletter, than those of change and it may well be that at our AGM everything will be altered and that we shall return to the status quo, which so clearly has served us well for so long.

Our third division has sported far fewer teams than for many years, but even that has only kept the Carl Prean Centre which has reversed and that we shall return to the league pay £1.50. The battle to retain also the assets like the Carl Prean Centre and running this as a cheap baby sitting alternative.

As usual, membership. Even I had forgotten what a long process this often is, not least how many fall by the wayside, as they try to learn to play and how much they use the facilities only as a cheap baby sitting alternative.

Our charges, as befits an area with high unemployment in winter, are very low; for a pound our members can play two or three hours and non-members, those who do not play in the league pay £1.50. The battle to break even, to have enough money for repairs, to pay the business rate, even discounted, and many other charges, is always with us.

Small as we now are, we pay the ETTA over £400 p.a. What we get for this sounds, the intention is to raise more money not least by tapping existing on that front.

It is obvious that, friendly though all this sounds, the intention is to raise more money not least by tapping new sources, such as people thought to “benefit” from the ETTA without paying for this. However, figures I have seen indicate plans to make members pay a lot more. Such schemes may well pass at an ETTA AGM, where the larger counties dominate, whilst the leagues tend to opt out and so entrust their votes, by default, to the county representatives.

Others must speak for themselves, but here such moves would go down very badly and disaffiliation is likely, leaving in effect a very small rump affiliated to the ETTA, whilst the league continues in disaffiliated form, retaining also the assets like the Carl Prean Centre and running this as before.

I have no means of knowing whether this would be replicated in other parts of the country. Memories will, of course, play their part. Few have forgotten how badly the ETTA, at any rate its management committee, treated us some years ago when we needed them most.

We were left to stew in our own juice, as our centre was surrounded by a quagmire for reasons the experts had not foreseen when it was built. We do not think we get very much at the best of times and to be asked to pay more for so little would go down very badly. I cannot believe that the rest of the country is so very different. Once one has seen reforms and some signs of a revival in the sport, one may view such things differently. I can only beg the powers-that-be to abandon these plans, not least as they would lead to their defeat in the not too distant future.

KENT
by Adrian Hall
NEW COMMITTEE
FOLLOWING a troubled 2002 / 2003 when the county were unable to find an active committee, the 2003 / 2004 season starts with more promise. Maidstone’s Neil Highmams has taken the Chairman’s role, with the main bulk of the committee emanating from the Tunbridge Wells League. Full details of the committee can be found on the Kent County Website www.kctta.net.

KENT CLOSED
The county closed championships will again be held at the Body & Mind, Canterbury on 1st / 2nd May 2004.

RATINGS TOURNAMENTS
Not to be confused with Ranking Tournaments these will be held throughout the season for both Junior and Senior players giving between 5 & 8 matches in a day. The events will be banded with a maximum of 25 players per band ensuring competitive play and the incentive for players to move up to a higher band based on results. Entry forms go out to all leagues but if you wish to enter please contact Len Pilfold on 020 8850 3910 or email lenpilfold@ntlworld.com

COUNTY MATCHES
Kent Junior II have won their division winning all 5 of their matches; beating Middlesex II 6 - 4, Wiltshire 8 - 2, Bucks IV 7 - 3, Surrey III 9 - 1 and Sussex III 9 - 1.

KENT VETERANS LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

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KENT LEAGUES

KENT LEAGUE MENS DIVISION

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Please note

Would ‘County Notes’ correspondents please continue to send their copy and photographs to Lindsay Shipp at Hastings Head Office.

Kent II have finished their programme with two wins, two draws and one defeat.

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I understand that our O'60 Vets team have won their division but I have no details to hand.

**LEICESTERSHIRE**

**by Derek Butt**

AT the halfway stage of the Leicester and District League Division One, and the match between the top two both previously with a 100% record saw Leicester Electricity beat Knighton Park first team 6–4. Karen Smith for the Park scored a good maximum and had a hand in their doubles win so was unlucky to be on the losing side, but Matt Hobday, Dave Grundy and Alan Hewitt got two each for a good win. So we will probably now have to wait until the end of the season before we know who will be champions. I'm not going to predict anything, but one thing for sure is that it will be one of these two. In third place are County Hall but well behind the leaders. At the foot of the table Electricity seconds and Thringstone are the struggling pair.

The long awaited final of the Elbow Tankard has been played and Electric Shoes (Leicester Electricity) convincingly beat Park Keepers (Knighton Park) 11–2. The man of the match was the Shoes Shrikant Naran scoring four from four, while Andy Wright two from three and Derek Butt one from two, plus all four of the oh so crucial doubles. A very enjoyable evening of good table tennis and then all retiring to the bar. The Park Keepers team were represented by Shirley Pickering, Gordon Sanders and Steve Towers. Most of the Cup matches have reached their final stages and the cup secretary is happy with the progress. The Phil Reid Memorial Trophy played annually over the New Year period has drawn a good entry and will take place at Knighton Park. I will report on both these in my next report. Happy New Year to all. No news from either Hinckley or Loughborough.

**NORFOLK**

**by Ray Hogg**

All our County teams were in action recently. Starting with the old ones; Over 60 veterans, Mary Sawyer lead Mick Broughton, Tony Hipperson and Wally Ladmore to Halifax for our first ever match in this division — losing 4 out of 5, but a good time had by all. In the other veterans, our 1st team won 2 and lost 2. Lindsay Dare made her debut for Norfolk.

Senior team made a terrible start losing all 4 matches with games average of 5 to 35. If anyone knows who played for us would they let me know.

First time cadets drew 1 and lost 3 at Halifax — Adam Gigli and Amy Ajeto having good wins against higher ranked players. Mark Dare also made his debut as coach and his influence and interest will stand us in good stead for the future.

Juniors went to Harlow with both teams in same division and all conducted themselves excellently — a credit to the County. We have a stream of players coming through and they all should be at the County Champs in March so we can put names to faces.

Also keeping youngsters busy was the National Junior League Eastern Region at Kings Lynn when Adam Gigli, Andrew Gale and Chris Durrant won all their matches.

VETTS eastern region tournament held in Norwich for the first time was a success; nearly 200 players on 24 tables with room for more if needed.

11 up still a bone of contention with some very experienced players threatening to pack up after 50 years of 21. Time will tell.

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**by Dennis Millman**

NORTHANTS recently suffered a major blow with the sad passing of Reg Allen, a cornerstone of the Northampton League for more than forty years.

Following a successful spell at Imperial College he turned his attention to table tennis and in particular to the Doddridge club which he helped to establish in the 1960-61 season. However, it was as an administrator that he made his mark progressing from Divisional Secretary to Match Secretary and finally to League Secretary, all in the space of five years.

During his time as League Secretary he orchestrated the growth of the league from 49 teams of four players to 129 three aside outfits in 1973. However, even his Herculean efforts couldn't buck the national trend and when he finally left office there were just 42 sides in contention.

One of his major success stories was his organisation of the Annual Presentation Dinner at a host of venues, with none more special than that well-known Midlands Ballroom — The Salon, where in the early seventies the attendance peaked at 450.

Another speciality was his handling of the fixture list, and irrespective of the total number of entries and the size and number of the different divisions, Reg would always ensure that club requirements were rigidly adhered to.

However, on 5 July 2001 Reg was elected President at the Northampton League AGM and simultaneously his 36 year term as League Secretary came to an end as he vacated a post he had occupied with such distinction and expertise since 1965.

At this time he also took over the position of Handicap Knock-Out Tournament Secretary and in tribute to his loyal service this particular competition has been abandoned for the current season.

His mathematical brilliance solved many problems but no longer will enthusiasts far and wide, when faced by a difficult problem, be able to do...
what countless of their predecessors have been accustomed to doing. “Give Reg a ring, he will know the answer.”

Without doubt the Northampton League will be saddened by the death of a structured organisation without the talent and dedicated Reg Allen.

He was also a long standing member of the County Lawn Tennis Club and in his later years became a croquet enthusiast. Additionally his loyalty to Doodridge Church remained constant to the end.

All those who knew him, colleagues and adversaries, send their deepest condolences to his wife and family.

The County Cadets made an excellent start to the season when they won all three matches against Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Suffolk 2nds.

Chris Doran, currently ranked No.3 in the National Under 15 rankings, was in fine form winning all six matches, but Simon Bushell, Matthew Carter, Matthew Burgess, Katy Armstrong, Danielle Prendergill and Beth Walter all made major contributions. Smartly attired in their new County tracksuits, the players produced a performance to match and can now prepare the second series of matches at Halifax on the last Saturday in February.

The Seniors, playing in Division 2C, also made a winning start when they beat Herts 2-7-3, but a strong Notts 2nds proved a bridge too far. Nothing daunted, Northants came back to get the much the better of Norfolk.

It was a sound team display with all five players, Andy Trot, David Gatiss, Kieron Dabb, Sarah Hollis and Melissa Price making major contributions. Particularly impressive were the senior debuts of 15 year old Melissa Price and Sarah Hollis, just one year her senior, with both players winning four of their six singles.

A tremendous performance from John Fuller wasn’t enough to give the Veteran 2nds a win against Herts 4ths. He won both his singles for the big time.及nbsp;and could possibly be in the hunt.

Our thoughts are with his family and son Billy, a member of the county junior team.

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE**

_Bay Alan Dunn_

The County Junior Side had a very successful first day, with wins against Shropshire 9-1, Lincolnshire 7-3 & Hertfordshire 7-5. Only Cheshire proved too strong with a 6-4 victory. The team consisted of Ben Barlow, Stephen Ariss, Matt Dodds and Emily Robinson all from Rotherham with Kirstie Harrison from Sheffield. The Deame Valley area of our County looks as though it will produce talent in the future, with lots of exciting TT Developments, Deame Valley TTC, West Melton TTC, Pirhana TTC and Barnsley YMCA are all working very hard for the future of our sport. The added input of Mark Willerton, our new RDO is proving invaluable to the area.

Mark Willerton-new Yorkshire Regional Development Officer tel. 01904 553405 mobile 07940 137555 email mark.willerton@york.gov.uk

In the Regional Trials, South Yorkshire’s players shone. Ben Barlow (Scorpions) won the Cadet and finished 2nd in the Juniors losing a very close match against Stephen

**COUNTY NOTES - 6**

**NORTHERNLAND**

_Pauline Long_

The County Veterans’ team of Dave Godbold, Malcolm Lusk, Geoff Salter, Ian “Benny” Robertson and Christine Robinson were unbeaten following their first series of Division 1A matches at Halifax over the weekend of 25th/26th October.

Dave, on his veteran debut, was unbeaten in his singles matches against Cheshire II (7-3), Hertfordshire (9-2), Leicester (7-3) and South Yorkshire (6-4). Geoff won five singles, “Benny” three, Malcolm two and Christine one. Various combinations were also unbeaten in the men’s doubles, and also won five mixed doubles matches. Unfortunately, Malcolm sustained an elbow injury which prevented him from playing singles in the last three matches, but the remaining players all performed with great credit to set themselves up for the second weekend in mid-January.

The juniors were in action on 1st November for the first of their Division 3B series of matches in Grantham. The team of David Graham, Adam McCormack, Kevin Watson (all Grantham) and Suening Ngai and Stephanie Down (both Ashington) drew 5-5 with Staffordshire 1sts 1-9 to 2nd Durham II and Lancashire II.

Grateful thanks were due to Nigel Coe who had organised £100 in sponsorship from AALCO for the juniors and also to our President, Harry Dignan, who has donated £100 towards the cost of shirts for the County team.

The Northumbria League season was at the time of writing about to enter the last month before the Christmas and New Year fortnight’s break, and was due to resume on 5th January. Current leaders are Premier Division: Birtley ‘A’; Division 1: North ‘A’; Division 2: Whitehouse Lane ‘A’; Division 3: DWP ‘B’; Division 4: Crumlington Colts.

The Team Handicap Knockout Cup Competition had reached the second round stage, with all matches having to be completed during week commencing 8th December.

Thompson Insurance moved into the second half of the Veterans’ British League with high hopes, thanks to two new signings.

Joe Kennedy completed his first session by losing only one match to Cippenham’s Terry Haley at Stoke. Wayne Percival, who has moved from Cheshire side PAA, was also in great form to help the team finish top of Division 1 on sets average.

They can now look forward to Doncaster early next year, when similar results would see them head for the big time.

The second team benefiting from the input of John Williamson moving down to help put them in a strong position. Despite losing to PSW West Insure and being held to a draw by Ilfracombe, they hit back to move down to help put them in a strong position. Despite losing to PSW West Insure and being held to a draw by Ilfracombe, they hit back to finish in second place. John and Jimmy Scope both finished in the top four averages.

**SHROPSHIRE**

_By Terry Ridgway_

HONOURS even in the highly competitive English County Championships Shropshire A & Shropshire B nets this match month, Albrighton’s Malcolm Langford unbeaten for the A side (just about! after an incredible 11-8, 12-10, 17-19, 19-11, 12-10 win against Dave Elkin), as was Shrewsbury’s Rod France for the seconds in the 5-5 draw that leaves the division wide open as both sides challenge for the 4C divisional title.

**Telford League**

Division One has a familiar look with Albrighton’s A and B squads dominating, but dark horses Bridgnorth A are still unbeaten and with county vets Chris Farr, Mike Dudley, Dave Levinson and Terry Ridgway playing well, there could be a close finish ahead!

Division 1 (top 5P) W L Pts
Albrighton A 7 6 1 50
Albrighton B 6 5 1 41
Bridgnorth A 5 0 0 34
Ind Bearings 6 3 3 34
Broseley 7 3 4 31

Leading averages

**Telford League 2**

My early season predictions are proving to be spot-on as the halfway stage tables see last year’s relegated GPO side lead, closely followed by Bridgnorth C in what appears to be a two horse race, the top sides both unbeaten (having fought out a recent thrilling 5-5 draw). GPO remain slight favourites as they can call on the highly experienced top county vet Rob Mansfield amongst their registered reserves!!

Leading averages
Pete Collins (GPO) P 21 – W 21, Bob Vaughan (Bridgnorth C) P 21 – W 18, Wendy Boggart (Bridgnorth C) P 21 – W 17, Geoff Bristow (Bridgnorth B) P 21 – W 15

**Third Division**

Abby B head the division with an unbeaten 6 out of 6 and 48 points followed by Mathesons C with 44 and Abbey C with 39 as the top three pull away from the pack. Telford League Chairman Roger Kennys tops the Ulfield MCC (a former TT team) and agrees with the score.

Shrewsbury League
Premier Division
Cricket Club B are the surprise leaders of Shrewsbury’s top division having played three extra matches so far. The squad of Dean Pountney, Mike Dudley and Terry Ridgway have a total of 69 points at the halfway stage, ahead of Pontesbury A on 48, last year’s champions and still unbeaten Cricket Club A also on 48.

Top players
Darrell Corfield P 18 – L 2
Rod France P 21 – L 2
Nigel Holding P 21 – L 2
Paul Corfield P 18 – L 5

**Division One**

Its close at the top with new boys Kinmerley and Cricket Club B both unbeaten and on 50 and 48 points respectively from 6 matches.

**Midland League**

Shrewsbury’s first team are in a determined mood to win back their place in the top division as they remain unbeaten so far. Wins over Kettering and Notts and a draw with the Shrewsbury 2nd team put the squad of Dudley, Mansfield and France on target for one of the promotion slots. Shrewsbury’s second squad of John Holding, Graham Phillips and Terry Ridgway are also unbeaten (with two draws) and could possibly be in the hunt. All Shropshire players and officials were said to hear the passing of Bob Peg, a very jovial, respected and popular player in the Shrewsbury League. Our thoughts are with his family and son Billy, a member of the county junior team.

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE**

By Alan Dunn

The County Junior Side had a very successful first day, with wins against Shropshire 9-1, Lincolnshire 7-3 & Hertfordshire 7-5. Only Cheshire proved too strong with a 6-4 victory. The team consisted of Ben Barlow, Stephen Ariss, Matt Dodds and Emily Robinson all from Rotherham with Kirstie Harrison from Sheffield. The Deame Valley area of our County looks as though it will produce talent in the future, with lots of exciting TT Developments, Deame Valley TTC, West Melton TTC, Pirhana TTC and Barnsley YMCA are all working very hard for the future of our sport. The added input of Mark Willerton, our new RDO is proving invaluable to the area.

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**TTN • JAN/FEB 2004**
Amanda Bell, and Minesh Tanna. The year. This was a disappointing turn weekends have still to find their first failing to turn up without notice, fought title run in, with three teams; inexperienced players, but all are looking to make it a title treble, but their place taken by a 3rd Scorpions'.

Carson, Alan Dunn, Mark Dawson, Cade, Luke Carrington, Jack Grant, Rother Valley & District TI League is Dewsbury TT Centre, Scorpions are promotion Grove 2. The 'B' team are Craig Hastie, Stuart Wallace, John Peter Morgan jnr, Liam Carson, Glen Carson, Alan Dunn, Mark Dawson, Amanda Bell, and Minesh Tanna. The Rother Valley & District TT League is looking like its heading for a close fought title run in, with three teams; Piranhas, Scorpions and league debutantes Stocksbridge within a couple of points. Scorpions are looking to make it a title treble, but don’t put your shirt on it.

In National Cadet League, venue Dewsbury TT Centre, Scorpions are top of the league, players involved in the 'A' team; Stephen Arliss, Joe Dunn and James Grayson looking good for retaining the title for a third year. This was a disappointing turn out with teams from Abbeydale not entered and the team from Castle failing to turn up without notice, their place taken by a 3rd Scorpions’ team. In National Junior League, held at the E.I.S, things are much tighter with Staveley, Castle, Scorpions and Hull looking for silverware. The fledgling Sheffield Coaching Club now is working out of the E.I.S on Don Valley, training is on Wednesday evening and coaching coordinator is Alan Lowe.

Congratulations to Stephen Horsfield on his Band 1 title at the recent Bath Grand Prix. I would also like to congratulate Mick Travis, who was given the 'Special Coaching Award' at the ETTA's Teaching & Training Conference. The award was given in recognition of the coaching given to Commonwealth Champion, Sue Gilroy from Barnsley.

The senior County side is currently sitting in third place in Division 1a with wins over Lancashire, Lincolnshire and Suffolk, a 10-0 defeat by Durham being the only blip of the weekend.

The Veterans are also in third place in with wins over Norfolk and Oxfordshire; they drew with Yorkshire 2nds and lost to Northumberland in Division 1a. The Cadet side are 3rd place in Division 1a, the match against the old enemy Yorkshire being the only defeat of the day.

I would love to put a more regular report in this distinguished magazine, so please be forthcoming with information on Teams, Leagues, Coaching, Development etc. Email: aldunnnt@hotmail.com or (01709) 324548.

SUFFOLK by Andrew Dosher

Rebecca Wright

Rebecca Wright is a young lady with learning disabilities who plays many sports, however table tennis is her main one. Having been a member of the Regional Disabled Squad for some time, she was invited to join the National Squad earlier this year, and on the 31st October she went to Saint-Chamand Sports Centre, Aveyron, France where she competed together with 12 other England Squad members against members from 8 French Regions. Rebecca did exceptionally well on her first appearance winning all her matches in her division, thus gaining the gold medal with a write-up and picture.

This was a great achievement for Rebecca and the County, and goes to show what can be gained through hard work and dedication. Chris and Sue Wright are very supportive parents, and would be very pleased to give any information that may be required (01359 270171). With a table at home she is able to practice with Dad, plus get regular coaching from Suffolk’s coach of the year Peter Avenell. Rebecca and Dad attend Stowmarket TTC each week where she will also be a valuable member of the newly forming disabled section.

CADET MATTERS

The Cadet 1st team found life hard in their first weekend at Grantham in the premier division recently. In the first match of the day Suffolk led Lincolnshire 5-4 before Aaron Self lost out in the final game. It wasn’t Suffolk’s day for close matches as they lost out 6-4 to both Derbyshire and Surrey, with Chelsea Bennett unfortunate to lose in her final match against Surrey after being 2-0 up.

The positives from the weekend are the improving form of Lee Barnes who is winning consistently in the Ipswich Premier Division and that of Jake Collins, who won 50% of his matches on the day. Charlie Clapson and Chelsea Bennett are both coming on and junior coach Peter Avenell is confident that this main experience will put them in good stead for the next matches in February.

The cadet second team went to Leamington Spa and in their first game against Warwickshire after taking the first two sets they went down 7-3, however in their next match’s Ryan Collins, Edward Spencer and Daniel Farrow all won their games against Leicestershire to record a 6-4 win. In their last match they understandably went down to a strong Northampton side with Ryan winning Suffolk’s only game.

Ryan and Jake Collins both lost one game each over the weekend.

Again the county coach is optimistic for the future and with matches to play next year Suffolk’s second string could well climb the table.

IPSWICH PREMIER DIVISION

In the Ipswich Premier Division Britannia Eagles have been joined by Tim Avis and with Fred Dove, Chan Wan Lee, Rex Manning and Andrew Dosher have swept aside their main opposition, while last season’s champions Claydon have struggled with the same team they had last year, team captain Barry Thain finding life adjusting to the 11 up system difficult!

Trimley A though with Charles Fulcher, Lee Barnes and Martin Bozier have lost only to Eagles and at Christmas are leading the pack. On first half form it should be between Eagles and Trimley as to who lifts the title come April.

BURY ST EDMUNDS DIVISION 1

Lawshall lead the pack here and thanks in no small part to Steve Arrison (just one loss) and an excellent 60% from Steve Donwood, though Gazeley in second spot have had Brian Richardson in fine form with a 93% average.

Third spot Bury Vikings have a game in hand on these two, as do fourth spot Fensham and a lot will depend on how often the Gray brothers turn out for Fensham, as Kevin has lost just two all season and Martin is unbeaten

SENIOR CLOSED

The night before number one seed Paul Cicchelli called off and with other seeds not playing, there had to be a slight reshuffle for the groups. Once they had been seen out, only two seeding upsets had occurred, as talented Paul Brosten and Ian Brown had beaten Andrew Holmes and Lee Barnes into the second qualifying positions. Former Top Essex Junior Tony West from Bury St Edmunds took out Ian Brown in the first round. Brown may have wished he’d have lost in his group match to Barnes, while Andrew Warner downed team mate Richard Ingle 11-9 in the decider in their round one match.

In the first semi, Hutchinson

contined on page 36

PLEASE NOTE

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Tommy Colley moves up two places

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TABLE TENNIS NEWS is looking for Agents to sell the magazine to tournaments, county matches, British League and domestic league matches.

This is a job which will suit those who regularly attend (or plays) at any of the above events.

Interested? Then contact Jim Beckley, telephone: 0161 439 6001
They suffered a small cash loss, victory over Miss King, who was alleging they were told that 250 in October by the Crawley League. dispatched Daniel Bulmer, whilst Stacey Furnival (Hastings) are the Stacey defeated Lisa Standen .. Stacey SUSSEX seeds Rose Rainton and Sally Weston, beginning to run out of steam. Ainée who had never beaten her new Sussex junior champions. been trying to win the crown for eight years. Stedman (Arundel) who at 26 has Sussex championships Venner just clinched the title twelve times. The Britannia Top 16 event is being staged once again, this time on Sunday the 5th of February at the Dome in Ipswich. Invitations are being sent out, though interested parties can apply either by emailing me on Andrew.Dosher@hotpenworld.com or contacting me on 07968 135 602 SUSSEX by John Woodford ADRIAN MOORE lifted the Sussex mens singles crown for the ninth time at Fontwell, but he has some way to go to reach the record set by Brighton’s Roger Chandler who clinched the title twelve times. Ritchie Venner might just be still the “king” of the county, but his crown is beginning to slip as Moore has now won the event for the past two years. In a day of surprises at the all-Sussex championships Venner just lost by the narrowest possible margin in the mens semi to Terry Haley, who was the mens ‘shockman’ of the day. In the womens events it was Sheila King who brought down the top two seeds Rose Rainton and Sally Weston, but then lost in the final to Sarah Smedman (Arundel) who at 26 has been trying to win the crown for eight years. She thoroughly deserved her final victory over Miss King, who was beginning to run out of steam. Michael Simpson (Arundel) and Stacey Furnival (Hastings) are the new Sussex junior champions. In the boys final Simpson dispatched Daniel Bulmer, whilst Stacey defeated Lisa Standen .. Stacey is only 14. The Big Debate in the committee rooms in Sussex concerns the future of the Sussex Open Grand Prix, run in October by the Crawley League. They suffered a small cash loss, alleging they were told that 250 players would be allowed in before it was cut to 220. The Sussex TTA have to find new organisers soon, otherwise the date will be nicked by the ETIA for a GP tournament elsewhere, not in Sussex. WARWICKSHIRE by Caroline Williams In December 2003 the first session of the County Cadets Championships Division IA took place with half of the division, Warwickshire, Suffolks II, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, competing at Leamington Spa and the other half of the division playing each other in Halifax. Leamington League players Edward Freeman and Michael Rowan along with Charlotte Caffrey and Paul Leck (Birmingham) plus Liam Walsh and Rachael Pilgrim (Nuneaton) represented Warwickshire. Against Leicestershire, Warwickshire won 9-1 with Rachel Pilgrim winning two and Charlotte Caffrey, Michael Rowan, Liam Walsh and Paul Leck all taking one plus 3 walkovers. Warwickshire lost to Northamptonshire 6-4 though Rachel Pilgrim again took two, Paul Leck and Edward Freeman one each. Warwickshire then beat Suffolk II 7-3 with Rachel Pilgrim and Charlotte Caffrey both winning two, Paul Leck, Edward Freeman and Liam Walsh one each. The second Lillington Free Church Tournament was held at the end of November 2003 at Leamington Spa. The results show winners and runners-up in both the main and consolation events with the runners-up in brackets. Aged based events were held in the morning, graded events in the afternoon. Seniors winner Gary Webb (Jason Essex); consolation winner Pete Morris (Derek Thompson) Juniors winner Richard Grover (Alan Caffrey); consolation winner S Moore (Laura Gubbins) Cadets winner Adam Wells (Sam Benwell); consolation winner Peter Norton (Charlotte Caffrey) Under 13 winner Lewis Williams (Stephen Jameson) consolation winner Scott Tune (Philip Blowey) Grade A winner Gary Webb (Hugh Matthews); consolation winner Gary Jackson (Gary Edwards) Grade B winner Rob Sinderbury (Alan Caffrey); consolation winner Edward Freeman (Adam Wells) Grade C winner Laurel Christer (Adam Cardell); consolation winner K Wooding (G Lindop) Improvers winner Peter Norton (Lewis Williams); consolation winner Laura Gubbins (Charlotte Caffrey) Beginners winner Jamie Morgan (Luke Haskins) and Grade B winner Philip Blowey (Mark Sheppard) A cadet doubles was also held where the results were 1st Jamie Morgan / Peter Norton 2nd Sam Benwell / Adam Wells 3rd Mark Sheppard / Charlotte Caffrey. YORKSHIRE by Barry Snowden White Rose Affairs TABLE Tennis players in Huddersfield are bringing hope to an African girl by paying her way through school, and they are doing it in a man’s garage. The Guild Table Tennis Club was set up at Robert Booth’s Fitzby home in 1992 and matches take place in his double garage where the table is stored. Fourteen members aged between 66 and 81 meet twice a week for games and pay a small weekly subscription to play in Booth’s garage. The group initially started fundraising for the Save the Children charity, making £1,000 and it was in the late 1990s they began sponsoring Kenyan pupil Joyce as part of Mission Kenya. Cash goes towards her schooling and living costs and so far they have made £1,547 and one of the members Will Batrye described the players as “a group of geriatric youngsters”, adding “They have become so close you can only describe them as family. Companionship, laughter, fun and mutual help come from within this group as engineers, artists, textile workers, businessmen, technicians and social workers, retired after years of hard work, combine to play hard but fairly and discuss matters of local and national importance” added Mr Batrye. Charity is very much part of the group activity but they also have plenty of fun, but all take their sport deadly seriously. The group were recently joined by Huddersfield President Howard Birch who was reunited with Cedric Whiteley, with whom he represented many years ago. Birch has recently returned from a visit to Santa Barbara, California and was keen to make a comparison between table tennis in his native Huddersfield and the Californian city. The city of Santa Barbara has a population of 85,000 similar to Huddersfield and Halifax combined, but there the similarity ends. The Huddersfield league was formed in 1932 and although Santa Barbara has been involved in the game of play for over 60 years, they have a club since 1956, they still have no league. The club in Santa Barbara continues to muster around 35 players while the two West Yorkshire towns have around 350 players between them. Birch says “Why a league falls to materialise in Santa Barbara is something of a mystery, given the fact that the area attracts people and players from all over the world. In fact, amongst the 25 enthusiasts I encountered and played against were players from Eastern Europe, Indonesia, Phiippines Chinese – Caucasian and even a lady from South Africa. These layers have greatly enriched the game in the area, raising the standard of play considerably since I was there four years ago, but there is still no serious attempt to develop the game and the Santa Barbara clubs’ players were envious when I showed them my Huddersfield fixture book and newspaper cuttings.” The Santa Barbara club practice on three occasions during the week and members travel from 40 to hundreds of miles to take part in tournaments and despite their lack of a league, Santa Barbara hosted the Californian State Championships in 1968 and founder member Dick Fairchild continues to play at the ripe old age of 77. Birch, a former Canadian singles runner-up and Halifax, Huddersfield and Yorkshire champion was invited to the home of IIodesean Ben Tumble’s house, where he has a room 256 by 16ft specially for his table and only recently invited friends over for a Presidents Day knock up which lasted 6 hours. So no league play in Santa Barbara, but some tremendous enthusiasm from those who do play.
FEBRUARY 2004
7th National Junior League (3) Doncaster
7th-8th Veterans British League (2) Ashford
7th-8th Veterans British Feeder Lge. (2)
7th-8th European Top 12
8th ESTTA Team Regional Finals Aldersley
14th-15th Junior British League (2) Bournemouth
14th-15th Bournemouth Open Grand Prix
15th Cadet & Junior Regional Training
21st Chandlers Cadet & Junior 1 Star
21st-22nd Cadet & Junior National Trials Blackpool
21st-22nd VETTS Northern Masters
21st-22nd BUSA Individual Championships
22nd Cirencester Cadet & Junior 1 Star
28th County Championships Cadet (3)
28th County Championships (5) Junior, Senior & Veteran
29th Stiga Cadet & Junior 3 Star GP
29th Wilmott Cup & Rose Bowl (Rnd 1)
MARCH 2004
1st-7th World Team Championships Doha, Quatar
6th ESTTA National Team Finals Chesham
6th Chesham U13/15/16 2 Star
6th-7th British League (4)
7th Cadet National League (4)
13th-14th Derby 4 Star Junior Select Derby
13th-14th North Herts 2 Star Hitchin, Herts
20th County Championships (6) Grantham, Lincs
20th-21st County Championships (2)
21st BUSA Team Finals
26th-28th National Senior Championships Sheffield

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