

TABLE TENNIS

NEWS



ISSUE No. 260
APRIL 1999

£2.50

MA WENGE

63rd ENGLISH OPEN 10 PAGE SPECIAL EDITION

JIE SCHOPP

THE NEW ENGLISH OPEN MENS SINGLES CHAMPION

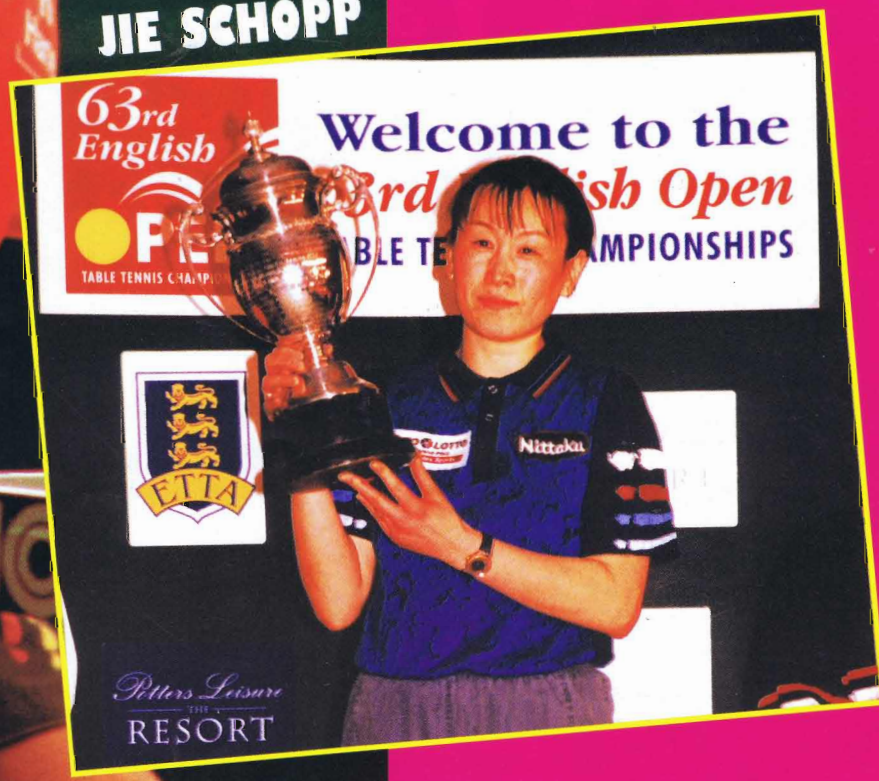


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TABLE TALK

Model Master

2

FROM THE CHAIR

Belgrade abandoned

3

POSTBAG

St. Neots' bombshell

5

WOMENS BRITISH LEAGUE

Jim's Gym fix it!

8

63rd ENGLISH OPEN AT POTTERS

"Dream start" to Pro Tour season

10

BRITISH LEAGUE

Horsham vs Progress - Battle for Premier

12

63rd ENGLISH OPEN ITTF PRO TOUR

Ma Wenge returns to glory at Potters

16

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Cheshire win Junior Premier

22

ETТА NATIONAL RANKING LIST

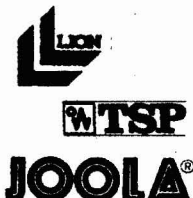
Top of the Table

32

**NEXT ISSUE
MAY 1999**

**JUNE ISSUE
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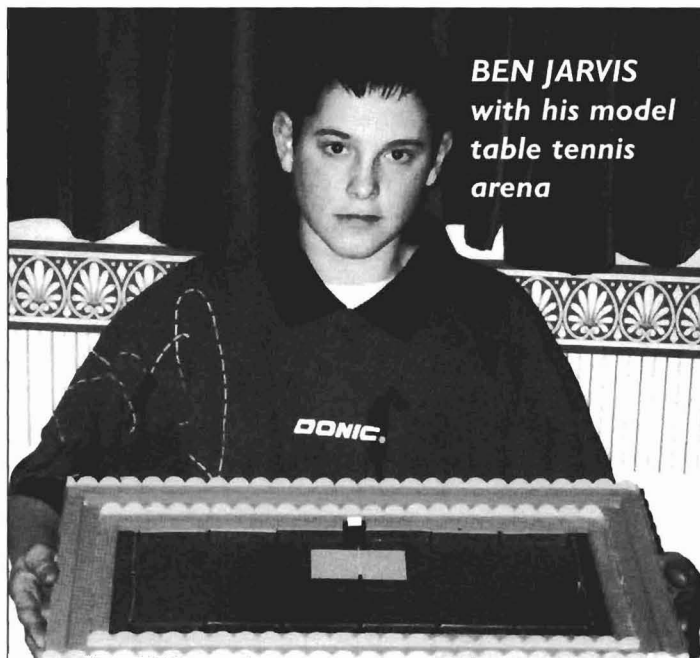


MODEL MASTER

FIFTEEN year old Ben Jarvis, son of former England player and captain Nick, has made a superb model of a table tennis arena, for a GCSE Graphics Project at his school, the George Abbot School.

Guildford based Ben, designed and made the model to the scale of 1-30 (pictured right), flooring as used at the World Championships 1997, surrounds made of Donic bat edging tape, seating of timber cut down, screwed together and painted, and table made of plastic sheets.

Table Tennis News wishes Ben every success with his exams.



BRAINTREE 50th ANNIVERSARY

One hundred and fifty four people attended the dinner and dance to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Braintree League, recently.

The attendance was described as "an outstanding achievement" by Don Parker, the former England team manager, who was guest of honour with his wife Jill. "I've been to a number of these occasions and

many of the bigger leagues don't get attendances like this," he said.

Guests included 24 of the league's former players who had returned to celebrate the occasion, including a

small number who had been around at the start. Foremost among them was former chairman Harry Warde, now 80, whose idea it was to start up the league.

WOODY'S World

A special welcome to this English Open edition, with a big ten page feature, plus some of the regular reports from home and abroad.

I was pleased to see many Table Tennis News readers at Potters Leisure Resort, where the standard of play was so high that it almost took my breath away, as I watched in awe, tinged with a little envy, at the awesome power and speed at which these world class super stars played.

The expected domination by the European players, especially Vladimir Samsonov and Jorgen Persson didn't happen, as the Asian born players took control of the tournament.

Ma Wenge was supreme, back to his brilliant best, as he destroyed the hopes and dreams of the European challenge, and then crushed the current Asian champion, Kim Taek Soo.

See Alan Ransome's report, page 3, on the Belgrade situation.

John Wood

TABLE TENNIS NEWS

The Official Magazine of the English Table Tennis Association

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Pictured right are, Braintree League President Len Woolmer (left) and League Chairman Ron Fosker. Whilst in the front are Jill and Don Parker



It was he who called the meeting that set up the league, took on the job of secretary - "because it was the most onerous and nobody else wanted to do it" - then took over the chairman's job for 17 years and was president until 1988.

Also present was his successor as chairman Len Woolmer, who held the post for 20 years and has been president for the last ten.

Among the guests were seven men's singles winners, five ladies' singles winners, 15 men's doubles winners, seven ladies' doubles winners and 13 mixed doubles winners.

Chairman Ron Fosker recounted how the league had started with matches of five players on each side with inter-league teams of nine.

Finals night was watched by a crowd of 300.

The league had grown considerably since then, once reaching 60 teams and although it had gone down since, it had bucked the national trend in recent years by showing an increase for five successive years. Once a backwater in division three of the Essex League, Braintree were last year's Essex champions.

The league has produced a publication of cuttings from the local newspaper covering the 50 years of its existence. This is available, price £5, from Dean Andrews on 01376 340994.

BELGRADE ABANDONED



Alan Ransome OBE,
Chairman of the English
Table Tennis Association

The ITTF Executive Committee have decided not to proceed with the staging of the 45th World Championships in Belgrade next month due to the current political and military position in the former Yugoslavia. A brief statement was issued by the ITTF Executive Committee on 25 March 1999 as follows:

" The ITTF Executive Committee sincerely appreciates the great efforts made by its member, the Yugoslav Table Tennis Association, and by the organising committee of the Dawei 45th World Table Tennis Championships (WTTC) in the preparations to stage the WTTC in Belgrade (26 April - 9 May 1999). However, in light of the current situation in Yugoslavia and to ensure a successful staging of the 1999 WTTC, the ITTF Executive Committee, after serious consideration and consultations, has unanimously decided to relocate and reschedule the WTTC to a later date. The Executive Committee will discuss over the next days all the consequences, issues and solutions related to the decision to postpone the WTTC."

The ITTF Executive Committee were as fair as possible to the Yugoslav organisers. The ETTU Management Committee when it met in Denmark last October asked the ITTF to make a decision by November so as to allow the possibility of finding an alternate host for the April/May period, but the ITTF delayed their decision until 22 March in the hope that a peace agreement could be signed with regard to Kosova and the Championships

proceed. In the event that the peace negotiations were not successful, and at the time the ITTF were due to make a decision, NATO were starting their air attacks on the former Yugoslavia therefore leaving the ITTF with the only possible decision in not proceeding with Belgrade.

The ITTF have wasted no time in seeking alternatives and at the time of writing are considering various possibilities which include a full World Championship possibly taking place in China, Malaysia or India, or an Individual Events Only tournament in the Netherlands. A decision from the ITTF is expected shortly.

Whilst no statement has yet been made, it appears likely that the BGM will not take place in April and therefore all decisions including the English proposal to delay the implementation of the ban on the longest pimple rubber until after the 2000 Sydney Olympics is unlikely to be decided until the ITTF are able to re-schedule their meetings.

ITTF PROPOSITIONS

The full list of proposals for the ITTF BGM and Council Meeting have now been circulated. Some of them make very interesting reading.

The ITTF Executive Committee have proposed that the laws of table tennis be changed so that the 40mm ball will come into effect for all table tennis play immediately after the Olympic Games in August 2000.

A second proposal from the ITTF Equipment committee which is likely to prove even more controversial is to restrict the upper limit of thickness of sandwich rubber to 3mm. The

current thickness is 4mm and therefore this effectively would limit the thickness of sponge from 2.5 mm at the moment down to 1.5mm, which would affect the rubber sheets used by the majority of players at all levels and would undoubtedly have the effect of slowing the game down. The fact that these propositions are being proposed by the Executive Committee in the case of the ball and the Equipment committee in the case of the rubber sheets means that they will be serious contenders.

To become law they need to have a 3/4 majority of all votes and therefore with approximately over 120 countries expected to be present, to achieve more than 90 votes in favour will be difficult.

There are a further three propositions from Germany, Japan and the Athletes Commission and the Rules Committee aimed at outlawing the practice of hiding the ball during serves which, if passed, will have the effect of reducing the potency of the spin service and increasing the number of safe returns.

Whilst there are no proposals on the Agenda, there is a full report from the ITTF Game Development Panel headed by Geof Rau of New Zealand who are providing a discussion document on changing the scoring system giving a number of options including 11 up, 13 up, operating tennis scoring system and volleyball scoring system. It is clear from these proposals that the ITTF are taking very seriously the fact that the game has lost some of its appeal to spectators and the media and are looking to make changes which will make the sport more interesting to follow in the future. All of these proposals will be debated at the ETTA National Council prior to

the discussions at the ITTF BGM.

A GREAT ENGLISH OPEN

The 1999 English Open played at the Potters Leisure Resort at Hopton-on-Sea in Norfolk between 9 - 14th March proved to be the most successful Open of recent times. The standard of play was comparable to that of the European Championships. With 46 national associations represented the Championships was the largest ever and the facilities at Potters lent themselves magnificently to the event.

The Men's Singles winner was Ma Wenge, the famous former Chinese national team player who is now playing in the German Bundesliga. Ma Wenge beat the well known Asian, Kim Taek Soo of Korea in a very good final and Jorgen Persson in the semi final, which was one of the best matches of the Championship, and the No. 1 seed, Vladimir Samsonov in a very close five setter in the last 16.

The Women's Singles was won by the solid German defender, Jie Schopp whose experience was far too great for the up and coming French star, Anne Boileau, who herself excelled to reach the final.

One of the best performances from an English perspective was Nicola Deaton's victory in the qualifying group 11 against Katrin Meyerhofer of Germany, Tini Schmid of Switzerland and Hye Kyung Jun of Korea. In the first round of the singles Nicola lost a five set match against the Yugoslav Silvija Erdelji.

Potters Leisure Resort was a very popular venue with the visitors. The show court area with four tables for the rounds and one for the finals proved a near ideal setting for an event of this kind providing excellent playing facilities, a close atmosphere and very good spectator viewing. The second hall also provided good playing facilities. The accommodation was in the main on site in the comfortable holiday chalets, whilst the meals were probably the best provided for any major championships that I have attended for the last decade.

The show court area provided an excellent stage for the TV coverage which was shown on Sky with 4 one hour programmes being screened three times each, so giving 12 hours of coverage the following week. The TV production team headed by Derek Brandon who covered several of the Leeds events in the 1980's and the European Championships from Birmingham in 1994, captured very good pictures whilst our two commentators, Donald Parker and Matthew Syed did well and proved to be a significant improvement on the commentary teams engaged to cover other recent Pro Tour events.

The Championships also provided a spring board for table tennis development. The ETTA Development Department organised many school visits when the youngsters had the opportunity to play and watch the international stars. The Open also provided a platform for the launch of the Junior Umpire Award supported by Kent Paper Company and Sports Match, whilst Jeff Neslan, the Sport England Regional Director and national team leader for table tennis presented the first round of awards for the ETTA Development Officer Silver Awards.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Potter family for the provision of the Resort and the sponsorship of the event and to the many personnel, volunteers and ETTA and Potters staff, for their contribution to this first class event.



Ma Wenge is pictured being interviewed by Skylet Andrew of Sky TV, after winning the English Open Mens' Singles trophy at Potters Leisure Resort

ITTF PRO TOUR ON SKY

I am pleased to announce that negotiations have been completed between the ETTA and the ITTF and Sky Sports to show the whole of the ITTF Pro Tour on Sky Sports for the rest of this year. Details of the coverage will appear in my column in each issue of Table Tennis News. The first event to be shown will be the Croatia Open.

Negotiations have also been completed by the ETTU, the ITTF and Eurosport for the screening of the European champions Club League next season. One match per round will be screened live on Monday evenings. The dates for the first four rounds have been fixed for: 6 September, 11 October, 8 November and 29 November.

The qualifying teams are as follows:
Hornstein (AUT)

Kreanga Kalinikos
Tsiokas Daniel
Schlager Werner
Charleroi (BEL)
Saive Jean-Michel
Primorac Zoran
Huang Johnny
Caen (FRA)
Kim Taek Soo
Eloi Damien
Levallois (FRA)
Gatien Jean-Philippe
Legout Christophe
Chila Patrick
Dusseldorf (GER)
Samsonov Vladimir
Roskopf Jorg
Matsushita Koji
Monrad Martin
Ochsenhausen (GER)
Ma Wenge
Franz Peter
Hakansson Frederick
Mazunov Dmitriy
Kalmar (SWE)
Waldner Jan-Ove
Persson Jorgen
Uzdin (YUG)
Lupulesku Ilija
Karakasevic Aleksandar

MILLENNIUM AWARDS APPLICATION PACK LINE

The Awards for All Lottery programme offers grants up to £5,000 to sports organisations with a turnover of less than £15,000 per annum who are able to submit a Development Programme that meets their criteria. A telephone line for an application pack is now open. Call 0845 600 20 40 and register. The first packs will be distributed from the middle of April.

Successful applicants can receive up to £5,000 and no partner funding is needed. The organisation needs to have a constitution and a set of accounts. In addition to the Information Line, affiliated table tennis organisations can receive full information about this programme from their Regional Development Officer or from the ETTA Development Department in Hastings. Particular priorities are school/club links which are included within the ETTA Top Club programme.

ETTA NATIONAL ELECTIONS

The Deputy Chairman, Tony Chatwin, the Treasurer, Barry Granger, and I would like to thank all the County associations and local leagues who nominated us for re-election last month. The Election Officer, Tony Wickens, announced that Tony, Barry and I have been returned unopposed for a further two year period. We are very appreciative of the support and confidence of the membership of the Association.

TABLE TENNIS on TV

ITTF PRO TOUR CROATIAN OPEN COVERAGE ON SKY TV

Match	Date	Date of TV	Time	Channel
Croatian Open	3.4.99	17.4.99	17.00	Sky Sports Digital 2
Croatian Open	4.3.99	20.4.99	13.00	Sky Sports Digital 2

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA ON DSF.ASTRA SATELLITE

Match	Date	Date of TV	Time
Frickenhausen - Gonnern	1.4.99	3.4.99	16.00
Grenzau - Ochsenhausen	9.4.99	10.4.99	16.00

POSTBAG

ST. NEOTS BOMBSHELL

AS Chairman of the British League Committee I am responding to the letter from Errol Skeete concerning the withdrawal of St. Neots from the Premier Division of the British League.

I should make clear at the outset that we did not receive a "request" from the club to withdraw. Quite the contrary, as we were informed, unequivocally, that despite strenuous efforts, they were no longer in a position to continue and were withdrawing with immediate effect, a decision which was not reversible. I can also assure readers that we do not take a half-hearted approach to such matters and take this situation very seriously. I agree that it brings no credit to the St. Neots club and, most certainly, none to the British League and is deeply regretted.

During the 20 year history of the league this is not the first time a team has withdrawn, indeed, it happens in other ETTA competitions. In all such circumstances it is recognised that some teams gain advantage but others quite the opposite, which is certainly the case on this occasion and the concern and anger expressed by the Progress club, and others, is perfectly understandable. As far as the British League is concerned, at the start of the season all clubs are advised to register enough players to cover all eventualities, bearing in mind that they are only required to pay for four players initially and only pay for others as they play. Quite clearly, St. Neots failed to do this and have paid a heavy price as the appropriate penalties have been imposed.

Having said that, it should be emphasised that the St. Neots club have been outstanding members of the British League for many years and have, hitherto, always conducted their affairs in an exemplary manner. There can be no doubt that the league will be the poorer without them.

With regards to the point made that St. Neots should retain their first half of season results but forfeit their second half matches, this suggestion was put to the British League Referee, International Referee Stuart Sherlock, following a letter from the Progress club. The ruling given was that the regulations were quite clear in respect of withdrawals and the committee had acted in the correct manner by completely expunging the St. Neots records from the division.

Before any entry is accepted all clubs are required to sign an undertaking that they will comply with the regulations governing the competition. The place to attempt any changes is at the Annual Conference, when clubs have the opportunity to submit new propositions for discussion by delegates. It is disappointing to note that the Progress club did not do this despite the fact that St. Neots withdrew before the deadline for submitting such proposals.

It is on record that the British League

Committee has a declared policy of working in close partnership with all our clubs as we value their membership, whatever division they play in, and we shall continue to do this to the best of our ability.

*Keith Ponting,
Chairman,
British League Committee.*

DYNAMIC LEADER

BEFORE there are shouts of "Well he would say that, wouldn't he!", I must emphasise that these are my personal thoughts and are in no way attributable to any "party line".

Along with many of our members I was saddened and disappointed to read of the attack on our Chairman, Alan Ransome, in The Times. I am sure that the investigative reporter that had dredged up this diatribe thought that the expose would provide us all with new and shocking information. Not so Mr Goodbody. The accusations were really "old hat", and had been the subject of exhaustive analysis both by independent audits and the Sports Council. No evidence of malpractice or impropriety whatsoever had been found, and it is perhaps significant that there were over 20 accusations in the article which were untrue.

It was Ransome himself who, mindful of his close ties with the commercial side of our sport, set up the Trade Committee, and I can personally vouch that in all the years that I have known him, he has been scrupulously fair when it comes to trade matters.

Of course Goodbody's "information" has been provided from sources that wish to do the game, and its elected administrators, harm. It really is unfortunate that the "invisible ones" won't reveal themselves. What are they afraid of? Condemnation by National Council? Litigation?

For far too long we have all just sat back and turned a blind eye to this cruel cancer that is eating away at the sport - and if ever a sport needed all the most decent and positive public relations it can get, it is ours.

I hope all fair minded people will recognise that in Alan Ransome we have a dynamic leader who is taking us into a new and exciting era. You only have to look at the improved financial status of our players, the many new and innovative programmes in place, and of course the funding that has provided new facilities all over the country to appreciate that all these have come about due to Alan's vision. No one but no one else could have achieved all of this.

All of us have the opportunity of saying enough is enough. Let us be positive not negative about our sport. If there are people who continue to associate themselves with the Goodbodies of this world, could they consider their positions and divorce themselves from

the Association. Of course constructive criticism is welcome - this carefully administered destructive campaign that is a time consuming menace is not.

*Brian Halliday
Reading, Berkshire*

"THE THUNDERER"

THE TIMES very generously gave table tennis a whole page in December on the business activities of chairman Alan Ransome. This I am told took "The Thunderer" over a year to prepare. Most of us inside the sport will be able to guess accurately the identities of the small group who supplied a lot of the information without having their names mentioned.

So far, the rest of the media have not followed suit and may not do so, unless the chairman decides to hit back. Then of course, the rest of the media would get involved, but perhaps fortunately, the allegations mainly historical, seem to be very small beer compared with the Olympic corruption and drug stories seen in recent weeks.

Lawn tennis, athletics, cricket have all been hit by scandal, much bigger and much more serious than the allegations against table tennis. My view is that in the long run this will be water under the bridge. There are many senior officials in sport involved with equipment, but not many with a chairman so active and dedicated to the promotion of our sport.

We all have our faults but Alan Ransome is a real leader. It is difficult to see who might eventually succeed him.

*John Woodford
Daily Telegraph*

SURPRISED

I was surprised that Stuart Greenberg should take such umbrage at my comment that I did not know him. It may well be that we played one another in 1966 but I can surely hardly be expected to remember every opponent over the last 60 odd years. Mr Greenberg may well have been a superb player and now be a superb coach - I had no way of telling.

However, Mr Greenberg's memory appears to be no better than mine. He refers to "Len D'Arcey" as the Vets No 1 a few years ago. Presumably he means Peter D'Arcey of Cheshire as Les D'Arcey of Yorkshire was never the top veteran. Peter would certainly not now remember Mike Lissen of Essex, as sadly Peter died around 10 years ago.

By his reference to the Buist/Reisman hard bat battle as confirmation of the point of his article, are we to assume that Mr Greenberg is in favour of the retention of "ordinary" pimped rubber? He may be interested to learn that Reisman did not consider Buist's bat to be an authentic pimped rubber bat as the pimples were longer than those on his own bat! If he does favour the retention of so-called ordinary pimples, what then when Henry Buist, for example, plays a reverse rubber opponent? They would surely not be competing on equal terms.

This simply underlines the fact that Mr Greenberg is crying for the moon.

continued on page 6

*WRITING his 3rd 'Courtside'-
popular with some, but not all!*

• **OUR UMPIRES**, bless them all, are becoming more militant. That was the impression I gained courtside and beyond at the Potters Open. What went wrong that caused the umpires and senior officials to move out to other hotels for the final two days? No doubt, the umpires will give us their version and I am sure the ETTA will want to put on record their side of the story. I have listened to various versions of events. We came close, very close, to an umpires strike and even closer to the story reaching the national media.

In simple terms, there was over-booking for the week-end. Potters did not think that we would fill all the accommodation and did what many hotels and airlines do, take extra bookings to make sure that the maximum amount of revenue is generated. What is important now, is that it does not happen in the future at Potters, if the alliance with the ETTA goes forward.

• **BADMINTON** seem to be our nearest rival sport, but I have no doubt they regard us as their poor relation, although not quite so poor following the arrival of the money from the National lottery. We have been toying with the idea of tying in the cost of Table Tennis News with affiliation for as long as I can remember, but so many table tennis players say they are so poor they cannot afford it. Badminton have taken the bull by the horns. From next September 50,000 members of the Badminton Association of England will receive their own copy of "Badminton" free of charge, but there will only be four issues a year. In table tennis, we cannot get all our stories in eight issues, so going down the road for a quarterly magazine is a complete non-starter for us.

• **POTTERS** Leisure Resort has a great deal going for it, more pluses than minuses. At other venues in the past, it was often the other way round. Nothing is perfect. Being able (almost) to accommodate all the players and officials within a few yards of the tournament halls and the other luxurious facilities was quite delightful. Having a heated swimming pool, first-rate nightly cabaret of West End standard and excellent food were the extra pluses.

The biggest problem with Potters is its location, way off beaten tracks and a long way from motorways. Returning home, I was annoyed to held up for over an hour by massive road works on the A12, bad news late on a Sunday night.

• **TWO** further comments on the Open - the players thought the playing conditions were excellent but I cannot see why it is essential to expand the tournament into six days, five would have been ample.

Standardisation of bat coverings is a complete non-starter. He talks of the "tricks" I highlighted to make rubber play differently. A player with, say, Srivier on both sides who does not clean his reverse rubber regularly could easily have a different effect quite accidentally between the two sides, merely through bringing one side of the bat into play more often. Mr Greenberg dismisses this with the statement that it is up to the administrators to tighten up the regulations accordingly.

HOW?

There is only one way that bats could be standardised. The same blade, covered by the same thickness of the same rubber type on both sides of the blade, both perfectly clean? Does Mr Greenberg believe that to be a realistic option? If so, he must live in cloud cuckoo land. And how does he feel fast glue could be banned?

The following extract is from a letter by a respected coach (not himself a long pimple user, by the way) in the VETTS February Newsletter... "I feel that it is incorrect to say that long pimples rubber is ruining the game per se. ALL of the youngsters I have coached over the past 7 years or so have been exposed to and taught to deal with long pimples rubber from early in their development and none of them have any problem with long pimples rubber opponents - assuming of course they are thinking!"

So Mr Greenberg believes that England's Carl Prean, Matthew Syed and Andrea Holt are all guilty of legal trickery, together with the legion of veteran players who use combination bats. Presumably he also believes that the top administrators in China, Japan and England, who voted against the ITTF decision to reduce certain aspects of long pimples, are all in favour of legal trickery.

There is such a vast array of different rubbers on the market today, with the manufacturers holding enormous sway, that the banning of all combination bats is a complete non-starter.

Come come, Stuart, join the real world, not fantasy land.

*Ron Etheridge
Beckenham, Kent*

DOOMED TO STRUGGLE

NEVER before has so much money been pumped into our sport at top level... never before have expectations been so high. So writes Gail McCulloch (TT News December).

Gail thinks the ETTA should be run by 'professionals' rather than 'amateurs'. She points to the ETTA National Council and Management Committee of which she is a member. Her courageous views provide something the Sports needs, controversy and debate, of which there has been too little. It is the only way to stimulate ideas and thoughts which may enable us to do better. Brian Halliday, in a well argued reply points out that the ETTA is a democracy.

They may be, as has often been said, a very bad form of government, but all the others are much worse. One man rule may cut corners and red tape, but

it usually goes spectacularly wrong and I would argue that the ETTA needs more democracy, not less.

Neither can I agree, on the basis of my own experience, that all virtues are concentrated within those who get paid for their labours, the 'professionals', whilst the volunteers (who don't get paid) have somehow failed to come up to scratch. In my time, which included a four and a half year stint as chairman of the ETTA, I have found quite admirable 'amateurs', who in real life, held down excellent jobs or ran successful businesses and equally some who were incompetents on an ego trip. Equally I found staff who were first rate and those whose main priority was the next pay day and looking for the next job. In short, leadership includes finding the right people and finding out the wrong ones. A sport like ours needs all the help it can get. I would agree that one of our faults is that we have not tapped fully all the talent available within our own ranks.

It is a thoroughly good thing that much new money, mainly Lottery and Sports Council is now available. Such is granted on firm conditions for specified purposes. Our credibility will depend on meeting the targets set. I wish those involved every success.

The great problem of the sport remains the lack of recognition and respect we enjoy among our fellow citizens. This alone is what stops people taking up our sport rather than another. Ours, however painful the admission may be, is not a 'product' which has captured the market place. Let me come to the heart of the matter. As Juan Samaranch has said, sports with little or no television 'are doomed to struggle' and that is precisely our problem. Until we can match the exposure of other sports, they will continue to take members from us, other sports will prosper at our expense. Of course, there is a great deal we can do to improve our sport and its structure, but whilst the great god Television eludes us - by which I mean mass audience at peak time we shall never be a major sport, still less an expanding one. We shall be 'doomed to struggle'. It is a problem which simply has to be cracked if our future is to be bright and secure.

*John Prean
Isle of Wight*

THE REAL FUTURE

I fully agreed with the views expressed by Gail McCulloch in the last issue of TT News. Perhaps this is the beginning of the 'real future' of our sport. For too long we have accepted the supposed right path chosen by those who take the lead at national level. In particular the 'Will Carling' description of the main decision making body (National Council) is very apt.

However my main reason for writing is yet again to warn those at the top about the serious situation regarding our top club competition - The British League.

Having recently attended the ETTA regional conference - OPPORTUNITIES IN TABLE TENNIS - I left with exactly

the same thought as before. A full day dedicated to letting us all know how rosy the garden will be in the future, or will it?

Michel Gadal was very impressive in detailing his hopes for the new Academy and how it will help to raise international standards. Unfortunately there was a stifled response to my suggestion that it will also provide German, Belgian, French, Swedish etc. clubs with more players. The ETTA continue to ignore the very pinnacle of their club structure despite the authorities in Squash reacting in the opposite direction (here the national league has been made part of their World Class Performance programme with significant funding to attract the British and top foreign players to play in England).

In the past British League clubs have raised their voice towards the declining value of the supposed top league. Previous 'sponsorship' has been used as a means of funding other ETTA activities. The ETTA answer to the continued devalued Prize Fund is to continuously quote the fact that such as the German Bundesliga has no Prize Fund - with a national profile that includes TV coverage of club matches in addition to vast numbers of other events, the situation is far different to Britain - again at the conference, the question of how many minutes of 'normal' TV coverage (i.e. BBC, ITV etc.) did we get in 1998 (answer none), was again swiftly passed over.

The reality for the ETTA is this. In 1979 the national club league began without a sponsor (as it is today) and a Premier Division prize of £2,500 went to the winners. Whoever wins the 'coveted' title, some twenty years on, will receive £500 less! The British League title is perhaps the only item in those twenty years that has managed to escape the clutches of inflation. A case maybe of the ETTA running for election as a political party in the next General Election.

The British League has seen the introduction of many progressive and adventurous clubs, the reality being the demise of many through the gradual disenchantment of their own efforts (gone are names such as Peniel, Bathwick Tyres, Vymura International, Linda Farrow) and more are guaranteed to follow as costs continue to spiral in the face of continued ignorance by the ETTA.

If the ETTA wish for an eventual system to rival the German Bundesliga, and many others throughout Europe, then they have to face the fact that the national profile is their responsibility. In that respect they have failed miserably. They have to accept that investment must be found quickly, as they know that not only are clubs becoming increasingly disenchanted, but also the League administration itself where at least one highly respected and long serving official has resigned, simply because the time has come to say to the ETTA - enough is enough.

With strong rumours of a possible

breakaway League, one not undermined by continual ETTA apathy and disinterest, the loss over the years of some excellent clubs and now the defection of a top official, the ETTA should act swiftly and with extreme urgency to give the flagship (as they call it) the boost it needs instead of the annual bleating of how difficult it is to raise sponsorship. We, the clubs, know how difficult it is, even more so when you have the pathetic national profile that exists for a brilliant sport with its

continued on page 33



ETTA OFFICIAL SUPPLIERS
The following companies have recently become 'Official Suppliers' to the English Table Tennis Association:

- Dawson and Sanderson Ltd. 2 Market Street, Blyth. Tel. 01670 351435. Official Travel Agents.
- The KPC Group, Ashford, Kent. Tel. 01233 623304. Official Suppliers of Paper.
- Nima Print and Design Services. Eastbourne, Sussex. Tel. 01323 430036. Official Printers
- Les Smith Trophies, Stroud, Gloucestershire. Tel. 01453 886686. Official Trophy Suppliers.
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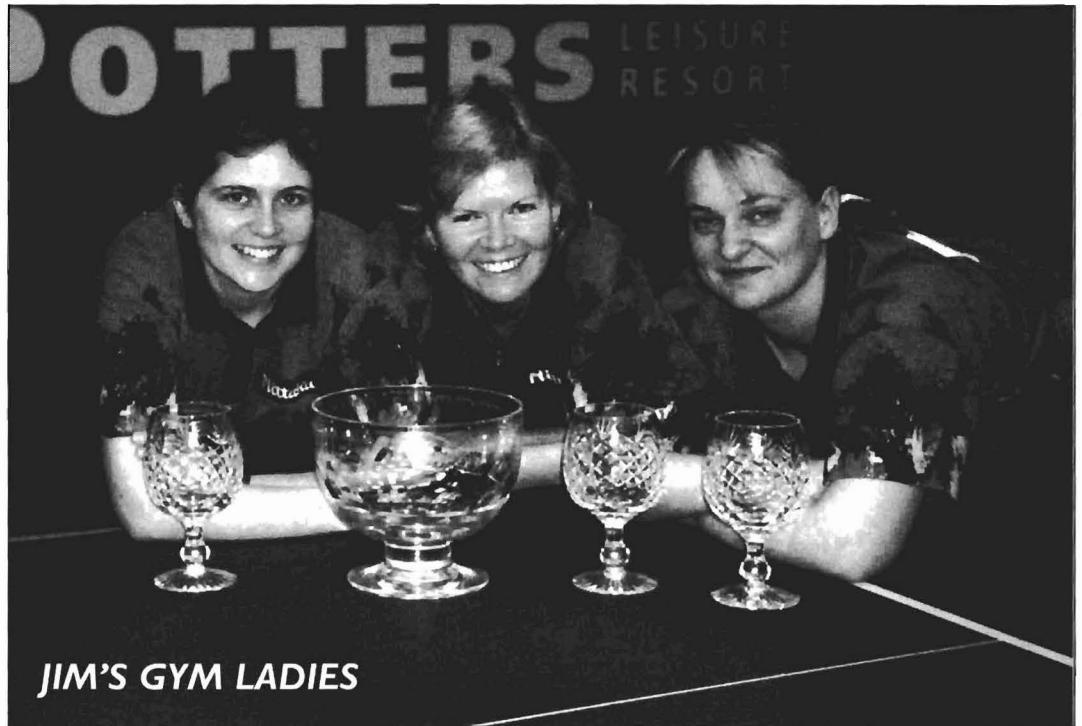
We ask all members of the association to support the above companies who are in turn supporting table tennis.




JIM'S GYM FIX IT !

SANDRA RODEN, Jose Bongers and Teresa Bennett have all supported the Womens British League almost throughout its now long history and under various guises have become a bit of a yo-yo team alternating between Premier and First divisions, This season under the new banner of Jim's Gym (based in Stourbridge) their declared aim was to consolidate a Premier position. The league table shows that JIM'S GYM did more than that and are now the proud holders of the coveted Butterfly Bowl as champions, writes Brian Lamerton.

They will be the first to admit that they were helped by a weakened Yashims S.K. Sovereigns team when the second week end was played at Potters Leisure Resort in Norfolk but opportunity when presented has to be grasped - watch out Europe! Three 4-2 victories and a 5-1 win saw them through with a 4-2 defeat at the



JIM'S GYM LADIES

Anyone over 18 can apply for the standard card, featuring a picture of English champion Lisa Lomas. But there's the prestigious Visa Gold Card for those earning £20,000 or more.



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A reasonable interest rate.

No annual fee for your first two years.

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Now you can show your support for table tennis wherever you go - with the ETTA's exclusive low-interest Visa credit card, issued by MBNA International Bank Ltd.

The card brings you significant financial advantages. But it also helps us raise money to promote the sport - at no extra cost to you! We receive a royalty from MBNA for every new cardholder, plus ongoing income every time you make purchases on your ETTA Visa card.



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Alternatively, return the coupon below to:

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Certain restrictions apply to the above benefits. Insurances are provided by underwriters at Lloyd's of London. Payment Protection Insurance is provided by member companies of Consolidated Insurance Group Ltd. The ETTA Visa card is issued by MBNA International Bank Ltd, Starsfield House, Chester Business Park, Chester, CH4 9ZZ and is available only to ETTA members and certain connected parties. MBNA Visa card interest rates are **17.9%APR (variable)** for purchases, **13.9%APR** for balance transfers and cash advances, fixed for six months from the date your account is opened. The **13.9%APR** is calculated by applying the monthly rate of 1.09% throughout the period of credit. After the six month period it reverts to the same variable interest rate which applies to purchases at that time (currently 1.38% per month, **17.9%APR**). Both APRs are calculated on a fee exclusive basis, in view of the two year annual fee waiver and assume a credit limit of £1,000 for a standard card and £3,000 for a gold card. The minimum monthly payment is just 3% of the outstanding balance (minimum £5). The annual fee (£10 for a standard card, £35 for a gold card (both variable)) will be waived for your first two years. There will be no handling charge for cash advances until after your account has been open six months. After that date a handling charge of 1% (variable) (min £1, max £25) will apply. Credit is available subject to status, only to persons aged 18 or over. Written quotations available on request.

WOMENS BRITISH LEAGUE

hands of Horsham (Sally Weston 2) the only hiccup.

Karen Smith fought valiantly for Yashima, losing only to Jose Bongers and a back to form Sally Marling who returned a 100% record for the week end.

It was late into the second afternoon before the destination of the First division title, or even the second promotion spot, was decided with one point only separating the top three in the final table, Groves 4-2 win against Cippenham being insufficient as Loan Master Leeds Ladies obtained the one point which they required from a drawn match with Irish Ladies - two wins from Joanna Roberts the telling factor. Leeds squad was completed by Caroline Reeh, Nicola Silburn and Nicola Smith. Of the ever-presents in this division Groves Jade Kendall (later presented with the "Woman of the Week end" award) was unbeaten whilst Cippenham's Shelley Ruocco was an 8 times winner.

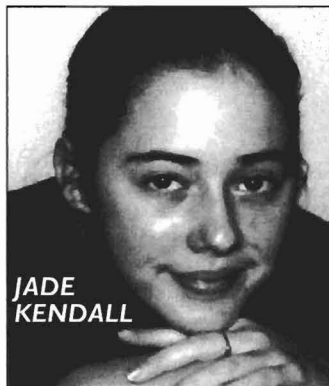
In Division Two Ulster Ladies who had dropped their only point in the first half in a drawn match with Global Sports made no mistake second time out winning by 6 sets to love and this counted for the difference at the final reckoning, both teams being far too strong for the rest of the division. For the winners Jennifer Thompson was unbeaten from 8 with Norah Tallon winning 7 and Pat Hunter 6 both also from 8 sets played. Ann Humble from Global Sports won 6 from 8 as did Ellenborough's Carol Judson.

Despite dropping points in drawn matches with Grove 2 (Paisley Spink 2) and Fast Track Norwich (Kim Chambers 2) Scottish Ladies were never really challenged at the top of Division 3 thanks to a good all round performance from Kathleen Knowles, Laura Knowles and Gillian Edwards. Norwich were by far the most improved team in this division winning 2 and drawing 3 of their 5 matches, making good use of their local knowledge and the inclusion of Wendy Durrant who topped the divisional averages (75%) and then at the end topping it all by being named "Team of the Week end".

This being the first of the Potters Festival of Table Tennis events and with spare table capacity a subsidiary invitation tournament was held involving four local teams resulting in a win for the Great Yarmouth Hospital team (Hospital Sparks) of Sue Allen, Edna Fletcher and Sally Shaw on a points count-back from Lowestoft Ladies

represented by Debra Faulkner, Debbie Lowe and Paula Newrick.

A new venue then, something special and to be remembered by all; we had tremendous help from Potters Sports Manager Russell King and his team all the way through and from the Borough of Great Yarmouth whose Chairman Councillor Jack Barnes was guest of honour at the opening ceremony.



Woman of the Weekend

Premier Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jim's Gym	10	6	3	1	37	23	15
Hull Sandhill	10	6	2	2	40	20	14
Horsham	10	5	2	3	32	28	12
Yashima S.K. Sovereigns I	10	3	5	2	33	27	11
Bristol Ladies	10	0	5	5	22	38	5
Plnewood Fullarians	10	0	3	7	16	44	3

First Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leeds Ladies	10	7	1	2	40	20	15
Grove I	10	6	2	2	37	23	14
Irish Ladies	10	5	4	1	37	23	14
Shinewater British Queen	10	3	5	2	31	29	11
Cippenham	10	2	1	7	26	34	5
Yashima SK Sovereigns II	10	0	1	9	9	51	1

Second Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ulster Ladies	10	9	1	0	48	12	19
Global Sports	10	8	1	1	39	21	17
Ellenborough	10	3	3	4	32	28	9
Norton Ladies	10	4	1	5	32	28	9
Cippenham II	10	1	2	7	20	40	4
Yashima SK Sovereigns III	10	0	2	8	9	51	2

Third Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Scottish Ladies	10	8	2	0	41	19	18
Limberlost Pine	10	5	2	3	34	26	12
Grove 2	10	3	2	5	30	30	8
Fast Track Norwich	10	2	4	4	26	34	8
Midland Ladies	10	2	3	5	27	33	7
Sutton at Hone	10	3	1	6	22	38	7

GRANT SOLDER SUMMER SCHOOL

IN CONJUNCTION WITH
SUDBURY TENNIS CLUB

Friday 6th - Monday 9th August 1999

Course Organiser - Grant Solder

Grant is aged 26 and is a professional table tennis coach working fulltime at Peniel Academy. Also currently coach of England Junior, Cadet and U12 players. He is also former Essex Mens No.1, London Mens No.1 and England Mens No.12, England Junior. No.1, English U18 Champion and Spanish Open Champion. Grant made his England Senior debut in 1995. ETTA qualified coach.

Course Director - Nicky Jarvis

Nicky is a professional table tennis coach working fulltime at Peniel Academy. He is former England Mens No.1 and England National Coach. Former European No.14 and World No.22. Nicky is a very experienced coach and is regarded as one of England's leading coaches. ETTA qualified coach.

Coach - Desmond Douglas

Des is former England No.1, World No.7 and England International for 20 years. He was eleven times English Champion and English Open Champion. Des is currently coach of England Junior, Cadet and U12 players. Here's your chance to practice with a legend.

Coach - Andrew Eden

Andrew is aged 26 and is former England No.5 and was a regular member of the England team. His titles include:- Commonwealth Gold Medallist, former England No.1 Junior and English Junior Champion. Andrew is currently a professional table tennis coach.

Coach - Paul Davison

Paul is Head Coach at Sudbury Table Tennis Club. ETTA qualified coach. Former Suffolk Junior Champion. He currently plays Senior British League and is a member of the County Mens team.

Cost £159.00 per person Non-residential, £199.00 per person Residential

For more information contact:- Grant Solder, 6 Bennions Close, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6TR.

Telephone: 01708 551778 or Mobile: 0797 9490351

There only are 24 places available - BOOK NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

“DREAM START” TO THE PRO TOUR SEASON



ITTF ENGLISH OPEN REPORT

WITH the 63rd English Open Championships "dream start" in the Pro Tour season, 1999 continued.

This was not a well organised table tennis tournament, this was a festival of table tennis. The ETTA offered, under one roof, professional conditions for the players, 'Funworld' for the schoolchildren and spectators, sales booths for table tennis equipment manufacturers, restaurants, bars and evening entertainment in an in-house theatre. This was a new way of presenting a Pro Tour tournament. Combining professional sport and presentation with show elements and family holiday entertainment has shown the direction for making our sport more attractive to the spectators.

Venue

To be able to stage a tournament like this a special place like Potters Leisure Resort is needed which offers to spectators and players, under one roof, playing hall, practice hall, restaurant, bars and theatre. The resort also offers visitors many other indoor and outdoor sport facilities, tennis, golf, swimming pool, bowling, squash, snooker and health club. With all these facilities, this is the ideal venue for family vacations. Combination of a holiday with the chance to see a Pro Tour will, I am sure be an attraction to many table tennis families.

Presentation of Matches

The announcer was used all the



Pictured top is a Potters hostess escorting a presentation party, headed by Jeff Neslen of Sport England, followed by the ETTA Deputy Chairman Tony Chatwin, to the rostrum.

Pictured immediately above is Brian Potter of Potters Leisure Resort, congratulating China's Ma Wenge on winning the English Open Mens Singles crown.

time. Necessary information was given to the spectators before and during each match. For the final matches the organisers used professionals from the entertainment group of Potters Leisure Resort for the players presentations. Real "show" presentation was offered to the spectators. Players emerged from

a special room under "fog" with music and a light show, escorted by hostesses and introduced by an announcer. This presentation of the finals was definitely the best one on Pro Tour so far.

Funworld

The idea to put out 8 tables surrounded by selling booths was a

very good one. Arrangements were made with local schools to bring classes to visit the tournament and to play under supervision of ETTA coaches. Funworld proved to be a very busy place and an excellent idea.

Meals

All meals were served in the main building. The very nice restaurant was large enough to serve all players at the same time. The quality of the food was excellent with a choice of buffet or table service.

Referee

Co-operation with Mr. Scruton and his deputies Mr. Beckmann and Mr. Gower was perfect. Mr. Scruton was Deputy Referee at the Swedish Open 1998 and therefore already knew how I work. To all my questions or suggestions during the tournament, I received the answer: "It is already done". I would like to congratulate Mr. Scruton and his deputies on a perfect job.

I would also like to congratulate the ETTA for organising the best ever English Open.

Especially I would like to thank Tournament Director Mr. Mike Johns and his staff for excellent co-operation and staging an exceptional tournament with so many new ideas, many of which, I am sure will be used at Pro Tours in the future.

Zlatko Cordas
ITTF Competition Manager

NO TIME TO SING

NI XIA LIAN, who is ranked 6 in the World and No.2 in Europe, now resides in, and plays for, Luxembourg. The 35 year old won gold medals for China in the women's team and mixed doubles events at the 1993 World Championships. She won the European Top 12 in 1996, 1997, and 1998. She is the reigning European Champion. She plays a close to the table blocking and attacking game switching between short pimples and long pimples on the backhand. Brian interviewed her just prior to her participation in this year's English Open.

Q. How did you start in the sport?

A. I started at home in Shanghai, China. My brothers played and I just followed them when I was about 4 or 5 years old. It was sometimes difficult to get a game as there are so many people in China. My sister and I played on a small table.

Q. Did you go onto a club or Centre?

A. In China I attended a school and as a player for the school I progressed from there.

Q. Did you take to the game straight away or was there a long period of coaching? Is the talent you have natural?

A. I have a natural talent for the game but in those early years I liked to sing. The teacher asked me to choose between singing and table tennis. I chose to sing but after three days I returned to table tennis. I told the teacher and she agreed that I had some talent for table tennis.

Q. Do you still sing?

A. Yes, but it is a little sad. In the early years it was very very hard to become a table tennis player. I had no time for anything else. There was much pressure and so there was no time for singing.

Q. Are you saying that in China you had a great deal of pressure to become a very good player?

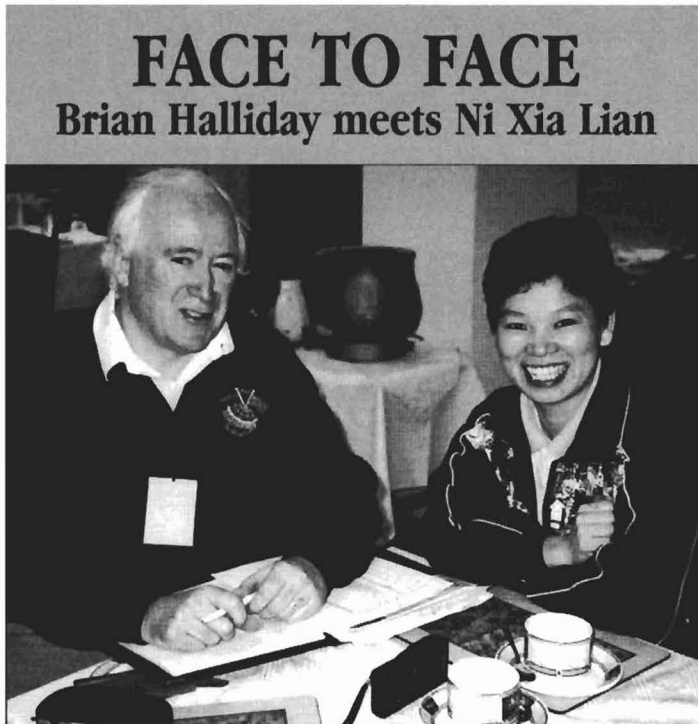
A. A lot of pressure.

Q. In what way?

A. Every way. I accepted all the demands, as my personality says I want to be the best. My Papa said that as I spent all my time with table tennis I have to be good. In China we always had goals to achieve. I do not find this so much with European players.

Q. How do you compare the European players with the Chinese?

A. In China it is taken very seriously indeed. The attitude is very



FACE TO FACE
Brian Halliday meets Ni Xia Lian

professional one from an early age. They train very hard.

Q. How did you come to Luxembourg?

A. I was in Germany when I was offered a contract after discussions with the Luxembourg coach.

Q. Where the Chinese authorities in agreement with your move?

A. I had already left the Chinese team for 2 or 3 years. They just knew I loved the sport so much that I had no trouble with my move to Europe.

Q. What do you consider to be your major triumphs?

A. My successes are bound up with all the people that have helped me. This is very important to me. I get help and assistance from the Luxembourg Association and this gives me motivation. Although I was World Champion my successes are due to my coach and everyone. I want to always play well for these people.

Q. When you are at home in Luxembourg do people recognise you in the street?

A. Yes (laughs). All the time and in a happy way. This is not the same in China where people's attitudes are more serious. They stressed the importance of playing for my country and the contribution I could make for the good of China.

Q. When you were playing in China which players provided inspiration?

A. Many. Number 1 would be Chuang Tse Tung who was 3 times

World Champion, but there were so many at that time. Chuang especially - he is a very nice person. Also Li Fu Jung influenced my development.

Q. I remember watching Chuang in Ljubljana in 1965 when he won the singles title - they presented him with a motor bike. I have always wondered how he got it back to China. Outside of table tennis what are your interests?

A. Music I like very much. Quiet, soft music. I don't like Pop music but I like good food and films. I like to meet my friends and eat and talk. I love my life.

Q. Will you stay in Luxembourg or go back to China one day?

A. Some years ago I was homesick but I have a very happy life now. At first it was hard but I love the game so much that now I am content. I still want to win and now my son is being educated in Luxembourg I will do my best for him.

Q. About your game. Who are your most difficult opponents?

A. I am afraid of no-one. It doesn't matter whether they are shakehand, penhold, attack, defend, right or left handed, I find I can play well against them all.

Q. Your style of play is original and perhaps your opponents find it difficult?

A. You see most Europeans have only one style whereas I am able to play all styles which gives me an advantage. Some cannot play defenders, and

players with long pimples and then they get angry. That is wrong. They should always think where they went wrong and practice very hard to overcome the loss. If you can only play against certain styles you are not good enough. You have to play very well against every opponent.

Q. What rubbers do you use?

A. One side short pimples and long pimples on the other.

Q. Will the proposed ban on long pimples affect you?

A. No (laughs). I can play with any rubber. The type I use is Friendship 737 which will not be banned anyway.

Q. All the top ladies will be upset now. They think you will not be effective any more. How wrong they will be!

A. Yes, I will still win whatever rubber I use. I always play to win but have fun at the same time.

When I train I always train very seriously. It is very important to have a happy life.

Q. What in your opinion would improve table tennis, especially from the spectator angle?

A. Good administration and good publicity. Players who show they can fight hard, even when they are losing. They must show a tough mental approach. The public appreciate this. I think players have many problems like training, discipline, dedication, but problems must be overcome. Never panic. Always concentrate all the time on every aspect of the game. Don't be angry and above all don't panic.

Q. Which club do you play for?

A. Aosta in Italy. I have a lot of travelling. I originally played in Holland and then in Germany, but then there were contract problems. In Italy I get more easy matches and this gives me time with my son.

Q. Who are your favourite players at the present time?

A. Samsonov, Waldner. They are good players with a good manner and that I appreciate. I respect not only a good player but he or she must also be a good person. This is very important for me.

BH: Thank you so much for giving me this interview. I am sure your comments will inspire our players in England, and I hope this tournament brings you more success.

NXL: I will do my best - as always.

HORSHAM vs PROGRESS

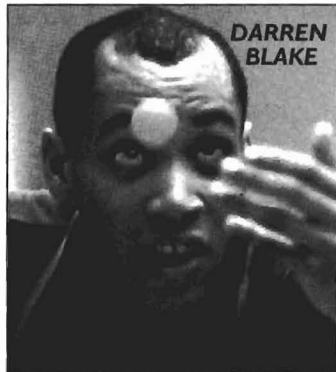
BATTLE *for* PREMIER

THE battle between Horsham and Brent Sports Progress for the British League title will now continue to the end of the season when the two teams meet at Horsham on 25th April, writes Aubrey Drapkin.

Horsham stayed on top of the table after defeating JAGS 9-5 with Ritchie Venner, Adrian Moore and Nigel Eckersley all winning two sets each whilst Tom Cutler and Selwyn Campbell did likewise for JAGS.

At the same time the Brent Sports team of Darren Blake, Gareth Herbert, Jason Sugrue and Marco Essomba ran out 13-1 winners away to DML White Hart Launceston, their only loss being the defeat of Sugrue by Ben Johnson.

This left Horsham one point clear



DARREN BLAKE

at the top of the table with only Brent Sports to play, whilst Brent are away to Grove as well as what will be the decider at Horsham.

Darlington seconds sealed the first division North title by winning 5-3 away to Kingshurst Bribar, Nick Stead and Mark Simon both being unbeaten. Derwent are in second place after beating Uxbridge (Burton). Andrew Horsfield and Richard Smith won two and Tim Sheppard got both of the Uxbridge sets. RMSC Lincoln go into third place with a 7-1 victory over the bottom team, Bulldog Security.

Colley Hyundai and Harvey Barnet are still contesting division one South. Colley's Wang Rui, Han Yan, David Barr and Stephen Jenkins beat Moonrakers (Westbury) 8-0 to stay one point clear whilst Barnet won 5-3 at C & N Insurance Brentwood. John Taylor and Keith Samuels were mainly responsible both of them

being unbeaten and Peter Radford won both of his sets for Brentwood.

Grantham Kontak retained their unbeaten record in division two North by defeating Ormesby 7-1 when Dale Barham was player of the match. This win also means that they win the division. Derwent second team move into second place by virtue of a 6-2 victory at Grove.

Division 2 South is still being fiercely contested with only two points separating the top four teams. Horsham's second team of Peter Barham, Terry Haley, Ram Bhalla and Jeremy Wilson beat DML White Hart Launceston thirds 7-1 to stay ahead of Cippenham on set difference but with a match in hand.

The Cippenham side won 5-3 at home to the Aylesbury League with Martin Adams winning both of his sets. Norwich Todd Foxwood are only one point behind the leaders after a 6-2 success at Fellows Cranleigh when Ian McLean was outstanding.

TAD-Ellenborough are now a further point behind following a shock defeat at KCD Stiga.

However they are certainly not out of the running as they still have to play away to Cippenham and at home to Horsham.

Horsham also have a home match against Aylesbury League, Cippenham are away to KCD Stiga and Norwich Todd Foxwood visit both KCD and DML White Hart Launceston.

The winners of all three third divisions are already known. In the South and West, Catsoft Puma's Adeyfield made certain of the title by beating OLOP AWCS Ltd 8-0. Jack Spratt Wellowhouse went into their match at Blackpool knowing that they had already won the Northern division and a 5-3 victory kept their 100% record intact - the only one in the whole of the divisions.

Harvey Barnet seconds won division 3 South without playing when their nearest challengers De Vere Sudbury lost 5-3 at home to Ashford.

Finally congratulations to KCD Stiga seconds who picked up their first point of the season in a home draw with Byng Hall Farningham Print seconds.

* = *Divisional winners*

PREMIER DIVISION	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Horsham	11	10	-	1	106	48	20
Brent Sports Progress	10	9	1	-	99	41	19
Darlington	10	5	1	4	81	59	11
JAGS	11	4	2	5	67	87	10
Grove	10	4	-	6	68	72	8
DML W. H. Launceston	10	1	1	8	47	93	3
OLOP AWCS Ltd	10	-	1	9	36	104	1
St Neots resigned							

DIVISION 1 NORTH	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Darlington II	12	9	3	-	64	30	21*
Derwent	12	7	2	3	57	39	16
RMSC Lincoln	12	6	2	4	52	44	14
Uxbridge (Burton)	12	6	1	5	44	52	13
Seasiders (Blackpool)	12	4	4	4	50	46	12
Syntegra Worcester City	12	4	4	4	47	49	12
Kingshurst Bribar	12	2	2	8	44	52	6
Bulldog Security	12	-	2	10	24	72	2

DIVISION 1 SOUTH	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Colley Hyundai	12	10	1	1	78	18	21
Harvey Barnet	12	10	0	2	60	36	20
Hastings	12	6	2	4	47	49	14
Byng Hall Farningham Print	12	5	3	4	54	42	13
C & M Insurance Brentwood	12	4	3	5	50	46	11
Limberlost Pine Poole	12	4	1	7	40	56	9
Moonrakers, Westbury	12	2	2	8	35	61	6
DML W. H. Launceston II	12	1	-	11	20	78	2

DIVISION 2 NORTH	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Grantham Kontak	12	9	3	-	72	24	21*
Derwent II	12	7	2	3	54	42	16
Darlington III	12	7	1	4	53	43	15
Abbeydale	12	5	3	4	49	47	13
Rushey Mead Club	12	3	7	2	47	49	13
Ormesby	12	3	3	6	38	58	9
Drumchapel Glasgow	12	2	2	8	39	57	6
Grove II	12	-	3	9	32	64	3

DIVISION 2 SOUTH	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Horsham II	11	8	1	2	62	26	17
Cippenham	12	8	1	3	58	38	17
Norwich Todd Foxwood	11	8	-	3	65	23	16
TAD-Ellenborough	12	7	1	4	57	39	15
Aylesbury League	12	6	-	6	48	48	12
KCD Stiga	12	3	2	7	34	62	8
Fellows Cranleigh	12	2	2	8	32	64	6
DML W. H. Launceston III	12	1	1	10	20	76	3

DIVISION 3 SOUTH & WEST	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
CATSoft Puia's Adeyfield	10	8	2	-	64	16	18*
Harvey Barnet III	10	6	1	3	49	31	13
Brent Sports Progress II	11	5	3	3	46	42	13
Moonrakers, Westbury II	10	3	3	4	36	44	9
OLOP AWCS Ltd II	10	4	-	6	31	49	8
Guildford	11	2	3	6	36	52	7
Cippenhain II	10	1	2	7	26	54	4

DIVISION 3 NORTH	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Jack Spratt-Wellowhouse	10	10	-	-	63	17	20*
Derwent III	10	5	3	2	46	34	13
City of Leeds	11	5	1	5	49	39	11
Seasiders, Blackpool II	10	4	2	4	44	36	10
Syntegra Worcester City II	10	3	1	6	33	47	7
Darlington IV	9	3	1	5	28	44	7
Ormesby II	10	-	2	8	17	63	2

DIVISION 3 SOUTH	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Harvey Barnet II	9	7	1	1	53	19	15*
De Vere Sudbury	9	5	1	3	40	32	11
Byng Hall F. P. II	8	4	1	3	33	31	9
Horsham III	8	4	-	4	30	34	8
Ashford	8	3	-	5	31	33	6
KCD Stiga II	8	-	1	7	13	51	1

SUPERB ARENA FOR TABLE TENNIS

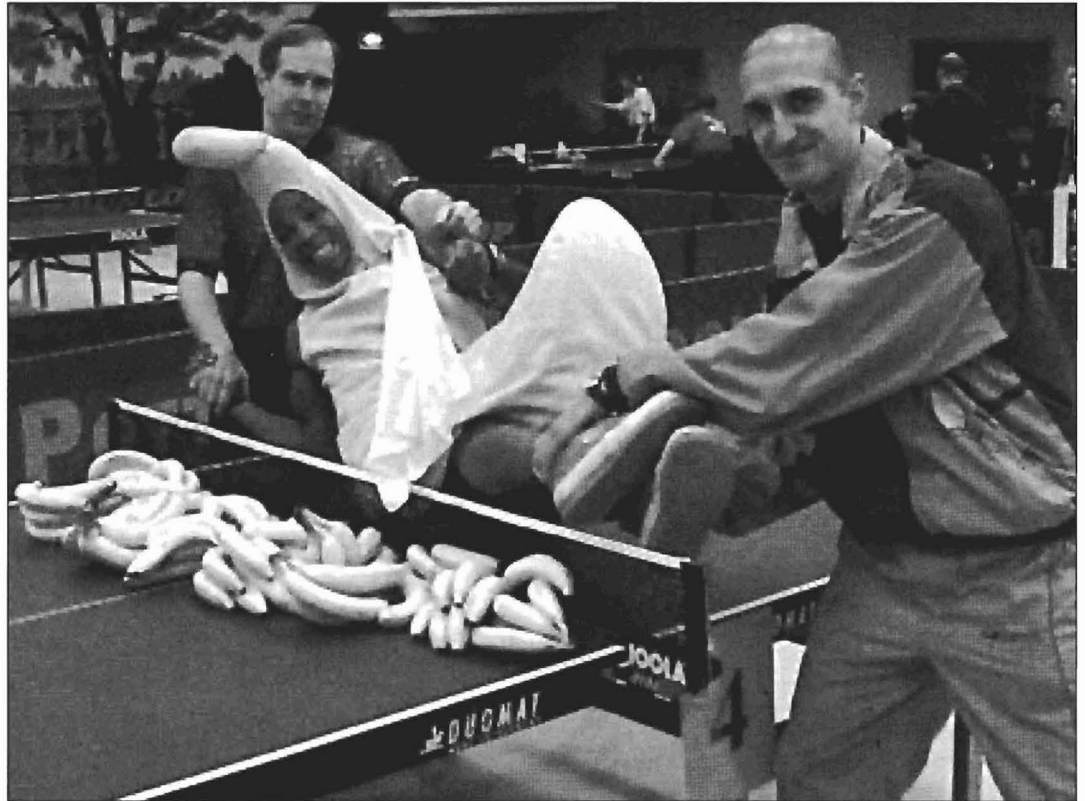
THE popularity of the English Open has waned over the last few years and the Association made a strong effort this year to reverse the trend. The venue previously used at Kettering was adequate but lacked the atmosphere generated by the venues used at Brighton, writes Brian Halliday.

The decision to go along with the Potters Leisure Resort invitation was a gamble that paid dividends. Hopton-on-Sea, perched on the East Anglian coast is not an easy journey for most players and spectators and there must have been raised eyebrows from our friends from all over the world as they approached the venue down narrow roads and country lanes.

Arrival at Potters must have allayed fears as this is a superb arena for table tennis by any standards. Apart from one query about air conditioning, which was quickly rectified, I did not hear of a single complaint from any of the players, which must be some sort of a record. In fact there was generous approval for the playing conditions, accommodation, and food. The additional facilities proved so popular that World No.2 Vladimir Samsonov liked the Gym and Swimming Pool so much that he did not want to leave!

There was a wonderful sense of co-operation between the ETTA and Potters. The staff went out of their way to ensure that if a problem did arise, immediate steps were taken to resolve it. The catering staff deserve special mention for coping with the dietary needs of such a diverse community. The combinations of food piled high on plates was extraordinary, but it all provided a unique touch to the event. Vast quantities of fruit was consumed, in fact we managed to get through 10,000 bananas in the first three and a half days and another lorry load had to be ordered.

Of course it was disappointing that the Chinese were not there in force but it was perhaps significant that Ma Wenge at last won a major Pro



Tour event. He won with style and a powerful grace that was impressive, and when asked whether he would ask his Chinese team-mates to come next year, he replied that he certainly would.

The complaints concerning lack of TV over the last few years have been addressed. It is not an easy problem to tackle, however at least this year we received reasonable coverage. The pictures went out to millions in the Far East and Europe, as well as the UK.

The expected "full house" notices did not materialise for the final Saturday and Sunday. Our sport cannot afford to have empty seats and the ETTA will be giving urgent attention to this aspect before the 64th Open. With computer generated images all the rage, perhaps we should consider a "virtual reality" crowd!

Overall I believe the Open to have been a massive success and a credit to all concerned. Maybe another trip to Hopton-on-Sea (Wherever it is!) next year?

The banana war broke out afresh at Potters Leisure Centre where the 63rd English Open Table Tennis Championships were held.

Matthew Syed the England No. 1 star, seen here on the right is grappling with Danny Seemiller, the USA Captain over the Potters own human banana, 'Busby'.

A Potters' representative said that the 350 players from all over the world appearing there that week had already eaten over 10,000 of the fruit and fresh supplies have had to be ordered.

Picture by Terry Canup, USA

ENGLISH OPEN MENS SINGLES CUP (THE LONDON FIRE CUP)

THE English Open Mens Singles Cup is a faithful copy of a silver cup, presented by the Lord Mayor of London in 1666 to Joseph Watts for his bravery in rescue from 'The Great Fire' at "Ye riske of Life" important documents belonging to one of the city companies.

This cup was presented to the Association by former ETTA President H. Oldroyd in 1934.



MA WENGE RETURNS TO GLORY AT POTTERS

SOME ten years ago, Ma Wenge was a permanent member of the Chinese national team and on one occasion he rose to No.2 on the world list. At Potters Leisure Resort his all-out aggression and his cool temperament reminded us of his finest days gone by, writes John Woodford.

Seeded No.13, Ma did not have an easy draw - after taking out Yoo Seung Min (Korea) he set about with relish the task of removing the top seed Vladimir Samsonov - this was a classic encounter, but Ma possessed the power to send the Belarussian away from the table from where counter-hitting was the tactic that paid off.

When he faces a ferocious and accurate attack, Samsonov is vulnerable, the result was he lost at 18 in the fifth which is far from good enough for a man all Europe is hoping will soon collect many Chinese scalps.

After his defeat Samsonov said he was desperately worried about whether or not the world championships would be on or off. His other worry is I believe, how he can cope with brilliant attackers if his counter-hitting is not producing enough winners. His ball control is excellent, but really fast attacking with or without top-spin, pushes him back into areas where he cannot win enough points for victory.

The final was a classic. Some spectators were disappointed that they did not see Samsonov in action, but they were compensated by the brilliance of Ma Wenge's attack that concentrated on hitting to wide angles leaving the gallant Kim Taek Soo losing 18,18,12.

MA ENJOYED POTTERS

After his victory, Ma told journalists and Sky TV that he thoroughly enjoyed the playing conditions, the accommodation, the food and the entertainment at Potters and he



MA WENGE the new English Open Mens' Singles Champion

**Words by
JOHN WOODFORD,
KEN MUHR and
JOHN WOOD
Pictures by
JOHN WOOD**

would try and persuade the Chinese national team managers to send the team here next year, if the event was held again at Potters.

Useful encouragement for the ETTA and the Potters to continue their "marriage" from a man who clinched total victory after removing the first and second seeds, one at the start and one at the end and nearer the end, a fine victory over the 1991 world champion Jorgen Persson 19,18,-15,

23 in the semi-finals.

English fans were hoping for some success from Carl Prean and Matthew Syed. Prean started with a useful win 18, 14, -14, 14 against the Yugoslav Aleksandar Karakasevic, but in the second round Prean foundered 16, 6, 13 to the No.16 seed Chiang Peng Lung from Taipei. Syed had a bye in the first round but then found himself up against his biggest bogey - Yang Min (Italy) whose apparent speciality is defenders, so the Italian triumphed once again over the England No.1, 16, 14, 13, leaving Syed with Don Parker, enjoying a full day's work on finals day commentating for Sky TV.

The former world champion Jean-Philippe Gatien was another faller to the steadily improving Trinko Keen (Holland), who proved his progress when he eliminated Yang Min, 10, 18, 17.

Austria, whose policy of accepting Chinese players has not increased their popularity amongst European nations. Few would object to fielding one class Chinese player, many nations including England have taken that road, but few nations use two Chinese - Austria now have a young Chinese girl player in their ranks - the last straw say the critics - a farce.

With Ding Yi apparently retired, Qian seems to be improving, making the quarters after taking out another improving player the Danish No.1 Martin Monrad, 13, 23, 15, but Qian eventually bowed to Ma Wenge 14, 23, 13.

No doubt, Werner Schlager has moved forward and up the world list because he can if he wishes, practice regularly with Chinese players.

In fact, Schlager enjoyed Potters



Jenkins and Isherwood.

Final word on the men from Holme Pierrepont - Gareth Herbert looked so talented in winning his group that many fans could not believe he did not qualify for Belgrade. Terry Young managed to scrape into the world squad on a wild card but he never reached his best form at Potters losing to two

Asians; Andrew Baggaley is arguably the best junior No.1 we have seen for years - he was the last England survivor in the Under 21's - a group winner but then he went under to a talented Japanese player, Kiho Shinnosuke.

JIE SCHOPP CHOPS HER WAY TO TITLE

The fifth seeded Jie Schopp (Germany) was seriously challenged only once on her path to taking the women's singles title and \$8,000. The 31 year old former Chinese with the stonewall defence and well chosen attack, comfortably overcame surprise finalist Anne

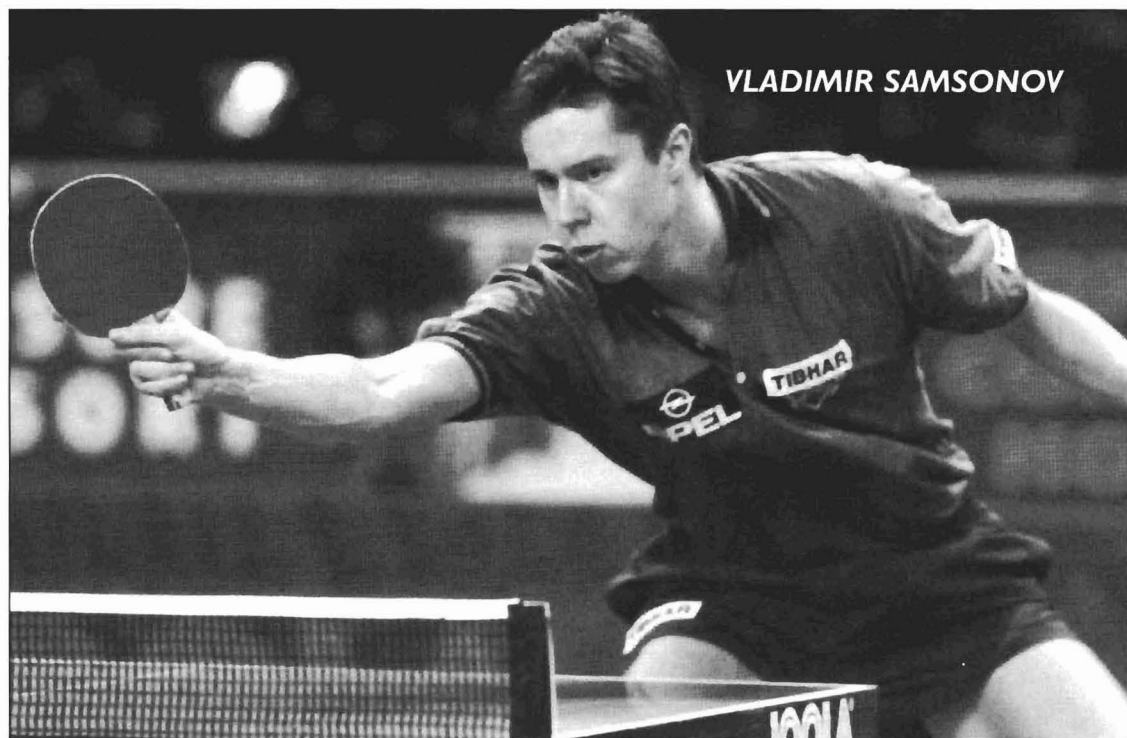
Boileau of France, 21-15, 21-10, 21-12. She had easily beaten her German colleague Olga Nemes, formerly of Romania, in the last 16, and then a little closer, the 4th seeded Korean attacker Ryu Ji Hye 18-21, 21-19, 21-16, 21-10 in the semis, writes Ken Muhr.

Schopp's greatest test was in the semi-finals when faced by the 16th seed Mihaela Șteff (Romania). The left handed Șteff, barely 20 and with a great future, took Schopp all the

immensely - he reached the semis after a monumental struggle with Keen and it took Kim Taek Soo five games, 19, -25, 23, -12, 14, to stop him reaching the final.

Qualifying groups are now becoming a firmly established part of the World Grand Prix - here are the group winners: Krzeszewski (Poland), Walker (Scotland), Lupulesku (Yugoslavia), Grujic (Yugoslavia), Yoo Seung Min (Korea), Karakasevic (Yugoslavia), Lee Chui Seung (Korea), Lengerov (Austria), Kadiri (Sweden), Hielscher (Germany), Park San Joon (Korea), Bentsen (Denmark), Monrad (Denmark), Tugwell (Denmark), Boll (Germany), Nilsson (Sweden), Wosik (Germany), Dziubanski (Poland), Martinez (France), Chang Yuan Su (Taipei), Mitamura (Japan), Herbert (England), Varin (France), Miller (Switzerland) and Erlandsen (Norway).

From those 26 groups, I would nominate Euan Walker, the Scottish champion as the man with the hardest group - he beat Marmurek,



KIM TAEK SOO the losing Mens' Singles finalist



63rd ENGLISH OPEN

way with her strong and well positioned forehand loops, smashes and occasional fierce backhand loop, leading 7-5 in the fifth game. At this point Schopp took a tie break which paid off because she immediately went 15-10 up and ultimately won with a forehand smash, 21-17, 10-21, 21-19, 20-22, 21-17. Schopp's change of tactics seemed to be to follow heavy chop with float, causing Steff to overhit, and to attack more herself.

Possessed of an excellent temperament and tactical brain - she was without a 'cornerman' - Steff was responsible for giant killing, taking out the 7th seed, Park Hae Jung (Korea) 14-21, 16-21, 22-20, 21-14, 21-13 in the 3rd round and then the world ranked 6 and top seed Jing Tian-Zorner, another former Chinese defender now living in Germany, 21-16, 7-21, 21-16, 21-19 in the quarter finals. From the writer's point of view, Michaela Steff, the 1993 European Cadet champion and 1995 European Masters Top 12 Junior champion, was the women player revelation of this event!

The other woman 'on song' was 23 year old Anne Boileau of France, the 14th seed, whose whippy forehand loop and power backhand loop brought her wins over the holder and no 6 seed Tong Fei-Ming (Taipei) 26-24, 24-22, 21-17 in the last 16, the ninth seed Suk Eun Mi (Korea) 21-17, 21-16, 15-21, 21-15 in the quarter finals and the eighth seeded Chinese-American Gao Jun 21-12, 21-16, 21-16 in the semis. Suk had knocked out European Champion and second seed Ni Xia Lian (Luxembourg) in the third round.

Boileau had been somewhat fortunate to progress at all, having survived a terrific, fast and furious second round match with Sweden's Pernilla Pettersson which at 21-19, 21-16, 19-21, 18-21, 21-19 could have gone either way. But in the final her forehand looked too snatchy and inconsistent, and her reading of Schopp's spin unsure, to dent her opponent's defence. A wonderful overall performance though. The writer should own up to his hot tip for the women's singles, the classy defensive 3rd seed Qianhong Gotsch (Germany), going down in the second round 21-11, 22-20, 13-21, 16-21, 16-21 to the young Japanese attacker An Konishi!

GOOD WINS FOR NICOLA DEATON

Of English performances, national champion Nicola Deaton (Derbys) stands out. She had good wins in her qualifying group over the tricky Jun Hye Kyung (Korea) 21-18, 21-19 and Tini Schmid (Switzerland) 22-20, 21-14 and then bravely saved two match points in the second game to beat the defensive Katrin Meyerhofer (Germany) 18-21, 22-20, 21-15 for a place in the rounds. The Chesterfield player then had chances against another defender, Silvija Erdelji (Yugoslavia), at no.100 world ranked 69 places above her and who, rather than using long pimples plays with reversed tacky rubber and gets her variation in chop and float through touch in the hand. Erdelji can also attack on both wings. Having taken the 2nd and 3rd games convincingly with strong topspin and smash, Nicola appeared to lose her concentration in the 4th. Both players reached peak form in the decider with exciting rallies up

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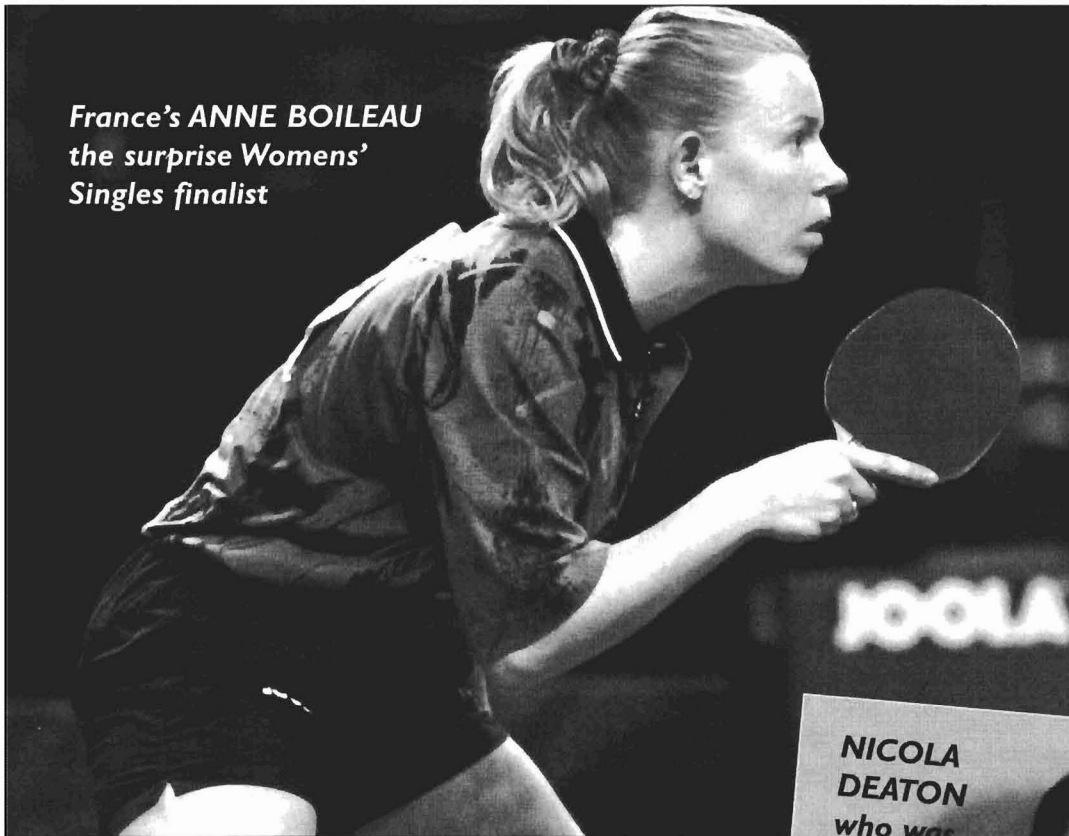
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France's ANNE BOILEAU
the surprise Womens'
Singles finalist



Holland) being ranked much higher than herself and the third (Asami Suemasu of Japan) winning the group. 15 year old Louise and cadets Natalie and Katy also showed promise that they can compete at this level - Katy went close with senior French player Sandrine Morel before going down 21-19, 7-21, 18-21 and beat Marloes De Smet (Holland).

Whilst admitting that there is a long way to go and that immediate results were not expected, England captain Alan Cooke commented, "The young ones showed that at times they are good. They need to increase the frequency and length of time that they are good. The first step was to give them experience against foreigners."

Yan Shi, apparently a Chinese teacher at Cambridge, was the other England representative at Potters. She had a win in her group over Elizabeth Gladieux (France).

to 13 all, but it was the Yugoslav who then pulled away to win 21-12, 6-21, 15-21, 21-17, 21-16.

ANDREA HOLT STARTED SMOOTHLY

England's top lady Andrea Holt (Lancs) started smoothly with a first round 22-20, 21-12, 21-16 success against Carol Detrigne (Belgium), but it was only when it was virtually all over in the second round that she found another gear to save 4 match points through great defence and hits, before losing to the twelfth seed from Korea Kim Moo Kyo 12-21, 12-21, 20-22. It was not a bad performance but one feels that Andrea is capable of better things - if she really wants it.

Kubrat Owolabi (Middlesex) did very well after her disappointment at qualifying for the World Championships. She beat the

Japanese Mayumi Hino 12-21, 21-11, 21-11 and had two match points against Suk Sol Ji (Korea) before losing 21-12, 21-23, 18-21. However, given a wild card to the knockout, she went out 21-17, 11-21, 18-21, 10-21 to world no 94 Petra Dermastija (Slovenia).

Although England players Gemma Schwartz (Berks), Shelley Ruocco (Essex), Joanna Barraclough (Cornwall), Karen Lockwood (Ches), Louise Durrant (Notts), Katy Parker (Lancs) and Natalie Bawden (Essex) did not get through their women's singles groups, there were good signs for the future. For example, Gemma took two players world ranked much higher than herself, Aya Umemura (Japan) and Helena Halas (Slovenia) to deciding games, and beat the third player in her group, Andrea Mayerhofer of Austria. Likewise Shelley took all players in her group to 3 games, two of the players (Melissa Muller of Austria and Linda Nordenberg of

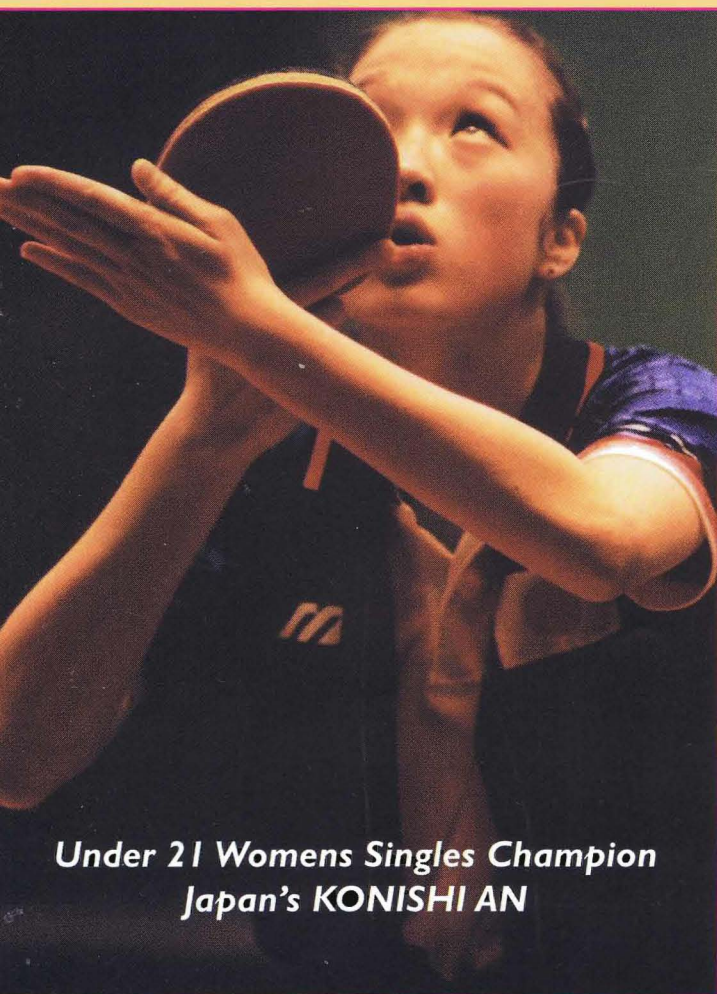
NICOLA
DEATON
who was
outstanding
for
England's
women



AN ITTF PRO TOUR EVENT



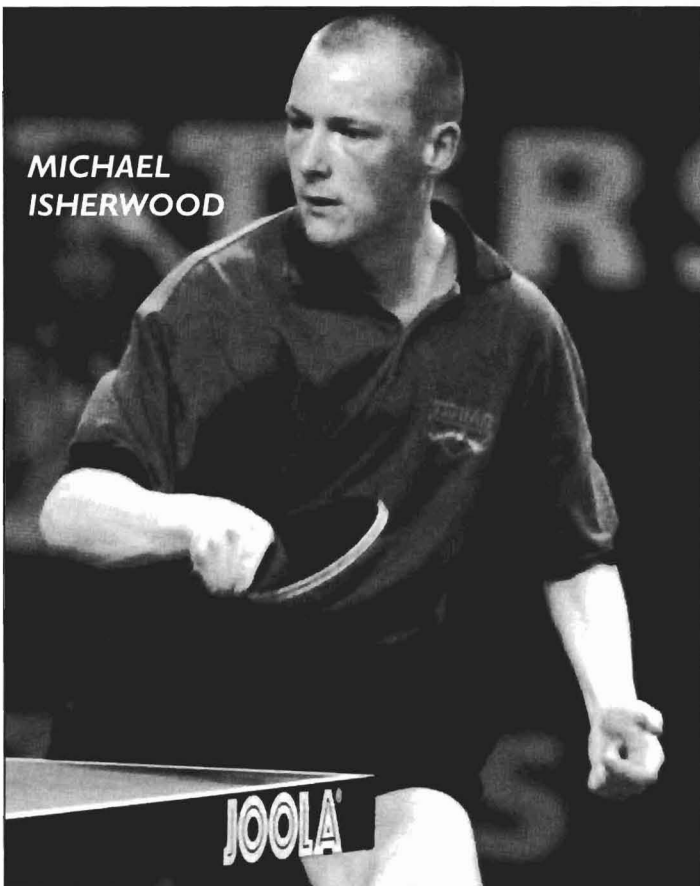
**Womens Doubles
Champions, Korea's
RYU JI HYE and
LEE EUN SIL**



**Under 21 Womens Singles Champion
Japan's KONISHI AN**



**Netherlands
DANNY HEISTER
and
TRINKO KEEN
Mens Doubles
Champions**



MICHAEL ISHERWOOD

HEISTER & KEEN WIN MENS DOUBLES CROWN

NETHERLANDS' Danny Heister and Trinko Keen triumphantly won the Mens Doubles final, beating Poland's talented Lucjan Blaszczyk and Tomasz Krzeszewski, 21-7, 24-22, writes John Wood.

In the semi-finals Heister and Keen narrowly defeated the pairing of Austria's Qian Qianli and France's Olivier Marmurek 21-17, 11-21, 21-19, whilst Blaszczyk and Krzeszewski comfortably overcame the challenge of Korea's Yoo Nam Kyu and Yoo Seung Min 21-17, 21-12.

Some of the big guns who were expected to reach the final, fell by the wayside well before the later stages. The holders Austria's Werner Schlager and Karl Jindrak, however, did reach the quarter-finals where they lost to the Polish finalists. Big names like Jean Philippe Gatién and Patrick Chila went out in the last 16, surprisingly to Denmark's Allan Bentsen and Martin Monrad, whilst the Saive Brothers, Jean Michel and Philippe, also in the last 16, lost to the eventual winners Heister and Keen.

England's best effort came from Carl Prean and Alex Perry, who reached the last 32, where they

narrowly lost to Belgium's Saive brothers, 21-23, 19-21.

KOREANS WIN

Korea's Ryu Ji Hye and Lee Eun Sil majestically won the Womens Doubles trophy, when they won an exciting close final, eventually beating Germany's Jie Schopp and Qianhong Gotsch, 21-16, 19-21, 21-17.

Schopp was hoping to collect her

second trophy with her German colleague, but in the end the Koreans proved to be just too good.

In the semis Ryu and Lee beat Austria's Liu Jia and Judit Herczig 21-16, 21-9, whilst Schopp and Gotsch won their place in the final by beating Korea's Jun Hye Kyung and Kim Mi Young 21-17, 21-12.

England's best effort in the event came from Nicola Deaton, who with her partner Shirley Zhou of Australia, reached the last 16 where they lost to Korea's Lee Kyung Su and Suk Eun Mi 19-21, 21-13, 21-10.

U21 WINNERS

Europe's rising young star from Germany, Timo Boll, was the favourite for the Mens Under 21 title, but the final didn't go to plan for Europe, as Taipei's Chang Yuan Su upset the form book by taking the trophy 23-21, 19-21, 21-14.

With three out of four semi-finalists coming from Europe, hopes were high of an European victory, but Chang had other ideas.

The other semi-finalist were Italy's Valentino Piacentini and Germany's Zoltan Fejer-Konnerth.

In the Womens Under 21 Singles final the No.2 seed Konishi An of

Japan, beat the No.1 seed Liu Jia of Austria, 21-17, 16-21, 21-14, with good control and sustained aggression.

OUTSTANDING ISHERWOOD Derbyshire's Michael Isherwood had a really outstanding English Open tournament, gaining valuable experience against foreign opposition.

Isherwood's Qualifying Mens Singles Group was a real tough one. Firstly he faced France's experienced Olivier Marmurek, to whom he lost 13-21, 11-21. He then went down to Scotland's Euan Walker 13-21, 12-21.

But in his 3rd match he took the scalp of the Welsh No.1 Ryan Jenkins 12-21, 21-14, 21-13.

In the Mens Under 21 event, he won his Group, beating Netherlands Erik-Jan Ververs and Yorkshire's Michael James. Then came 2nd in the Final Group, where he narrowly lost to England's Marco Essomba, 21-12, 17-21, 15-21.

Isherwood, who was playing under his own steam, must surely be knocking on the national door with his improved close to the table blocking game, which now includes lethal power hitting.

FINALS RESULTS

Mens Singles

MA WENGE (CHN) b. KIM TAEK SOO (KOR) 18, 18, 12

Womens Singles

JIE SCHOPP (GER) b. ANNE BOILEAU (FRA) 15, 10, 12

Mens Doubles

DANNY HEISTER/TRINKO KEEN (NED) b. LUCJAN BLASZCZYK/TOMASZ KRZESZEWSKI (POL) 7, 22

Womens Doubles

RYU JI HYE/LEE EUN SIL (KOR) b. JIE SCHOPP/QIANHONG GOTSCH (GER) 16,-19, 17

Under 21 Mens Singles

CHANGYUAN SU (TPE) b. TIMO BOLL (GER) 21,-19,17

Under 21 Womens Singles

KONISHI AN (JPN) b. LIUU JIA (AUT) 17,-16, 14

As part of the development programme that ran in conjunction with the 63rd English Open, a lucky school became the owner of a Joola table as used at Potters. The lucky school was the **THORPE ST. ANDREW HIGH SCHOOL, NORFOLK.**

SCHOOLS PRIZE TABLE COMPETITION



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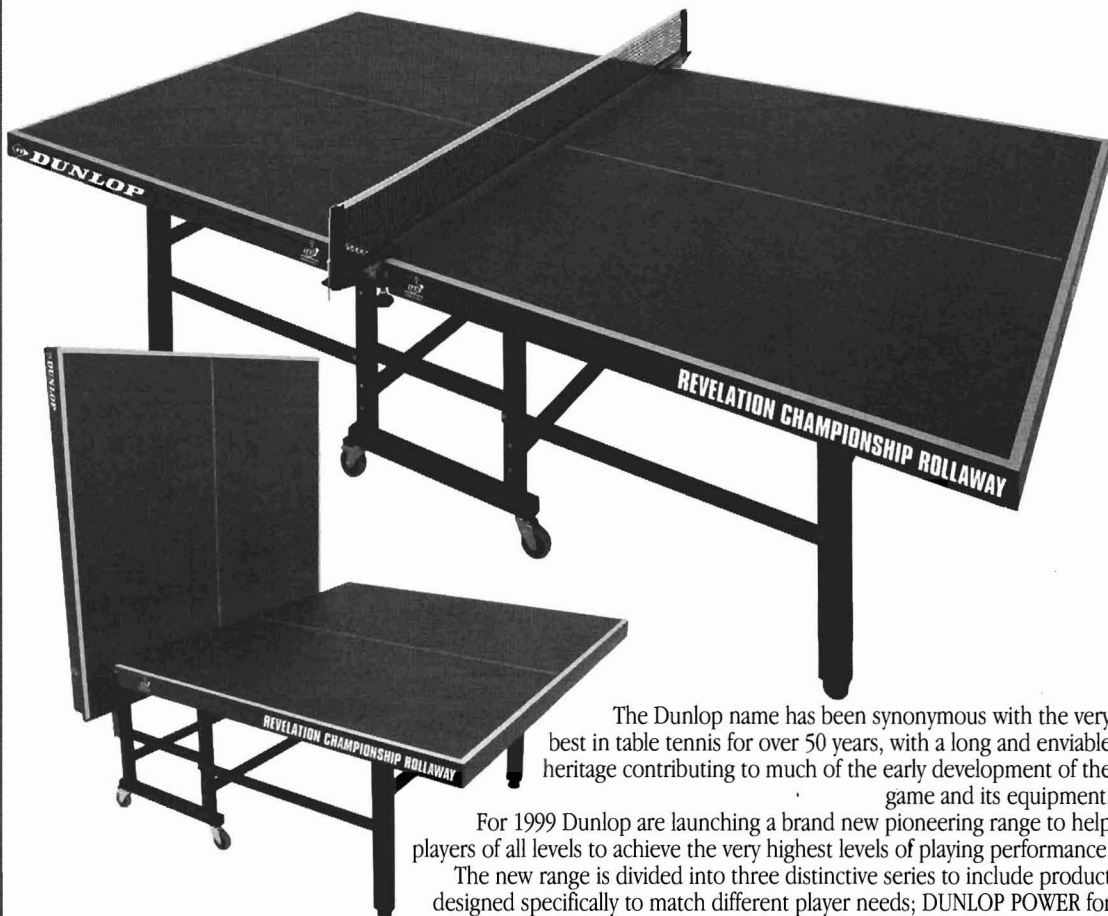
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Dunlop products as some of the best there are. The ITTF approved Revelation Championship 3 Star ball has been adopted as the official ball of the 63rd English Open and will be exclusively used at this Pro Tour event by the world's top players.

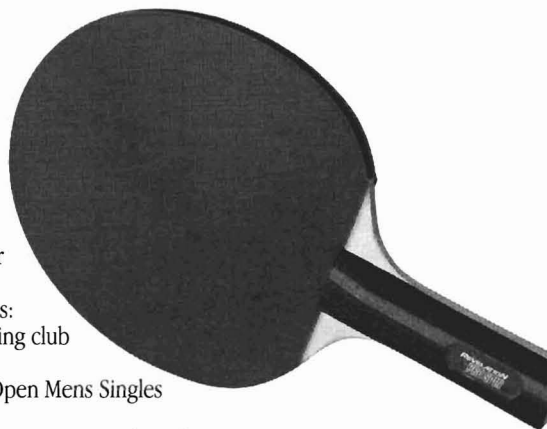


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1. What is the name of the Dunlop series designed for improving club and league players?
2. What is the name of the player who won the 1995 English Open Mens Singles title in Thornaby, Cleveland.
3. What is the name of the current holder of the English Open Womens Singles title.

Solutions to the questions appeared in March issue of Table Tennis News. All correct answers will be entered into the draw. The first names out of the hat will be the winners. Send entries to: **John Wood, Table Tennis News, Centenary Cottage, Church Road, Charlestown, St.Austell, Cornwall. PL25 3NS.** (Closing date 15th May '99)

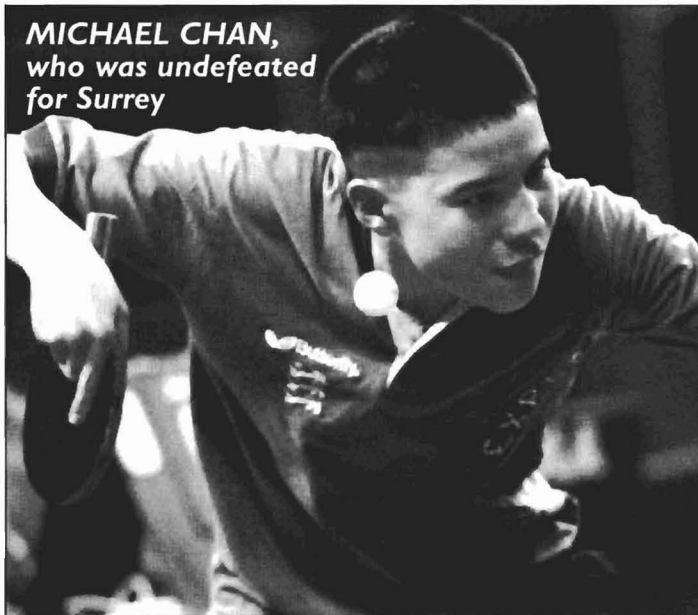


CHESHIRE WIN JUNIOR PREMIER

I have decided to cast aside my hobby horse for this month and leave the long suffering County Umpires Secretary's at peace for a while, however we are rapidly approaching the end of the season for county matches and the spectre of the County Championships Conference looms large on the horizon and the date for final submission of rule changes is almost upon us. And so on to another of my pet gripes, the conference is to be held in Birmingham this year and it would be very pleasant to see a greater representation from the Counties rather than the few old faithfuls who regularly attend each year. Don't forget it's your conference, your chance to have a go at the committee if you don't like the way they are running things. Do you like the format for county matches? If not let us hear your suggestions to improve the competition. After all the hassle this season I would expect somebody to have something to say, writes Stan Clarke.

JUNIOR PREMIER DIVISION

The first of the premier divisions to complete their fixtures, the second round of matches being played at Northwich on 20/21st February.



MICHAEL CHAN,
*who was undefeated
for Surrey*

The weekend was somewhat marred by the decision of Hampshire not to send their team to Northwich for reasons to which I am not at this time privy.

The start of play saw Cheshire, leaders from the first weekend, paired against Surrey who were in second place on level points, perhaps a little unfortunate as it would have produced a much more exciting finish if they had been paired to play in the final round of matches with the championship

resting on the result, however it was not to be and it's easy to be wise in hind-sight.

The first set saw Michael Chan beat Chris Dunne 21/15, 20/22, 21/12, to put Surrey in the lead, however it was a short lived lead as Danny Horner levelled the match with a 21/17, 21/19, win over Paul Pountney, Cheshire then took the lead when Terri-Anne Nolan defeated Debbie Flint 21/17 in the third, back roared Surrey, Marco Essomba beating John Coysh 18 & 18 only for Karen Lockwood to push Cheshire ahead again by beating Joanne Parker 11 & 13. Michael Chan again levelled the match at 3/3 by beating Danny Homer 13/21, 21/15, 21/15, only for Terri-Anne to beat Joanne 17 & 17, Marco accounted for Chris 21/18, 17/21, 21/14, to level the match at 4/4, a bad day for Chris who was decidedly out of sorts, and extremely lucky to escape disciplinary action for abusive remarks made to an Umpire. At this point the match swung in favour of Cheshire with Karen beating Debbie 21/16 21/19 leaving Paul to play John to save a point and keep alive Surrey's chance for the Championship, alas it was not to be, John took the set 21/18, 21/13, to

give Cheshire a 6/4 victory and ultimately the championship in their first year back in the top flight.

Unfortunately for them four of the team will be too old to play at Junior level next season leaving only Danny Homer available. As an interesting aside a number of players told me they were struggling to compete to their full potential having just returned from a week long training camp with the England squad which had left them exhausted.

Defeats of Yorkshire 9/1 and Middlesex 8/2 and a 10/0 walkover awarded against absent Hampshire ensured Cheshire finished the season as undisputed champions.

Surrey made sure of runners up spot by beating Kent 6/4 where Oliver Stevens had a great win over Marco Essomba 28/26, 22/20, Glamorgan fell 6/4 and Clwyd succumbed 10/0.

Presentation of awards to the winners and runners up was made by County Championship Committee Chairman Andy Seward.

The Veterans divisions are producing some interesting prospects for the remainder of the season, after four matches in division 1A no fewer than four counties are on level points, each with three wins and one defeat. In division 1B the rat race is at the bottom end with five teams level on two points each, all five having won one and lost 2.

In division 2A those North East rivals Durham and Northumberland are fighting for champions spot both having five wins from five matches.

In division 2B the fight to avoid relegation looks like going to the final round of matches with five teams in danger of making the descent into division 3 next season, there will be some heart stopping games before these positions are finally decided. Of course by the time you read these notes everything may, and probably will, have changed and you will be asking what on earth the old fool is whithering on about.

SEASIDERS SUMMER SCHOOL

3RD GREAT YEAR

COACHES:

**DESMOND DOUGLAS, DENIS NEALE
AND NICOLA DEATON**

BLACKPOOL SPORTS CENTRE

8TH TO 13TH AUGUST 1999 and

15TH TO 20TH AUGUST 1999

DETAILS: TONY MEREDITH

01253 397589/314908

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS TABLES compiled by Les Smith

Tables include results received up to 1st March 1999

SENIORS

PREMIER	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sussex	3	3	0	0	21	9	6
Surrey	3	1	2	0	17	13	4
Middlesex	3	2	0	1	16	14	4(39-33)
Hertfordshire	3	1	2	0	16	14	4(36-31)
Yorkshire	3	1	1	1	14	16	3
Derbyshire	3	0	1	2	13	17	1
Devonshire	3	0	1	2	12	18	1
Berkshire	3	0	1	2	11	9	1
DIVISION 1A							
Nottingham	4	4	0	0	29	11	8
Leicestershire	4	3	0	1	26	14	6
Suffolk	4	3	0	1	26	14	6
Lancashire	4	2	0	2	21	19	4
Cambridgeshire	4	2	0	2	18	21	4
Yorkshire 2nd	4	1	0	3	14	26	2
Worcestershire	4	1	0	3	14	26	2
Warwickshire	4	0	0	4	11	25	0
DIVISION 1B							
Kent 1st	3	3	0	0	27	3	6
Essex 2nd	3	3	0	0	24	6	6
Essex 1st	3	2	0	1	19	11	4
Kent 2nd	3	2	0	1	18	12	4
Middlesex 2nd	5	2	0	3	25	25	4
Buckingham	4	2	0	2	17	23	4
Wiltshire	5	1	0	4	7	43	2
Sussex 2nd	4	0	0	4	3	27	0
DIVISION 2A							
Northumberland	7	6	1	0	56	14	13
Cheshire	7	5	2	0	46	24	12
South Yorkshire	7	4	1	2	39	31	9
Lancashire 2nd	7	4	0	3	39	31	8
Lincolnshire	7	2	1	4	30	40	5
Warwick 2nd	7	1	3	3	29	41	5
Cumbria	7	0	2	5	25	45	2
Leicester 2nd	7	1	0	6	16	54	2
DIVISION 2B							
Devonshire 2nd	7	6	1	0	49	21	13
Glamorgan	7	6	0	1	45	25	12
Cornwall 1st	7	4	1	2	42	28	9
Herefordshire	8	3	2	3	42	38	8
Avon	6	2	2	2	32	28	6
Worcester 2nd	6	2	1	3	31	29	5
Somerset	7	2	0	5	24	46	4
Cornwall 2nd	7	1	1	5	25	45	3
Devonshire 3rd	7	1	0	6	20	50	2
DIVISION 2C							
Bedfordshire	5	5	0	0	38	12	10
Suffolk 2nd	5	3	0	2	27	23	6
Hertford 2nd	5	3	0	2	26	24	6
Cambridge 2nd	5	3	0	2	26	24	6
Norfolk 1st	5	2	1	2	27	23	5
Northampton	5	2	1	2	26	24	5
Norfolk 2nd	5	1	0	4	16	34	2
Huntingdon	5	0	0	5	14	36	0
DIVISION 2D							
Hampshire	6	6	0	0	47	13	12
Berkshire 2nd	6	3	1	2	31	29	7
Kent 3rd	4	3	0	1	27	13	6
Gloucestershire	4	2	1	1	21	19	5
Sussex 3rd	4	1	1	2	19	19	3
Surrey 2nd	4	1	0	3	13	27	2
Dorset	4	0	1	3	14	26	1
Wiltshire 2nd	4	0	0	4	6	32	0

JUNIORS

PREMIER	P	W	L	F	A	Pts	
Cheshire	7	6	1	0	52	18	13
Surrey	7	5	1	1	44	26	11
Glamorgan	7	4	1	2	46	24	9
Middlesex	7	4	1	2	40	30	9
Yorkshire	7	3	0	4	34	36	6
Kent	7	2	1	4	35	35	5
Clwyd	7	1	1	5	22	48	3
Hampshire	7	0	0	7	7	63	0
DIVISION 1A							
Lancashire	7	5	2	0	43	27	12
Essex	7	4	3	0	47	23	11
Yorkshire 2nd	7	5	1	1	44	26	11
Suffolk	7	4	2	1	40	30	10
Warwickshire	7	3	0	4	33	37	6
Derbyshire	7	1	1	5	32	38	3
Lincolnshire	7	1	0	6	18	52	2
Hertfordshire	7	0	1	6	23	47	1

DIVISION 1B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Devonshire	6	4	2	0	43	17	10
Glamorgan 2nd	6	4	1	1	38	22	9
Worcestershire	6	2	4	0	34	26	8
Avon	6	3	1	2	35	25	7
Glamorgan 3rd	6	2	1	3	32	28	5
Middlesex 2nd	6	2	1	3	24	36	5
Berkshire	6	2	0	4	24	36	4
Sussex	6	0	0	4	6	34	0
DIVISION 2A							
Cumbria	4	3	1	0	23	17	7
Lancashire 2nd	4	3	0	1	25	15	6
Norfolk	4	3	0	1	25	15	6
Leicestershire	4	2	1	1	23	17	5
Essex 2nd	4	2	1	1	21	19	5
Warwick 2nd	4	1	1	2	18	22	3
Durham	4	0	0	4	15	25	0
Huntingdonshire	4	0	0	4	10	30	0
DIVISION 2B							
Buckingham	5	5	0	0	40	10	10
Kent 2nd	5	4	0	1	32	18	8
Glamorgan 4th	5	4	0	1	31	19	8
Surrey 2nd	5	3	0	2	33	17	6
Dorset	5	3	0	2	28	22	6
Gloucestershire	6	1	0	5	24	36	2
Surrey 3rd	6	1	0	5	17	43	2
Kent 3rd	5	0	0	5	5	45	0
DIVISION 3A							
Bedfordshire	4	3	1	0	24	16	7
Buckingham 2nd	3	3	0	0	28	2	6
Suffolk 2nd	4	3	0	1	23	17	6
Norfolk 2nd	3	2	1	0	18	12	5
Cambridgeshire	3	1	0	2	12	18	2
Hertford 2nd	4	0	1	3	14	26	1
Norfolk 3rd	3	0	1	2	9	21	1
Huntingdon 2nd	4	0	0	4	12	28	0
DIVISION 3B							
South Yorkshire	4	4	0	0	34	6	8
Nottingham 1st	4	4	0	0	33	7	8
Northampton	4	2	1	1	25	15	5
Cheshire 2nd	4	2	1	1	23	17	5
Cleveland	4	0	3	1	17	23	3
Nottingham 2nd	4	1	1	2	17	23	3
Lincolnshire 2nd	4	0	0	4	8	32	0
Northumberland	4	0	0	4	3	37	0
DIVISION 3C							
Somerset	6	6	0	0	43	17	12
Cornwall	6	5	0	1	41	19	10
Devonshire 2nd	6	3	1	2	29	31	7
Gwent	6	3	0	3	34	26	6
Gloucester 2nd	6	1	2	3	26	34	4
Herefordshire	6	2	0	4	25	35	4
Powys	5	1	1	3	18	32	3
Shropshire	5	0	0	5	14	36	0
DIVISION 3D							
Sussex 2nd	5	3	1	1	32	18	7
Sussex 3rd	4	3	1	0	24	16	7
Essex 3rd	5	2	3	0	29	21	7
Oxfordshire	4	2	1	1	20	20	5
Wiltshire	5	2	1	2	22	28	5
Dorset 2nd	5	1	1	3	22	28	3
Hampshire 2nd	5	1	1	3	20	30	3
Berkshire 2nd	5	0	1	4	21	29	1

VETERANS

PREMIER	P	W	L	F	A	Pts
Cheshire	3	3	0	22	5	6
Yorkshire	3	3	0	16	11	6
Surrey	3	2	1	18	9	4
Essex	3	2	1	17	10	4
Norfolk	3	2	1	11	16	4
Devonshire	3	0	3	10	17	0
Dorset	3	0	3	8	19	0
Lancashire	3	0	3	6	21	0
DIVISION 1A						
Leicestershire	7	6	1	40	23	12
Essex 2nd	7	5	2	40	23	10 (91-59)
Cheshire 2nd	7	5	2	40	23	10 (90-63)
Hertfordshire	7	4	3	33	30	8
Worcestershire	7	3	4	27	36	6
Yorkshire 2nd	7	2	5	28	35	4
Warwickshire	7	2	5	23	40	4
Bedfordshire	7	1	6	21	42	2
DIVISION 1B						
Kent 1st	3	3	0	24	3	6
Hampshire	3	2	1	16	11	4
Berkshire	3	2	1	13	14	4
Hertford 2nd	3	1	2	15	12	2
Sussex 1st	3	1	2	13	14	2
Kent 2nd	3	1	2	12	15	2

(DIV. 1B cont.)	P	W	L	F	A	Pts
Avon	3	1	2	9	18	2
Sussex 2nd	3	1	2	6	21	2
DIVISION 2A						
Durham	5	5	0	33	12	10
Northumberland	5	5	0	32	13	10
Lancashire 2nd	5	3	2	32	13	6
Yorkshire 3rd	5	3	2	28	17	6
Northampton	5	3	2	27	18	6
Warwick 3rd	5	1	4	12	33	2
Worcester 2nd	5	0	5	12	33	0
Lincolnshire	5	0	5	4	41	0
DIVISION 2B						
Essex 4th	5	5	0	36	9	10
Norfolk 2nd	5	4	1	28	17	8
Middlesex 3rd	5	3	2	19	26	6
Cambridgeshire	5	2	3	24	21	4
Kent 5th	5	2	3	22	23	4
Suffolk	5	2	3	19	26	4
Buckingham 2nd	5	1	4	17	28	2
Norfolk 3rd	5	1	4	15	30	2
DIVISION 2C						

Avon

By David Hockney

ILES AND DAUNCEY TAKE TITLES

As yet another season approaches a close, much has been happening within the County. Most recently, the Avon Junior Closed championships have been held at the Grange School in Warmley. Although the entry was lower than hoped for, with a number of the top players unable to attend, this did not stop a very enjoyable day's table tennis. As expected, Avon No 1 Leigh Iles, playing in his last year as a Junior, won the Boys event, with Bath's Paul Nichols coming runner up. In the Girls Junior event, up and coming star Stephanie Dauncey proved unbeatable, with county team-mate Rachael Allen runner up. Some of the more exciting and enjoyable matches though came in the Cadet, U12s and Restricted events. Rachael Allen made up for her disappointment in the Junior event by winning the Cadet Girls title, beating Samantha Lloyd 21 - 14, 21 - 10. The Cadet boys final saw the two Bath boys Paul Nichols and young Edward Haskins battling it out, with the more experienced Nichols winning through. The U12s titles went to the impressive Mark Bumell and Sophie Kelly respectively. In the Doubles events, predictable Leigh Iles, partnered by Daniel Walker won the boy's event, with Paul Nichols and Chester Trinick runners up in the group. In the Girls doubles event Stephanie Dauncey, partnered by Rachael Allen, added to her trophy count. It was though perhaps fitting that perhaps the best matches of the day was the last one played. In the final of the Restricted event (for non-league players) Edward Haskins and Mark Burnell played out a high quality and exciting final! Earlier in the day, Mark had beaten Edward in the U12s event, but Edward was determined to get his revenge and so it proved, eventually winning 15-21, 21-14, 21-19. Much encouragement can be taken from this event and it is pleasing that the coaching schemes being run within the county are paying dividends.

February saw the Bath Closed Championships being held at the Bath Sports Centre. Once again, Gary Baldwin confirmed his status as one of the top players in the region by winning the Men's Singles title, beating teammate Lee Piercy. Following a small entry, Linda porter won the ladies title with Judy Higgs coming runner up. In the Boys Junior event Chris Gibbs - last years runner up - beat Paul Nichols to take the title. Kerry Porter was victorious in the Junior girls event. In the Veterans final Bob Murray upset the form book by beating favourite Gary Baldwin in a close match. In the Super Vets event (over 55s) Roy Smith successfully defended his title against Maurice Cohen. In the doubles events, predictably No 1 seeds Gary Baldwin and Bob Murray won the men's, with mother and daughter pairing of Linda and Lucy Porter taking the women's doubles crown. The Handicap Singles event was won by the league's hottest prospect, 10 year old Edward Haskins, who defeated a tiring Gareth Higgs in two straight sets. There was a

COUNTY NOTES

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Pictured above are BERKSHIRE'S Lee Calcutt (left), Robert Hudson (right), with Michael Auchterlonie in the middle.

scare early on in the tournament when Peter Galea fell awkwardly hurting his back, but gladly after receiving some hospital treatment, Peter was allowed home. We wish him a quick recovery and look forward to seeing him back at a table shortly. The Presentation Evening for the Bath Association will be held on Friday 14 May 99, at the Bath Civil Service Club.

The county teams have all had a mixed season but all look set to retain their status in their respective divisions. In one of their more recent matches the Junior team scored a resounding 8-2 victory over Sussex, with Leigh Iles, Brian Smith, David Porter and Stephanie Dauncey all winning two each.

And finally, mention must be made of the Bristol and District League celebrating their 80th birthday! To celebrate this marvellous milestone, a dance will be held at the Sommerdale Lodge, Fry's, Keynsham on Friday 21 May 99. Music will be provided by the aptly named group, Reminiscing. Tickets for the event cost £5 and are available from Linda or Martin Moore, who can be contacted on 0117 9862234. All present and former players will be warmly welcomed.

Berkshire

by Michael Auchterlonie

The Berkshire Junior Table Tennis Championship was held at the Kingfisher Table Tennis Club on Sunday 24th January 1999. The tournament was a

great success with a large entry and a lot of events. The Under 11 mixed singles was won by the hot favourite Lisa Bosley defeating Peter Wright in the Final. Youngster Alice Walker won a closely contested Under 10 Girls final against Melanie Farquhar. The Under 12 events were fiercely contested. In the Under 12 Boys competition, local Woodley boy Bob Huang, with his strong forehand attack, won closely in the deciding games of both his matches to come out victorious against Peter Wright, the number 1 Under 11 boy and flourishing youngster Daniel Rice. In the Under 12 Girls Singles Lisa Calcutt the No.1 Seed had to fight back from 17-20 down in the second against the up and coming Lisa Bosley to come through and win 24-22. Rising star Hannah Stone produced an upset in the final, beating Lisa Calcutt, the no.3 in England, in two games.

The Under 14 girls semi finals were both tense three setters. First year cadet

Kerry Matthews took Lisa Calcutt to 21-16 in the final game and Hannah Stone caught back against Lisa Bosley from 15-10 down and piled on the pressure in the final points coming out victorious at 21-19 in the third game. In the final Lisa Calcutt defeated Hannah Stone decisively in two.

The Boys Under 14 competition produced some sparkling table tennis, particularly from the top three players in the event. Ben Gates gained an unexpected victory against the number 1 Seed Vital Volovich in the groups. This result fired up young Volovich who came out, guns booming against the much favoured Sean Cox in the semi final. Cox had no answer to Volovich's blistering attack which came at him like heavy machine gun fire. Volovich, having fired himself up then cruised to victory against the much improved Ben Gates in the final, gaining revenge for the earlier defeat and winning the title.

By mid afternoon, all the entrants had arrived and an electric atmosphere was beginning to build in the venue. The Under 15 Girls was a round robin affair with most of the top juniors on the day contesting the event. Lisa Calcutt was the clear favourite and turned out to be the best. Her maturity on the table is far beyond her years. She instinctively knows when to hit a ball and when to keep it tight, pressuring opponents at just the right time to take games she looks to be struggling in. And, when she attacks her shots are deadly and powerful achieved with great timing and relative ease. The runner-up spot was taken by Lisa Bosley who beat both the number 2 and 3 Seeds to come runner-up.

The Under 15 Boys saw many of the contestants in the Under 14's battling it out once more. This time it was Sean Cox's turn to shine. Having lost once to Volovich he had no intention of it happening again. Cox, a thoughtful player with a good awareness of the tactical side of table tennis, worked out how to slow Volovich down, giving him time to get his own powerful shots in. His tactics of heavily backspin balls payed off in the third game and Cox became the Under 15 Champion.

The Boys Doubles competition produced some great matches. One of the closest fought matches was in the group stage between Rob Hudson/Hugh Crofield and Sean Cox/Simon Jarvis Cox and Jarvis took the first at 19 Hudson and Crofield fought back, narrowly taking the second at deuce 22-20.

In the third game Jarvis had a chance

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to make the game his with a high ball which he missed leaving Hudson and Crosfield to come out the victors 21-19 in the third.

In the semi final Adam Neal, a player with great style partnered an "on song" Ben Gates and caused a shock defeat over top seeds Hudson and Crosfield, leaving a final between Cox and Jarvis and Neal and Gates. By this time Cox and Jarvis had worked out their tactics and, playing well with each other won a convincing victory.

The Girls Doubles bought a win for sisters and Reading Girls Doubles Champions Michelle and Lisa Bosley. They looked comfortable when playing together and took the title two straight against Kerry Matthews and Nisha Thakrar.

Finally, a bit later in the day than expected the Junior singles events got under way. In the Junior Boys groups the Under 15 Champion Sean Cox beat top junior Adam Neal in a close three set match. The other semi final was an all attacking affair between second seed Hudson and the stylish Adam Neal. Hudson took the first 14, Neal replied in the second 21-13 and the third went all the way to the wire, both players attacking hard, pushing for the win. At deuce the tension had mounted to the extreme. Hudson kept his cool and kept playing his shots coming out the eventual winner at 22-20 in the third.

The final saw an on form Hudson, playing deadly sharp table tennis. His tactics against Calcutt were solid and he carried them out decisively, getting in with fast, heavily topspun balls. If the ball came up Hudson pounced on it, if Calcutt returned well Hudson played the drop shot and started the attack again. Calcutt had no answer to Hudson but showed his good sportsmanship in gracious defeat. Both Hudson and Calcutt have been performing well for the county first team and getting good results in the national tournaments.

Lisa Calcutt pulled out of the Junior Girls Singles event, leaving the competition wide open. Second favourite Nisha Thakrar found it tough going in her group, going down to Kerry Matthews and Lisa Bosley. The semi final saw Kerry Matthews produce her best table tennis since her Under 14 semi final beating Michelle Bosley to go into the final. Due to the withdrawal of Lisa Calcutt, Lisa Bosley played future star Melanie Farquhar in the other semi, winning comfortably.

This set up a final between Kerry Matthews and Lisa Bosley which, although was their last match of the day in a gruelling schedule during which Lisa Bosley played a total of 18 matches was their best match of the day! Matthews got off to a storming start going 10-2 up in the first, producing brilliant forehands to all parts of the court. Bosley, after recovering from this onslaught then began to fight back, catching back to lose the first 14. In the second rallies began to get longer and the ball was being hit harder. Every rally was of the highest quality; attacking drives; topspins; varied spin serves, with Bosley fighting her hardest to win 21-15.

The third saw Bosley take charge, using her full range of shots, from spinny serves

to forehand and backhand topspins and a hard forehand smash, leaving Matthews wondering what she had to do to win, as Bosley came out the winner at 21-14, showing that she has the makings of a great champion, winning the Junior Girls title and the biggest trophy of the day.

Cornwall

by John Wood

FORMER WORLD CHAMPION VISITS ST.AUSTELL

On Thursday/Friday 11th/12th March, Stellan Bengtsson, the Swedish former World Table Tennis Champion, visited the Cornwall County Table Tennis Centre at Tregorrick Park, St.Austell to conduct coaching sessions for local players. He was accompanied by Alan Hyde, a former England International player as part of a national tour to promote Stiga table tennis equipment.

The visit was arranged by Bill Stewart of Mount Charles Methodist TTC and on Thursday evening local adult players were encouraged by Stellan, both to enjoy their table tennis and to refine the techniques of their game.

On Friday the Centre was full of school children, parents and local coaches as Stellan and Alan led two hours of intensive coaching. The young players ranged in ability from Matthew Nicholls, the current County No.1 Junior, who plays with Stiga equipment, to a number of Junior School players who have had only a few months of coaching. All were encouraged by Stellan who played against most of those present, pinpointing weaknesses and offering advice about how to overcome them.

At the end of the morning everyone present felt that the event had been hugely beneficial to players and coaches alike, whilst all hoped that it will be possible to arrange more visits in the future from these two instructive and inspiring Stiga representatives.

The enthusiasm of so many youngsters is indicative not only of the work of local coaches, but of the influence of the TOPS course in the County Primary Schools where the B.T. sponsored table tennis bag is proving popular, and the Champion Coaching sessions, which together are providing foundations upon which teachers, coaches and County administrators are looking to build for the future of table tennis in Cornwall.

Derbyshire

by Colin Deaton

Chesterfield's Springbank Centre represented by Michael Isherwood and Steven Shaw, produced some brilliant table tennis in the team event of the recently held Welsh Open Championships. In the group they played Crazy Dukes (Glamorgan) and then provided one of the surprise results of the tournament when they sensationally defeated Japan 'A'. Continuing to the first round proper, they then beat Luxembourg, only to lose to the eventual event winners Spain.

Both Isherwood and Shaw collected some valuable ranking points during this successful run and both players are now

perched in the top 12 of our National Ranking list. Both Michael and Steven were invited to the World Championship qualification tournament, held in Nottingham. Both players gave a good account of themselves but did not qualify.

With Nicola Deaton chasing hard for the England number one spot it appears as though Derbyshire table tennis is on the crest of a wave.

The Derby and District League received a good entry for their annual league tournament. Popular player and coach Phil Vickers emerged both the Mens and Veterans Singles champion, whilst his wife June won the Ladies Singles titles.

Meanwhile, coaching sessions after Easter commence at the Mickleover Community School under the direction of Ada Murphy qualified (Level Two) coach.

Over in Eastwood, their league championships were staged with number one seed in the Mens singles, Clive Holmes becoming the champion and then combined with Tom Miller to notch a very creditable double.

Derbyshire's only open tournament, the Derby Junior Open again attracted a good entry, despite no entries from the Irish this year. As always with these events, the schedule was slightly delayed, owing to players being in two events. However, despite this, the tough schedule was completed by 8.30 pm.

Despite the fact that there were no ladies events in the Derbyshire Close Championships this season, we have one or two young girls who have just come in to the game who look to have real potential. I have never seen as many young promising girls as was witnessed in the Derbyshire Schools Championships.

Chesterfield coach Neil Houghton has produced yet again another dynamic young prospect, Lauren Turner of Hady Primary School, Chesterfield, became the Under Eleven Champion and thus goes on to represent Derbyshire in the National Schools finals at Aston Villa Sports Centre in May. Houghton has brought her from a beginner to winner in just ten months. It will be remembered that Neil produced English Under Fourteen Champion Louise Durrant. Ten year old Lauren who still has another year in the Under Eleven category is as good a young prospect as I have seen for a long time. We will watch her progress with real interest. Neil is the Senior Coach at the Wellow House Prep School in Worksop.

Essex

by Steve Kerns

Obituary - Martin Bawden

The whole of Essex table tennis was deeply saddened to hear of the death of former county junior star Martin Bawden who died suddenly on 12 January 1999 aged 43. Martin was an immensely popular and whole-hearted player who went on to become an ETTA coach and the 200 plus people who attended his funeral are testimony to the very high esteem in which he was held. Alan Shepherd has written a full obituary

which features elsewhere in this magazine.

Chelmsford Closed

Former Lithuanian international Lawrence Trumpauskas took his first Chelmsford mens singles title but he had to save two match points to do so against a determined Steve Dettmar who fought back from a 4-12 deficit in the third-end with some inspired hitting. The last ten points were amongst the most dramatic ever seen on Finals night. Elsewhere 13 year old Leanne Bentley partnered Dettmar to a stunning two-straight success over Marilyn Bawden and Duncan Taylor in the Mixed doubles final. Ben Warner also had a fine tournament taking the junior boys singles and junior doubles titles and he put up a fine showing against the more experienced Paul Lucas in the U21's final coming very close to extending the favourite to a deciding game.

Further results were as follows:-

Mens singles semi-finals:

Lawrence Trumpauskas beat John Holland 8,19.

Steve Dettmar beat Rik James 17-15, 12.

Final: Lawrence Trumpauskas beat Steve Dettmar -17,10,22

Mens Doubles Final:

Lawrence Trumpauskas/Paul Lucas beat Terry Guymer/Neil Brierley 13,10.

Ladies Singles: Marilyn Bawden beat Sue Cook 16,11.

Ladies Doubles: Sue & Hannah Cook beat Melanie Bonnett and Nicola Phippen 15,16,15.

Mixed Doubles:

Steve Dettmar/Leanne Bentley beat Duncan Taylor/Marilyn Bawden 18,17.

U21s Singles: Paul Lucas beat Ben Warner 16,21.

040s Singles: Terry Guymer beat John Holland 17,16.

050s Singles: John Holland beat Chris Jacob 11,11,20.

Junior Boys Singles: Ben Warner beat David Knights 10,18.

Junior Doubles: Ben Warner/Paul Woodcock beat Hannah Cook/Neil Disley -16,15,11.

Junior Girls:(RoundRobin)Winner: Hannah Cook,Runner-up: Kay Barham.

Junior Handicap Singles: Richard Storey beat Kerry Bentley 18,11.

U15 Singles: Neil Disley beat Hannah Cook 12,18.

U13 Singles: Leanne Bentley beat Alistair Hill 19,17.

2-Down Singles: Richie Hughes beat Bryn Thomas 18,13.

4-Down Singles: Malcolm Jacobs beat Neil Thompson 5,12.

So close.....The Junior first's team attempt to win promotion back to the premier division ended in a last ditch failure at Grantham.

The last round of matches saw the team beat Hertfordshire 1 7-3 with our girls Nicole Todd and Amy Wright joined by Micah Evans in staying undefeated. The team then overpowered Lincs 10-0 with Keith Lesser coming in to the side which set us up for the finale against Lancashire I. Sadly the match ended in a 5-5 and we missed promotion by a point.

Team-manager Alan Shepherd was typically magnanimous in defeat saying, "This was one of the most heart-stopping finales to a season that I can remember... my team literally played their hearts out".

Shades of Terry Venables after Euro '96 perhaps. Keith Lesser was a revelation and took both of his singles in this match whilst Joe Benson chipped in with a vital win over David Pilkington. The main thorns-in-our-side were Rebecca Tong and Louis Rosenthal who were both unbeaten with Louis in particular "playing some tremendous stuff".

Next year Alan.....

Gloucestershire

by Alf Pepper

COTSWOLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

History was made when Gloucestershire's Suzy Robinson became the first local player to win a title at "The Cotswold Junior Open Three-Star Championships", last January.

Robinson, the Glo'shire No.1 Junior Girl, won the U17's girls singles to claim the county's first ever title in the 32 years of the championships.

Robinson, who had never won a major open championship before, did it in great style, beating Terri Ann Nolan from Cheshire in straight games 17,18.

Robinson not only received a cheque for her efforts on the table, she also was presented with the Len Huff Trophy, given annually to the Gloucestershire player who contributes the best overall performance in this event.

In the Boys U17 Open Singles, spectators and players alike were treated to a very close championship final in which finally, Neil Page from Glamorgan beat Stuart Gibb of Devon in a nail-biting 23-21, 21-23, 24-22, final which could have gone either way.

SCHOOLS INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Schools Individual Championships were held at St. Benedicts School, Arle Rd, Cheltenham, last weekend, and under the eagle eye of the Hon. Referee Mr Peter Cruwys proved a great success.

With 73 players entries from some 35 Glo'shire Schools the tournament was played on 8 tables and consisted of 8 separate events.

The winners as shown below will be representing Gloucestershire Schools in the Individual Finals which will be held at the Aston Villa Leisure Centre on May 1st 1999.

Boys Under 11 (group) Winner-Harry Shahlaci from Glenfall Primary. Runner-up Michael Harvey St James Primary.

Boys Under 13 Winner-Alex Felce from Archway won 21-10, 21-15, R.U. Simon Friling from Deer Park, Ciren.

Boys Under 16 Winner-Dominic Wynn-Sands Sir T.Riches School, won 21-16, 21-15. R.U. Luke Davis, St Peter High.

Boys Under 19 Winner - Chris Roberts Bouraside 21-16, 21-17, R.U. Rob Lane (School unknown).

Girls Under 11 (Group) Winner - Stella Davis Tuffley Primary. R.U. Emily Bel Highnam C of E.

Girls Under 13 (Group) - Winner Celina

Bell Newent Community. R.U. Charlene Griffin Sir William Romneys.

Girls Under 16 Winner - Katie Broad Cleeve School 21-13, 21-10, R.U. Gemma Pilsworth (School not known).

Girls Under 19 - Will be represented by Suzy Robinson who had a Walk Over.

Leicestershire

by Derek Butt

Rushey Meads third team are still at the top of the Leicester and District Table Tennis League, and also remain the favourites for the title. They have a very strong squad of four players. In second place are Knighton Parks first team, they look like the only team likely to stop Rushey, the Park have to rely a lot on the good form of Karen Smith who remains unbeaten so far. At the bottom of the table Goons and Great Glen seconds are the two teams facing the drop.

In Division Two Syston Casuals are now beginning to emerge as the favourites for the title, with having a string of good results recently, and I know they are looking forward to the challenge of the top flight Who will join them is hard to tell at the moment with three teams all within a shout, they are Leicester Electricity, Loughborough Kingfishers and Blaby and Whetstone.

All the cup competitions have reached the finals, and will be played within the next few weeks. The Rose Johnson Cup will be between Knighton Park and Rushey Mead, and the Corall Cup will see Blaby and Whetstone and Knighton Park competing. The Frith trophy will be contested between Electricity and Belgrave W.M.C, while the Lillian Williamson Trophy will be between Knighton Park and Electricity. So we have some very interesting matches ahead.

On to the Woolwich Junior Leagues in Leicester and again it has been a great success, and well run by Dave Tanner and his helpers. Two divisions of eight teams in each completed their fixtures.

The Hinckley League also had their own Junior League and they had one division of ten teams. This has also been completed successfully and well run by Dave Blaney and his helpers.

It's good to see some of these youngsters progressing to the League teams. We certainly need them, as do many other Leagues.

The Hinckley (Calor Gas) Division One title has been won by Nalگو B with two games yet to play. They made sure of the title when they drew with their own A side They are unbeaten so far, as is their star player Matthew Hobday, and he has good support from Martin Hobday, Nigel Stretton, Mick Allsop and Peter Morris. Who will be the runners-up, that's the question, it could go right to the wire as Nalگو A and Ridge Lane battle it out, as there is just two points separating them.

In the second Division East Midlands Electricity B are almost there with two more matches left, only a major disaster can stop them. They are unbeaten so far this season and their squad of Andy Allen unbeaten so far, Howard Walden, Richard Chesters, and Mark Randall are

all playing well.

Finally Congratulations to Leicestershire's Kelly. Craven Griffiths on being selected and playing for her country in France for the Under 12's, and winning three of her six games.

Kelly has improved dramatically over the last few months. Well done.

Lincolnshire

by Betty Brown

SCHOOLS INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Grantham's rising star Shaun Rogerson beat his brother Simon to win the boys' under 11 title at Lincolnshire Schools Individual Championships played at the South Kesteven Table Tennis Centre on Sunday, 21st February. The brothers both go to Isaac Newton School and are tipped for great things in the future.

Grantham schools will be well represented at the national finals on Saturday, 1st May at Aston Villa Leisure Centre.

Lauren Springthorpe of the National School took the girls' under-11 singles. The girls' under 16 champion is Laura Dixon (KGS) who beat the favourite, Hayley Hooton (Boston) in straight sets. Heather Lamin (Walton Girls) won the girls' under 13 singles, beating Charlotte Pawlet (KGS) in the final. In the best final of the day, 17 year old Jody Cox (KGS) beat Stamford's Emma Cook in straight sets.

Results: U11 Boys - Shaun Rogerson (Isaac Newton); U11 Girls - Lauren Springthorpe (National); U13 Girls - Heather Lamin (Walton Girls); U16 Girls - Laura Dixon

(KGS); U19 Girls - Jody Cox (KGS)

REVAMP PLAN FOR CENTRE

Circa Leisure will splash out thousands of pounds to revamp South Kesteven Table Tennis Centre in Grantham which became part of Grantham Meres Leisure Centre last summer.

Decorators will paint the bar and sports hall, the hall floor will be resealed, and some ageing equipment including scoreboards, tables and nets will be replaced.

Work will take about a fortnight and is scheduled for May or June, the months when the facilities are in less demand by table tennis and badminton players.

Meres general manager Lisa Harrison said, "The table tennis centre has started to show its age in comparison with the rest of the site. Rather than it become the poor relation, we want to up-grade the facilities."

There is no building work involved in the project, but electricians will improve lighting in the bar.

Centre management will consult users before deciding colours for the hall so there is no interference with play.

Miss Harrison said: "It has been known for sports halls to be decorated in the wrong colours and badminton players have 'lost' the shuttlecock in the wall."

Middlesex

by Tony Taylor

WHITEWASH

At the Junior Premier Weekend, our team comprised Eli Baraty, Luis Dominguez, Tim Holton, Aparna Narandran and Iva Gaberova.

Our first match was against Yorkshire against whom we have a very poor record. However this time the situation was reversed with an 8-2 beating for our illustrious opponents and one feature was a complete whitewash for our boys.

Hampshire failed to turn up in the next fixture, but a strong Cheshire side who won the championship beat us 8-2.

The last match of the weekend was against Kent whose boys over ranked us all the way. In what was a magnificent performance we won 6 matches to four. Eli came through against Dominic Hall and Luis against Oliver Stevens, both for the first time ever. As usual Middlesex were last to finish, but can be content on having a very successful campaign. Finishing fourth is no mean achievement at this level.

Norfolk

by Graham Rogerson

BIG SHOCK

The Norfolk County senior Table Tennis Championships produced a big shock when Andrew Hawes and John Cockburn, both from the Foxwood club, beat the defending champions and No.1 seeds Mats Olssen and Ben Thompson in the semi-final of the Mens doubles and went on to beat Paul Durrant and Doug Bennett in an excellent final.

In the final of the Mens singles Mats Olssen was always in charge. His hard hitting never allowed Mick Broughton to settle into his defensive rhythm and Mats won comfortable in two games 21-14, 21-17. Mick Broughton got reward in the veterans though, beating David Henderson in the final 21-17, 21-18.

The Ladies doubles event produced a surprise to equal that of the Mens competition. In the first round, the newly formed pair of Lauren Spink and Julie Horstead, with a combined age of 26, overcame the No.2 seeds Mary Sawyer and Edna Fletcher, both nationally ranked Ladies Veterans players. This is a fantastic example of how the game can unite people at both ends of the age scale. Lauren and Julie went all the way to the final where they were finally stopped by the No.1 seeds and three time winners, Kim Chambers and Sue Allen.

In the final of the Ladies singles and in a repeat of the previous days' Yarmouth League championship final, Kim Chambers was in devastating form beating Mary Sawyer 21-12, 22-20.

The star of the Junior events was undoubtedly ten year old Lauren Spink who won both the girls Under 12's and Under 14's and reached the semi-finals of the under 17's where she lost to the eventual winner Julie Horstead. Lauren also went on to reach the final of the girls doubles and win the junior mixed doubles with Ben Metcalf.

In what was a great month of table tennis for Norfolk, the English Open came to Potters and proved to be a tremendous success. While the big stars will have taken all the headlines in the national and international press, probably the most supported player and undoubtedly one of the hardest

workers behind the scenes was Potters own Russell King.

On the pre-qualifying day, Russell attracted a crowd of his own with some very vocal support and was very unlucky to just miss out on qualification from his group.

Northants

by Dennis Millman

Ryan Keates took the premier award at the Kettering Closed Tournament when he won the Men's Singles title for the first time, but it was Alan Ashberry who gained most of the plaudits with a magnificent sustained performance that fully demonstrated his indomitable spirit and paramount determination.

Ashberry, who during the morning session had retained the Hard Bat title against the talented Keates had already battled through a daunting schedule, when he returned to the action in the early evening, still retaining an active interest in five events.

Four hours later, and without a break, Ashberry was bringing the day to a close, with his twenty fifth match of the day, but regrettably he had become a victim of his own success. Continual play had taken its toll and he was able to add only the Mystery Doubles to his morning triumph.

His decline, and eventual fall, left opportunities for his rivals, but No.1 seed was always going to win the main event, and though Ashberry fought his way to the final, he was never in genuine contention as Keates gained the ultimate reward after twice finishing second to Ian Hawes.

En route to the final, Ashberry had accounted for Gordon Shaw at the quarter final stage after the clash had gone to expedite with Shaw leading 20-17 in the first. Shaw took this but Ashberry rallied to take the decider, 23-21. However when the same pair met in the semi-final of the veteran singles, Shaw gained revenge and went on to take the honours for a fourth time, with a clear-cut win over Geoff Atkinson.

The day now took on a rosier hue for the county veteran No. 1, and reliving their success in the 1993/94 county closed tournament, he and Terry Luxton proceeded to the final of the men's doubles, where they beat Keates and Ashberry in straight games.

Shaw and Ashberry were again in direct opposition in the veterans doubles, with Shaw partnered by Atkinson getting the better of the argument with a 21-16 third end scoreline over Ashberry and Gerald Finney. This gave the victors a third title, after three years of domination by the beaten finalists.

Shaw's fourth title made him the main winner on the day, and it came in the Premier Handicap, where receiving five points from Keates he took the final 21-12, 21-16, to win the event for a second successive year.

Atkinson had two further successes both at Over 50 level and both for the third time in a row, making no mistake against Gerald Finney in the singles and joining his vanquished opponent to take a third end doubles against Alan Woolston and Dave Cross.

Ashberry's long evening marathon was not entirely in vain, for he and last season's junior league champion Damian Carr, plotted a tortuous route to the final of the Mystery Doubles with Carr as steady as his mentor. On the way they saved match points against Atkinson/Adrian Harris and Henry Arthur/Phil Preece and then in the final they recovered from a second end deficit to snatch the trophy 22-20 in the third from a frustrated Hark Stockley and Lee O'Boyle.

A disappointing entry on the female side resulted in the cancellation of the doubles and produced a repeat of last year's singles final, again won by Helen Watts after a fast and furious battle with Viv Smiley. The same pair contested the mixed doubles final and again it was Watts, partnered by her brother Martin, who got the better of Smiley and Adrian Ellmer, to become the first brother and sister pairing to triumph since Keith Nicoll and Jane Johnston in 1987.

At junior level the main honours went to the Corby duo of Kenny Clarke and O'Boyle, who took the doubles after Clarke had edged out his partner on a two deuce singles. The beaten doubles pairing then featured in the final of the Under 15 Singles, with Hark Thompson gaining a surprise win over Michael Clarke.

Other winners included Terry Luxton in the 30-40 Singles, Keates in the Under 30 event, Stephen Woolston in the Consolation Singles and Keith McLaren, Chris Robertson and Mark Cornforth in the divisional handicaps.

Overall the tournament provided a tremendous day's play with more than 250 matches condensed into thirteen hours play - sure testimony to the expertise of organiser Phil Slade. It was also a major triumph for the resurgent Corby club, whose players won ten titles and shared in two others, and whose enthusiastic members played an integral part in another major success.

ETTA coach Dave Rees informs me that there has been a major advance in South Northants this year with the setting up of the Kingsbrook Woolwich Junior League at Deanshanger. This resulted from the combined efforts of the highly successful Yardley Gobion Club and Kingsbrook School, who were anxious to use their sporting facilities to the full. Additionally the former County Development Officer Dave Parsh, who brought the interested parties together, and the South Northants Council who offered encouragement and financial support were instrumental in bringing about the perfect conclusion.

Watch this space for future developments.

Northumberland

by Pauline Long

OVERCROWDED CALENDAR

The WENADE (UK) LTD county veterans' team are still unbeaten at the time of writing, but not in the way they would have wished. They were due to entertain Warwickshire III at North Shields YMCA on February 20, which coincided with the Veterans' British League weekend at Potters Leisure Resort. This meant that both Geoff Salter and Jimmy Scope would

have been unavailable, as the long journey necessitated travelling on the Saturday. However, even though we had a replacement available for our team, the match was conceded by our opponents, who were unable to raise a team of their own. I appreciate that the ETTA have a very overcrowded calendar, but surely arranging a veterans' county match and a veterans' British League weekend at the same time is asking for selection problems to be created, especially as I understand that at least one other County chose to rearrange their fixture for the same reason.

The Division 2A championship will therefore be decided when Northumberland play Durham at Bishop Auckland on March 27. Sadly Jimmy Scope will not be available for selection as he suffered a heart attack just before the British League weekend which necessitated a spell in hospital. Thankfully, he is recovering well and is now resting at home. The juniors also played their final series of matches on February 20, which involved a journey to Grantham to play three Division 3B matches against Notts II (2-8), Lincs II (3-7) and Cleveland (3-7). Despite losing all their matches the team acquitted themselves well, in particular Ellie de la Hunt, who played magnificently to win all her six singles, with the other two being won by Shaun Jackson.

Shaun joined fellow junior Chris Leyland in a depleted two - man team (Richard Chapman was unavailable at the last moment) which travelled to Armlay Leisure Centre in Leeds for the final series of Woolwich Junior League matches. They managed to win all three matches by 4-2 to finish fourth overall from twelve teams.

It is hoped that there will have been a reasonable number of entries for the JOYSON OFFICE EQUIPMENT Northumberland Closed Championships, due to take place at Wallsend Sports Centre on Sunday March 28, the day after the final County veterans' match of the season. Details of results will appear in the next issue.

The draw for the Team Handicap Knock-out Cup competition has currently reached the quarter - final stage and is as follows: NORTH FIRE 'A' v BLAYDON YC'B'; NORTH SHIELDS YMCA 'J' v BIRTLEY SC 'C'; CRAMLINGTON COLTS v NORTH SHIELDS YMCA 'G'; NORTH SHIELDS YMCA 'C' v DSS 'A'. These matches were due to be played during week commencing March 29.

Nottinghamshire

by Brian Jones

Craig Gascoyne marches onwards, winning the Juniors Boys Ranking Trials and entering the top ten on the ranking lists. Having watched him play since he was nine and knowing how much hard work he has put into the sport, this is a thoroughly deserved success and I feel sure there are many more achievements to come. This is the time of the year to mark achievements and we seem to be bringing home the silver by the ton weight. Nottinghamshire got six schools through the area rounds of the ESTTA Team tournament and an unprecedented four teams through to the National Final

at Grantham, held this very day of writing this article. Honours go to the Under 13 Girls of Valley School, Worksop, who were runners-up (Ashlie Edwards, Lisa Ripley, Clare Bradshaw and Samantha Edwards) but the Valley Under 16 Boys and the boys and girls from Redlands Primary School (also Worksop) and the Under 19 Boys from Ashfield all deserve our praise. My own school, Wellow House has reasons to celebrate with its Under 12 Team having just won the National Prep Schools' Championships and the team captain, George Yardley, was the individual champion. His team mates were Mark Layfield and Tobias Rooney. Wellow's Under 10 Team also reached the final but went down 8-9 on countback, having drawn on sets.

The County Junior side was slightly weakened due to illnesses and international call-ups but it still clinched the Division III title. A. Edwards and C. Gascoyne were joined by Nottingham's John Taylor and Edward Croyden-Fowler, Mansfield's Georgina Walker and Worksop's Cheryl Ripley. Georgina has also won her first international title while on England duty in Sweden. The County B squad also acquitted themselves well with Alan Ford and Andrew Gascoyne doing particularly well. The Vets are heading for an honourable third in their division and I hesitate to mention this, knowing that events will overtake this publication, but Barrie Russ feels that the Seniors are doing so well that a place in the Premier Division is within their grasp. Well done all.

The final results and placings in the local leagues will be published later but having just received a well presented newsletter from the Mansfield League, I will share some of its highlights. In its youth league Peafield Lane are the team to aim for but they have a chasing pack with games in hand. B.Wood of St. Wilfrid's III has a 100% average. In the Premier Division, Robin Hood A are making the running with their players, R.Hume and W.Ainsworth dominating the averages. The committee is working hard on links with a new recreation centre to establish table tennis there.

Jack Spratt-Wellow House have clinched Division III of the British League and they look strong contenders for higher things next season, bolstered no doubt by their recent coaching session with Stellan Bengtsson. The session was well attended by about 100 players.. coaches, parents and Wellow pupils and all who met Stellan were much impressed with his friendly and tireless enthusiasm.

Finally, an event which has to get some mention even though it was clouded in controversy, was the Nottinghamshire Schools' Individuals Championships. They were dominated by the players from the National Academy, who qualify because they attend a school in Nottingham. Naturally, they picked up the awards in all of the five categories they contested. They are superb and sporting players and I wish them well but from a

patriotic Nottinghamshire point of view, I have two comments. First, I would have liked to see an arrangement whereby the 'genuine' Notts players got the recognition they deserve and secondly, there was not a single local player on view who looked out of place in such good company. Well done to Ashlie Edwards (U13 G), Sarah Perks (UII G) and Richard Wesley (UII B).

Oxfordshire

by Avril Haynes

GREG TAKES THREE TITLES

The annual Oxford Junior Closed Tournament was held at the Forum Youth Club on January 16th and 17th. The results were as follows.

UNDER 11 BOYS FINAL Sam Harrison beat Simon Hughes 29-31, 21-9, 21-19, in an excellent final with many outstanding rallies especially the first long set.

UNDER 13 BOYS FINAL Greg Boone beat Sam Harrison in a close match 21-17 21-17, where Greg always had the edge.

UNDER 15 BOYS FINAL Greg Boone beat Stewart Hamilton 21-17, 21-1, which was comfortable victory over an older opponent,

UNDER 17 BOYS FINAL Kevin Cruickshank beat Greg Boone 21-13, 21-15, in a good match. Young Greg gave a good effort being going down to an older opponent.

BOYS DOUBLES FINAL

Greg Boone collected his third title and Sam Harrison his second title when they beat Simon Hughes and Yusef Salehi 21-11, 20-22, 21-15.

MIDLAND VETS LEAGUE

Oxford travelled to Leamington for this match and defeated Leamington (C) 8-2. Man of the match was Ian Arnold who had three great singles wins and the doubles with Tony Wheeler. Nigel Taylor and Tony Wheeler both won two singles each to complete the victory.

COUNTY VETS MATCHES

SOMERSET 1 OXON (1) 8

Oxfordshire travelled to Somerset and had a convincing victory. Karl Bushell Nat Richardson and Eddie Herrity all won two singles each. Janet Brown won the mixed doubles with Eddie Herrity and Karl Bushell won the mens doubles with Nat Richardson.

OXON (2) 7 HEREFORDSHIRE (2) 2 Oxfordshire without their usual team had a good victory. Alf Davies won both his singles and the doubles with Neil Hurford who won one singles.

Newcomer Ian Hutchins won a singles and the mixed doubles with Sue Gokhor, Sue Gokhor also won a singles.

BEDFORDSHIRE (3) 8 OXON (3) 1 Oxfordshire travelled to St Neots where the victory came from Nigel Taylor despite five rubbers going the full distance.

WITNEY TOURNAMENT

The Witney Tournament was held in January at the Witney County Primary School.

In the Open Singles Edwin Bone beat Maurice Chambers and Doug Bartlett in the final stages to reach the final. Likewise Steve beat Goff Blake and Richard Woodward to reach the final. In the final Steve Mollart defeated Edwin Bone 21-18, 21-17, the restricted singles

was won by Phil Cork who beat Andy Norton 21-13. 21-16.

The doubles was won by Doug Bartlett and Goff Blake who defeated John Allsworth and Kiko Fagaragan 19 and 12.

The open plate was won by John Allsworth beating Kiko Fagaragan 17-21, 21-10, 21-13.

The restricted plate was won by Cathy Mollart who beat Emily Buley 22 and 15.

Sussex

by John Woodford

ROADSHOW

CONSIDERABLE progress is now evident in the development of junior players through both East and West Sussex. A few leagues, we have a dozen, are setting up junior leagues next season, when the Woolwich sponsorship will no longer exist.

Sussex must be the most fortunate county around to be able to run the schools Roadshow. The men running that project are Ray Forder (Lancing) and Dave Ward (Herstmonceux). They have now completed 25 visits to schools in Sussex. With four tables transported by themselves they have on most occasions, introduced 64 pupils per visit to table tennis - that's around 1,600 youngsters, most of whom have never held a table tennis bat before.

If there is any coaching project around that has achieved that objective, then a lot of people interested in driving table tennis forward would like to hear about it, especially the development supremo Diccon Gray.

I, like many others find it worrying that most local leagues these days are comprised of veteran players. I am again impressed by the huge entries for the veterans tournaments - the intermingling of the sexes socially is I believe a major factor at these events - jolly good luck to those to seek a weekend break away from their families!

On the junior front in Sussex, at least one of the teams is eyeing promotion but this season and next will continue to be identified as a re-building period after a large group left for the senior ranks. Sussex have three players in the England Under-12 rankings - Michael Simpson (Arundel), Luke Bridge and Gina Rogers, both from Hastings - these three could have five more seasons as juniors - a comforting thought.

• The Boys of Old Brigade continue to pass on - Charles Wyles, the former chairman of the ETTA and who lived for many years in Hastings is no longer with us; Sid Godfrey, who ran the Hollington tournaments at Hastings for something like 50 years has also gone - his funeral saw about 150 local players and officials in attendance; no doubt the Charles Wyles funeral will also attract a large attendance.

Warwickshire

by Caroline Williams

SCHOOLS TOURNAMENT

The Warwickshire Schools' Championships were once again held at Myton School Warwick with a record entry in the younger age-groups which shows how much table tennis is a thriving sport in this area. Leamington League dominated the results taking all but one

trophy. This especially is the result of the Junior and two-aside Divisions played in Leamington which Bishops Tachbrook School in particular is involved in.

In the Under 13 Boys 23 contested the whole of the County before Jaz Allen-Sutton from Trinity School, Leamington took the title, overcoming Chris Anderson from Arden Lawn School, Henly in Arden in the final. Ben McNally from Warwick School and Craig Tunney from Aylesford School, Warwick were losing semi-finalists. Oliver Williamson of Arden Lawn defeated Dean Shannon of Alderman Smith, Nuneaton in the Consolation final.

In a thrilling Under 13 Girls final Kelly-Jayne Walden from George Elliott School, Nuneaton defeated Lillington's Kelly Sibley 22/20, 21/18. In the semi-finals this duo had seen off young Stephanie Hawkins from Bishops Tachbrook Primary and Sam Garland from Myton School, Warwick. The Consolation was won by Joanna Capp from Rugby who defeated 9 year old Kirsty Walden (Chetwynd Junior Nuneaton).

It was an all Bishops Tachbrook Primary Under 11 Boys final with Barry Hobbs succeeding over school mate Adam Cooper. The two losing semi-finalists were both provided by Moreton Morrell CE Primary in the guise of identical twins Joseph and Thomas Lewis. In the Consolation event Thomas Crellin of Bishops Tachbrook was victorious over Jonathan Capp of Henry Hinde Junior, Rugby.

Kelly Sibley (Lillington) retained her Under 11 Girls title against Stephanie Hawkins from Bishops Tachbrook. Bishops Tachbrook also supplied the unsuccessful semi-finalists in Lauren Slater and Nicola Sensicle. In the Consolation, Kirsty Walden (Chetwynd) overcame Sarah Mousley of Moreton Morrell.

The Under 16 Boys champion was Kevin Rourke from North Leamington who defeated Chris James from KES Stratford. Alcester Grammar's Iain Preston and Trinity's Jaz Allen-Sutton reached the semi-finals. Myton's Graham Cooper took the Consolation trophy from school-mate Stuart Marshall.

In a limited Under 19 Boys entry Jon Shaw (North Leamington) emerged as victor with Chris James (KES) again runner-up. The Girls Under 16 and 19 events are being held on a separate occasion.

COUNTY UMPIRES TO VARSITY

Warwickshire County Umpires Frank Stevens and Bob Montgomery had a change from the usual sports hall in a car park when they took charge at the Oxford and Cambridge Varsity match. The venue was Queens College Cambridge (founded 1448) next to the famous Mathematical Bridge over the River Cam. Warwickshire also provided the Cambridge women's captain, Jenny Williams, who led the light blues to a 10-0 victory over their old rivals.

Full report on this Varsity Match, written by Caroline Williams will appear in the next issue of Table tennis News.

Worcestershire

by Martin Clark

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Jason Thompson went one better than last year in winning the mens singles for the first time. He ultimately overcame his Bromley team-mate and past winner Steve Horton in a hard fought final over three games.

Sandra Roden retained her ladies singles title for the eleventh time in thirteen years. The two missing years of 1992 and 1995 were when she was missing due to injury. In this years final she saw off the challenge of Alison Westwood whose plucky efforts were

continued on page 30

PLEASE NOTE

MY NEW ADDRESS

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not quite enough.

A surprise in the veterans event saw Eric Hardman beat last years double champion Roy Norton in the semi-final before also taking number two seed Ken Walton in the final.

The absence of Jan Dunning through a thigh strain gave Lynda Reid the opportunity to add to her impressive list of county achievements. She grabbed the chance and beat Helen Pogmore in the final.

Steve Horton teamed up with Julian Wooton, playing in his first Worcestershire Championships, to take the mens doubles against Zia Khan and Jason Thompson.

Steve Horton in his third final of the day, joined forces with Sandra Roden in the mixed doubles to retain their title from the challenge of Lewis Sicket and Alison Westwood.

Sandra Roden returned to the table, this time with Sarah Stone to win the ladies doubles by beating Lynda Reid and Alison Westwood.

The veterans doubles was won yet again by Mervyn Wood and Roy Norton who this time swept aside the challenge of Eric Hardman and Chris Maiden.

The consolation event was won this year by Steve Gough who beat John Patel in the final.

COUNTY JUNIORS

Still unbeaten, but only just. Travelling away to Avon and having Jenny Burchill back after two months from injury the juniors got off to a flying start with wins from Leigh Hipkins and Lewis Cook. However, James Perks went down -22 in the third and Jenny Burchill -13 also in the third, before a Leigh Hipkins defeat put us behind. Kate Hughes struggled but eventually overcame the Avon no. 2 to level the game. In a topsy-turvy

match in which Jenny played really well in her second set we were 4-5 down before Kate found her form to give us yet another draw.

COUNTY VETERANS

Veterans 2nds having previously come away empty handed from their long trip north after facing strong teams from Northumberland and Durham, at last got valuable points from an 8-1 victory against struggling Lincolnshire. Eric Hardman, Chris Maiden, Martin Clark and Helen Pogmore all contributed to the win which secures our place in the second division and sets us up for the last match of the season next month against neighbours Warwickshire

Yorkshire
by Rea Balmford

FUTURE

Once again it is the talented young players who are in the forefront of the County's future who take top billing with the Junior II - the only second string competing in Division 1 North, finishing in third place, but level on points with Essex who had a marginally better 'sets difference'.

Two more youngsters, new comers to this higher level of our sport, both from Wakefield, were called up, and Matthew Hepinstall and Zoe Cheesman did nothing to harm their reputations as the former was beaten only once in six outings, while Zoe returned a clean sheet.

Further honours for Emily Dearing, who was named to partner Karen Lockwood in the England II duo for the Welsh Open at Cardiff, although unfortunately she has a recurrence of a shoulder muscle injury which has troubled her previously and was prevented from playing to her full potential.

Also earning more recognition was Simon Nutch, Englands No.1 at Under 12 level, who crosses the Channel to Lille in Northern France, along with Bradford girl, Nicola White, making her international debut, to compete in the Villiers St,Paul tournament Results in the next issue, always assuming that somebody lets me know.

Before leaving the topic of representative play and the junior starlets, do not let us forget the dedicated coaches who make it all possible. I will not mention names, I would be sure to miss somebody out, but you know who you are, you have not been forgotten.

YORKSHIRE ON THE INTERNET

Are you aware that the Yorkshire Table Tennis Association is now on the Internet, with its own website, where many table tennis topics, including Yorkshire League results and tables, County match results, where to obtain coaching and/or match play etc. can be found.

The address is (URL) <http://www.ytta.swinternet.co.uk>.

If you have trouble in finding access, type in the find (search box one of the following search engines; ALTA VISTA, AOL NETFIND, CRAWLER, EXCITE, HOTBOT, INFOSEEK, LOOKSMART, SEARCH, COM and WEB CRAWLER.

**IMPORTANT
LONG PIMPLES
INFORMATION**

ITTF Bulletin 263

RACKET COVERINGS

IN List No. 1901 Authorised Racket Coverings for this season we introduced a marker (A) for those coverings with a too high aspect ratio (AR>1.10), ref the ITTF Council decision in Durban last year.

We also have a few brands that were not in the List with an "A", but they were in the area where we said we would investigate (AR =1.00-1.10). In addition these had other problems with a possible effect on the AR, so we have asked for improved samples, but we have not seen all, yet.

These rubbers need improvement in order to maintain their position in the List for the next season. As an early warning to our players we state here the present situation for these brands - as it now looks from our side. However, some changes will still occur.

ATTACK	Seldam Ox	No news
BUTTERFLY	Feint Long	To be substituted
DONIC	Piranja	To be substituted ?
DOUBLE HAPPINESS	PF4-C8	Under modification
FRIENDSHIP	837	Modified, OK
GOLD WAY	B938	No news
JUIC	Leggy	Modified, OK
KINSON	Long Pip	No news
PALIO	CK531	To be substituted
ROTATION EXTREME	Dirk De Cleene B01	No news
TIBHAR	Grass Spezial	Under modification
	Grass Super	No news
TSP	Curl P-1	Under modification
	Curl P-3	Under modification
YASAKA	Phantom 0011	Under modification
	Phantom 0012	Under modification

No news - means that we have no information and we have not seen any improved samples.

To be substituted - means that the supplier has decided to introduce a new brand name.

Modified - means that the required modification has been introduced.

Under modification- means that the suppliers are working with these brands, and we expect the required modification in time for the next season.

The old versions of the above mentioned coverings may not be used after 30th June this year. Improved versions will be continued with a marker, or a new name - to be given in the next List.

There will of course be other "normal" changes also in the List for other reasons than the aspect ratio and related problems. This will not be ready until just before actual printing.

There are some strange rumours about rubbers having too high aspect ratios that still will be valid. If anyone has facts or samples to bring forward, please do so. Keeping rumours alive does not get us anywhere.

Odd Gustavsen
ITTF Equipment Committee

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**FOREIGN
YOUNGSTERS
IN ENGLAND
THIS SUMMER**

Can you help or accommodate any of the following teenage boys wishing to visit England in the summer (July/August) to improve their table tennis (practice and coaching/training) and their English? **A)** Leonard Daniels, 17, from Belgium, **B)** another 15/16 year old from Belgium and **C)** 14 year old Erwan Sabattier from France (who ideally would like to spend a fortnight with a family in July). If you are interested or can help, please contact:

A) Professor A. Daniels (grandfather), Rue de la Jachere 47, 5021 - Boninne, Namur, BELGIUM.

B) Robert Collignon (former General Secretary of Belgium Table Tennis Federation) Avenue des Anciens Combattants 83/3, 1140 Bruxelles, BELGIUM. Tel/Fax 00 3227262961.

C) Helene Sabattier (mother), La Grange du Bief, Route des Trois Chatels, 69480 - Ause, FRANCE. Tel 0033474602411, Fax 0033474671527.

CHRISTIAN JOINS JARVIS

JARVIS SPORTS LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

THE long running success of Jarvis Sports is set to be complimented when the introduction of a new member of staff is drawn into the ranks.

Former England player, National and Masters champion Christian Thompson has teamed up with Nicky Jarvis and Co to add a youthful dimension to the already highly popular Jarvis Sports.

Christian Thompson who has been sponsored by Jarvis Sports for almost a decade, has seen the vast bulk of his 98/99 season fade away through a severe injury, he is now set to make his return to the Grand Prix circuit in more ways than one. As well as competing in the Grand Prix events, Christian will also be taking charge of the Jarvis Sports Sales Stand.

Meanwhile, back at the Jarvis Sports office Christian will be found working hard to improve the status of Jarvis Sports, servicing customer orders and available for valuable advice on all aspects of table tennis.

Nicky Jarvis says "Christian adds an extra dimension to the company. His technical knowledge both on the playing and equipment side will be of great value and his presence within the office and the tournament circuit will continue to give the personal touch our company has always tried to achieve."

The addition of Christian to the company, coincides with the planned expansion and movement from their



current trading premises to Rochester in Kent.

CARL PREAN SIGNS FOR LION SPORT (UK) LTD

LION SPORT (UK) Ltd the world's largest producer of table tennis equipment has signed up Carl Prean.

Carl Prean, former holder of the English Men's Singles title has joined Lion Sport (UK) Ltd.

Alan Hydes, Managing Director of Lion who represented England over one hundred times is delighted that a player of Carl's world wide status has joined the company to promote the Lion range.

Lion produces over five million table tennis bats per annum and is the world's largest producer of table tennis equipment.

The Lion Tournament 3 Star Ball was adopted for the English Open, English Closed and County

Pictured above are Nick Jarvis and Christian Thompson, on the Jarvis Sports stand at the English Open at Potters

Championships over the past years.

Antony Fung, the owner of the world's largest table tennis factory will develop a range of Carl Prean products supported by Lion Sport (UK) Ltd.

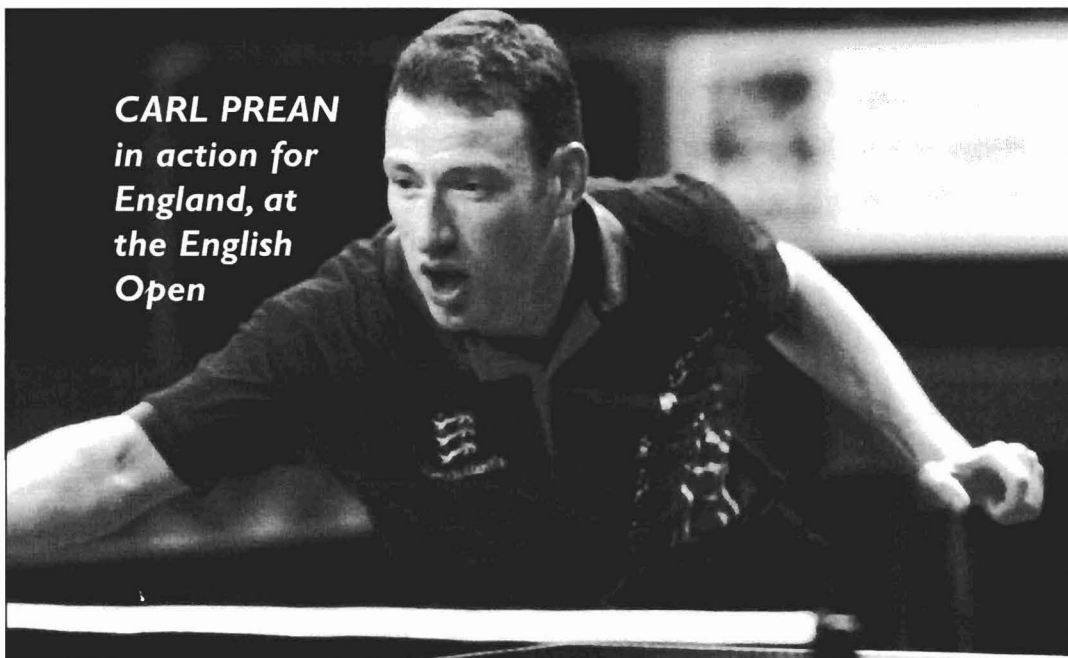
"LONG PIMPLED" RACKET COVERINGS

THE ITTF Equipment Committee has made the following statement: In mid 1998 the ITTF Council decreed that some long-pimpled racket coverings - those with aspect ratio (length/ diameter) greater than 1.1- should lose their authorisations after June 30, 1999.

Associations, coaches, players and suppliers are cautioned that this date is still in effect.

The fact that the World Championships were not held on the scheduled dates in Belgrade has no effect on Council's decision, which has not been changed.

The affected racket coverings will not be authorised beginning July 1 this year (refer to note on the opposite page, page 30).



CARL PREAN in action for England, at the English Open

many dedicated clubs and individuals. Gail McCulloch was brave and correct to raise her own fears for her part of the sport and hopefully the reaction to my fears (echoed by all clubs in the British League) might for once not fall on deaf ears, or ears that cannot understand common sense when heard. With the great development plans in mind, with investment in the British League we could well see 'real' excellence at the top of the much vaunted TOP CLUB structure.

Should the correct path be taken by the ETTA, maybe we could see in the future years details of when the British League matches were to be shown on TV instead of when we can watch German Bundesliga table tennis. However, no doubt, as in Gail's case, the reply will be standard ETTA drivel and a repeat of how hard they are working to raise sponsorship without even a hint of the bravery required to take the correct action.

*Keith Wilson
Darlington*

THE BAT CONTROVERSY

I am just about to start writing - the television is on and the darts championship is starting, phew! I have no remote control, nevertheless, I will have to get up and switch over. Maybe Cell Block H is on the other side - a big improvement on the darts. I can only think of dominoes as being more repetitive and totally boring. What's the guy chuntering about you my say. Well, the point is that the darts will be covered for hours and hours of peak viewing time. So where has table tennis gone wrong? The Manchester Worlds was to have been our biggest boost for the development of the game. The T.V. live coverage was nil - forget the live coverage on the continent and Asia - as much use to English table tennis as last week's Daily Mail. The 1977 Worlds had excellent coverage. Denis Neale pointed out to me that when he won the National Championships (English Closed) in 1977 the prize money was similar to that which Ray Reardon received for being World Snooker Champion that year - about £500 as he can recall. Look where snooker is now, and darts for that matter, phew! Before TV coverage these were solely pub games. The World Snooker Championships in 1978 was played in a working men's club in Birmingham - it then went on to Crucible fame and has never looked back.

You may say that all this has nothing to do with the bat controversy. Well, compare the changes in equipment. Snooker cues and darts arrows haven't changed much at all. I imagine they have improved in accuracy due to modern technology. Table tennis bats, however, have become far too complicated, thousands of different rubbers, hundreds of different sponges (all with different thicknesses), hundreds of different blades and dozens of different types of speed glue. I read Stuart Greenberg's excellent article in TTN and he makes a lot of sense. If the sport is to go forward in terms of participation and par excellence

it has to cease to be it's own worst enemy.

Nobody in their right mind could dispute that the matches between attackers and defenders are what the spectators want to see. And this applies more than ever in the current game where most of the play is robotic. This is born out by the following that Matt Syed enjoys wherever he plays. I agree with John Prean when he says that to disarm the defender and not the attacker would leave a total imbalance in the game. There are quite definitely two separate issues which need addressing - the long pimples and the glue.

It would appear that the dreaded long pimples are more of a problem at the grass roots of the game. At local league level I have seen players write w/o on the scorecard to avoid playing a long pimples player or even worse, not turn up at all. Then comes the junior players - a couple of years of sound coaching and then their debut in the local league. Oh dear, all their acquired skills go out of the window - a simple push shot ends up five feet past the end of the table. "What did I do wrong" asks the kid. "Nothing" replies the coach "It was the long pimples." I am not saying that this is the reason for the dramatic fall in numbers every year, but it doesn't help the cause. What other racquet sport, or for that matter, any sport, has such complicated equipment that conjours up trickery with little skill.

Imagine Wimbledon with racquets that imparted top spin from a slice stroke (the tennis equivalent of chop). The ball would probably end up in the grandstand.

Who would want to pay money to watch that! Thankfully for lawn tennis they have outlawed such trickery. The game has become incredibly fast, but back of the court players such as Agassi and Chang have still fared rather well. We talk of veterans being kept in the game by the use of long pimples. Yes it does make local league third division type players into county vets (sometimes). Imagine two vets with long pimples playing each other and a group of up and coming young beginners entering the clubroom to witness the spectacle for the first time. Our great game must lose a lot of it's charm instantly with these kids. John Prean states that to play with long pimples takes a lot of time and practice. I agree with that to an extent but at local league level the end result is negative to the sport. Surely, if there was a level playing field, even in the vets, the keen players, who cared about the future of the game, would continue to enjoy it by using skill and tactics rather than trickery. Jim Beckley wrote a very interesting article in Vets Newsletter pinpointing this very subject.

At the top of the game long pimples seem to be far less a problem. International players are able to read the spin. Our own Desmond Douglas is particularly good against any type of rubber. Having said this, the defender at this level would have little chance without some form of armoury against speed glue. It would be great to see a level playing field where coaches could encourage kids with the inclination to become defenders. We might then end up with a spectacle worthy of TV air time. I can remember a

classic European League match at Hull - a qualifier for the super division - where England had Chen and Syed and Austria had a World class defender (his name doesn't just come to mind). England won the match and Alan Ransome commented "isn't it great stuff." It was, but nearly all the matches were attack versus defence (with rallies).

Set against the long pimples the glue is a much bigger problem. Quite a number of the lesser veteran players tend to experiment with different types of long pimples and probably spend more money than they need to. On the other hand the glue has become the best "little earner" the game has ever known. It is the bread and butter line of the trade, rather like a fruit and veg stall where the same people queue up every week. Tins cost from about £5 upwards and larger tins around £20 - £25. It doesn't end there - the glue apparently deteriorates the rubbers considerably and can shrink them to the extent that they can be as much as half an inch short on the blade. At local league level I am told that players are using as many as twelve rubbers in a season, and at the higher levels, it is obviously a much higher figure. The top players are mostly sponsored for rubbers but at the lower levels it must be costing the players a small fortune. Surely, it must be obvious to most people that there is now too much money involved.

*Tony Meredith
Blackpool*



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JOHN OAKLEY

A FORMER Chief Sports Reporter for the Press Association, Britain's top major news agency, John Oakley, died after playing his favourite sport - table tennis - in hospital four days after suffering a heart attack when umpiring for his club Pegasus in the Guildford League.

It is estimated that he played regularly in both the Guildford and Aldershot Leagues for half a century, a real addict for our sport and for sport in general. His other great passion was for golf, both playing it and writing about, latterly as a freelance.

When he could spare the time, he also did some table tennis writing. He was the most likeable, genial workaholic I knew. When he retired from his full-time post with the P.A. he had a chance to take it easy, but he chose to carry on writing, mainly golf. His personality earned him invitations from the organisers of the world's greatest golf events - like the Masters at Augusta National. Those invitations he found difficult to resist, so he carried on working and died aged 70. Having worked alongside him in table tennis Press Centres worldwide, he was the colleague you would most like to be sitting next to.

He leaves a devoted wife Patricia and two sons Mark and David. Mark is a former England junior table tennis player and follows in his father's hallowed footsteps as a sports reporter with Agence France Presse, based in Paris.

One of my most cherished memories of John Oakley happened in Stuttgart. We were reporting at the European Championships. There was a fracas in which the referee had to give a decision with our English deadlines coming up. A pompous and burly German arena guard would not let John and I cross the end of the arena to get to the official. We eventually broke through this one-man cordon in a sordid scuffle!

More than 150 people attended the funeral at Camberley. Among those table tennis officials was Mick Strode who unofficially represented the ETTA.

John Oakley is the third of my former colleagues who are now playing golf on heavenly fairways, all worked twelve hour days writing golf for agencies.

John Woodford

MARTIN BAWDEN

*Born on 16th August 1955
Died on 12th January 1999*
Essex Table Tennis circles were deeply saddened to learn of the death from a heart attack at the very

OBITUARIES

early age of 43, of their friend and colleague, Martin. I personally had known Martin since he started playing at the age of 12 and together with his younger brother, Andrew, was soon representing Essex. I knew that his proudest memories were of being part of the great side which won the Junior Premier Division in the season 1971/2. In that squad were Ian Horsham, Jeff Drew, Peter Hunt, Jamie Willson, Janet Hellaby, Gillian Taylor, Elaine Tarten and Gillian Locke. Martin was always reminding me of that wonderful day at Bradford in February 1972 when we pipped Yorkshire by 6-4 with him closing out the match by defeating Tony Martin.

After becoming a senior player, Martin played in the Southend, Chelmsford and Braintree Leagues and became a leading player in all three, winning many honours. He also represented Essex at senior county level.

Later on Martin became a very respected coach and was appointed by the ETTA to coach the National Cadet Squad in 1994. Locally he coached at the Black Notley Club in Braintree, which work contributed (along with fellow coach, Mark Sweeting), to the emergence of the exciting young Essex prospects Leanne Bentley, Lee Daines, Matthew Staines and many others.

The Bawden family is of course very well known and respected in Essex, with Andrew a former County player, Marilyn flying the flag for the Vets and little Natalie the jewel in our crown by becoming in 1998 the National Champion.

Table tennis apart, Martin was a very nice guy and I always looked forward to meeting him at tournaments and having a laugh with him. He was great company. He leaves a wife and two daughters, and to them we would wish to convey our sincere sympathy.

May his soul rest in peace.
Alan Shepberd

CHARLIE SEAMAN

He commenced his table tennis career as far back as 1928. He played regularly for England in the immediate pre-war days when the England squad was under the direction of the legend to top all legends, Victor Barna.

His appearances for Sussex numbered over a hundred and many

more for Brighton in the inter-town matches. His style of play was swashbuckling all-out attack, really spectacular to watch.

I first watched him courtside at the Orange Hue club in the arches underneath the promenade near the Palace Pier, Brighton. At that time, I had never seen a ball hit so hard.

He first won the Brighton singles title aged 16 in 1929.

Those who played with him for Sussex were Bert Fretwell, Stan Moore and latterly Peter Shead, and Rose Bromfield.

Upon retirement he donated the "Seaman Cup" played for annually on Swaythling Cup lines by the top 8 ranked Sussex players and still considered to be a "blue riband" event in the County calendar.

He was elected a Vice President of Sussex upon retirement from playing and was one of the longest serving County Vice Presidents.

He maintained a close continuing interest in all local League and County events and was elected a Life Member of Sussex 1992.

Charlie passed on after a heart attack, aged 85, just before Christmas. His funeral gathered many table tennis people on December 30.
John Woodford

STANLEY PROFFITT

There were many people from all walks of life who attended Stan's funeral on 15th January. Fellow international Ken Stanley looks back on Stan's career and his contribution to our sport.

Stan who has passed away aged 88, was a true sportsman in every sense of the word. A man who was the longest serving member of the Manchester YMCA having joined in 1921. I first met him at the YMCA when he was already an established Swaythling Club player. The standard at the club was very high and at that time could boast 5 or 6 international stars.

Stan was a stylish left hander, always very fit as well as being a shrewd tactician. He provided an example to me that was to remain with me for the rest of his life.

His name will be remembered as having taken a leading part in making the game more popular by his contribution of articles to National newspapers and also by his promotion of the game by example. He was a notable performer of the

game on the stage and I will remember his act was the best of its type that I have ever seen. Certainly he brought all the grace and skill of the game to tens of thousands of people.

I will remember my return from playing in the Swaythling Cup in Cairo when Stan journeyed to France to meet us in Paris. Typical of Stan and his love of the game.

I was fortunate in playing many exhibition games with Stan up to the 1950s. Great fun there with never a dull moment.

I understand he took up marathon running and weight training and kept up a remarkable level of fitness into his 70s. His love of our sport continued with his training of youngsters at the YMCA and close involvement with the Swaythling Club.

He will be remembered for a full life and one who enjoyed every minute of it. Many friends in cricket (he was an Essex County player) and table tennis will mourn his passing.

MICHAEL MACLAREN

Although English by birth, Mike MacLaren who died whilst playing table tennis on 10th February 1999, his ancestry was Scottish. He came to Scotland in 1986 and established a photography business in Edinburgh, primarily concerned with fine art and antiques for Christies Sales Catalogues and stage and screen personalities visiting the capital.

Michael played for England as a junior in the early fifties and won the English Junior Boys Doubles with Ray Dorking in 1953/4.

He assisted "Table Tennis" photographer Peter Madge in covering the 1954 World Championships at Wembley and later for several years was the official photographer for that magazine. On coming to Scotland he undertook the same task for the Scottish T.T. Bulletin.

He was NPG for the Scottish Girls team at the 1987 European Youth Championships in Athens.

He will be greatly missed on the Scottish Table Tennis scene.
Dennis George

DUE TO THIS BEING AN ENGLISH OPEN SPECIAL EDITION OF TTN, IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO PUBLISH ALL THE COPY RECIEVED

NORTHERN NOTES

by Ken Muhr

Another Northern stalwart received much deserved recognition when Brenda Stephenson was presented with an English Sports Council Service to Sport Award by England and Newcastle Rugby Fly Half Star Rob Andrew at Penrith Rugby Union Football Club on 18 November, (see adjacent picture).

Brenda took up table tennis following a Women's 'Come and Try It' session organised by Josie Ransome in 1983, being a founder member of the Rainbow Ladies Club for which she is treasurer and secretary and whom she represents in the Middlesbrough League. After getting involved in running the Middlesbrough Closed Championships in 1989, she has subsequently taken on a huge number of voluntary positions at club (including Ormesby) league, (including Woolwich Junior) County, regional and open and closed championships level. She is a joint editor of two newsletters - for the Middlesbrough League and the Ormesby Club respectively.

A very kindly person who is always willing to help, Brenda also cares for her husband Gordon who has multiple sclerosis. As regional chairman Colin Davison says, "I don't how she finds time for all her activities".

Another statistic from the dynamic Kendal (Cumbria) league: Chairman Janette Dixon tells me that they have expanded by 300% in five years, the result a few dedicated and enlightened volunteers all pulling together. But they are in dire need of a new facility to accommodate any further growth. Meanwhile at Stanley, where with Chris Walton he has created similar demand, Alan Westwater is ready to submit his Lottery Sports Fund application for a table tennis led facility for Oxhill Youth Centre. A third Woolwich Junior league in Stanley, this one at Tanfield Comprehensive School, is now in operation. (Incidentally, the writer has been running a WJTTL at Tudhoe Grange School, Spennymoor).

Northumberland County TTA, headed by Dave Scholfield and John Donnelly, are poised to take on the lease of the Newcastle Racket Sport Centre. And guided by Mike Wilson, the Sunderland league, (founded in 1910, the oldest continuously running in the Country) are investing in the future through committing reserve funds and advertising revenue to



development. Over at Carlisle, John Clarkson and Mark Temple are set to undertake a new coaching programme at Caldew School, which has 12 tables.

In the face of so many encouraging initiatives, it is therefore disappointing to report the demise of yet another league, Burnmoor (Philadelphia) in County Durham, for want of an organiser.

Table tennis is to be included as an additional/exhibition sport in the 1999 Durham Sport (3 July, Maiden Castle) and Tyne and Wear Sport (16 June, Sunderland), Millenium Youth Games County Competitions, and will be part of the year 2000 programme for Teesside Sport. Hopefully these games, which give experience to youngsters below county and England ranking standard, will continue well in to the next century.

The Northern Region 'Opportunities for Table Tennis' conference, chaired by Colin Davison, was held in the fine setting of the old College Chapel, University of Durham on 12 December. It was a case of quality not quantity of delegates, and sparkling presentations from Alan Ransome, Diccon Gray, Michel Gadal and Peter Hirst. Unfortunately, problems with the Powerpoint projector greatly disrupted and prolonged Len Alderson's (English Sports Council) talk; and greatly accelerated my own - the machine ran ahead at its own frenetic pace - to the relief and amusement of (nearly) all!

These are the last Northern Notes I will be writing as RDO. I have greatly enjoyed my time in the North and met many fine people - thank you all. There is huge potential and great opportunities for table tennis here,

but although we have excellent organisers and coaches they are too few. More willing workers, with passion, energy and vision are desperately needed - perhaps the biggest issue facing English table tennis?

STOP PRESS: Durham table tennis has been shocked by the sudden death on Wednesday 20 January of Derek Carney, County Secretary for 20 years, and National Councillor for around eight years, and County Umpires Secretary. Derek, who had also been involved in running the now defunct Peterlee League and was a football referee too, was an honest, straight, utterly reliable worker for table tennis who produced immaculate paperwork (including the minutes for the 'Durham Sport' Focus Group). A quiet friendly, unassuming

man, Derek could also express firm views when he felt strongly enough. He was a progressive in his way', and gave me support and encouragement in my developmental role. He will be sorely missed and our condolences go to his wife Nora and family.

LONDON REGION

by David Lipman

How quickly things change, three months ago London didn't have a development officer or a director of coaching, now we are very pleased to welcome Jon Kaufman as our development officer and John Standing as our director of coaching.

If you have never heard of Jon Kaufman by name, then London knows him by reputation, as he is the manager of Progress T.T. Club. It was while he was a teacher at Willesden High School and running after school Table Tennis, that a local club sought his help in finding premises, and the rest is history. What started with only twelve members now has over one hundred. Jon has only been in post a few months but in that time he has been making contacts, building a network of clubs with junior development programmes, and in particular promoting a chain of "Top Clubs" across the region to support the development of junior players. He has also helped establish at Grove Park, a club catering for players with disabilities.

continued on next page

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Jon also produces a regular news bulletin. ALL THIS HAS BEEN DONE WITH THE MOST GENEROUS FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE HELP OF THE LEE VALLEY PARK AUTHORITY. If your club would like to be added to the mailing list, contact Jon on 0181 522 0517.

John Standing, is himself an active qualified coach, and his first priority is to identify all the coaches in the region, active or not. He hopes to organise a forum to communicate and share experiences, which in turn should improve the level of Table Tennis. If you coach or would like to coach, contact John on

01689 829882. John's role is vital in bringing on the young talent, and deserves support.

The London conference held at the end of January was the best attended conference nationwide so far, discussed all aspects of development across the region.

The Greater London

Championships will be played at Pickets Lock on 26 and 27 June.

With two most important officers now in post, a conference pointing the way ahead planing for the future and the return of our own tournament, London is on the move!

EVENTS CALENDAR

APRIL 1999

2nd-5th	South Western Open (Grand Prix)	St.Austell
10th	Carter Cup R3	
10th	Bromfield Trophy R3	
10th	Alec Brook Trophy R3	
10th	Pat Archdale Cup R2	
10th	Cippenham 2 Star	
10th	British Primamry Championships	
11th	Leach Cup R3	
11th	Hammersley Cup R3	
11th	Seasiders Junior GP 2 Star	
11th	British League	
16th-23rd	Commonwealth Championships	
17th	Abbey Junior Graded 2 Star	
17th	Chesham School U.11/U.13 Graded	
17th	National Council	
17th-18th	Blackpool GP 3 Star	
24th	Wilmott Cup R3	
24th	Rose Bowl R3	
25th	Whitchurch 2 Star	
25th	British League	
28th-9th May	World Championships POSTPONED	

MAY 1999

1st	ESTTA Individual Finals	
1st	Ormesby Cup R3	
1st	Gainsford Cup R3	
1st	Hollington Junior 1 Star	
1st - 2nd	Essex Junior 3 Star	
1st 2nd	Glos Graded Junior 2 Star	
1st - 2nd	VETTS Western Masters	Thornbury
2nd	Hollington 1 Star	
8th	Cippenham U12 2 Star	
8th - 9th	South Yorkshire Open (Grand Prix)	Sheffield
8th - 9th	BWSF Training Weekend	Stoke Mandeville
15th - 18th	Seasiders Junior 4 Star	
15th - 16th	BALASA Federation Games	Cirencester/Swindon
22nd	Mid Yorkshire Junior 2 Star	
22nd - 23rd	Junior & Cadet Masters	
22nd - 23rd	VETTS National Championships	Thornbury
29th - 30th	Under 10/11/12 Championships	Widnes
29th - 30th	Grand Prix Finals	Bath

JUNE 1999

5th - 6th	British Wheelchair Open	Aylesbury
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12th-13th	National Team Finals	
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JULY 1999

3rd	ETTA Annual General Meeting	
7th - 14th	European Wheelchair Championships	