

table tennis news

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Table Tennis in the Media

do we really deserve Forrest?

Katy Parker

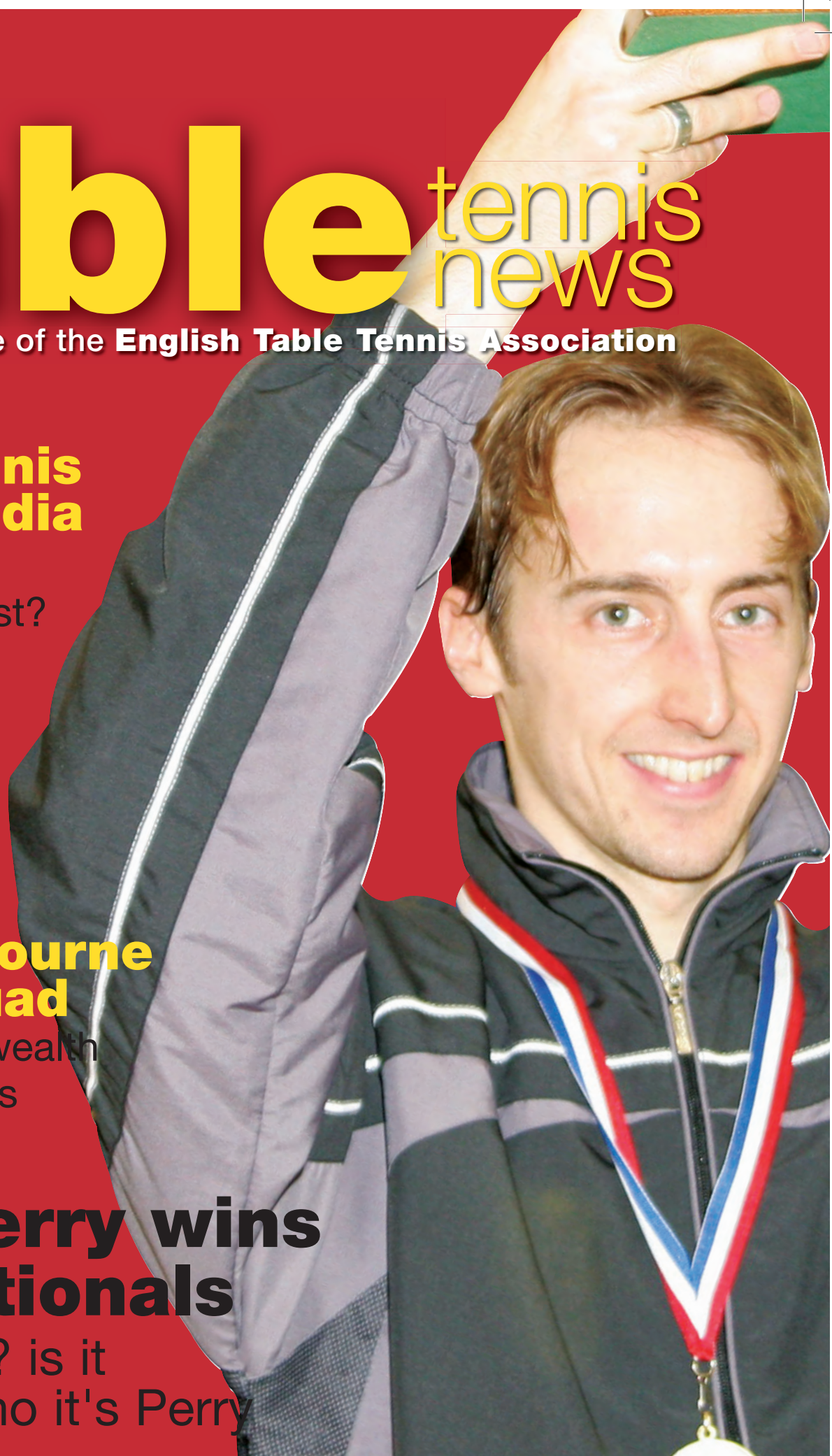
a trip down memory lane

The Melbourne 2006 Squad

our Commonwealth representatives

Alex Perry wins the Nationals

is it Cooke? is it Drinkhall? no it's Perry



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PHOTOGRAPH BY: DAVID WEARN

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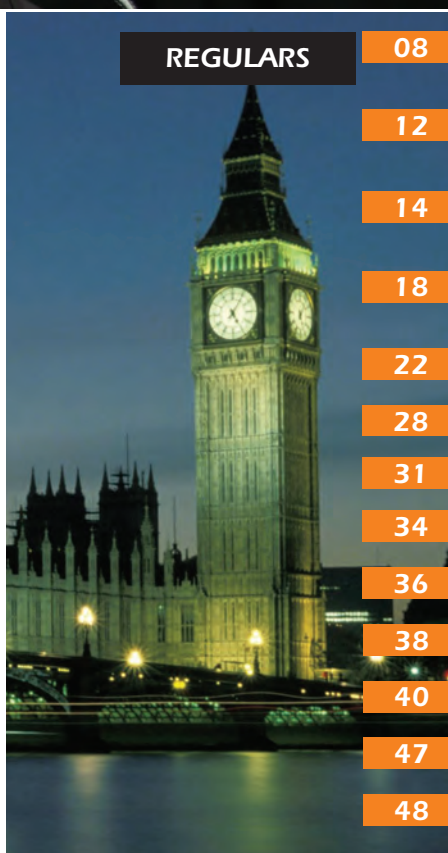
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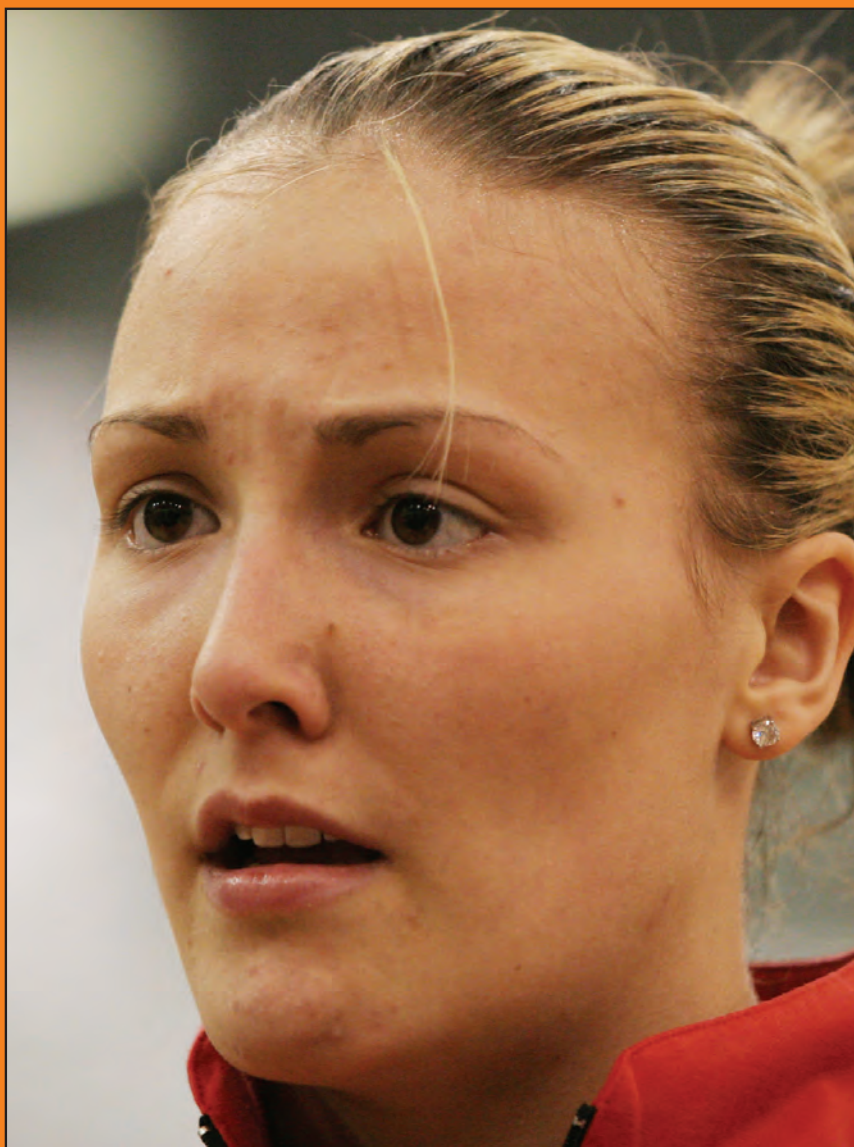
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**SOME SURPRISES AT
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Read all about it on page 24

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RICHARD PETTIT, EDITOR

RICHARD EATON

Richard has written about racket sports for 30 years, working for newspapers, magazines, radio and websites all over the world. He has also co-authored books with Desmond Douglas, Jill Hammersley Parker and John Hilton.


PAUL RAINFORD

Paul worked as a journalist in London for several years but now runs Exmoor House, a small hotel in Exmoor. As a cadet he reached number two in England but sadly it's been downhill ever since.


MATTHEW SYED

Matthew is former English number one. He has a defensive style with the bat yet quite the opposite with the pen. Currently a Times columnist, TV sports commentator and media pundit.


KATY PARKER

Katy has played table tennis at the highest level and is currently part of the England coaching setup and completing her studies in journalism.

What a month! Looking at the calendar brings back memories of outstanding table tennis and provides great promise for the foreseeable future. Thank you for the phenomenal and extremely positive response to the first new look magazine. This response has caused my inbox to swell to gigantic proportions, so to alleviate this I have shared a selection of letters with you on page 18 - please keep them coming in.....

Congratulations to all new National Champions I hope you will enjoy reminiscing when reading the centre feature.

Later this month our England squad will board a plane for the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne. Nerves, tension and the inevitable scrabble at the luggage carousel will all add to what will be an exceptional experience for both players and travelling support. However, there is one force that they might not have bargained for. Not the Nigerians or the power from Singapore - it will be the 'Coriolis effect', a force that is simply unstoppable. This effect lies not at the table but puts a whole different spin on life in oz. Crossing from the Northern to the Southern hemisphere the Coriolis effect will take place and the water will start to spin in the opposite direction. Topspin, back spin and side spin are all in a table tennis player's repertoire but whether you are at the sink or in the shower this effect will catch you up, so beware! Let's hope the topsy-turvy nature of this continent does not play too much on our athletes, minds. Good luck to all competitors.

"IT COULD BE ON THE MOON AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED" **RICHARD EATON** PAGE 4. "INCREASING YOUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE DYNAMIC MOVEMENTS" **CHRISTOPHER PETTIT** PAGE 8 "NOTHING PREPARED ME FOR THE EXCITEMENT" **KATY PARKER** PAGE 10 "IT IS CRUCIAL OUR VOICE IS HEARD AND LISTENED TO BY KEY DECISION MAKERS" **ALEX MURDOCH** PAGE 14 "ALAN COOKE AND CO WILL ARRIVE IN MELBOURNE HARBOURING STRONG AMBITIONS" **MATTHEW SYED** PAGE 20 "IN 2006 THE 2002 CHAMPIONS WERE CHAMPIONS ONCE AGAIN" **IAN MARSHALL** PAGE 24 "IT PORTRAYS OUR SPORT WITH WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A HINT OF GLAMOUR" **PAUL RAINFORD** PAGE 32

Paul Drinkhall Darius Knight Gavin Evans Joanna Parker Kelly Sibley

THE BEST 16-year-old in Europe, the second best cadet squad in the world, the finest trio of young players this country has had since, well, no-one was admitting to being old enough to remember when.

BY RICHARD EATON

That didn't prevent it from being an excuse for the sort of self-serving question a media man relishes. Are we into a new era?

But it was close to the last thing Steen Kyst Hansen relished. If he answered no, it would not help a sport which needs all the publicity it can get. If he said yes, it could create self-inflicted pressure. Worse, it would put vulnerable young players under pressure too.

However, nothing if not patient is the England Performance Director. With barely a sigh he responded: "I would say we have the possibility of being on the verge of something new and exciting."

Note the "possibility" and the "verge." A double

distancing act, which was followed immediately by another.

"We have two girls, Joanna Parker and Kelly Sibley, who can compete with the best juniors in the world," Kyst Hansen went on. "But we have a very long way to go.

Now it is true that Joanna is such a promising defensive player she's moved to Berlin and is learning German to improve her understanding of how to employ der ruckhand und vorhand, while Kelly is such a fine athlete that she can be as good as they get once a rally is going. And they deserve all the help they get, because it is harder for girls to make a living at table tennis. But of course the subject of the question was Paul Drinkhall, Darius Knight, and Gavin Evans,





hall ght

possible medal contenders at London 2012. So it was proffered again.

"The big problem will be the funding," said Kyst Hansen, still hedging. "We are definitely in the right way with these three players, though they are still very young and many, many things can happen."

Once this proviso was made, he allowed himself to enthuse. The trio's emergence is actually one of the reasons why the Dane wants to extend his four-year stay in England till 2012.

"These three boys' talent is so big that everything is possible," he acknowledged. "The best experience I have had in my time here was when we had a players' meeting after winning the World Cadet Challenge (in the Dominican Republic in October).

"Of course there were congratulations and all this, but then they were only interested in their

mistakes and how they could improve and how they could play the next day. This was a fantastic positive for myself and Jia Yi (England coach) too."

This was also a major change from before. Some players in previous England squads did not display the commitment required or expected. It led to decline and contributed to the sport's loss of funding.

Kyst Hansen is unequivocally critical of the attitudes which caused it. "I think there was some kind of pollution," he said.

"Some never got a chance to learn from the big names, because England always played with its strongest team. Suddenly they were standing on their own feet without those players to support them.

And the World Class Performance programme was starting. When players can make a lot of

Are we into a new era?



06

pocket money, and there is very little competition for places, then it is a very dangerous situation."

With Drinkhall, Knight and Evans, the environment seems relatively pollution-free. But, only relatively, according to Liu Jia Yi. "They work hard, but not hard enough," he insisted typically. "Not as hard as Chinese players. They have a chance of reaching top ten, but must do more. Everyone wants to be best player."

Yi was nevertheless prepared to suggest that Drinkhall is superbly quick getting in with his forehand from anywhere, that Knight is good over the table, and Evans has very good feeling. So good, in fact, that Kyst Hansen even puts him in the Jan-Ove Waldner class.

Jia-Yi might not admit that, but he has spent a tremendous amount of time with the trio and possibly no-one knows better what is best for them.

But, he warns, they are working in far from ideal conditions. "We need more money; but we also need to spend in right way," he insisted. Not hard to guess what he meant. More top class coaches, and the re-opening of a national centre.

Kyst Hansen's voice alters longingly when this is mentioned. "It is my big dream that we will get back to one," he says. "Anywhere. It could be on the moon as far as I am concerned."

It was midway through 2003 that UK Sport and Sport England decreed a reduction of funding because of poor results.

According to Alan Ransome, the former ETTA Chairman who wrote the plan which acquired the funding, the quangos were warned that success would only come in the long-term, yet the cuts which contributed to closure of the Nottingham centre were still made.

"They didn't just move the goal-posts they put them on a different field," Ransome grumbles. Neither is Kyst Hansen happy with how funding or decision making is done.

"It's very strange," he says. "Funding in England is very complicated. I know I will be getting funding but I don't know how much. We have the World Championships in April and in principle we don't know whether we have the money to prepare, and that's not healthy."

Much may change in April when the announcement of funding from the successful London 2012 bid is announced. Table tennis, as an Olympic sport, has reasons to be hopeful. If funding is generous a national centre might be re-opened.

"We need more Pauls and Dariuses and Gavins. And this will be our only hope," concluded Kyst Hansen. "No country in Europe has three boys like we do. It will be a disaster if we don't do anything good with them."

It had taken him a long time to get to saying it like that, but you could see why he had been so cagey.



CONDITIONING YOUR

CORE

FORGOTTEN FITNESS WITH **CHRISTOPHER PETTIT**

Sprints, twists, side steps, jumps and lunges, you name it, you do it to varying degrees in the sport of table tennis. Central to all these movements is core stability, an element that is frequently overlooked in training regimes.

Having good core stability means being able to hold the central part of the body firm, providing the limbs a stable base upon which to move. With a better-conditioned core you will enjoy a better transfer of energy to the limbs, increasing your ability to perform the dynamic movements required in table tennis.

In addition to providing a stable base, core muscles enable many subtle and unconscious adjustments to occur. The loss of these subtle movements decreases the efficiency of movement and increases your susceptibility to injury or re-injury. The core muscle function is commonly hampered after a period of pain or injury to the lower back, poor exercise technique, or posture. This may result in the local core muscles being switched off, having their subtle functions overridden by stronger global muscles, not capable of the subtle adjustments.

Conditioning your core is an unusual process, as it requires the performer to become aware of and control subtle movements, going against the tradition of no pain no gain. You may not initially feel the benefit from level one but it is vital that you establish this level of control before progressing. Start point is approximately 12 repetitions per exercise (apart from exercises that have other repetition instructions described in sequence) gradually increasing as control develops.

**CHRISTOPHER PETTIT: PHYSIOTHERAPIST BSC (HONS), SPORTS AND EXERCISE SCIENTIST BSC (HONS)
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SPORTS MEDICINE PERSONAL TRAINER**



Essential Starting Block.

NEUTRAL SPINE - stand with your back to the wall. Your bottom and shoulders touch the wall. Place the flat of your hand between the wall and the small of your back. Try to tilt your pelvis so you flatten your back and then tilt your pelvis the other way so you increase the hollow in your lower back. Your neutral position is halfway between the flat and hollow positions. This neutral position is the safety zone for the spine. You should aim to maintain this spinal position/posture regularly throughout the day and especially during all exercises, i.e. sitting in a chair or in the gym lifting weights.

Level 1.

ABDOMINAL HOLLOWING - in four point kneeling (3 reps, 5 second hold) allow your abdominal muscles to sag towards the floor then pull them in, pulling your belly button towards your spine and holding it there, gradually increasing the length of time as you become more efficient at the technique. Do not arch your spine or tilt your pelvis.

Level 2.

SIDE LYING, SPINE LENGTHENING - lie on your side with your knees together and slightly bent. Prop yourself up on one elbow so that your back is gently curved. Hollow your abdominal muscles as above and lift your

lower side up to straighten your spine and hold for 5 seconds then rest. Progress this by taking the weight on your feet rather than your knees and holding this position with your core.

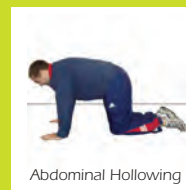
BRIDGING - lie in supine position, knees at 90 degrees and feet together, hollow your abdominals and then lift your pelvis until your body is in alignment. Hold the position 3-5 sec then slowly lower. To progress lie with your shoulders on a gym ball and your feet shoulder width apart, then hollow your abdominals and raise your hips from the floor to the horizontal position. Again hold for 3-5 seconds.

TRUNK CURL - lying on your back with your knees bent. Feet shoulder width apart, perform a pelvic tilt flattening your back to the floor. Add abdominal hollowing then reach forwards with your fingers towards your heels so that your trunk bends and your shoulders lift away from the floor. Reach forwards along the ground towards the heels rather than upwards for the knees.

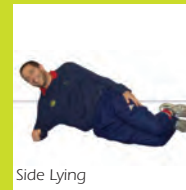
SUPPORTED CRUNCH - feet against the wall, knees at 90 degrees, perform normal trunk curls.

Level 3.

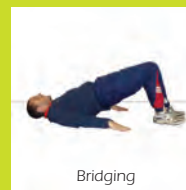
PELVIC RAISES - lying in supine position with hands by your side for support, lift both legs together into the air lifting your tailbone 3cm off the ground, at the same time pulling your



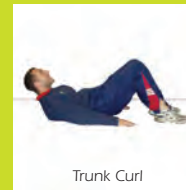
Abdominal Hollowing



Side Lying



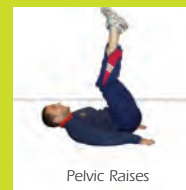
Bridging



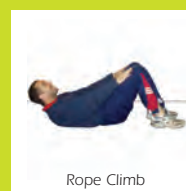
Trunk Curl



Supported Crunch



Pelvic Raises



Rope Climb



Russian V Sit

knees upwards towards your shoulders. This action should be slow and controlled (3 sec up 3 sec down). The power should come from the trunk rather than momentum from the legs.

ROPE CLIMB - start position as in trunk curl, then slide your right hand to your left knee, slowly lower and then repeat with your left hand to your right knee. Your lower spine should stay on the ground, with only your chest and shoulders moving up.

Level 4

RUSSIAN V SITS - Sit with the arms lightly supporting the weight. Keeping both legs together while maintaining the spine in neutral, lift both legs straight, as far as you are able without compromising spinal position.

If you find these exercises difficult or want more ideas on how to develop your core, many gyms now provide Fit Ball and Pilates classes, which can provide you with hands on instruction of these and additional core stability exercises.

NB - You should never feel the exercises working your lower back regions. If this is the case you should return to the lower level and continue progress as and when your core is strong enough.



Katy Parker at the 2002 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

It was a great honour to be part of the second biggest multisport event in the world, the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester. Hearing of my selection was a buzz but nothing compared to the feeling I got when I walked into the City of Manchester stadium for the opening ceremony. Fifty thousand people cheering and clapping was fantastic and to top it off I was metres away from David Beckham as he carried in the baton!

Commonwealth experience

Surprisingly the Games had a distinctly different character to any other table tennis event, the competitive edge was still there but it was complemented by an exceptionally welcoming atmosphere. There were over 5,000 competitors, from 17 different sports, representing 72 countries and everyone was approachable, this contributed to the great spirit present throughout the Games and underlined why the Commonwealths are also known as the 'Friendly Games'.

Exciting times

For me the most exciting part of the Games was the opening ceremony, nothing prepared me for the excitement, it was quite overwhelming. The acts and music were fantastic. Furthermore I was treated like a

celebrity. From getting off the bus at Sports City (the table tennis venue) people asking for my autograph this amused me, most wouldn't have a clue who I am, or what I do, however it was good to feel important for a little while!!!!

The success

Three of the 54 gold medals won by Team England at the Games were in the table tennis events. The men's team won the team event, Gareth Herbert and Andrew Baggaley won the men's doubles and Sue Gilroy won the open wheelchair ladies singles.

It wasn't just our table tennis team that enjoyed success as medals were won by Team England in fifteen of the seventeen sports. Of course it goes without saying that the Games themselves were an enormous success without which a successful bid for the 2012 Olympics would have been impossible.

Why were we successful in Manchester?

There was no question that we were the best prepared table tennis team. Our sports doctors, physiotherapists, outstanding coaches and support staff were truly exceptional. In addition M2002 event organisers left no stone unturned, they organised special training sessions to allow us to familiarise ourselves with the conditions, and even provided exclusive

transport in addition to the regular buses. Adding to the exceptional transport and playing conditions was the hospitality lodge, an excellent place to relax with friends and family only 100 metres from our accommodation based at the university campus Fallowfield; with massages on tap this really was a perfect end to a day's competition and made me feel like royalty.

Supporting Team

Home support was a big plus in Manchester and the provision of tickets for friends and family was exceptional, this really boosted the already fantastic atmosphere.

Melbourne has a lot to live up to in 2006 however as the sports capital of Australia, there is no doubt that the nineteenth Commonwealth Games are destined to 'raise the bar' with some of the fantastic stadiums that are found in the city of Melbourne. The MCG (Melbourne Cricket Ground), the venue for the opening and closing ceremonies and athletics, has been rebuilt and will seat over 100,000.

I am very envious of the team that have been selected for this event, it is something they will remember for the rest of their lives and I would like to take this opportunity to wish them every success.





Safe Followed by Aggressive

A Feature of Wang Liqin's play throughout the Volkswagen 48th World Table tennis Championships was that he would often play 'safe' first attacking stroke and then play aggressively with the next stroke

SPIN OR SPEED

COACHING TIPS WITH
IAN MARSHALL

Controlled Topspin

Wang Liqin serves and then plays a controlled topspin into Oh Sang Eun's backhand; this is the safest place to direct the first topspin, the most likely outcome is that the opponent will play passively with a blocked return.



Aggressive Stroke equals Weak Return

The first topspin from Wang Liqin is deep into the backhand with spin as opposed to speed. The next stroke is much more aggressive and forces a weak return that Wang Liqin can attack with his powerful forehand to win the point.

Wide Stance Creates Power

Note the wide stance and use of legs when Wang Liqin attacks; he is able to generate spin or speed as required whilst maintaining his balance; also note the forward rotation of the body from the waist to create power as he plays the forehand.



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STRAIGHT TALK

WITH **ALEX MURDOCH**

First I must say thank you to all those spectators and players who made our premier event, the National Championship, a true highlight of the season; my congratulations go to all the winners and finalists.

QUESTION TIME

The Editor has requested I answer a question in each issue to generate interactive response from the readers. This month's question has been asked by many.

Q. How has the 2012 bid affected or is going to affect Table Tennis in this country?

A: In short it is not an overnight process but it is already having a huge effect on ours and the other 26 Olympic sports. I have broken my response down into three parts: in truth I could talk about the 2012 effect all day, but here is a shortened version...

Now: The 2012 effect is already with us; table tennis is becoming part of the UK Sport World Class Performance Programme. This programme will significantly benefit our sport not just at the Elite Level but also within areas of Youth Development and Talent Identification providing initiatives for potential young players from school level upwards.

Opportunities: The emphasis of the bid for sporting spectacle but a legacy for sport in Great Britain. Opportunities are and will continue to come about for table tennis at all levels with support via National, Regional and Local initiatives.

Our responsibilities: As a sport we have a responsibility to embrace and utilise these initiatives not just as the National Governing Body but also as individuals to seek out and ensure that table tennis is pushed to the forefront.

It's crucial that our voice is heard and listened to by key decision makers and the public at large. More media coverage both nationally and locally is essential.

The build up during the next six years will significantly impact our sport in terms of participation, facilities and an image that Table Tennis is a "sport for all and for life".

INSURANCE

Discussions are underway regarding an insurance policy to cover all affiliated persons under the umbrella of the ETTA. This will provide significant cost benefits to those affiliated.

CABINET RESHUFFLE

It was with regret that I recently had to accept the resignation of Mike Johns, the former ETTA Deputy Chairman and VC Selection. I have proposed Peter Bradley VC Competitions as the acting Deputy Chairman which has been accepted by National Council. The ETTA constitution requires a formal election process for this position; details have been circulated to all voting members.

ETTA CONFERENCE

It is anticipated that the conference in September will be an overall ETTA Conference covering many issues about our sport, and to give an insight into how our sport is influenced by decisions made by the government in respect of their policies and direction. It is very important that we all understand how these policies impact our sport and how we can use them to the benefit of table tennis and all of us who are involved now and in the future. A number of key speakers from sporting organisations in Great Britain have agreed to attend.



OUR SQUAD

COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2006

This group of 11 players has a real mix, so let's hope the rich blend of youth and experience rises to the top. With previous champions Sue Gilroy and Andrew Baggaley looking to defend their titles and the new look men's team hoping to replicate the achievement of the 2002 squad, there is certainly a lot to play for.

ALAN COOKE Greatest Triumph: Winning the Commonwealth Men's Singles in 1989 Cardiff **ANDREW BAGGALEY**

Greatest Triumph: Winning two gold medals in the Commonwealth Games Manchester **ANDREW RUSHTON** Greatest

Triumph: Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships silver medal **PAUL DRINKHALL** Greatest Triumph: Winning the

European Championships individual and team event (cadets) 2005 **GEORGINA WALKER** Greatest Triumph: Competing at the

2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester **JOANNA PARKER** Greatest Triumph: Finishing 6th place at the European Junior

Top 12 **KELLY SIBLEY** Greatest Triumph: Winning the triple crown at the National Junior Championships 2005 **HELEN**

LOWER Greatest Triumph: Winning my second National title **SUE GILROY** Greatest Triumph: Commonwealth gold medal at

the first attempt Manchester 2002 **CATHERINE MITTON** Greatest Triumph: Becoming World Champion (class 2) in Chinese

Taipei 2002 **JANE CAMPBELL** Greatest Triumph: Winning silver at the Hungarian Open 2005

DOUBLE PARTNERSHIPS: Paul Drinkhall and Alan Cooke, Andrew Baggaley and Andrew Rushton,
Helen Lower and Georgina Walker and Kelly Sibley and Joanna Parker

Player: Alan Cooke
Born: 23/03/1966
Style of Play:
 Right hand attack topspin

Player: Joanna Parker
Born: 10/06/1987
Style of Play:
 Defensive

Player: Andrew Rushton
Born: 18/06/1983
Style of Play: Close to the
 Table counter hitter

Player: Catherine Mitton
Born: 30/11/1956
**World Championship
 Gold Winner Class 2**

Player: Kelly Sibley
Born: 21/05/1988
Style of Play:
 Right hand attack topspin

Player: Susan Gilroy
Born: 19/10/1972
**Commonwealth Games
 Gold Winner**

Player: Paul Drinkhall
Born: 16/01/1990
Style of Play:
 Right hand attack topspin

Player: Andrew Baggaley
Born: 26/02/1983
Style of Play:
 Table counter hitter

Player: Helen Lower
Born: 09/05/1970
Style of Play:
 Right hand attack topspin

Player: Georgina Walker
Born: 28/07/1985
Style of Play:
 Right hand attack topspin

Player: Jane Campbell
Born: 18/08/1968
**Hungarian Open Singles
 Silver Winner**

BBC Coverage

The BBC will have extensive coverage of all the action at the touch of the red button, here are the playing schedules in British time:

Wednesday March 15 10:30 pm - 3:30am

Men's and Women's Team Event Matches

Thursday March 16 5am-10am / 10:30 pm-3:30am

Men's and Women's Team Event Matches

Friday March 17 5am-10am / 10:30 pm-3:30am

Men's and Women's Team Event Matches

Saturday March 18

5am-10am: Men's and Women's Team Event Quarter Finals Classification and Matches

10:30 pm-3:30am: Men's and Women's Team Event Semi Finals Classification and Matches

Sunday March 19

5am-10am: Men's and Women's Team Event Semi Finals Classification and Matches

10:30 pm-3:30am: Men's and Women's Team Event Bronze Medal Matches and Classification Matches

Monday March 20 5am-10am

Men's and Women's Team Event Gold Medal Matches

Tuesday March 21

3am-10am: Men's and Women's Singles Qualifying Matches

10:30pm-4am: Men's and Women's Singles Qualifying Matches, Mixed Doubles Matches

Wednesday March 22

5:30am-10:30am: Men's, Women's and Mixed Doubles Matches, Women's EAD Wheelchair Singles Qualifying Matches

10:30pm-4am: Men's, Women's and Mixed Doubles Matches, Men's and Women's Singles Matches, Women's EAD Wheelchair Singles Qualifying Matches

Thursday March 23

5:30am-10:30am: Men's, Women's and Mixed Doubles Matches, Men's and Women's Singles Matches

10:30pm-4am: Men's and Women's Singles and Doubles Quarter Finals, Women's EAD Wheelchair Singles Quarter Finals, Mixed Doubles Semi Finals

Friday March 24

5:30am-10:30am: Men's and Women's Singles Quarter Finals, Women's EAD Wheelchair Singles Quarter Finals, Mixed Doubles Bronze Medal Match, Mixed Doubles Gold Medal Match

10:30pm-4am: Men's and Women's Doubles Semi Finals, Women's Singles Semi Finals, Women's EAD Wheelchair Singles Semi Finals

Saturday March 25

5:30am-10:30am: Men's Singles Semi Finals, Men's and Women's Doubles Bronze Medal Matches, Men's and Women's Doubles Gold Medal Matches

11pm-4:30am: Men's and Women's Singles Bronze Medal Matches, Women's EAD Wheelchair Singles Bronze Medal Match, Men's and Women's Singles Gold Medal Matches, Women's EAD Wheelchair Singles Gold Medal Match



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MailBox

Back by popular demand, this page provides you with an opportunity to get issues off your chest. The only regulations are that letters must be in 150 words or less and on my desk by the 1st of every publishing month. to editor@englishtabletennis.org.uk



From Cover to County Notes

First let me say how improved I think the new look Table Tennis News is. Good feature writers make a lot of difference to a publication and you seem to have at least three (maybe four).

My only grumble is the county notes feature. Whilst I understand it is important that the counties have some say, seven or eight pages (that's almost a quarter of the magazine) makes no sense at all. After the interesting and varied features, to come across a bland 8 pages is a real let down. Also a lot of the content I note is repeated in the British League column (did you notice that?) Anyway, that's my only quibble and good luck in the future.

JOHN EVANS

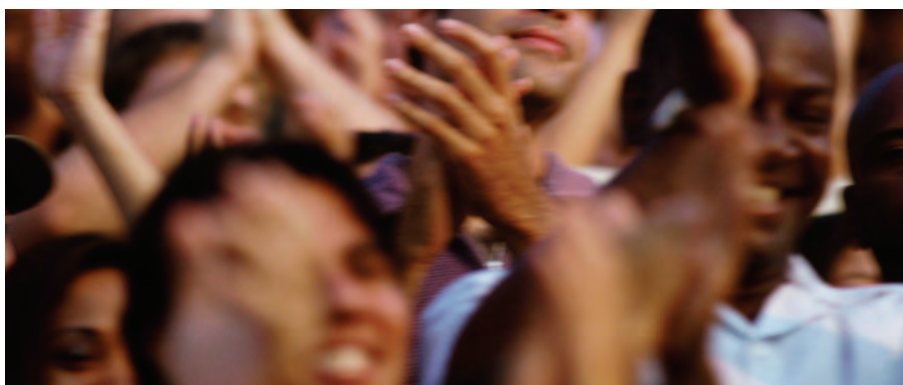
Editor's Reply

Thanks for your input John. County notes are a contentious issue. I suppose you could describe them as the Marmite of TTN, 'you either love it or hate it'. I trust you will appreciate the revised design in this issue.

Result!

Congratulations on your publicity during the National Championships. Unfortunately I couldn't make it to Sheffield, but I was able to keep abreast of the scores through your website. It was a big improvement on last year and in my opinion was as good as any similar sports website. I look forward to reading the full story in TTN.

MATTHEW WEST



Editor's Reply

This is only the beginning of our improved results service, with a fresh new website around the corner comprehensive results will soon become the norm.

Crowd Trouble

I read with interest Brian Halliday's feature in Table Tennis News on Ken Hyde and was fascinated with the details Brian was able to glean from Ken. I know table tennis is a young person's sport, but to know what the older players are up to and their views on the modern game I find really interesting.

I note Ken Hyde's reference to crowds in those days. I also remember the Merseyside Open full with spectators who had come from miles just to watch our top players. That would never happen today.

ADRIAN ROWLES

Editor's Reply

Table tennis still possesses an avid fan base and with exceptional up and coming talents anything is possible. Just look at what Amir Khan has done for boxing. Table tennis still packs the biggest punch of all indoor racket sports.

21st Century

I just had to write and congratulate you, most sincerely, on the excellent production of the new style TTN. It is absolutely superb and you should be very proud of your efforts. It is greatly improved and much more in keeping with modern standards of magazines and the 21st century - well done indeed.

KEITH PONTING

Presentation

Just received the latest copy, what a difference in presentation, well done, keep it up.

LON MOIR, CHAIRMAN CROYDON TT LEAGUE

Editor's Reply

Many thanks Keith, Hannah and Lon. Your comments are most encouraging

Send Your Views to Mailbox

Richard Pettit, English Table Tennis Association, Queensbury House (3rd Floor), Havelock Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1HF

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20

The Commonwealth Games in Manchester in 2002 were dubbed the “Friendly Games” – but I wondered just how friendly when a packet of condoms was thrust into my hands as I arrived at the accreditation desk on the opening day. Apparently supplies of contraception ran out at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and organisers had vowed not to let the same happen again.

They need not have worried. The atmosphere in the athlete’s village in Manchester had little of the testosterone-charged intensity of the Olympics. In Sydney the obsession with peak performance bordered on perversion. In every conversation, every strut, every blood-shot eye you could discern an insane fixation upon success. And the liberation of pent-up fervour provoked a tidal wave of sexuality once the competitions concluded.

“Our best prospects lie with the men, who will be defending gold”

ALAN Cooke and co will arrive in Melbourne harbouring strong ambitions but they will also instantly discern the friendship and solidarity that is unique to this festival.

BY MATTHEW SYED

Manchester was a far more cordial affair with plenty of smiles, high fives and pin swapping. Orderly queues formed at the food counters in the huge marquee that housed the restaurant. Pleasantries were exchanged at the al fresco coffee stalls. The demeanour of the track and field athletes in Sydney spoke of individuals about to confront the Day of Judgement. There was no such fatalism in Manchester. This is what makes the Commonwealth Games such a wonderful event to participate in. Alan Cooke and co will arrive in Melbourne harbouring strong ambitions but they will also instantly discern the friendship and solidarity that is unique to this festival. Those who argue that the Commonwealth Games are something of an anachronism in this post-imperial era are rather missing the point. This is an event that should be celebrated.

The stakes are particularly high for a sport like table tennis. With BBC coverage of the Games, Melbourne, like Manchester before it, provides an opportunity for the sport to build on recent television successes to gain a toehold in the public consciousness. With the Cooke/Drinkhall combination a particularly strong storyline, there ought to be plenty of exposure both on television and in the nationals. Medals will not be easy to come by, however. Our best



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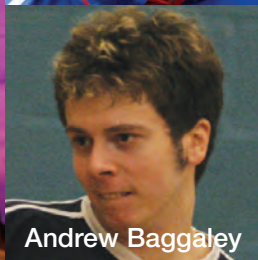
e with gold medals"



Alan Cooke



Paul Drinkhall



Andrew Baggaley



Andrew Rushton

prospects lie with the men, who will be defending gold medals in both the team event and doubles. Singapore is rumoured to have two new Chinese players who may make things very difficult. There will also be the usual strong challenge from India and Nigeria.

The Indian team will be without Chetan Baboor, the cerebral and uncannily consistent right-hander who has given England players problems in the past. In his absence the team will be led by D Roy, a player who combines penetration and tremendous guile. The Nigerians will be spearheaded by Segun Toriola, the exciting looper who confounded all expectations to claim the singles gold in Manchester.

My guess, however, is that neither India nor Nigeria will possess the strength in depth to defeat England in the team event. Players from both nations tend to rely on predictable patterns of diagonal topspin that our boys, with their superior adaptability, ought to be able to counter. Much will depend on the capacity of all four England men to deliver when team-mates falter. This is what proved crucial in Manchester, with Gareth Herbert forging key victories in the semis and final.

The good news is that Johnny Huang, the veteran Canadian (originally from China) has reportedly decided not to play. With his highly awkward two-winged, short pimped attacking game, he would have started the men's singles as strong favourite. His formidable doubles skills may also have proved difficult to nullify. In his absence, our pairings of Cooke/Drinkhall and Baggaley/Rushton must fancy their chances of reaching the latter stages.

If the quality and dramatic intensity of the matches are anything like those in Manchester, we have much to look forward to.

World Rankings Men

1. WANG Liqin	Chi
2. BOLL Timo	Ger
3. SAMSONOV V	Bul
4. WANG Hao	Chi
5. MA Lin	Chi

World Rankings Women

1. ZHANG Y	Chi
2. GUO Yue	Chi
3. GUO Yan	Chi
4. LI Jia Wei	Sin
5. KIM Kyung Ah	Kor

Germany's Timo Boll and Croatia's Tamara Boros won the Men's and Women's Singles titles respectively at the IHI Europe Top 12 tournament in Copenhagen. In the Men's Singles final, Boll overcame Austria's Werner Schlager in four straight games whilst in the Women's Singles final, Austria also had to settle for silver, with Tamara Boros beating the defending champion, Liu Jia, in five games.

New Level - Boll ended 2005 playing some of the very best table tennis of his career, and since his second round defeat at the Volkswagen Open China in Shenzhen in September his confidence has grown and he is playing at a new found level. In World Ranking events since the reverse at the hands of Ma Long in Shenzhen he has suffered only two defeats in Men's Singles events, those being to Vladimir Samsonov at the Liebherr Men's World Cup in October and to Ma Long at the Liebherr German Open, a decision he reversed the following week in Sweden. He has beaten the elite of Chinese table tennis; at the latter stages of the Liebherr Men's World Cup he accounted for Wang Liqin, Ma Lin and Wang Hao, whilst at both the Volkswagen Open Japan and the Volkswagen Pro Tour Grand Finals, he defeated the reigning Olympic champion, Korea's Ryu Seung Min.

Commanding Performance - In Copenhagen this year he was in command from start to finish; in the semi-finals he recovered from an opening game deficit to beat Croatia's

B

TIMO

BOLL

WORLD TOP 12 REPORT BY **IAN MARSHALL**

Zoran Primorac whilst in the final he was in top gear defeating the 2003 World Men's Singles champion, Schlager, in four straight games.

It was a convincing performance whilst for Schlager, after a somewhat disappointing 2005, he displayed a return to form by accounting for Denmark's Michael Maze in the semi-finals in a tough six games duel. The final was the second time in the tournament that Boll and Schlager had met, they were both in Group A in the preliminary stage and on that occasion, as in the final, the German won in straight games.



TIMO BOLL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: DAVID WEARN

Different Ball Game - En route to the title Boll was never extended beyond five games but for Boros, the Women's Singles champion, it was a different scenario. Similar to Boll she was the top seed but only qualified for the second stage on games ratio having beaten Germany's Elke Wosik but then suffering defeat at the hands of Li Jiao of the Netherlands.

The quarter-finals caused her no great alarm; she beat Spain's Shen Yanfei in four straight games but the semi-final against Romania's Mihaela Steff was a real cliffhanger. The Croatian recovered from a three games to two deficit to win 12-10 in the decisive seventh game.

A narrow victory but one that no doubt gave her confidence; she beat Liu Jia of Austria in the final in five games to capture the title, Liu Jia having accounted for Li Jiao at the penultimate stage in a match where the Austrian fought back from three-one in arrears before securing victory.

Repeat Champions - It was for Boll the third time that he had won the title whilst for Boros the second time she taken the prestigious crown; the first time the German won was 2002, the same year as Boros won.

In 2006 the 2002 champions were champions once again. Has it ever happened before? The answer is yes but only once, in 1986 Jan-Ove Waldner won the Men's Singles title and Fliura Abbate-Bulatova won the counterpart women's event. They both won again in 1988.

Similar to Boll she was the top seed but only qualified for the second stage on games ratio having beaten Germany's Elke Wosik but then suffering defeat at the hands of Li Jiao of the Netherlands.

results

MEN'S SINGLES

Semi-Finals - Timo BOLL (GER) bt Zoran PRIMORAC (HRV) 9-11, 11-4, 11-4, 11-6, 11-4 (4-1)

Werner SCHLAGER (AUT) bt Michael MAZE (DEN) 11-7, 8-11, 13-11, 8-11, 11-5, 13-11 (4-2)

Final - Timo BOLL (GER) bt Werner SCHLAGER (AUT) 11-8, 11-3, 11-8, 11-6 (4-0)

WOMEN'S SINGLES

Semi-Finals - Tamara BOROS (HRV) bt Mihaela STEFF (ROU) 8-11, 11-8, 11-8, 8-11, 11-13, 11-9, 12-10 (4-3)

LIU Jia (AUT) bt Li Jiao (NED) 6-11, 8-11, 11-7, 8-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-9 (4-3)

Final - Tamara BOROS (HRV) bt LIU Jia (AUT) 11-9, 4-11, 11-6, 11-7, 11-8 (4-1)



THE 2006 BUTTERFLY NATION

Alex Perry landed his third tournament final victory in a few weeks at Ponds Forge International Sports Centre at Sheffield following his successes at both Bath and Crystal Palace Butterfly Super Grand Prix's.

Andrew Rushton enjoyed the best weekend of his career by up-ending top seed Alan Cooke, but losing out to Perry.

England Technical Manager Steen Kyst Hansen had the last laugh as Rushton (seemingly) endorsed his selection for

Melbourne although looking at Perry's brilliant display, it seems as though Perry should have been on the Melbourne flight, despite not having fully complied with Hansen's training criteria over several months.

Rushton lifted his game to create the biggest shock of the weekend when his attack went through Alan Cooke, like a knife through butter, at six in the fifth game in the semi-finals.

After his defeat Cooke said "that was the first English player to beat me in 4 years, not a bad record, but Andrew played extremely well,

all credit to him".

The men's singles final was not the most riveting. The fans or some of them were thinking if Rushton can defeat Cooke he can surely stop Perry, but it was Perry's relentless cross-court counter hitting at speed that won the day, but not a trip to Melbourne.

Andrew Baggaley provided the most spectacular duel, when in the battle to reach the quarters he lost in the seventh game to Tim Yarnall, who excelled to reach the semi-finals.



ALEX PERRY AND HELEN LOWER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: DAVID WEARN

FINALS

BY JOHN WOODFORD

There were no real shocks in the women's singles. Helen Lower retained her title with a straight forward final win over Joanna Parker, 11-4, 11-7, 11-7, 11-3.

Parker, still residing near Hev Berlin Club, is showing signs of improvement, especially with her attack, but further improvements are needed before she succeeds against opponents of the calibre of Lower, however she may not get the opportunity to play Lower at the Nationals again as there have been whispers of an imminent retirement at the end



KELLY SIBLEY V JOANNA PARKER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: JOHN WEARN

of this season, at least for international selection.

Georgina Walker only lost over five games to Lower and in the other semi final Linda March went down fighting against Parker. After a long period out of the top flight and March has had an impressive comeback, and in this form is again a true force in the women's game.

Most readers will have heard by now that our two outstanding prospects, Paul Drinkhall (Cleveland) and Darius Knight (Surrey), lost in the men's singles quarters. These two lads, now 16, have not yet reached the stage to overpower such experienced men like Cooke and Perry, but their time will come, that is certain.

Drinkhall lost to Perry whilst Knight went down to Rushton. The consolidation for Drinkhall was winning the men's doubles with Cooke – their drive to the final included in the third round Matthew Syed and Paul Andrews, who did not score many points, too few to be recorded!

Syed did an excellent professional job as MC on the last day, although some younger people were not sure who he was, as they did not catch his introduction – how time flies for past former champions.

Before the finals, the top presentation was made by Chairman Alex Murdoch to John Wood who edited this magazine for fifteen years.

Veteran Men's Singles by Jim Beckley

Clive Carthy is celebrating after winning back the Men's Veterans National Singles title he first won at the turn of the century.

After beating Worcester's Stephen Horton, he went on to beat veteran newcomer Abdul Wuraola, currently ranked eight places above Carthy, and for many the likely winner of this sought after title.

But never underestimate Carthy who tends to be at his best when he's the underdog. The 45 year old has such a laid back style that opponents can easily be lulled into thinking they can beat the Essex man.

But from the beginning Wuraola struggled to cope with Carthy's quick hitting attack and went down in four games.

At the other end of the draw top seed Joe Kennedy, who won the title the year after Carthy, was simply easing along. He beat Andy Wignall in the quarter-final and then rushed through against Nigel Eckersley 11-7,11-3,11-7.

But the final, which many of us thought would be a cracker, fizzled out to become something of an anticlimax. Kennedy was never in with a chance as Carthy went on to win all the crucial points, taking the title 11-9, 9-11, 11-5, 11-9.

Veteran Women's Singles

In a disappointing ladies event, only seven players entered, Stockton's Jane Durham managed to win the title beating Kent's Kim Mudge after coming back from two games down to win in five.

Veteran Men's Doubles

Biggest upset of the weekend came in the veteran's doubles. Diccon Gray and Trevor Kerry came through from an unseeded position to win the title, which brought the biggest cheer of the day and rightly so.

None were more surprised at their success than the players themselves. After reaching the semi-final they accounted for No 2 seeds, Abdul Wuraola and Chris Beckley, to take on what should have been a walk in the park for the top seeds Kennedy and Carthy. Instead it turned into a nightmare.

The record shows the underdogs were always in command and eventually ran out winners 11-7, 11-8, 11-10.

U21s by Richard Pettit

The Under 21s is always a tough fight for all



DICCON GRAY AND TREVOR KERRY - VET MEN'S DOUBLES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: DAVID WEARN

competitors and a real benchmark to assess just how bright the future of English table tennis will shine. With some exceptional talents in both the Men's and Women's draw the sparks of brilliance really did brighten up what otherwise could have been a dull precursor to the main event.

Darius's Day

Speed, power and precision were in abundance as Paul Drinkhall, Craig Bryant, Adam Bleakley and Darius Knight surged to the quarter finals.

The only stumbling block for the awesome foursome's progress was Tim Yarnall, last year's runner-up, who took Knight all the way 9-11, 4-11, 11-4, 13-11, 11-4.

The semis tested all four players, but Bryant and Bleakley bowed out gracefully to the same deficit of 1-4, setting up a tantalising final between the much talked about Drinkhall and Knight. Recent form would suggest that Drinkhall was odds on favourite to regain his title however, Knight being Knight had other ideas. Eventually Knight's relentless pressure and persistence provided the final blow, 5-11, 11-5, 12-10, 9-11, 11-7.

Parker chops them down

The women's title provided some excellent rallies with real aggression. In the semi finals Gemma Chapman and four times U 21 Champion Georgina Walker succumbed to the pressure of Joanna Parker and Kelly Sibley. This made the final a classic table tennis scenario of defence vs. attack. Parker's defence just proved too hard to crack with Sibley becoming increasingly frustrated as the ball just kept popping back on the table. Parker took the title 2-11, 12-10, 11-8, 11-3.

results

Men's Singals

Quarter Finals - Alan Cooke (Dy) bt. Terry Young (Bk) 10-12, 12-10, 11-5, 11-3, 11-7

Andrew Rushton (La) bt Darius Knight (Sy) 19-17,4-11,11-4,12-10,11-7

Tim Yarnall (Np) bt. Simon Nouch (Y) 11-8,11-5,7-11,11-7,11-3

Alex Perry (Dv) bt Paul Drinkhall (Cv) 7-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-9, 10-12, 11-3

Semi Finals - Andrew Rushton (La) bt. Alan Cooke (Dy) 11-9, 11-5, 11-3, 11-13, 11-6

Alex Perry (Dv) bt. Tim Yarnall (Np) 9-11,11-8,11-7, 9-11, 5-11, 11-5, 11-6

Final - Alex Perry (Dv) bt Andrew Rushton (La) 11-6, 11-9,11-4,11-5

Women's Singles

Quarter Final - Helen Lower(St) bt. Lindsey Reynolds (La) 11-4,11-8,11-7,11-7

Georgina Walker (Ng) bt. Joanna Roberts (Y) 11-5,11-5,11-5,11-3
Linda March (He) bt Kelly Sibley (Wa) 9-11, 11-8, 11-5,11-9, 8-11, 11-9

Joanna Parker (Sy) bt Natalie Bawden (E) 5-11, 11-7, 13-11, 7-11, 5-11, 11-8, 11-7

Semi Final - Helen Lower (St) bt. Georgina Walker (Ng) 11-3, 13-11, 9-11, 11-5, 11-5

Joanna Parker (Sy) bt. Linda March (He) 11-5,11-5, 7-11, 12-10, 11-3

Final - Helen Lower (St) bt Joanna Parker (Sy) 11-4,11-7,11-7,11-3

Men's Doubles Final

Paul Drinkhall (Cv) and Alan Cooke (Dy) bt. Alex Perry (Dv) and Terry Young (Bk) 11-7,10-12,11-9,11-6

Women's Doubles Final

Helen Lower (St) and Georgina Walker (Ng) bt. Linda March (He) and Lindsey Reynolds (La) 4-11,11-8,11-6,11-9

Mixed Doubles Final

Helen Lower (St) and Alex Perry (Dv) bt Kelly Sibley (Wk) and Paul Drinkhall (Cv) 11-9, 11-7, 9-11, 13-11.

Under 21's Men's Singles

Darius Knight (Sy) bt. Paul Drinkhall (Cv) 5-11,11-5,12-10,9-11,11-7

Under 21's Women's Singles

Joanna Parker (Sy) bt. Kelly Sibley (Wk) 2-11,14-12, 11-8, 11-3

Veteran Men's' Doubles Final

Trevor Kerry (Ng) and Diccon Gray (K) bt. Joe Kennedy (K) and Clive Carthy (E) 11-7, 11-9, 12, 10

Veteran Men's Singles Final

Clive Carthy (E) bt. Joe Kennedy (K) 11-9, 9-11,11-5,11-9

Veteran Women's Singles

Jane Durham (Cv) bt. Kim Mudge (K) 11-9,12-10, 5-11, 6-11,11-8

New Year Smiles from Merseyside



LEFT TO RIGHT ARE: CATHY BAXENDALE, SUE BURGESS, BRENDA BUOEY AND BARBARA KIRKMAN

BRILLIANT BLACKPOOL

Looks like another record number of players will make the annual trek to Blackpool next month for the Northern Masters.

Referee Karen Tonge tells me that in less than a week after entry forms were given out at Hereford she had received over 60 entries and with still one month to go, last year's record of 212 seems likely to be beaten. Breezy Blackpool is especially popular with our Irish friends, members and non-members alike. These days they are taking the trip across the Irish Sea in ever increasing numbers. In 2003 just five members made the trip, last year it had grown to 20. And as word gets around about Blackpool's pleasures we can expect even more interest from the Emerald Isle.

"Blackpool is a great place to have a good time. Don't get me wrong, we come here to play some serious table tennis, but you know what I mean," said my contact with a twinkle in his eye. "We've been coming here for a few years now and have got to know the best places for a drink and a laugh."

GLAMOUR GIRLS

Cathy Baxendale, Sue Burgess, Brenda Buoe and Barbara Kirkman.

In the early 1970s these four glamour girls were the talk of Lancashire, for all the best reasons, of course.

They each played in the Liverpool and District League and each at some time made appearances for Lancashire in the County Championships. Since then the girls have gone their separate ways but not entirely, for they kept in touch and vowed to meet up again. So when Cathy Baxendale reached her 51st birthday, they decided to put on their best togs and celebrate. Now all veterans (that's over 40), they gathered together at Childwall Golf Club in Liverpool to chat about all those earlier days – and how things had changed.



LEFT TO RIGHT ARE: CATHY BAXENDALE, SUE BURGESS, BRENDA BUOEY AND BARBARA KIRKMAN

EXCURSIONS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE

The Veterans Southern Masters has been moved from its usual date on the calendar to Easter weekend, which will make the organisers a little nervous I suspect. Nevertheless, they seem to be doing everything they can by sending out entry forms early and getting as much publicity as they can. The new Veterans website www.vetts.org.uk has a piece headed "Think of Easter, think of Reading" which hopefully will have prompted some of the hundreds who visit the website to pencil in the date in their diaries. And for my readers a reminder that there is still plenty of time to send in your entry to Tim Harris.



SURPRISE PRESS

Busy vet Peter Bradley, who recently took over the reins of Deputy Chairman of the ETTA from Mike Johns, this time turned up to do the honours when Nigel Maltby was unable to receive his Press Officer of the Year award at the ETTA presentation evening in Lilleshall. "We belong to the same club so we decided to give him a surprise and present him with his glassware and certificate just when he wasn't expecting it," said Peter. Nigel won his award for his regular table tennis write-ups in the Reading Evening Post.



ALEX PERRY, now 29, is relishing a rich vein of form, possibly his best since winning the English crown in 1999. After the Hungarian No.9 Robert Pagonyi brought down Welsh champion Ryan Jenkins 7, 9, 10 in the semi-finals, the fans thronged to the no.9 court at Crystal Palace to see if Perry could withstand the fierce final challenge.

Perry's normal game is to attack almost every ball, specialising in counter-hitting with his excellent backhand armoury. The result was a splendid and skillful tactical victory 9, 9, 11 by Perry to deny the Hungarian victory almost against the odds. Who would bet against Perry, even allowing for his current excellent form? Quite a few at the Palace were backing the Hungarian, but they would have lost their money as Perry piled on the pressure. After his victory Perry said "He is a good player, I can just about remember playing him in Budapest a long time ago. Having seen him beat Ryan Jenkins, I decided the only plan was to try and hit past him on every shot and it worked".

At a mini-press conference after Pagonyi had taken out Jenkins, aided by his friend Gergely Urban, it was revealed that he (Pagonyi) is a full-time table tennis professional based in Budapest and plays in the second division of the Bundesliga. It is ironic that when entries closed weeks before the tournament, both Urban and Pagonyi were excluded, but as TWO SEEDS DROPPED OUT (including Andrew Baggaley) they were able to get

back into seeded positions. Glancing back to the quarters Colum Slevin kept the Irish flag flying with a win against Adam Bleakley (Lancashire) at 9 in the fourth but it was Perry who snuffed out the Dubliner 8, 7, 3 in the semi-finals. Jason Sugrue was another "Irishman" who played well but he became a Pagonyi victim in the quarters 7, 2, 11.

JOANNA ON TOP

Joanna Parker (Chertsey) landed the women's singles title with a final round success 11, -8, 6, 7 against Linda March (Herts) who is making a comeback after qualifying as an accountant. Joanna Parker seems to be improving after her second year at the Berlin club. She is now using more attacking strokes, an essential ingredient for a defender at this time.

Constantly varying the pace of the ball between topspin and backspin can bring down many opponents. The match between Linda March and Karina Szarzycke was controversial. At 2-2 in games the Eastern bloc player pulled out with a mysterious but totally undefined injury and "demanded" the referee Steve Welch let her see a doctor and then continue!

Steve Welch explained that there were no doctors on call – she either had to play on or withdraw, so she pulled out – all in a referee's day, that after problems with sunlight taking out nine tables and the tournament losing over an hour in time!

results

Men's Singles

Alex Perry (Dv) bt Robert Pagonyi (HUN) 11-9, 11-9, 13-11

Women's Singles

Joanna Parker (Sy) bt Linda March (He) 13-11, 8-11, 11-6, 11-7

Men's Band 1

Bradley Evans (Bu) bt Mark Smith (Y) 11-9, 3-11, 11-5, 11-9

Women's Band 1

Marcia Ma (Sy) bt Naomi Wilson (So) 11-1, 11-3, 9-11, 11-4

Men's Band 2

Dorian Robinson (Sy) bt Neil Page (WAL) 2-11, 11-6, 7-11, 11-3, 11-7

Women's Band 2

Isabel Sanjurjo (Do) bt Jurate Brazaityte (K) 6-11, 11-7, 11-7, 11-6

Men's Band 3

Ashley Willetts (Ha) bt Tom Bray (La) 3-11, 11-9, 11-6, 11-6

Women's Band 3

Jurate Brazaityte (K) bt Hannah Hicks (Ha) 11-8, 11-5, 11-6

Men's Band 4

Robert Owen (Y) by Ben Swart (He) 11-8, 11-7, 7-11, 8-11, 12-10

Men's Band 5

Les Eadie (E) bt Taejoon Lee (E) 11-8, 11-3, 11-9

Men's Band 6

Osman Bawa (E) bt Wayne Matthews (K) 11-8, 11-7, 9-11, 11-9

Junior Boys

David Hayes (IRL) bt Chris Lewis (Sy) 11-3, 11-8, 7-11, 11-7

Junior Girls

Round Robin: 1st Naomi Owen (WAL), 2nd Sarra Wang (E)

Veteran Men

Abdul Wuraola (Sy) bt Mark Wicker (E) 6-11, 11-9, 8-11, 11-9, 11-6

Veteran Women

Marcia Ma (Sy) bt Val Murdoch (Bd) 11-4, 11-9, 11-5

Under 21 Men

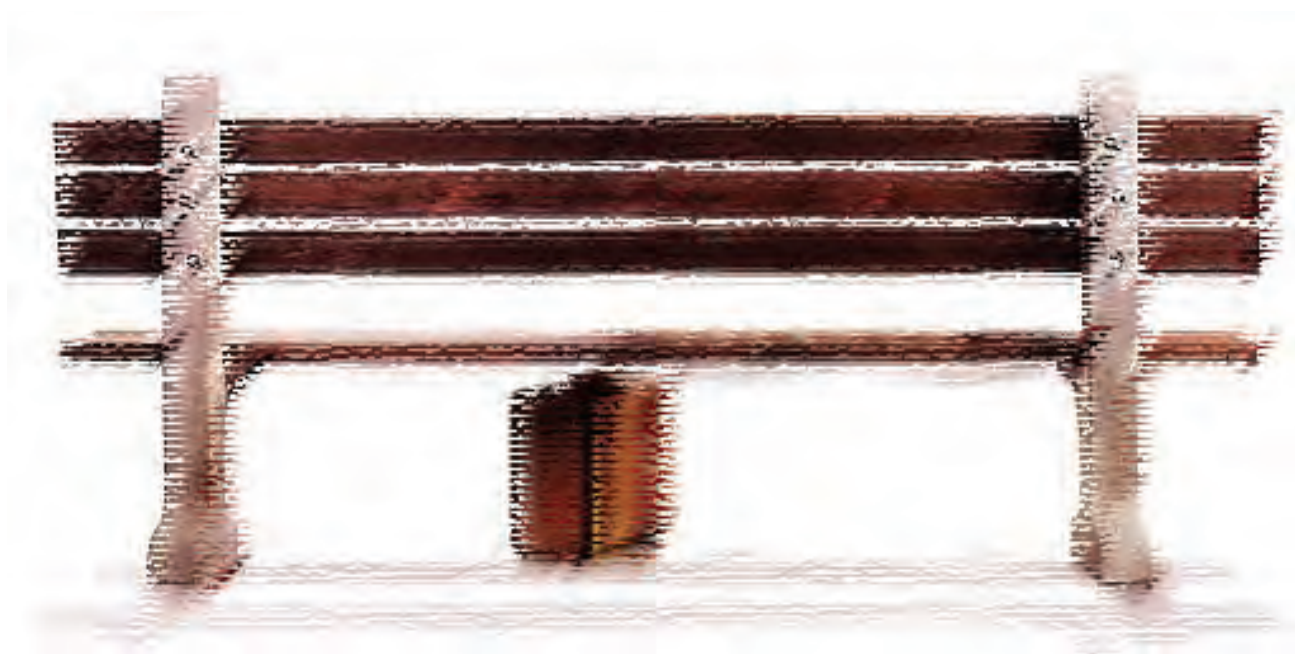
Gavin Evans (Bu) bt Na Ning (IRL) 11-9, 11-6, 11-8

Under 21 Women

Naomi Owen (WAL) bt Joanna Parker (Sy) 11-4, 8-11, 7-11, 11-7, 11-7

Paul Rainford Forrest Gump Syndrome

Table Tennis in the Media



Woody Allen's most recent film, *Match Point*, tells the unlikely story of a retired Irish tennis pro who marries into money then proceeds to get himself into a bit of a pickle, women-wise. Murder and mayhem ensue. As is invariably the case with sports-related films (see 'Escape to Victory' with Sylvester Stallone and Pele for a classic footballing example of the genre), the sport in question is played in a ludicrously unconvincing manner: this supposed ex-tennis pro's tennis would look dismal on the pitted tarmac courts of the local park, let alone Centre Court at Wimbledon.

However, the leading man's lack of talent does not stop at tennis. Early on in the film there is a short table tennis scene, where our hero meets his principal love interest, played by Scarlett Johansson. A short rally is played. It is not good. Our hero offers coaching tips: they make no sense whatsoever. Rubbish table tennis notwithstanding, this scene is possibly unique in that - thanks to Scarlett Johansson's easy-on-the-eye credentials

- it portrays our sport with can only be described as a hint of dangerous glamour. For it has to be said that, in the world of entertainment - be it films, TV or books - the words 'table tennis' and 'glamour' do not often collide. They don't even get close.

Perhaps the best known filmic representation of table tennis in recent years is found in 'Forrest Gump', that interminable Tom Hanks weepie charting the life journey of a frankly retarded southern boy. While recovering from injuries sustained in the Vietnam war, young Gump picks up a 'paddle' and begins belting the hell out of a Halex 3 star. His strokes, are of course, your worst youth club nightmare, but nevertheless he takes on and beats all comers and soon finds himself in the USA

national team, exchanging forehand smashed with the mighty Chinese side at the height of the Cold War. It's dead symbolic, you see. To be fair, the TT sequences in the film are quite cleverly done, with speeded-up trick photography at least conveying the pace of the sport. But why was table tennis chosen as Gump's sport? Because Gump's a misfit, of course. And table tennis is the sport of misfits. Or so they would have us believe.

A similar sentiment emerges in Howard Jacobson's 1999 novel, *The Mighty Walzer*. The young Oliver Walzer, growing up in a Jewish family in 1950s Manchester, is a painfully introverted boy who spends a suspiciously long time on the toilet. He can't get on with his parents, he can't get on with girls. He is, in short, a hopeless case. He is, however, a natural at table tennis, rising to prominence in the Manchester & District League and getting picked for the county side. Along the way, he plays with and against a whole range of misfits.

The descriptions of the players and the playing conditions in Jacobson's book will strike a chord with anyone of a certain age who has played local league table tennis: "The room was icy. There were radiators on every wall, great glossy cream cobra coils of burbling iron... but the room stayed cold.

The radiators were there for us to lose the ball behind, not to provide warmth. This was my first lesson in the ergonomics of ping-pong: every feature and dimension of the playing area must contribute to your discomfort; every item of furniture is where it is for no other purpose than that you should lose your ball behind it." We've all been there.

Despite his success in the sport, Oliver Walzer is constantly plagued by doubts about the very notion of table tennis. Is it, he has to ask himself, a proper sport for a grown man? As the book says, "It was too small. A parlour game. It suffered from too modest a conception of itself.

'Ping-pong' - what kind of a name was that?... Whiff Waff was another one they tried. Meaning what? Something insubstantial, piffling, neither here nor there, like swatting at

flies... Why didn't they just call it that - 'Something Piffling' - and have done?"

The author of *The Mighty Walzer*, Howard Jacobson, is himself no mean player.

I was fortunate enough to be invited to the launch of the book, which took the form of a mini-tournament in the cramped offices of a London publishing company, and saw him give Matthew Syed a run for his money, albeit with standard-issue hard bats. (I crashed out in the first round: I'm lost without my 2mm Sriver.) Now if a decent player doesn't believe in the game, what hope do we have of a fair trial? In one of the seminal books of the twentieth century, J D Salinger's 'The Catcher in the Rye', the main character, Holden Caulfield, makes the following observation on some girls he comes across waiting for their dates: "You figured most of them would probably marry dopey guys..."

Guys that get sore and childish as hell if you beat them at golf, or even just some stupid game like ping-pong." Thanks a lot, Holden! Meanwhile, in an episode of Friends, the popular American TV comedy, much comic mileage is gained from the fact that the Monica character is playing table tennis and actually... taking it seriously!!!

Yes, it seems that, in the world of films, books and TV, our fine sport is to be forever depicted as a pointless parlour game played by misfits. And it's just not fair. After all, isn't any sport, when you really get down to it, ultimately pointless? Tiger Woods may be a god to some, but he makes his living wandering around oversized lawns knocking a small white ball into holes with flags in them. Boxing is all about two chaps who usually have no argument with each other trying to knock their respective blocks off. Yet boxing gets Robert de Niro in 'Raging Bull', a moving cinematic classic.

We get Forrest Gump.

BRIBAR WOMEN'S BRITISH LEAGUE WOOLWELL'S WIN

DML Woolwell's Women's Table Tennis Team headed to Widnes near Liverpool to compete in the final weekend of the Women's British League after a successful undefeated first round trip to Hereford. However, Woolwell were under no illusions as to what was required to take the title back to Plymouth for the second consecutive year.

BETTER THAN AVERAGE

These players had an exceptional four days of play and topped the averages in their respective leagues. For a more in-depth analysis take a look at www.englishtabletennis.co.uk

Player	Division	Team	Average (%)
Na Liu	Prem	Irish Ladies	95.00
Thornton-Reynolds	Prem	DML W'Ilwell	92.85
Marketa Myskova	Prem	DML W'Ilwell	85.00
Natasha Hurd	Div 1	Cheltenham	100.00
Karen Smith	Div 1	Woodf'ld 1	87.50
Jose Bongers	Div 1	Woodf'ld 1	78.57
Andrea Baldi	Div 2	Elgre	90.00
Angie Bristow	Div 2	Sutton at Hone	80.00
Sarah Stedman	Div 2	Hollington	78.57
Alice Loveridge	Div 3	Guernsey	100.00
Karen Shepherd	Div 3	Ormesby	95.00
Kay Chivers	Div 3	Guernsey	90.00
Stacey Furnivail	Div 4	St Andrews	90.00
Pauline Steel	Div 4	Norwich Gels	75.00
Lisa Standen	Div 4	St Andrews	75.00

With an astonishing 7 point lead at the top of the table could their rivals catch them?

2-1 down to Wirral in their first game the answer could well have been 'yes', but with the trump card of Marketa Myskova to play a comeback was almost inevitable. Myskova from Plymouth out-classed her opponent and easily won her 2nd game pulling the score even at 2-2. But with Liz May 2-0 down against the higher ranked Gemma Lloyd, the team looked certain to lose their first league point. May battled well and with her team mates behind her she astonishingly pulled back the deficit and win the match in a tight final set, putting her team's nose just in front. Lauren Spink clinched the last match allowing a welcome 4-2 win.

Next up were last year's runners-up, Ireland. Woolwell came through with a 4-2 win, both matches dropped to Na Liu, who was nominated player of the weekend, for her exceptional performances and sportsmanship. Saturday's closing match saw Woolwell face

TISH E



Cippenham, and it was here that Woolwell clinched the British title with a 5-1 victory. May secured the 4th game and Lindsay Thornton-Reynolds took the 5th.

Not wanting to rest on their laurels Woolwell decided to continue their title campaign the way they started, taking each match as it came and to fight for every point. There was no letting up as Leeds were the unfortunate receivers of a 6-0 drubbing. The last match of the day and ultimately the league finale was a tight affair. Woolwell couldn't lose the title and London Progress couldn't lose their second place. However neither team gave an inch. Woolwell went in all guns blazing, Myskova played an outstanding match mixing defence with attack, beating Kaori Saijo of Japan 12-10 in the 4th. This boosted her confidence considerably as in Myskova's next game she beat Egle Adomelyte 3-0. With Myskova's two and an additional two from Lindsay Thornton - Reynolds, who yet again put in an awesome performance, Woolwell rounded off a second successful weekend! The icing on the cake for the twice British

champions was being announced Team of the Weekend, highlighting the foundations for their success in first place.

Going up in the world

Woolwell were certainly not the only team on the up. With four other division titles to play for, there was plenty more table tennis on offer.

Division 1 was sewn up by Woodfield 1 at a canter, with their only blip of the two weekends coming in the form of a draw as Alice Howard and Katy Ingham of Halton Table Tennis proved too hot to handle. However this draw was only a minor distraction to Woodfield as they gained promotion and the Division 1 title. If they can continue in this rich vein of form anything is possible, so watch out Premier Division!

Division 2 and 4 were well and truly hit by East Sussex ladies, with both Hollington (Division 2) and St. Andrews TTC (Division 4) crowned champions. This though is where the similarities end. Hollington made far lighter work of their promotion creating a staggering 9 point advantage over their closest rivals. But St

PREMIER

TEAM	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
DML Woolwell	10	0	0	46	14	20
London Progress	5	3	2	38	22	13
Irish Ladies 1	5	2	3	38	22	12
Cippenham L A	4	0	6	21	39	8
Wirral Premier L A	1	2	7	22	38	4
Leeds Ladies	1	1	8	15	45	3

DIVISION 1

TEAM	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Woodfield 1	7	1	0	36	12	15
Draycott & LE	4	1	3	25	23	9
Halton TT 1	2	4	2	24	24	8
Cheltenham	2	1	5	20	28	5
Spicers Ladies	0	3	5	15	33	3

DIVISION 2

TEAM	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Hollington	8	2	0	44	16	18
Wirral Premier L B	4	3	3	31	29	11
Sutton at Hone	3	4	3	29	31	10
Elgre	4	1	5	27	33	9
SEH Ladies	2	3	5	26	34	7
Midland Elgre	1	3	6	23	37	5

DIVISION 3

TEAM	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Guernsey	9	0	1	46	14	18
Ormesby	7	2	1	43	17	16
Uxbridge TTC	3	4	3	32	28	10
Cippenham L B	3	1	6	27	33	7
Ashford	2	3	5	20	40	7
Marston	0	2	8	12	48	2

DIVISION 4

TEAM	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
St Andrews TTC	8	0	2	41	19	16
Staffs Ladies	7	2	1	40	20	16
Norwich Gels	6	0	4	34	26	12
Byng Hall	3	2	5	30	30	8
Woodfield 2	2	3	5	23	37	7
Halton Table Tennis 2	0	1	9	12	48	1

Andrews TTC only just squeezed though with the tightest of margins topping Staffs Ladies by 1 game from a possible 60.

Finally in Division 3 a role reversal between the top two meant Guernsey sneaked the top spot. Nevertheless with Ormesby fielding such a young side they will definitely be a team to watch in the future.



London Progress I dropped their first point of the season when they were held to a draw by Ellenborough I in the third round of British League Premier Division matches. With third placed Ormesby I beating second placed Darlington 5-3 it was ironic that Progress actually moved a point further ahead of their rivals. They lead the table by four points and they deserve enormous credit for the lengthy period of time in which they have been showing the other teams the way. Progress were comfortable 8-0 winners over BATTs Team Peniel I in their midday fixture. Four of the eight games were decided three straight and it was only in the last game where Clive Carthy succumbed 12-10 in the fifth end to Darren Blake that Progress looked to be in real danger of dropping a game.

LONDON PROGRESS 1 V ELLENBOROUGH I

Ellenborough were always likely to be a real challenge for the London Progress team and with their top player Gareth Herbert taking his two singles Progress were under real pressure. Gareth enjoyed contrasting wins, he had to graft his way through five sets of spectacular loop to loop Table Tennis before he managed to subdue Jason Sugrue 11-8 in the fifth end whilst the

fireworks expected in his clash against Terry Young never materialised. After trailing 7-5 in the first end and winning 11-9. Gareth totally dominated the match as he raced home 11-4, 11-5. Jon Nilsson had given Ellenborough a 2-1 lead with a fine 12-10, 12-10, 11-8 victory over Darren Blake and although Marco Essomba hit back with a 11-8, 11-7, 11-7 success against Jimmy Walsh, Ellenborough regained the lead courtesy of Gareth Herbert. With Progress Captain Sugrue subduing Nilsson 11-7, 11-5, 11-6 with a very competent display the match was level again. This pitted Marco Essomba, undefeated in nineteen games against Gary Tandler and therefore you had to fancy Progress to take the lead. However, this is exactly the type of challenge that Gary relishes and he produced his most potent display of the day to score a shock 11-6, 11-8, 9-11, 11-7 victory. The final game paired Jimmy Walsh with Darren Blake and after four games which ebbed one way and then the other the tension began to mount dramatically in the fifth end. Try as hard as he did Jimmy just couldn't find a way over the finish line and it was a relieved Darren who edged home 11-4, 8-11, 11-9, 6-11, 13-11.

ORMESBY V DARLINGTON

Ormesby's 5-3 success over Darlington I owed a lot to Danny Reed's excellent wins over Ritchie Venner and Michael Marsden but that wasn't enough to earn him the Player of the Match Award. That went to the equally impressive David Meads who was rewarded for his victories over Craig Bryant and Steve Bailey. However, from the overall match perspective it was the surprise win for Martyn Clarke at 11-9 in the fifth end over Michael Marsden that deserved most recognition as that gave Ormesby an important 2-1 lead.

HORSHAM V PENIEL 1

Bottom side Horsham played well against a slightly below par BATTs Team Peniel I and were rewarded with their second point of the campaign. The evergreen Nigel Eckersley impressed with a 3-0 win over Neil Charles and he led John Holland 2-0 with some really determined play before John eventually came through to win 9-11, 6-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-7. Peter Bartram added an excellent 3-1 win over Joe Kennedy and Terry Haley impressed with a 3-1 victory over Clive Carthy. With Adrian Moore edging out Joe Kennedy 11-8 in the decider Horsham took a shock 4-2 lead but it still wasn't enough to enable them to secure victory.

PREMIER DIVISION

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
London Prog1	10	9	1	0	67	13	19
Darlington 1	10	7	1	2	50	30	15
Ormesby 1	10	5	4	1	47	33	14
BATTSPeniell	10	4	3	3	46	34	11
H Barnets1	10	3	3	4	39	41	9
Ellenborough	10	2	4	4	31	49	8
Elgre Nott	11	0	0	2	23	57	8
Horsham 1	10	0	2	8	17	63	2

DIVISION 2 SOUTH

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
York Gardens I	10	9	-	1	58	22	18
EBS-OrangeNI	10	9	-	1	54	26	18
Byng Hall I	10	7	1	2	53	27	15
Fusion II	10	5	1	4	41	39	11
Generation 2	10	2	2	6	31	49	6
OLOP Impact II	10	1	3	6	27	53	5
Horsham II	10	1	2	7	28	52	4
Batts Peniel II	10	1	1	8	28	52	3

DIVISION 3 SOUTH

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Mossford	10	7	3	-	53	27	17
Lond'n ProgIV	10	5	4	1	48	32	14
Sutton Sharks	10	1	8	1	40	40	10
Horsham III	10	3	4	3	39	41	10
Ashford II	10	4	2	4	39	41	10
Ellenborough II	10	3	2	5	37	43	8
Hastings	10	2	3	5	35	45	7
Elgre Nott III	10	-	4	6	29	51	4

DIVISION 1 NORTH

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Sycamore	10	8	0	2	52	28	16
Derwent I	10	7	0	3	48	32	14
Norwich	10	5	1	4	46	34	11
Darlington II	10	4	3	3	40	40	11
Grantham	10	4	2	4	39	41	10
Bedford Modl	10	3	3	4	37	43	9
Ormesby	10	4	0	6	38	42	8
Seasiders I	10	0	1	9	20	60	1

DIVISION 2 SOUTH & MIDLANDS

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
London ProglI	10	7	2	1	57	23	16
Cippenham II	10	7	1	2	50	30	15
Oxford FC II	10	7	1	2	49	31	15
Harv. Barnets II	10	3	5	2	40	40	11
EBS-Orange NI	10	3	4	3	44	36	10
Bedford ModlI	10	2	3	5	32	48	7
Ashford I	10	1	1	8	28	52	3
Kingsht Bribar	10	1	1	8	20	60	3

DIVISION 4 SOUTH & WEST

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Plym'thWand's	10	6	4	-	49	31	16
DML WoolweIII	10	6	3	1	52	28	15
Cippenham III	10	5	4	1	49	31	14
Cofton Hackett	10	4	3	3	47	33	11
London ProgV	10	4	1	5	48	32	9
SouthamptonW	10	3	2	5	39	41	8
Guinn.Polska II	10	2	1	7	17	63	5
Brighton III	10	1	-	9	19	61	2

DIVISION 1 SOUTH

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
DML Woolw'III	10	7	12	0	52	28	15
Oxford FC I	10	7	0	3	48	32	14
Fusion I	10	6	1	3	51	29	13
Cippenham I	10	6	0	4	44	36	12
London Prog II	10	5	0	5	40	40	10
Brighton I	10	3	2	5	34	46	8
OLOP Impact I	10	2	2	6	31	49	6
De Vere Netts	10	1	-	9	20	60	2

DIVISION 3 SOUTH & WEST

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Guin.Polska I	10	7	2	1	61	19	16
Club Cornwall	10	6	2	2	52	28	14
Guernsey	10	6	1	3	41	39	13
Kingsf. R'ding	10	5	2	3	42	38	12
Waterside	10	3	4	3	42	38	10
NWF	10	3	1	6	34	46	7
Oxford F.C II	10	2	2	6	29	51	6
Ashford III	10	0	2	8	19	61	2

DIVISION 4 NORTH

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Elgre NottinIV	10	9	-	1	61	19	18
Ormesby III	10	9	-	1	60	20	18
Woodfield	10	8	-	2	60	20	16
Darlington III	10	6	-	4	49	31	12
Roth'm Scorp.II	10	5	-	5	46	34	10
Angels	10	2	-	8	14	66	4
Hotpoint Peterb'	10	-	1	9	15	65	1
Isle of Man	10	-	1	9	15	65	1

DIVISION 2 NORTH

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Roth ScorpI	10	10	-	-	64	16	20
Elgre Nott. II	10	7	1	2	49	31	15
Halton Croda I	10	6	2	2	49	31	14
McClym. Nat.	10	5	-	5	47	33	10
Northfield	10	4	1	5	34	46	9
Blackpool	10	2	2	6	30	50	6
D&B.D. Fastbl	10	2	1	7	26	54	5
Uxbr'ge Burton	10	-	1	9	21	59	1

DIVISION 3 NORTH

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Chesterfield	10	10	-	-	7	19	20
Sheffield	10	8	1	1	57	23	17
Halton Croda II	10	7	-	3	49	31	14
Seasiders II	10	2	3	5	32	47	7
D&B.D. FastblI	10	3	1	6	29	50	7
Grimsby	10	3	1	6	29	51	7
Barrow	10	1	3	6	27	53	5
Derwent II	10	-	3	7	25	55	3

DIVISION 4 SOUTH

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Eastbourne S	7	5	2	-	41	15	12
Brighton II	6	5	1	-	42	6	11
Byng Hall II	7	4	-	3	27	29	8
York Gardens II	7	3	1	3	29	27	7
Fusion III	7	2	1	4	18	38	5
Brit. Ipswich	7	1	1	5	19	37	3
Harv.Barnets III	7	1	-	6	16	40	2

**THE BRITISH LEAGUE
OFFICIAL BALL**

3-Star - ITTF Approved



AVON

By Dave Banks

The **SW Regional Junior Final Trials** took place at Cirencester and congratulations go to Alex Kearney, Alex Banks, Jessica Coggins (U15) and Jack Vaughan (U11), who have all made it to the National Finals at Filton College, Bristol, this month. This is the first time that the finals have been in Bristol.

The **Bristol Senior League** continues to stage some exciting matches every week and at the half-way stage in the Premier Division Failand A are leaders, with Nailsea Panthers in second place. Eddie Roofe (Knowle A) leads the averages, followed by Steve Hall (Bristol Club A).

The **Bath League** also continues to flourish, with Oldfield B leading the first division at this stage, with Westinghouse A in second place. Alan Champneys (Oldfield B) leads the averages, followed by Clive Ellison (Frys A).

On the County front, our senior side found Devon 2nds too strong and went down 8-2, despite good wins from Paul Hooper and David Reeves. The Veterans are also struggling in a very hot Division 1B, but did manage to take a point from Surrey 2nds, with Bob Murray grabbing two wins. Disappointingly, they were just edged out by Wiltshire 6-4, despite outstanding victories by Neil Wrigglesworth over Trevor Lloyd and Linda Porter over Brenda Baldwin. It is with the juniors that we are having most success this season. The first team remain unbeaten after five matches, recently recording good wins against Dorset 8-2, with Andy & Alex Banks and Alex Kearney recording two each and against Devon 2nds 6-4, with Alex Banks taking two, to snatch it in the final game. The first team had to then play our own second team, winning 8-2, with Hannah Stock playing well to also take two. This now leaves the first team with a good chance to be promoted it's all to play for!!

BERKSHIRE

By Colin Dyke

The **Veterans 4th** team picked up their first point of the season with a gutsy 5-5 draw against the odds against Hampshire 2nds. Good form was also on display against Kent 4 losing narrowly by 4-6 with Banham and Wilkes both beating Mike Howard. The men however found John Glass and Barry Chapman too strong.

The **Veterans 5th** team got off the mark with a 6-4 win over Devon 5 at the Kingfisher Club, after being 2-0 down, Dave Gilham and Allan Bruton losing to Pete Nicholson and Brian Pengelly respectively.

Maidenhead Closed Championships

The Maidenhead Closed Championships took place at the Cippenham Table Tennis Centre. This year's turnout was the best for several years with nearly sixty participants.

Last year's Men's and Ladies champions held onto their titles. Mark Banks defeated Tim Goodship in their final 11-8, 11-3, 11-6 and Gemma Chapman



Round Up summary

defeated Emma Human in their final 11-4, 12-10, 11-5. The Men's and Ladies Doubles Champions also remained unchanged this year with Jan and Gemma Chapman defeating Elena Cockrell and Emma Human in the final 11-5, 11-4, 11-6. Mark Banks and Derek Wood dropped one set in their defeat of young Eddy Mitchell and Ken Phillips 11-8, 6-11, 11-9, 11-9. Saturday saw John Barclay win the Veterans' Singles whilst Barry Wetherall won the Veteran Men's Singles Consolation, Division Two Singles and came runner up in the Divisional Handicap and Handicap Doubles, a good day's work.

Results: Men's singles: M Banks bt T Goodship 8,3,6
Ladies Singles: G Chapman bt E Human 4,10,5 Men's
Doubles: M Banks/D Wood bt E Mitchell/K Phillips 8,-6,9,9
Ladies Doubles: G Chapman/J Chapman bt E Cockrell/E
Human 5,4,6 Mixed Doubles: T Griffiths/G Chapman bt M
Banks/E Human 10,-5,8,7 Tweenies Singles: G Chapman bt
M Banks 11,11,11 Veteran Men's Singles: J Barclay bt E Hull
6,11,8 Veterans Ladies Singles: D Rolfe bt K Dudley 3,4,5
Premier Division: M Banks bt D Wood -8,-8,9,8,3 Division 1 J
Barclay bt D Rolfe 7,10,10 Division 2 B Wetherall bt P Davies
-8,-11,7,8,4 Division 3 S Davies bt N Gibbs 8,5,4 Divisional
Handicap P Davies bt B Wetherall Handicap Doubles S
Davies/E Mitchell bt D Webber/B Wetherall

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

By Steve Rate

The Cambridgeshire juniors took part in their first county match, the juniors Stephen Pickering, Mark Dawkins, Ian Gregory, Jack Luscombe, Olivia Miller and Katie Whale all played very well with Stephen picking up three wins and Daw one. We would like to praise the coaches Steve Rate, Colin Luscombe and Nick Rate who have a team for the future. Special thanks to Lesley Rate, Junior Secretary, for her efforts in getting the team together. The team is looking forward to the next round of matches.

In the recently held Cambridgeshire Table Tennis League Championships the men's singles went to Keith Richardson for the fifth time and the ladies to Shweta Kamdar. Young player of the day was Nick Rate (15 years old and plays for Bassingbourn) who picked up four trophies including the junior doubles with Ian Gregory.

At Ely Table Tennis League Championships, Tim Wootton became the men's singles winner defeating Nick Rate in four ends and the ladies title went to Jannett Klinke. Rate then teamed up with Wootton to win the men's doubles. Rate continued is victory streak winning three other titles.

Nick Rate, the Cambridgeshire no 1, had another good day in the King's Lynn championships taking a further three titles, junior boys, junior boys doubles and Div 1 singles, and then went on to collect the Victor Ludorum Award for winning the most events.

CHESHIRE

By Alan Blears

This report is mainly a "Tale of Two Misses". That's "misses" as in young females, not the opposite of 'hits', though these young misses are certainly a couple of hits.

Maitreyi Shivkumar, is a young lady who has been causing quite a stir in the North West this season. A highly rated junior player in India, Maitreyi came to Connah's Quay in N. Wales over two years ago, but it was not until the last six months when she moved to the Wirral, that she resumed playing. She quickly established herself in the Wirral League and has joined the National Junior League N.W., in which she is unbeaten after two rounds. Shivkumar has also played in three Junior Grand Prix events, winning all her sets. It was in the last of these where she really made people sit up, as her victims included Rachel Baker, Reena Ardeshana and a top Scottish junior, Corinna Whitaker. With a supportive family, if she can balance her practice with her studies then a good future ping-pong seems assured.

The second young lady, Caroline Hallows, is rather better known. The Stockport lass has begun the new season the way she ended the last, with success in the Women's British League and Bath Grand Prix. Her W.B.L. team of Draycott & Long Eaton has finished second in Div 2, and should be promoted to the Premier Division next season.

In the Bath Grand Prix she was runner-up in the Juniors to Kelly Sibley, taking a game off her, having earlier drowned the hopes of Sarah Hall in the quarters and Sarra Wang in the semis, both 3-2. This was her first ever win against Sarah Hall.

In the N.J.L. North West (South area), Wirral lead Div 2, West after two rounds, having dropped just two sets. Besides Maitreyi, Chris Weir also has a 100% average, with Stephen Broad on 88%. Halton 'A' are in second spot.

In Div 2 East, the leading Cheshire team is Hillcourt 'A', comprising Dan Brown, Jordan Potts, Paul Kershaw and Stephen Jackson. The youngest team in the division, they stand fourth out of eight; no.1 Brown averages 68% and no.2 Potts 85%. The division is led by Tameside 'A'.

CLEVELAND

By Alan Ransome

Ormesby Girls Promoted- The Ormesby girls team playing in the Women's British League have won promotion up to the second division at the first attempt. The team was fortunate to be placed by the organisers in the third division at the beginning of the season and have justified that decision by winning



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seven out of ten matches played, drawing two and losing only one, winning second place behind the strong Guernsey team.

In the second weekend Ormesby beat Marston 6 - 0, Cippenham Ladies B 6 - 0, and Ashford 6 - 0, but could only draw with Uxbridge Burton 3 - 3 and then, with the championship at stake, lost narrowly to Guernsey, but this time the Channel Islands team was strengthened by the incredibly talented 12 year old, Alice Loveridge, who won both her matches. For Ormesby Karen Shepherd was the best player winning 9 out of her 10 matches in the second round, finishing with an average of 95%. Rachel Greener did well to win 8 out of 10 this time around, whilst Karina Lefevre made an important contribution with 5 out of 8. Jennifer Lowther completed the Ormesby line up and won both of her games against Cippenham.

With more talented youngsters following on, including Katherine Lefevre and Chloe Whyte, the future of girls table tennis in Cleveland looks bright.

Dazzling Danny - With an exceptional performance from Danny Reed, the Ormesby 1st team in the Premier Division of the British League won two important fixtures against Elgre of Nottingham and local rivals, Darlington, both 5 - 3. Danny was unbeaten in both matches scoring wins over the much more experienced Chris Rogers and David Gannon for Nottingham, and Richie Verner for Darlington as well as beating Michael Marsden.

Craig Bryant, Steven Bailey and Martyn Clarke all won one each in both matches to secure the victories which builds up to an exciting final weekend on 8/9 April, which will be staged at the new Ormesby Club headquarters here in Cleveland.

Professional Coach Appointed - The County Association has appointed its first full time professional coach. Neil Besford was the successful applicant and has taken the role of developing coaching in the areas of the County which are not directly covered by either the Ormesby or Northfield programmes. Neil, who has a 3 star qualification, worked within the Ormesby programme for eighteen months and coaches the Advanced squad at the Ormesby Club on a voluntary basis. Neil was a member of the Ormesby junior squad in the 1970s which included players such as Nicky Jarvis, David Alderson and Carole Knight Moore.

With the Northfield School project and the Ormesby Club PESSCL scheme which is also supported by TTK Greenhouse, there will be four full-time coaches working in schools in the County in the near future.

DERBYSHIRE

By Colin Deaton

The annual Derbyshire Closed Championships were featured at the Staveley Middlecroft Leisure Centre. Despite the entry being down, there was some highly entertaining table tennis.

These championships produced some real surprise results. Shock maker in chief was eleven year old Lucy

Davidson from Chesterfield. Known as the pocket rocket, this bundle of talent caused quite a sensation to out hit the England no. 1 Cadet, Emma Vickers from Derby, in the cadet girls' final. Several enthusiasts were asking how a girl so small can hit the ball with such power.

Some of the rallies in this clash with Vickers were unbelievable. She also produced some good form in the Junior Singles where she led by two sets to nil before losing against Derby's high ranked junior Emily O'Sullivan.

Ranked at number four in England Lucy won both the under 12 and Cadet Girls' singles.

Emma was triumphant in the Women's Singles defeating her mum Jane, then joined forces to take the Women's Doubles.

Steven Yallop (Derby) was the Men's Veteran champion despite losing in the first round of the Men's Singles to Liam Pitchford (Chesterfield).

Producing some real aggressive table tennis was England ranked junior Allan Fullwood. Allan has been making progress all year attending the High Performance Centre in Nottingham and now is in the junior boys top 12 ranking.

He was too quick for the no.1 seed Adam Frost, in the semi final swept aside Stuart McIntyre 3-0 in the final. Fullwood's immediate comment after this win was "Now I'm after the Chesterfield title. That would make a rare and unique double."

Steven Yallop (Derby) was a worthy winner in the Veteran Singles and Derby also took the Junior Singles with Emily O'Sullivan defeating Emma Vickers over 5 very close games.

Matlock's Tony Gregory partnered by Jane Vickers combined with effect to win the mixed doubles.

One of the most popular wins of the day was by young Ben Goodwin from Matlock who emerged with the under 12 championship title.

Ben is working hard to improve and develop his game and he certainly looked a top player in the making.

DEVONSHIRE

By John Vincent

The National Junior League in Plymouth is being run by John Smith with 13 teams from all over Devon.

British League - DML/Woolwell I senior table tennis team continued their good run in Division I (South) of the British League after their second round of fixtures at Oakhampton. The squad of Chris Brown, Paul Whiting, James Whiteman, Mike Short, Kevin Buddell and Marketa Myskova did well to win 3 and draw 1 of their 4 matches. Whiting and Whiteman both won 7 out of 8 matches.

Cornwall Satellite Grand Prix - Sally Smith (Woolwell) had an excellent tournament. In the Ladies Singles,



She beat Liz May in the semi-final and Kate Alken in the final 11-5, 11-6, 14-12. Smith also won the Women's Band One and Two titles rounded it off with a fourth title defeating Sarah Hall in the Under 21's Women's singles.

Jonathan May (Woolwell) now back playing regularly took two titles: Men's Band Five against Paul Savins (Bedfordshire) 6-11, 11-5, 11-8, 11-6, and Band Six against Joe Clifford (Jr) in the final 11-7, 11-7, 11-3.

ESSEX

By Steve Kerns

Attridge takes County title - Ian Attridge took the starring role at the 2006 Essex Closed Tournament played at BATTs, Harlow. From an evenly matched field it was Attridge who came through to take the Men's Singles title. He ousted John Monk 3-1 in the second round and then top seed Martin Kubrt after a titanic quarter-final that ended at 15-13 in the fifth end. Clearly a man on a mission, Attridge made no mistake in beating County Junior first team star Yasir Mauthoor 3-0 in his semi-final which paired him against the County's top Junior Vytas Rybakas in the final. This game edged one way and then the other, but it was Ian who came through to win 11-6, 7-11, 12-10, 2-11, 11-9.

Vytas should also be commended on battling his way to the final. He was unable to win his group (losing in five games to Yasir Mauthoor) and as a result he had to contend with the no.2 seed Matthew Spero in the first round. After dropping the first two ends Vytas came through to win 6-11, 10-12, 11-7, 12-10, 11-3. Vytas then impressed with a 3-0 win over the lightning quick Daniel Bronziet and a fine 3-1 semi-final victory

over another leading veteran player Terry Guymer.

Other results of interest included Yasir Mauthoor's victories over Paul Davison (3-0) and Daniel Cannon (3-1); Daniel Bronziet's excellent 3-1 victory against Neil Brierley and George Reeves's 3-1 win over Steve Kerns. Unseeded Paul Davison and Jon Hill were the surprise winners of the Men's Doubles. They took the title with an 11-8, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9 win over the

second seeds Steve Kerns/Mark Wicker. Yasir Mauthoor, the top seed, was a deserved winner of the Junior Boys' Singles. Nial Akata gave him the most problems, only succumbing 11-8, 11-7, 5-11, 13-11 in the semi-final and he took the title with a 11-4, 12-10, 11-3 final victory over Emran Hussein. Emran had come through a real tussle 8-11, 11-4, 9-11, 11-8, 11-5 in his semi-final against Michael Shore and he had also been extended a round earlier by Greg Green 5-11, 11-9, 8-11, 4-11.

Other winners – Men's U 21 Vytas Rybakas Men's Over 40 Ian Attridge Mixed Doubles Steve Kerns /Holly Stubbings, Men's Restricted Paul Martindill, Men's Over 40s Doubles Steve Kerns/Mark Wicker, Women's Singles Kelly Skeggs, Women's U21

Kelly Skeggs, Boys U13 Aexander,

George Boys U15, Emran Hussein Boys Restricted Greg Green, Girls U13 Hannah Pitt, Girls U15 Hannah Pitt Girls U18 Laura Pyman.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

By Margaret Dean

The Cheltenham (Cotswold) Junior Three Star Table Tennis Tournament took place at Cheltenham College 105 boys and 52 girls took part over the two days, coming from all over England and Wales, and with a small (but significant) contingent from Ireland. There was a very high standard of play on both days. Some rallies, in both boys' and girls' events, were quite remarkable. The finals were fiercely contested, with several going to five sets.

This was not Gloucestershire's year, however, with our best result being Michael Harvey, who reached the quarter-finals in the boys' junior banded event. Robert Harvey and Milan Dragojlovic performed well in the cadets' events, but went under to superior opposition. The venue, which was new to the Cotswold this year, proved to be very good, with more space than we have become used to, which made it very comfortable. Our thanks go to Cheltenham College, who hosted the event with efficiency. Members of the local leagues came to assist; their help was much appreciated. Our thanks go to them and to the qualified umpires who came.

Winners U13 boys Liam Pitchford U13 girls – Chloe Nealon Cadet boys banded – Oscar Selfridge Cadet girls banded

Haylee Potts Cadet boys open Christopher Doran Cadet girls open Melissa Wright Junior boys banded Stewart Mudie Junior girls banded Melissa Wright Junior boys open Damien Nicholls Junior girls open Rachel Jamieson.

HAMPSHIRE

Jeremy Wilson

Hampshire's junior table tennis team continued their wonderful progress of recent seasons to gain a second successive promotion and entry into the Premier Division of the county championships.

The squad of David McBeath, Matt Ware, Garth Kinlocke, Annabelle Morle and Heather Knight are the county's best crop of young players in recent memory and will hope to challenge strongly for the Premier title over the next few seasons.

After the first round of matches, Hampshire led the division by one point after wins against Glamorgan, Buckinghamshire and Middlesex, but still had to face their closest challengers in Sussex, Surrey and Somerset.

Knight held her nerve to survive two match points in a crucial win over Frances Potjewyd to help Hampshire recover from a 3-1 deficit to beat Somerset 6-4.

Knight and Morle again shone against a powerful Surrey team, but only Ware recorded a victory among the boys as they went down to a narrow 6-4 defeat. Hampshire, though, were still one point clear of Surrey going into the final match and needed a comprehensive victory over Sussex to secure the Division One title.

After a confident start, the result was never in doubt and they swept to a 10-0 win to take their place among the country's elite for next season.

The Hampshire junior closed tournament was also a hugely competitive event, with Ware and Hannah Hicks achieving the double of both the under-18 and under-15 titles.

Hicks took the under-15 girls' singles without losing a game, beating Waterside's Katie Bradford in the final.

The under-18s girls singles event was played on a round-robin basis and, although Hicks lost 3-2 against Morle, she prevailed against Knight to take the title on a sets count-back.

In the boys' events, Ware cruised to the semi-final stage of the under-15s singles where he defeated Southampton's Ruihao Zhang in straight sets. On the other half of the draw, McBeath saw off Kinlocke 3-1. But Ware was just too strong for McBeath in the final, winning in four sets.

Ware then defeated Kinlocke in the semi-finals of the under-18s before comfortably defeating surprise finalist John McBeath, who had recorded a good win over brother David in the semi-final.

David McBeath and Ware won both the under-15 and under-18 doubles titles against Kinlocke and Zhang in each final.

The boys' under-13s title was taken by rising Waterside star Jonathan Evans who beat Jamie Willsher in the final, while the girls under-13 events

saw Winchester's Tressa Armitage defeat Edwina Kinlocke.

HERTFORDSHIRE

By Ann Fereday

I am very pleased to report that all Herts. teams have now got some points.

When Herts. Veterans 6 took on Surrey 4 at home they were not expecting anything. Surrey had been winning their matches by wide margins. Following poor results the men were revamped with new boy Paul Nelson included. It did the trick. He won a singles and the men's doubles with Alan Shelford who also won a mixed. Captain David Wilson won a singles and our lady, Jackie Channel, beat Surrey's lady. The final result was 5 – 5 and a point each. Well done!

Herts 5 just lost 4 –6 away to Essex 5 after many matches going to 5 sets, their first loss in a long time. In the final round of matches for the Over 60's.

several players took part in the two long sessions; Alan Lamprell, Geof Bax, David Wilson, John Fox, Brian Gale and new young one – Larry Gregory. The ladies were Sue Felstead and Ann Fereday. The teams narrowly lost several matches finally drawing with Surrey. Felstead won her singles and both mixed in this match, therefore finishing above Surrey in the final table due to a better game average.

LEICESTERSHIRE

By Derek Butt

At the halfway stage in Division One of the Leicester League there are no surprises to see who are the top teams in Division One, yes Knighton Park lead with a 100% record and in second place are Leicester Electricity only losing to the Park 4-6, Karen Smith leading the Park to victory with an excellent maximum; Smith also leads the individual race losing just two. Third place in the table goes to Desford Village: Tony Smith and Neil Matthams are in good form.

In Division Two Great Glen look's favourite for a jump into the top flight at the halfway stage, having lost just one match. In third place Knighton Parks III are going well. Not so with their fifth team as they are rock bottom at this stage. Leading the individual averages in this section and at the present boasting 100% is Syston's Mick Allsop.

All the cup competitions are progressing well with not many surprises and have reached the semi-final stages.

The Leicester youth coaching and junior league are progressing well with our excellent team of coaches and assistants led by Mike Smith, Shirley Pickering, Gordon Sanders and Alan Chapman.



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

By Dennis Millman

In the EBS Mobile Phones Super League Westfield, of the Wellingborough League, lead the way after a narrow 5-4 win against Higham Band. The first three rubbers were all won by the shortest route with Richard Elliott beating Greg Yarnall, Chris Doran levelling for Westfield against Mark Nannery and Ryan Keates restoring Higham's advantage against John Fuller. Elliott then beat Doran in the fourth end; Yarnall reduced the deficit in similar style against Keates before Fuller restored parity with an 11-8 fifth end verdict against Nannery. Keates accounted for Doran in four to put the Band back in front, but Elliott lost for the first time when Fuller prevailed in a tight fourth end, while finally Yarnall got the better of Nannery to give Westfield the spoils. Harborough remained unbeaten after a tremendous encounter against Farthingstone. For the second time against Towcester sides it was the attacking prowess of Andy LeButt and David Grundy that won the day as they shared six singles between them. Gary Deakin provided the fireworks as Cold Higham beat DCA Pumas by the odd game in nine. His hat-trick, supplemented by two hard earned successes from Lee Pilkington, proved a bridge too far for Chris Gibbons' side whose best player on the day, Keith Lucas, won twice.

The Veteran 2nds had mixed fortunes in the County Championships losing narrowly to Herts 4ths but gaining an emphatic 9-1 win over Norfolk 3rds. John Fuller was again in fine form against Herts, winning twice and joining the other scorer Gordon Shaw to add the doubles. Only Shaw remained against Norfolk, and together with Gary Webb and Janet Wright remained unbeaten in singles and doubles. Skipper Chris Gibbons won twice but just failed to complete a clean sweep. Greg Yarnall has changed places with Dave Welsman at the top of the Thornton's Sport County Ranking List, with Tim Yarnall and Andy Trott third and fourth due to infrequent appearances. With Greg Yarnall and Trott not yet having played the qualifying ten rubbers the Kettering League Ranking List has a different look with Ryan Keates at no. 1 followed by Chris Doran and his recent victim Welsman. The intriguing battle at the top of Kettering's Premier Division continues, with the return of Andy Trott, strengthening Higham Band's challenge to Burton Baptist A, the current holders. A maximum from Ryan Keates gave Higham a 6-4 win in November with the return game in mid March well worth watching.

NORTHUMBERLAND

By Pauline Long

The County junior team of Jamie Dent (Oxhill YC), Kevin Watson and brother and sister Ben and Debbie

Dawson (all Cramlington) played their final series of Division 2a matches at Grantham, but lost 0-10 to Yorkshire II and Cleveland, and 2-8 to Cheshire II and Northants II. They also lost 2-7 to Durham II in an earlier match. Although they finished bottom of the table, the inexperienced team is steadily improving, and will have benefited from the experience. Five young players from the Cramlington club took part in their first ever open tournament – the Northfield 2 Star event at Billingham. Ryan Richardson (11) won his group in the U13 boys' singles, beating Keegan Barstow (Yorks), Daniel Young (Cleveland) and Matthew Paxton (Durham) before losing at the knockout stage.

Jack Harrison claimed one victory in each of his groups in the U13 and cadet singles. Callum Patterson also won a match in the group stage of the cadets, while eight year old Dean Richardson gained valuable experience in U11 singles. In the junior boys' event, Chris Killen returned with a trophy after finishing runner up in the consolation singles.

At the other end of the age scale, Jimmy Scope was a runner-up in the men's Over 50s plate competition in the Eastern Masters held at Norwich.

OXFORDSHIRE

By Karl Bushell

County Veterans - The Oxfordshire Veterans 2nd team played their second session of matches in Division 3C of the County Championships at Ashford Table Tennis Centre.

Oxfordshire played two previously unbeaten teams in the division, and secured a creditable 5-5 draw with Sussex 3 and a 7-3 victory over Middlesex 2. Andy Missledine was the star for Oxfordshire winning all four of his singles matches. Supporting singles and doubles wins were contributed by Bob Sym, Neil Hurford and Jan Curtis. Oxfordshire are now in second place in the Division.

Midland League - Oxford secured a maximum points victory over Loughborough in the men's division of the Midland League. For the home side Karl Bushell achieved a maximum and was well supported by Andrew Flint and Pete Dasher with two wins each. British League - Oxford Fireplace Centre's 1st and 2nd teams had a great weekend at Crippenham with both teams winning their two matches. The firsts, boosted by having Jing Wei Zhao and Yue Jiao Wu, top quality Chinese players based at the Bristol academy, beat league leaders DML Woolwell 6-2 and London Progress 8-0.

The Chinese players were well supported by Eddie Roofoe of Swindon and locally based Ian Packford. The team are now in second place, one point behind the league leaders with four matches to go. The second team that includes locally based players Karl Bushell and Mark Newns, achieved two 6-2 victories over Ashford and Northampton. The team

are now joint second in the division with four matches to play. The last match against the league leaders London Progress should be very exciting.

SOMERSET

By John Wood

Ark Removals Taunton Team - A fighting Marc Jenkins' maximum took Premier Division Woodyarders from the brink of defeat to a share of the points with YMCA Reds in the Ark Removals Taunton Table Tennis League.

Jenkins had to come from two down in his opening singles against Paul Nutkins and, when his team trailed 6-3, he gained a four game win over Mark Morley to prevent the YMCA player from winning his third singles. He then partnered Mike Hurley, who won two singles, to take the final doubles and save the day. Trinity Old Stars only successes have both come at the expense of YMCA Knights, and by the same score, 12-0.

In Division One the leading sides were both engaged in drawn matches. Chris Norman hit a maximum for Galmington Gladiators and John Selby played in two winning doubles, but David Allwright and David Adeniji won four singles between them to earn a draw.

Castle Valiants' Davids both needed five games to get past Selby. Steve Smith hit a maximum for Hewett Homers, but George Carter and Chris Turnball won two apiece to keep the Tiverton unbeaten run going. Junior county scene - The junior team had a disappointing day at Crippenham in the second round of matches. The non-arrival of one player and the injuries to the two girls in the run-up to the day left the team ill prepared.

Despite the difficulties Somerset was at one time 3 - 3 with the eventual divisional champions. Shaun Hall and Frances Potjewyd were both 2-1 up in their matches with things looking promising, but it was not to be and Hampshire got through 6-4.

It was evident that Frances' injury was giving her trouble and Clare Howe after having her arm in plaster until 23rd December 2005, was far from fit. Both lost to the Middlesex no.1 who played well, and with only Shaun winning for the boys, they lost 3-7. With Shaun playing well and Clare suddenly finding her form, Somerset had hopes of a result in their last match. Frances, however, was in some difficulty and despite battling gamely on, couldn't quite win her last match.

SURREY

By Chris Andrews

At the Slovenian Open, Velenje, Joanna Parker and Darius Knight both won one of their qualifying group matches in the main event. In the doubles Joanna won her first round match partnering England's no. 1 Helen Lower. Both players won their qualifying group in the under 21 singles event. However neither



managed to progress any further.

Grand Prix's - Surrey had a good start to the 2005/06 Grand Prix season by doing well at the Liverpool Grand Prix. Kim Mudge won the Veteran Women's event, Wing-Yung Chan won the Men's Band 3 and Henry Medellin was runner-up in the Men's Veteran event. At the Stoke Grand Prix Abdul Wuraola won the Veteran Men's event, whereas Darius Knight was runner-up in the under 21's event. The East Midlands Junior Open saw Wing-Yung Chan win the Cadet Boys event. In the Bath Grand Prix, Kim Mudge came second in the Veteran Women's event.

Surrey Schools - Chris Bush retained his Surrey Schools title by beating Chris Lewis in the semi-final and Dorian Robinson in the final.

Leagues - Halfway through the season the best three teams in the Croydon League are separated by only two points and in the Thames Valley League, Surrey Secretary Peter Barrow is top of the averages. The Croydon League would like to mention that there used to be two leagues in Croydon with six divisions and ten teams in each. Ex-players from those days are still welcome (as well as new ones no doubt). Monks Hill Table Tennis Club practice on Wednesday evenings so go on give Lon Moir, Chairman of Croydon TT League, a call on 0208 657 1457.

WARWICKSHIRE

By Caroline Williams

Packford repeats top county win - The Warwickshire Closed Championships were at St. Nicholas Park, Warwick, and saw last year's winner Ian Packford from Leamington repeating his success in an all Spa Men's Singles final between him and Mark Jackson. Ian Ferguson paired up with Andrew Hare to win the Men's Doubles.

Sarah Riach (Birmingham) overcame last year's Ladies Singles winner Rachel Pilgrim from Nuneaton to lift the trophy in the fifth set from two sets down. Sarah partnered Helen Turner, also from Birmingham, to win the Ladies Doubles. Rachel Pilgrim gained the Mixed Doubles with her partner, Ian Packford. Rachel also retained her Junior Girl's Singles title, her opposition in the final this year was Sanika Karandikar.

One twelve year old boy from Coventry, Xioayang Ma, new this season to the Warwickshire scene, wiped the board clean in the age groups, winning the Junior Boys' Singles, Cadet Boys' Singles and Under 13 Boys' Singles. Xioayang beat last year's winner Navinder Matharu (Leamington) in the juniors, and Jack Williamson (Birmingham) in both the cadets and the under 13s. The Junior Boys' Doubles was won by Alan Caffrey and Jack Williamson over Tom Hearne with Navinder Matharu.

Jessica Birbeck from Nuneaton won the Cadet Girls' Singles and Sanika Karandikar won the U13s final. Leamington's Earl Sweeney won the Veteran Singles and the Veteran Doubles with Phil Paine, also from



Leamington.

Earl overcame more Spa players, Alan Jones in the singles, and Jones with Mike Bishop in the doubles. Jones kept up the pressure and so won the Veteran Over 50 Singles against

Graham Hoskin from Birmingham. In consistent form, Graham Hoskin was able to pick up the Veteran Over 60 Singles title, in a well contested competition. In the Restricted Singles events, Jason Essex overcame John Chandler in the Men's final, Sarah Riach over Samantha Apostol in the Ladies Restricted final and Alan Caffrey overcame Jack Williamson in the fifth set of the Boys' Restricted final.

WORCESTERSHIRE

By Ken Walton

County Vets 2nd team news and an excellent 9-1 victory away against Shropshire 2nds, played at the Albrighton Table Tennis Club, familiar to many of our players through local league connections. Chris Maiden dropped the one singles to Brian Rainford, but Nicky Mytton, Eric Hardman and Margaret Dignum remained unbeaten, with Nicky and Eric both beating home no.1 Tony Ackeroyd. Although unofficially 'retired' from County table tennis this season, Maiden once again helped out at short notice when no. 1 Ray Dixon went down with flu the day before the match.

The County league kicked off at Evesham High School under the watchful gaze of Mike Prior and Matt Hartwell, with only Dudley not sending a team along on the day.

The title would appear to be heading for either Bromsgrove or Worcester as both top the table with the second session planned for the same venue.

YORKSHIRE

By Barry Snowden

One of the success stories in the Yorkshire area is the

Ryedale Table Tennis League which is situated between York and Scarborough in the north eastern region of the county. From virtually nothing within a few seasons the league boasts 2 divisions, 25 teams, 138 players of which 15 are active junior players with many more playing in non-competitive action under the guidance of coaching secretary, current ETTA tutor of the year Cliff Edens. Under the watchful eye of league secretary John Gasgoine, the league goes from

strength to strength and is achieving success at all levels from junior to veterans not only in local competitions but county and national events.

Cadets - Three hopefuls travelled to Hull Table Tennis Club for the second day of the Yorkshire Cadet League Division 2 recently. Adam Ridley, Richard Addison and Andrew Cavanagh who are all part of Helmsley Table Tennis Club, played against two teams from Scarborough, losing both matches 8-1 and 5-4 but gained some

valuable experience.

Seniors - Helmsley A, the current holders of the handicap tournament, the Bower Trophy, are out of the competition. Ruth Purseglove, the sole player from last year's winning team, was joined by young hopefuls Sam Lunn and Adam Ridley as they attempted to stop Ryedale Laundry from knocking them out of the cup.

Juniors - Ryedale School Under 16 Boys team travelled to Billingham in Cleveland as North Yorkshire Schools Champions to play in the 'Zone Final' of the English Schools Table Tennis Competition recently. The team played Northfield School to decide who would go through to Blackburn as the Zone winners. Charlie Allott, Edward Fambely and Sam Lunn scored an impressive 5-3 victory against the fancied Northfield School and progressed through the next round.

Veterans - Ryedale Veterans 1st and 2nd teams both won 7-3 in divisions 2 and 3 of the Yorkshire Veteran Leagues. The 1st team played Huddersfield 2 in Division 2 and had a worrying start when team captain, Cliff Edens, lost his first game to Philip Schofield. Tom Needham stopped the rot with a fine display of blocking against Bob Sanderson.

The 2nd team played Wakefield 4th team in Division 3 and each of the players came away with 2 wins each. Ruth Purseglove, Gerald Cosens and Ray Mitchell won some very close games and two of the three that they lost went to 5 sets. The combination of Ruth and Ray in the doubles proved a good choice as they comfortably won 3-0. At the end of the first half of the season, the 2nd team are in 7th place out of 10 in Division 3 and the 1st team are placed 3rd.

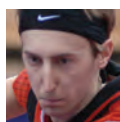
RANKINGS

Exciting times as another young star David Mead, creeps into the men's senior top 10. In the Women's Wu Yue Jiao has surged to the second spot replacing Joanna Parker. For further details please ring Jennifer Sherwin on 01424 722 52

SENIOR MEN



1 ALAN COOKE



2 ALEX PERRY



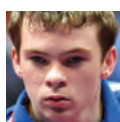
3 ANDREW BAGGAILEY



4 ANDREW RUSHTON



5 GARETH HERBERT



6 PAUL DRINKHALL



7 TERRY YOUNG



8 DARIUS KNIGHT ↑



9 ADAM BLEAKLEY ↑



10 DAVID MEADS ↑

- 11** Craig Bryant
- 12** John Holland
- 13** Tim Yarnell
- 14** Bryn Drinkhall
- 15** Dale Barham
- 16** Daniel Reed
- 17** David Meads
- 18** Mark Richard Smith
- 19** John Hilton
- 20** Abdul Wuraola

JUNIOR BOYS

- 1** Paul Drinkhall
- 2** Darius Knight
- 3** Tim Yarnall
- 4** Gavin Evans
- 5** Bradley Evans

CADET BOYS

- 1** Gavin Evans
- 2** Wing-Yung Chan
- 3** Myles Evans
- 4** Matthew Ware
- 5** Christopher Doran

UNDER 13 BOYS

- 1** Gavin Evans
- 2** Liam Pitchford
- 3** Daniel Lowe
- 4** Xiaoyang Ma
- 5** Greame Barella

VETERAN MEN

- 1** Ritchie Venner
- 2** Abdul Wuraola
- 3** Nigel Eckersley
- 4** John Hilton
- 5** Jo Kennedy

SENIOR WOMEN



1 HELEN LOWER



2 WU YUE JIAO ↑



3 JOANNA PARKER



4 LINDA MARCH



5 GEORGINA WALKER



6 KELLY SIBLEY



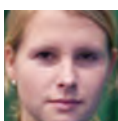
7 NATALIE BAWDEN



8 MYSKOVA MARKETKA ↑



9 ABIGAIL EMBLING



10 ADOMEYTE EGLE ↑

- 11** Lindsey Reynolds
- 12** Zarzycka Marina
- 13** Lauren Spink
- 14** Saijo Koori
- 15** Joanna Roberts
- 16** Karen Shepherd
- 17** Naomi Wilson
- 18** Lesley Keast
- 19** Shu Huang
- 20** Nicola White

JUNIOR GIRLS

- 1** Kelly Sibley
- 2** Lauren Spink
- 3** Sarra Wang
- 4** Melanie Farquhar
- 5** Emma Vickers

CADET GIRLS

- 1** Emma Vickers
- 2** Rachel Jamieson
- 3** Melissa Wright
- 4** Mary Fuller
- 5** Reena Ardeshana

UNDER 13 GIRLS

- 1** Ayonija Sundararajan
- 2** Karina Lefevre
- 3** Martha Travis
- 4** Lucy Davidson
- 5** Emily Bates

VETERAN WOMEN

- 1** Shu Huang
- 2** Jill Harris
- 3** Karen Smith
- 4** Sandra Harper
- 5** Jan Johns

Butterfly Grand Prix Satellite tournament - Hitchin
British League Weekend - Commonwealth Games -
Melbourne - County Championships (6) - Junior and
MAIN EVENTS MARCH 2006
Senior County Premier W/E (2)

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY 1 	THURSDAY 2	FRIDAY 3	SATURDAY 4 <i>Butterfly Grand Prix Satellite tournament - Hitchin</i>	SUNDAY 5 <i>Butterfly Grand Prix Satellite tournament - Hitchin</i>
TUESDAY					
MONDAY 6	WEDNESDAY 8	THURSDAY 9	FRIDAY 10	SATURDAY 11 <i>British League Weekend</i>	SUNDAY 12 <i>British League Weekend</i>
TUESDAY 7					
MONDAY 13	WEDNESDAY 15 <i>Commonwealth Games - Melbourne</i>	THURSDAY 16 <i>Commonwealth Games - Melbourne</i>	FRIDAY 17  <i>Commonwealth Games - Melbourne</i>	SATURDAY 18 <i>County Championships (6)</i>	SUNDAY 19 <i>Commonwealth Games - Melbourne</i>
TUESDAY 14					
MONDAY 20	WEDNESDAY 22	THURSDAY 23	FRIDAY 24	SATURDAY 25 <i>Junior and Senior County Premier W/E (2)</i>	SUNDAY 26  <i>Junior and Senior County Premier W/E (2)</i>
TUESDAY 21					
MONDAY 27	WEDNESDAY 29	THURSDAY 30	FRIDAY 31		
TUESDAY 28					

VISIT WWW.ENGLISHTABLETENNIS.ORG.UK FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FORTHCOMING EVENTS



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Championships 2005-07
National Team Finals 2005-07
England Team Clothing 2005-07



Grand Prix 2005-2007
ETTA Senior/Junior/Cadet
Nationals 2005-07
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