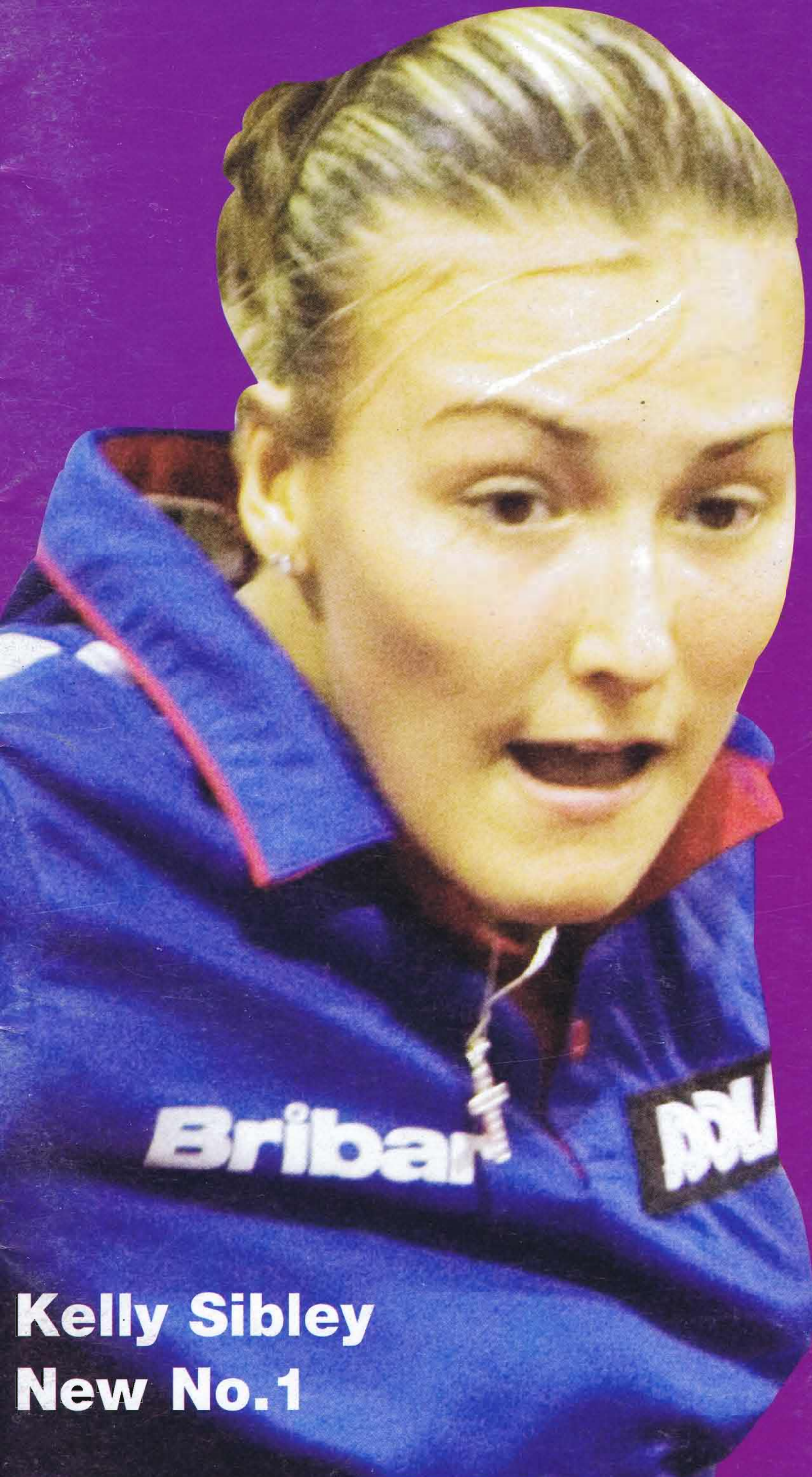


table tennis news

Official Magazine of the English Table Tennis Association

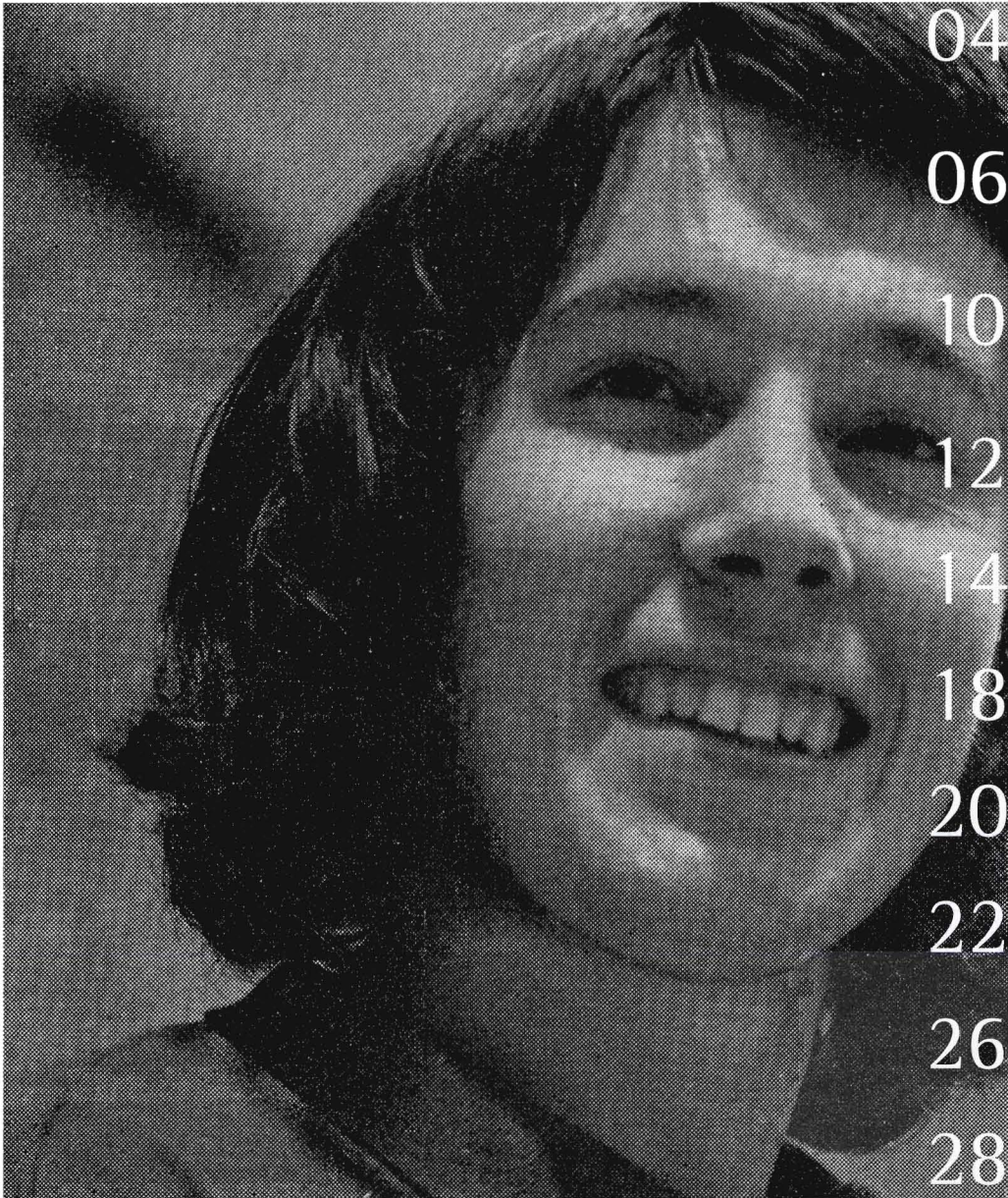


Kelly Sibley
New No.1

Chester Barnes
Rediscovered magician

Marty Reisman
The legend lives on

Plus:
Paul Whiting
Discipline discussion
Reading Resource
and
the latest news
and results



04

Straight Talk

Alex Murdoch brings you up to date with the latest developments in the ETTA

06

Marty Reisman

Howard Jacobson continues in final of his trilogy about the man from the big apple

10

News Update

Catch up on all the latest news snippets and personal achievements

12

Paul Whiting

Insider information about one of our top coaches

14

News Update

More tantalising snippets from the world of TT

18

Red Card

Jim Beckley brings us up to date with disciplinary proceeding

20

Reading Resource

Find out how this top club is achieve great results.

22

Chester Barnes

The magician of table tennis reviewed

26

Local Technicalities

Matthew Syed tell us about his greatest disappointment

28

Results Round up

Butterfly Grand Prix, County Championships and more

30

County Championships

A review of the latest action from in the county championships

32

British League

Oxford Fireplace Centre continue their top form

34

News Update

More tantalising snippets from the world of TT

36

County Roundup

News from around the country

43

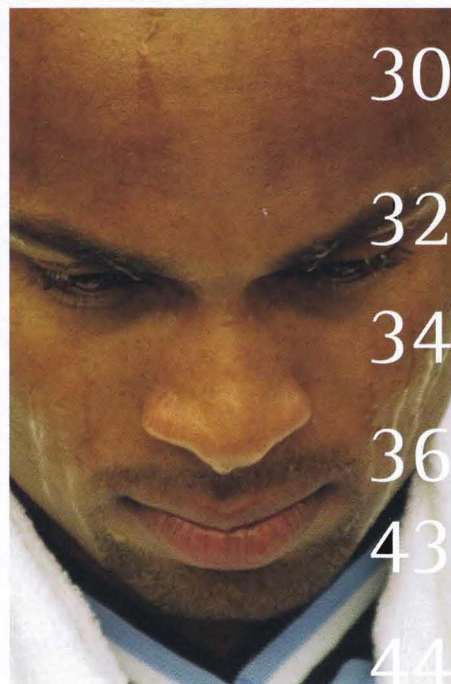
Rankings

Top players plus questions with the impressive Kelly Sibley

44

Event Listings

Guide to January's TT events



Bribar

Table Tennis

TIBHAR RAPID

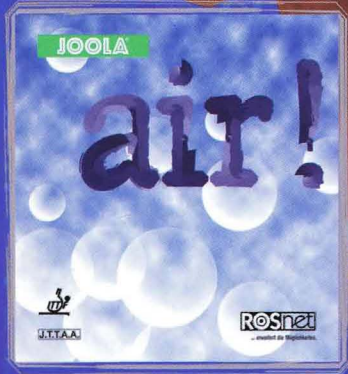
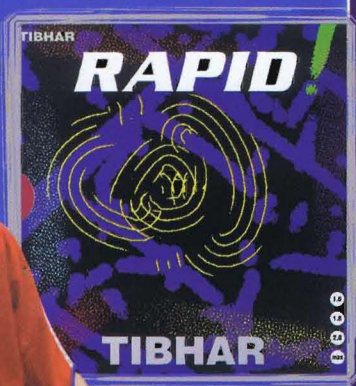
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Thickness:	1.8 / 2.0					Sale Price £17.99
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from the editor



RICHARD PETTIT, EDITOR



HOWARD JACOBSON

A superb novelist and broadcaster, Howard Jacobson is best known to table tennis fanatics across the world as the author of 'The Mighty Walzer' released back in 1999.



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.



JEREMY WILSON

Jeremy is a sports journalist who writes regularly for both The Guardian and The Sunday Times. He has also played senior and junior county table tennis for Hampshire.



STEVE KERNS

After 15 years as Chelmsford League Press Officer, Steve is concentrating on his duties as British League Press Officer and Essex County Press Officer. Steve has also been a regular member of the Essex Veterans third team.

Another eventful year for table tennis is nearing completion. Competitions, events and governance, many changes have made it an interesting, exciting and certainly busy sport to write about, and play. Ending the year as number one is certainly a great achievement for two of our top talents, Kelly Sibley and Paul Drinkhall, but what does the future hold for them? Will the funding secure a world class training facility for these two and others as they strive towards 2012? These and other questions will need answers in the New Year so keep yours coming in.

Chester Barnes is a name that continues to echo around our sport. A somewhat aloof character who wowed the public and certainly pushed the boundaries in his hey day is described by Jeremy Wilson starting on page 22. Matthew Syed talks about his frailties when faced with his nemesis Sonning Common and Jim Beckley bring us in order as he delves into the red card phenomenon.

Sadly Howard Jacobson's trilogy on the tremendous Marty Reisman draws to a close in this issue. A man I was fortunate enough to share a few words with recently. Fanatical, infectious and truly unique the self promotion whiz was delighted with Howard's work. Whilst I listened to his deep New Yorker's twang I heard the word 'Hollywood' ushered mid conversation as if it was just a word to stick a sentence together. "Did you say Hollywood?" I replied inquisitively. "Yeah didn't you know they're interested?" "No." It seems the chapters of Marty's astonishing career are to be recited on the big screen and given the bright lights and red carpet treatment. So once you've finished reading Jacobson's superlatives don't be down hearted. The next installment is in the making..... Thanks for all your comments, keep them rolling in and I wish you all the best for this festive season.

"THERE IS HARDBAT AND HARDBAT" HOWARD JACOBSON PAGE 6 "WE HAVE BUILT UP A SUCCESSFUL CLUB WITHOUT GRANTS" JOHN SMITH PAGE 12 "EXISTING SANCTIONS WERE NOT STRONG ENOUGH DETERRENT FOR A FEW PLAYERS" JIM BECKLEY PAGE 18 "CHESTER BARNES. TO ANY TABLE TENNIS ENTHUSIAST OF A CERTAIN AGE, JUST THOSE TWO WORDS ARE ENOUGH TO EVOKE IMAGES OF EXCITEMENT, GLAMOUR AND EVEN A DOSE OF MAGIC." JEREMY WILSON PAGE 22 "ON EACH OCCASION I WAS FOILED BY THAT MAN HALIDAY" MATTHEW SYED PAGE 26

Festive Wishes

As this will be the last issue before the Christmas and New Year break, Val and I send you and your family our best wishes and hope that you have an excellent time over the festive season and a super 2007.

REACHING THE TOP

Our young players continue to make progress with both Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight making the last 64 in major senior Pro Tour events, and Gavin Evans winning gold medals in both singles and doubles in a recent major open cadet competition in Europe. Despite these successes and the progress being made, as a country we still have a long way to go to reach the heights needed at senior level to win major events in the world and European arenas. Our goal continues to be that England becomes the Table Tennis nation it deserves and should be within the world of our great sport.

We cannot stand still as an organisation and we shall need to continue to make changes over the coming years in regard to increasing participation, developing our club structure and having resources in place to meet the needs of the new UK coaching requirements. Support and help our county, league and club structure to be better and improve communications to everyone will continue to be foremost in our minds.

Our goal continues to be that England becomes the Table Tennis nation it deserves and should be within the world of our great sport.

MODERNISATION

It is essential that our corporate governance be modernised to bring us up-to-date as an organisation for today's and our future membership. It seems crazy to me that, for example, new "doping" regulations are put in place by the Government and for us to change our rules to encompass "doping". These have firstly to be confirmed and drawn up by our Rules Committee, then submitted to National Council for approval and then finally approved and voted on by the Membership at an AGM, a procedure that could take up to 12 months. This is just one simple example

of why our decision-making process needs modernising.

I hope you find the new website easier to use and more informative. As you can imagine the amount of information which had to be transferred over was considerable and over the coming months further updating will take place.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

A number of new funding opportunities for our sport are being discussed with our partners and we anticipate in the next few months they will be concluded. We hope this will result in additional resources being made available to our sport and its members.

I have continued to attend events and meetings with the table tennis fraternity not only to play but also to answer questions and give updates on our sport. My team and I are available to meet with you at any time to discuss our sport and help you wherever practical.

QUESTION TIME

Q. Why do we need individuals' data?

A. It is essential for any national governing body of a sport to have details of its membership. In addition part of the agreement we have with our funding partners is to ensure the money they give us is increasing participation, showing the make up of our membership, how many players, coaches and volunteers we have, so they can report nationally on all the sports. As a sport we lead many others in much of what we do, however, in terms of who and how many members we have, our sport is well behind, and we are being strongly urged to put this right or suffer potential reduced funding.

Q. What are the benefits to a local league player?

A. The benefits are many but it is up to the individual which of these benefits they want to use. From my perspective as a local league player it's about direct communications and being kept up to date. I am asked daily many questions which if we were able to directly communicate with our membership they would be not just updated but in a much better position to understand and use the benefits of being part of the ETTA.

Q. What are the cost implications?

A. If you asked a local player what his/her affiliation fee is to the ETTA the majority would not know. This is because generally they pay as part of a team and the fees cover the ETTA fee, local league fees, county fees and in many cases the cost of the venue. The present affiliation system is based upon a four-person team which equates to just over £4 each per annum.

This annual team affiliation fee increases every year and is based upon the Retail Price Index, which is part of the Rules of the ETTA approved at an AGM.

Any proposals for individual membership and changing to an individual fee for affiliation will require the approval at an AGM with considerable consultation before this approval could be sought.

I personally believe that the members deserve, for example, personal accident insurance, regular newsletters or the

Are there some issues you would like answered within this section? If the answer is yes simply e-mail them to richard.pettit@etta.co.uk



Straight Talk

by Alex Murdoch
ETTA Chairman

equivalent TTN, a diary, a fair and equitable voting structure, be able to purchase ETTA merchandise at a reasonable price, have an opportunity to purchase tickets for events at both home and abroad at a lower cost than to the general public, and have a membership card which will give them discounts with retail organisations.

The costing structure for this cannot be determined or raised with the membership until we have a database of our members.

Q. How will it benefit our sport?

A. Show to our funding partners and to outside of the Table Tennis fraternity that we know and understand the needs of our members and our sport. Increase our opportunities for sponsorship and this will give us a better selling tool with TV companies. How can any organisation be recognised in real terms when they do not have a database of their members?

Many affiliated players and officials do not perceive they are part of the ETTA and that the ETTA is just the "Establishment" trying to get money from them. This should not be the case, we should all be proud to be members and part of the "family" of English Table Tennis and share in the "ownership" of the sport we are involved in and we all love.

From my perspective as a local league player it's about direct communications and being kept up to date.

Q. Is it just a money exercise?

A. It is not an exercise designed to increase fees but one that works towards improving the way we operate and communicate to our members, understanding their needs better and being able to act and manage our sport better in the 21st century.

To operate any NGB requires money, the ETTA relies too heavily on outside funding compared with most other sports.

Any changes in affiliation that has been in existence for over 40 years sometimes creates negative responses, we need to move with the times and not fall behind others who are competing with us for new members.

We have had in the Rules of the ETTA for many years the requirement for leagues and clubs to provide data on their members so a database can be established. Let us all work together to move this process of Individual Registration forward and I urge you to complete your IR forms as soon as possible.

To this day Reisman can be comically precise about the horrible sensation of playing against sponge – “It’s like scrambled eggs out here,” he calls to me during some side-event in Fort Lauderdale, his opponent an especially unpretty and ham-fisted sponger...

But his objection at the last is a societal one. It’s harmony he’s missing. Harmony and methodology and order. One word crops up again and again in Reisman’s critique of post-Satoh ping-pong – chaos.

And that, really, should have been that. To the victor the spoils. To the loser – oblivion. And although Reisman did win another US title in 1960 (his one faithless shmooze with sponge), oblivion, as far as tournament table tennis was concerned, was where he was heading. He opened his own ping-pong parlour on 96th Street. Played for money. Turned up as a ping-pong clown on television. Made a bit of a fool of the game which he felt had made a fool of him. Then suddenly he was back, ‘lured out of retirement’, as he puts it, by the reinstatement of a hardbat event at the US Open in Las Vegas in 1997. Which he won. Won with dash, according to all accounts, won magnificently. The come-back kid. And having won, was now ready to challenge the whole world. Not just fellow 5 ply and rubber pimple players, you must understand, but every hated thieving sponger out there. Roll up, roll up! At last, fired by a forty year old grievance, determined to prove once and for all that his pocket had been picked in 1952, he was staking his own money on a showdown with any player in the country bold enough to disarm, toss in his sponge, and slug it out with Marty, hardbat to hardbat. No fool like a resurrected fool.

It was Jimmy Butler, three times National Champion, not yet thirty, who took up the challenge. Romantics bet on Marty. Promptings of the heart again. More realistic punters went for Butler. Secretly, Marty’s admirers held their breath, fearing an annihilation. But there was no annihilation. Nothing like. Yes, Butler won it, won the re-match too, but the fight Reisman made of it – looking like a possible winner himself there for a while – made friends even of his detractors. Now not only was Reisman back, the old game too was recovering its glory. Top players were rumoured to be taking up the old fashioned paddle again, if only for the fun of it. Today there is a Classic Hardbat magazine, put out by a Hardbat Committee peopled by poetical hardbat diehards, publicists and polemicists of the classical game, and at their centre, tricky as a spider, only more

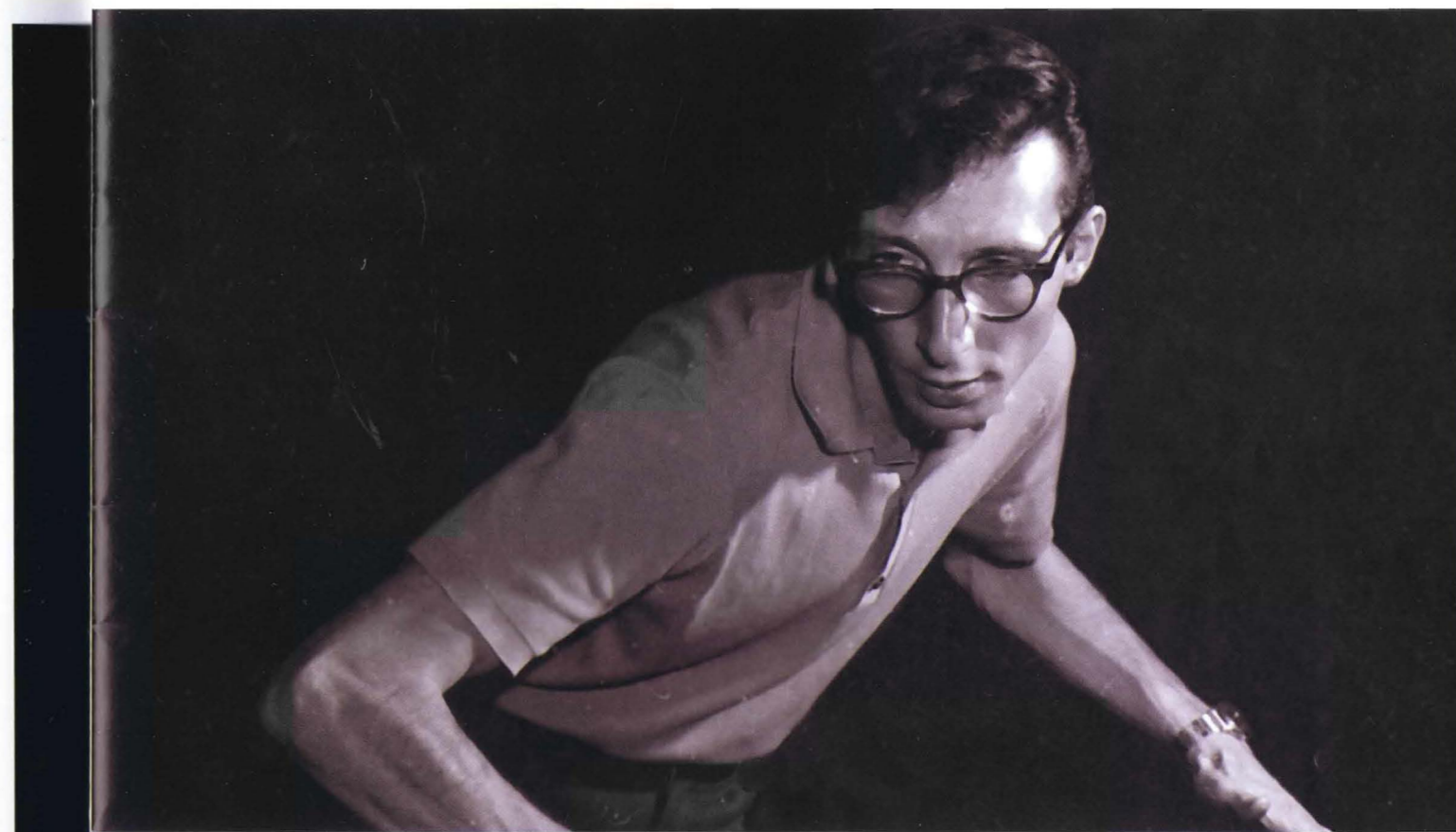
garrulous, Marty.

Outside the Convention Centre in Fort Lauderdale players are glueing up. For glues too are now part of that technology which, in Marty’s words, ‘covers up shortcomings in a game the way gravy covers up bad meat.’ The modern ping-pong player begins his day reaffixing his rubbers to his blade, selecting from glues slithery, glues speedy, glues that will leap out of his hand and play his ping-pong for him. And he glues up outside the hall because if he glues up in it he risks damaging the health of other players and spectators, except that there are no spectators. At the World Championships there is a glue-sniffing machine which tests bats deemed too toxic to play with. At the American Open they are more trusting.

Inside, on the practice tables, young kids are getting last minute coaching in the modern mechanical game, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit. They stand with their feet apart, bouncing, automatons treating every ball the same. They could be asleep. But their bats are deadly. Inverted pimples on sponge. You don’t buy them like that; you start with a blade made of whichever blend of plywood, carbon and fibreglass your game demands, then set about assembling the weaponry you fancy. You choose the sheets of rubber, packaged like CDs: Salvo, Samba, Zenith-G, Tackiness, depending on how you like your surfaces – spinny, slippery, sticky – and how you like your pimples – in or out. You’re making decisions about speed, spin, silence. When the kids with the closed eyes hit the ball you don’t see it or hear it. Chaos.

There’s been another change to the bashful, introspective game I used to play. Now, when you win a point, you raise a fist, stamp the ground, and make a noise identical to Homer Simpson’s self-denigrating – ‘D’oh!’ The difference being that your ‘D’oh!’ is an ejaculation of personal triumph. ‘Offering to make drama,’ Marty mutters scathingly to me, ‘where there isn’t any.’

For those of us hoping for drama from Marty himself, the worry is whether he is as confident as he says he is. There is the arm to take into consideration, the double loss to Jimmy Butler, and the inadequacy of what he has the gall to describe as ‘rigorous four-hour training sessions’ with Steve



Berger. I watch him bumble through his early rounds, tentative and out of touch, complaining about the light, the space, the floors, the conditions of modern life, but always doing just enough to get through. ‘I’m in a struggle to the death,’ I hear him saying to himself, ‘with someone I could once give 15 points to.’ And the truth is it’s that same knowledge on the part of his opponent that allows him through. Eye to eye with the possibility of beating Marty Reisman, most opponents cave in. He is the object of an almost universal veneration. Players from all over the world cross the hall to watch him, to beg an autograph, to tell him he is their lifelong hero, the reason they took up ping-pong in the first place. One by one, seeing me with a notepad in my hand, they repeat the tribute – ‘This guy’s a living legend, you know.’ Wanting to be certain I’ve got that, Marty says, ‘You hear that, Howard? A living legend. Nice, huh?’

Yeah, nice. The fear, though, is that sooner or later he is going to run up against an opponent who not bothered by living legends. And he does. Barry Dattel from New Jersey in the quarters. This is Marty’s third day of play in Fort Lauderdale. He is already out of all the any-old-surface Micky Mouse events he had entered, as befuddled and maddened by sponge as he was in 1952. But this is the big hardbat one.

Beat Barry Dattel in the quarters and he meets Ty Hoff, the canny chicken-boned holder from Georgia, in the semis. That’s a match everyone has been looking forward to. When Steve Berger, who has finally got here, learns that Marty has only Barry Dattel to knock over before he makes the last four, he makes a gesture of dismissal. ‘Joke city, Marty!’ The rest of us are not so sure. Marty hasn’t been attacking well. He’s been playing safe, pushing, trying to chisel his way through his matches. What will happen when he has to hit?

Because Marty Reisman is a living legend in Puerto Rico too, he has a legion of Puerto Rican kids cheering for him. Every time Marty gets one past Barry Dattel, the kids cheer. But as the match progresses they have less and less to cheer about. In dribs and drabs they leave the playing area. You can feel it going Dattel’s way. It’s a petulant contest, all stops and starts and quibbles about perspiration on the ball. But that suits Dattel. He doesn’t have to do much. Just stay in there. Keep the ball in play. Let Marty make the running if he dare. Because it’s obvious now that Marty dare not. He has one of the best forehands in the world in his locker, but he won’t bring it out. Does he fear failure suddenly? For years he has been mouthing off about his hardbat prowess, throwing out challenges to the best players in the country, wagering his own

money on his forehand. What if it means to make a liar of him in the end? So he keeps it under lock and key and plays pat-ball.

And loses.

A great sadness descends on the arena. Only Barry Dattel is in good spirits. Many of Marty's supporters cannot even bear to commiserate with him. Yoshiko mops him down. I can tell from her expression that she doesn't know the result. She follows him faithfully from match to match, pinning his number to his back, wiping the table - an exquisite apology for Satoh from the people of Japan - but she has never understood how the game is scored. Maybe he wants her to stay in ignorance. Maybe tonight he will tell her he has won.

To me, in stream of consciousness, he says, 'Finished . . . that's it . . . where does this leave me? washed up . . . this is the worst loss of my career. . . career . . . ha! . . . it's now nothing but a shambles.' For the first time since he arrived in Fort Lauderdale he looks his age.

Tim Boggan comes over, wildly jubilant. He wears a gold table tennis bat stud in his ear, the ball a diamond. He blazes so furiously it is a miracle the stud is not molten. His eyes seize mine. 'That's the end of the article, huh!' he says, like a man vindicated. I am speechless. Sure, they're all rivals, these old stagers, but can he be pleased, can he feel somehow justified, that Marty's lost? And then I see that I have it wrong, that he is furious with Marty for proving him right about lack of match-fitness, for letting himself, for letting all of us, down. 'There's a big difference, Marty,' he snaps almost pitilessly, 'between playing Steve Berger every night and going into a tournament!'

But already Marty is starting his repair work on himself. He returns to the table he has just lost on, to inspect the net. 'That's the crap they pull in the so-called modern game,' he says. But whether he means the net is too high or too low, too loose or too tight, I cannot tell. 'I was bothered by the mushiness of the ball,' he says to an aguished fan. 'The conditions are terrible. You can't do any kind of fine play out there.' Then, after another ten minutes, to me he says, 'I've still got a whole life in front of me.'

I sleep badly that night. This must be what sport is for: to absorb all the cruelties and injustices of life. After some sporting losses - Ali to Spinks, Rosewall to Connors at Wimbledon in '74 - I have suffered the desolation of the dying. When you recover you are stronger, but first you must lie in pain. That's the deal. God knows how Marty is doing. Tomorrow I fly home and think about something else. But what else does Marty have to think about?

He is there the following day for the finals of the Hardbat,

looking stronger than I expected him to look. But then I was expecting Methuselah. The final is between Ty Hoff, who did for Barry Dattel in the semis, and Lily Yip who plays for the women's national team with her sponge, but likes to mix it with the old guys using hardbat. After a five game thriller, Ty Hoff takes it. By general consent, this is the only final to provide excitement. Every other event climaxes in spin serve, silent kill and 'D'oh!' So it's a win for the enthusiasts of hardbat, whoever they support.

I am pleased that Marty is able to be generous about the match and leave himself out of it. He does have one demur, though. There is hardbat and hardbat. The only pimped rubber that should really be allowed is made by Leyland in Britain. He doesn't know what Ty Hoff and Lily Yip are using, but it definitely isn't Leyland. I become short-tempered hearing this. Enough is enough. It seems to me it's one thing wishing sponge away, but that the hardbat movement will make a fool of itself if it fetishizes a single product used at one particular moment in the history of the game. Not all change is beneficial, but no change is paralysis. Marty isn't swayed by this. He hasn't yet finished hunting down illegal substances. The long day wanes, but still he is pursuing order. A little later I see him deep in conference with Ty Hoff, inspecting Ty's bat and comparing it with his own. At the dinner celebrating his defeat of Boris Spassky, Bobby Fischer tried to get his opponent to run through some of their games on a pocket chess set he was carrying. The obsessed never want it to be over. But Fischer at least was obsessing from a position of strength. Marty is talking his way back into contention as a loser. Why would Ty buy into this? Then I hear that Marty has issued another of his challenges - roll up! roll up! - and that Ty Hoff, US Hardbat Champion for only two hours, has accepted it. He will play Marty using one of Marty's Leyland spares.

I have a plane to sanity to catch, challenge or no challenge. I am, though, able to stay just long enough to take in the first game, to watch Marty drilling majestic forehands, finding angles that don't exist, driving Ty Hoff further and further back from the table, and yes, yes, winning. He is as limber as a teenager. He is leaping like Nijinsky again, and doing pirouettes. And all at once I realize I have been nursing too dark and heroic a conception of him. He isn't Lear. He isn't Ulysses. He is Wilkins Micawber, never to be cast down for long.

Before fortune has time to redistribute her favours once more, I wave goodbye. The last I see of him, Marty is ahead one game, punching the air and, for all I know to the contrary, shouting 'D'oh!'

the end.

NEWS

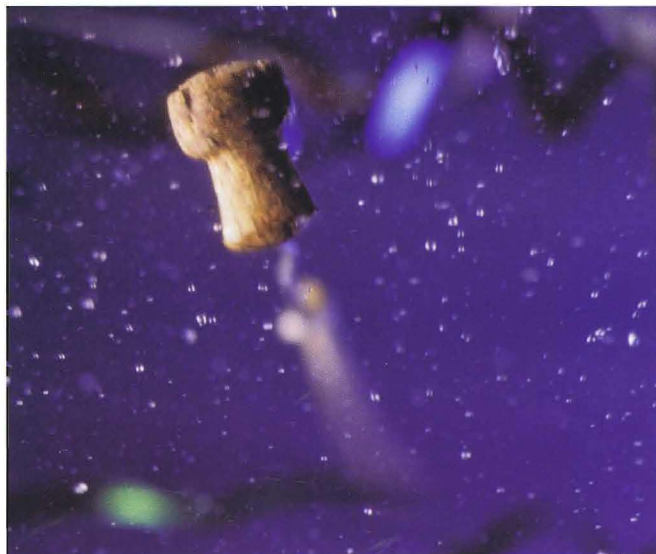
Jack cracks the top 100

JACK Hunter-Spivey breaks into country's top 100 table tennis players...

The Halton ace's achievements are all the more remarkable given he has cerebral palsy and takes on able-bodied opponents from a wheelchair.

The 11-year-old has only been playing seriously for about nine months but already has ambitions to take part in the 2012 Paralympics in London.

Jack lives in Widnes and trains once a week at Halton Stadium. He has played for Halton in the National Cadet League and is 99th in the English Table Tennis Association's Under-12 boys' rankings.



Barnardo's were involved with taking Jack along to the club where he has been helped and supported by coaches and another wheelchair-using player Tony Edge.

Karen Tonge, Chairman of Halton Club and League, said: 'After playing for less than 12 months, Jack shows much promise but he needs a sports wheelchair and table tennis equipment of a higher standard.'

The youngster has already tasted success in competitions.

He won the Under-16s table tennis event at a district rotary clubs sport for the disabled event at Sutton Leisure Centre in St Helens.

Regular at 81

Super vet Len Griffiths can still pack a smart forehand drive despite being 81.

He's still hitting winners and he has no plans to put his bat away yet. He's played in the Plymouth League even since starting his table tennis career in the RAF. Before that he remembers playing at the local youth club in the 30s. "I'm enjoying it and aim to keep going as long as I can but maybe this will be my last season." Don't hold your breath, Len has been saying that for the last ten years. Not many are playing table tennis on a regular basis at 81 – that is unless you know better! If you do, let us know.

Aguilera is addicted

The superstar singer has revealed her favourite hobbies are shopping and table tennis. Christina, 25, admits she very rarely has time to indulge in her pastimes. However she has been filmed playing table tennis with fellow star Linda Perry on MTV - view the action at <http://tinyurl.com/vq64l>



He cried when he finished the tournament because he was so tired and he spent Monday in bed recovering.

Non-stop display...

Kenny Peckham, a member of the Lancing and Sompting Lions Club, played non-stop table tennis against a steady stream of opponents for an unbelievable 24 hours from Saturday noon to Sunday. This exceptional display was in aid of the Kyle Overington sensory room appeal. Kyle, a toddler, recently survived a rare strain of meningitis but was unfortunately left brain damaged and deaf. His mum, Sandra, wants to set up a sensory room for him at their Shoreham home but needs to raise thousands of pounds for the specialist equipment. Local MP Tim Loughton started the tournament, which raised £1,200 for the appeal in sponsorship.

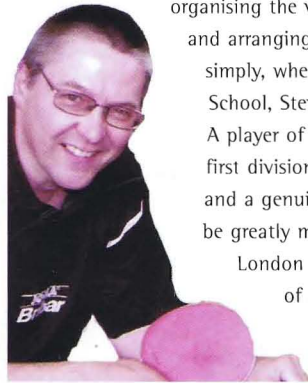
Kenny's wife, Sue, who is also a Lions Club member, said: "Kenny and I were so moved by the plight of Kyle we wanted to do some fund-raising. Kenny has a bad back but he was determined to keep going, even though he had to stand to play the whole 24 hours. He cried when he finished the tournament because he was so tired and he spent Monday in bed recovering. We are really pleased with how much we raised."

Steve Tatam

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Steve Tatam, who died prematurely, at the age of 51.

Steve, a level 3 coach, has been known to the Ilford League since 2000, and in those six years, his club, Langdon Community, has achieved an amazing level of success. The club was originally set up to help deprived children in the East London area and Steve Tatam was the club's driving force for seven years. During that time the Langdon Club achieved PremierClub - "Clubmark" status. They entered the Ilford League in the 2000/1 season and the following year their two teams won divisions three and four respectively. They entered an additional team in the League in each of the following two seasons and in the 2003/4 season they amazingly provided the champions in all four divisions, an unprecedented achievement. They are the reigning League Champions but have unfortunately pulled out of the League this year when Steve found out that the level of support from the Langdon School had diminished and he also moved away from the area.

Much of the above success was down to Steve's determination, drive and vision and it is of little surprise that Steve became known affectionately as "Mr Langdon" wherever he went. Steve did everything for the young people in his club ranging from organising the venue, the club's administration and arranging the club's coaching sessions. Put simply, whenever someone visited Langdon School, Steve would be there to greet them. A player of some note himself - lower Ilford first division standard, popular, well-respected and a genuine Table Tennis follower, he will be greatly missed. Table Tennis in East London will be all the poorer for the loss of Steve Tatam.



Knight plays Jimmy Carr



Recently Darius Knight was invited on to the New Paul O'Grady Show, a prime time chat show on Channel Four. Originally Darius was scheduled to have a game with Rio Ferdinand following the recent release of his autobiography in which he talks about his obsession with table tennis. However, due to a last minute meeting with Sir Alex, Rio was unable to attend. This left our star to battle it out with top comedian Jimmy Carr and presenter Vernon Kay.

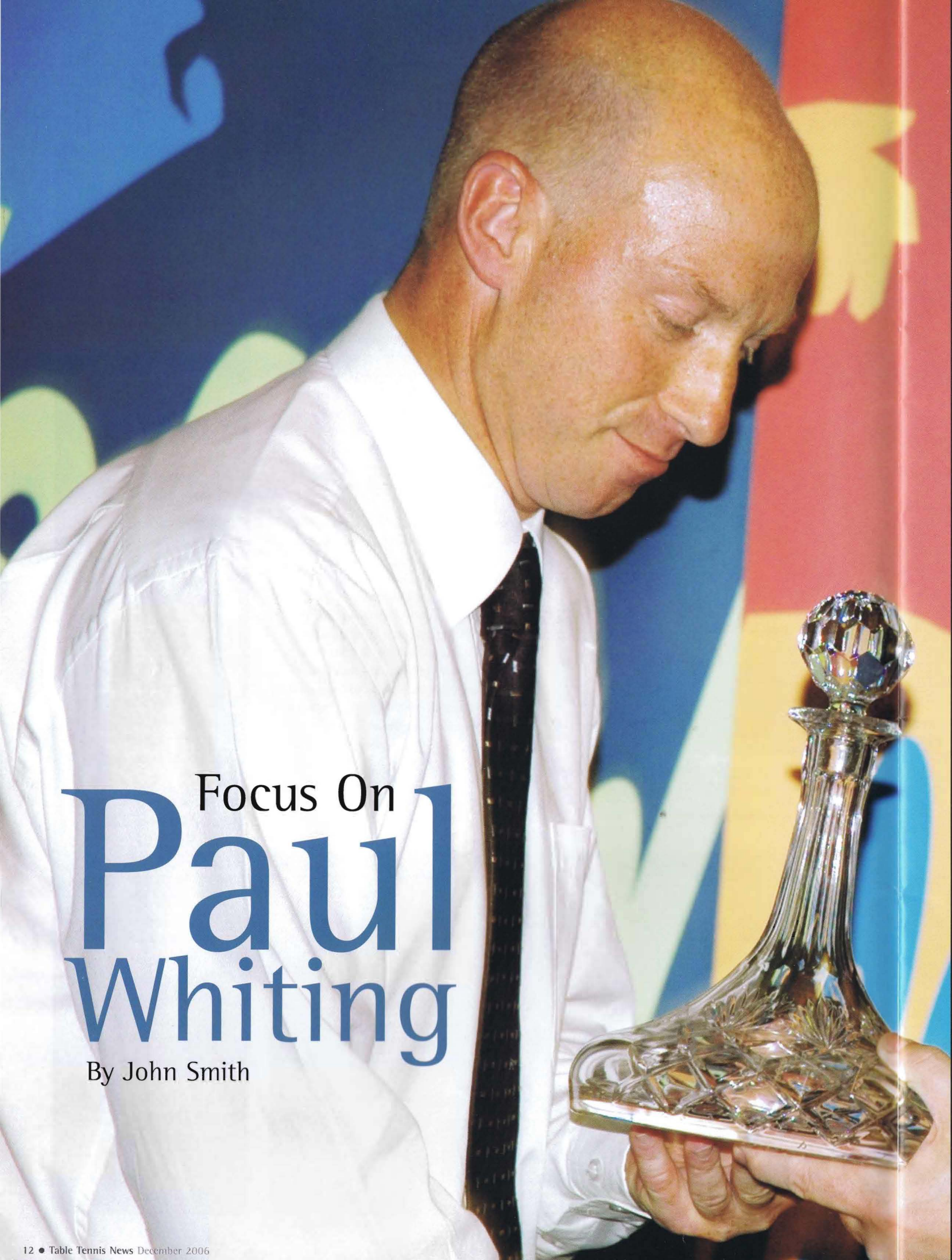
PING PONG in the rain and gardens blooming in parking spaces greeted workers recently, as Farringdon Street, Islington, London, was reclaimed from the cars.

The event, organised by Islington Council, challenged designers to transform a humble parking space into a place of fun and relaxation. It was intended to make people think seriously about what a city would be like without cars.

The winning design was by Nonsense Design and Helena Rivera, who filled their parking space with 600 rosemary plants which were given away to passers-by.

However, much more interesting to the TT fanatic was the initiative taken by landscape designer Katherine Larriva, who placed a table tennis table in her space. She said: "We wanted to have a bit of fun. We are redistributing the space from the vehicles to the pedestrians. However, I don't think we've seen the potential for the 2012 Olympics here!"

Does this mean that all NCP car parks will become the mecca of ping pong? Or next time you take a trip to Tesco's you will be able to gain club card points for winning a game against the trolley boy? What interesting and imaginative ideas can you come up with to promote our sport? Let us know.



Focus On Paul Whiting

By John Smith

I am a relative newcomer to table tennis so Paul's achievements in his prime – international caps, a Commonwealth doubles medal & then his coaching of Alex Perry amongst many others, were well before my time. I first became aware of him when I brought my eight year old son Chris for coaching to Plymouth League HQ & he was downstairs helping Craig Bryant – in a totally different world to us. Time went by, it was obvious even to my untutored eye that Paul knew his business, Craig & others went to pastures new, Chris improved & I asked Paul to coach him, which he agreed to do.

In the meantime, from extremely modest beginnings in 1998, I'd built up a large group of promising youngsters and third rate adults at Woolwell, the only real table tennis club in Plymouth. In 2003/4 Paul's team was rather monotonously running away with the Plymouth League yet again, when he told me that he had always wanted to be part of a genuine club with players of all standards & ages. At the same time he stunned me by saying he wanted to play with Chris in the league the following season. There were also some problems with the venue his (and two other high class) teams had been using.

Things moved on quickly. Paul not only persuaded all three teams to come to Woolwell, but also experienced players like Mike Short and Kevin Buddell to incorporate club youngsters into their teams. Accompanied by discontented rumblings from some league players, five juniors, only one of whom had ever played above division four, found themselves playing in the top tier with the city's best players. All five took the division by storm, helped considerably by the club developments Paul had ignited.

Paul, Kevin & Marketa Myskova encompassed the club from the start. They volunteered their invaluable coaching services & have helped in numerous other ways with new tables, new lighting, repainting the walls, etc. Paul, who is also always the first at the club putting out tables, barriers, etc., and sometimes becomes a taxi service for the juniors he has assisted so much, has had the pleasure of seeing his own children take to the game enthusiastically in the friendly social environment at Woolwell. His wife, Debbie, has thrown herself enthusiastically into the catering as well as playing side of the club. He sets a brilliant example on the table with 100% effort & a superb temperament. Paul still says that he gets more out of the club than he puts in! The ETTA could not have a more deserving coach of the year.

However, a few things got me thinking that there was at least one more big move that could take table tennis forward in the area. Paul gave up his one to one coaching a couple of years ago to devote time, very successfully, to bringing on a large group of good players. Nevertheless he always says that one to one is really the most effective. We in Plymouth are always aware of the small group of extremely talented young players in the south of Cornwall who struggle to get sufficient table time or coaching. Also, due to the huge distances involved, it has not surprisingly been difficult to get some capable young players into the national arena.

I was finally persuaded by my experiences at this year's national under 11 to 14 championships. At their most important event of the season, Martha Travis (already a five time national champion), my daughter Vicky (now national U12 doubles champion & twice age-group finalist), and

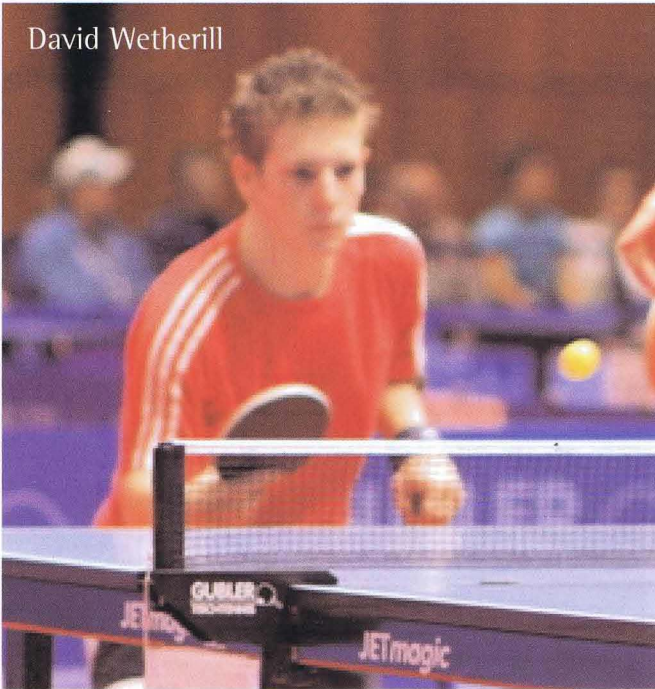
Paul, who is also always the first at the club putting out tables, barriers, etc., and sometimes becomes a taxi service for the juniors he has assisted so much, has had the pleasure of seeing his own children take to the game enthusiastically in the friendly social environment at Woolwell.

Alistair Smith, a very talented top 15 player, were all handicapped by having just an ill-qualified parent to assist them. Their opponents invariably had top national coaches in their corner. I have a stubborn streak. I dislike the preponderance of "grants with everything". We have built up a successful club almost without grants, hopefully providing good value for money. I also dislike the general consensus that coaches can only be paid by grants – and by inference are not worth the money because no-one will actually pay it! I knew we had a coach worth paying & was sure the demand was there. I asked Paul if he wanted to give up his job & become a full-time coach!!

He is now working slowly towards that eventual aim. He will obviously keep his day job until he is sure, beyond reasonable doubt, that the demand & structure are in place to get there. Paul has built up a group of 19 players from around Devon & Cornwall so far, whom he is coaching on a regular basis & will help at tournaments. There have already been pitfalls & no doubt will be more, but we both want to see the considerable potential in the extreme south west develop into a real national force.

NEWS

David Wetherill



"It is going to be tough out there," admitted Wetherill, who plays for DML Woolwell in Division One of the Beacon Electrical Plymouth and District Table Tennis League.

"There are going to be some very good players out there, including the world number five, who is likely to be ranked first. But I am not thinking too much about that. I just want to go as far as I can and I want to push myself up the seedings so I can build up to next year when the rankings really matter. I have got a big chance of making the top 10, but I have to keep working hard."

Before Wetherill flies out to Las Vegas he is in the running for a couple of notable prizes at the Disability Sport England sports awards,

Taking place at Old Trafford cricket ground the 16 year old will be hoping to collect two awards.

Firstly, Wetherill is up for the South West regional award, secondly, the National Rising Star Award, following a strong nomination from his coach, Phil Greenwood.

Finally, just to add to these superb achievements Wetherill has also been selected as one of a group of four players to go to a training camp in Hong Kong early next year where he will train with Chinese players ahead of the Beijing Olympics.

"It is a big boost to be nominated for the two awards and to be selected by the Great Britain coaches," said Wetherill. "And to be chosen by the GB coaches as just one of four players for the camp means a lot to me."

Worldwide for Wetherill

Wetherill takes giant step to place in Beijing

Plymouth disabled player David Wetherill took a giant step to a place at the Beijing Olympics when he climbed to 15th place in the world rankings.

Wetherill did his selection a power of good when he beat South Africa's Zak Khuzwayo at the Montreux 2006 IPC World Championships to help him take home 480 ranking points and move

up the world rankings.

He now has to move up to 10th place to guarantee a place in Beijing, and will be hoping to carry his great form to a tournament in Las Vegas this month. However, he will face tough competition in the US from a field of more than 100 athletes representing countries such as USA, Australia, Canada, Korea and Sweden.

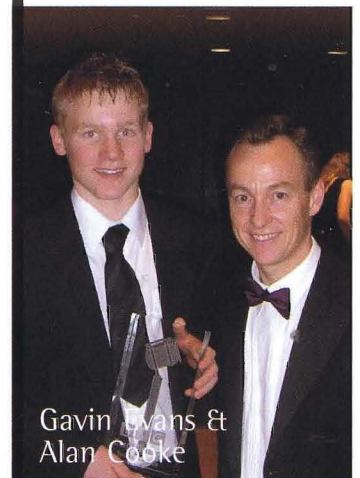
Awards a plenty...

SIMPLY OUTSTANDING

The founder of Mursley, Swanbourne and Little Horwood Table Tennis Club has been awarded the AVNSC/Sport England Alan Holman Trophy for 2005/6. The award given each year 'In Recognition of Outstanding Achievements and/or Service to Sport in North Buckinghamshire' was presented to Paul Hooley by Councillor Hedley Cadd, Chairman of Aylesbury Vale North Sports Council, at the annual awards evening.

A competitor, administrator and organiser in many sports for over 50 years Mr Hooley, who was appointed MBE in 2003, was given the award for his services to table tennis in North Buckinghamshire since moving to the area in 2000.

MSLH TT Club was founded by Mr Hooley, a qualified English Table Tennis Association Coach, in 2001 and he is the chairman, secretary, treasurer and captain. The club has had numerous successes in its short life including winning the Buckingham & District TT League four years running and the



Gavin Evans & Alan Cooke

Please keep your stories rolling in, this is an excellent area in which to showcase your club's and your personal achievements. We will consider all content, so don't delay: get in contact via phone 01424 456217 or email richard.pettit@etta.co.uk

He cried when he finished the tournament because he was so tired and he spent Monday in bed recovering.



Coulson Cup for the past three years, as well as several other trophies in the Milton Keynes/ Buckinghamshire/ Bedfordshire area.

The club's real achievement, however, has been in introducing table tennis to a rural area and attracting so many participants. Nationally table tennis has been in decline for many years and MSLH has reversed this trend. To date over 160 players of all ages (from 4 to 74), backgrounds and abilities have taken part in the club's twice weekly sessions. Many are new to the sport, some are seasoned league players and others have rediscovered a game they enjoyed in their youth. Amongst the more high profile people to have played at the club are the Chairman of the English Table Tennis Association and a former leader of HM's Opposition.

COOKE CLAIMS YET ANOTHER

Everything comes to those who wait..... Alan Cooke, now an established veteran and new World Veteran champion, is celebrating his 40th year by lifting another award.

At the Derbyshire Sports Awards glittering ceremony at the Winging Wheel, in his home town of Chesterfield, he was named the Derbyshire Sports Veteran Sportsperson of the Year. What other awards can our Derby sensation win...Watch this space....

DRINKHALL ALREADY HAS A HAT-TRICK

Paul Drinkhall continues his award winning performances and as such continues to win awards. The youngster from Loftus has recently picked up three coveted awards: the OCS National Young Sports Person award, BBC North East Junior Sports Achievement award and the 2006 Northern Echo Young Sports Personality. Paul also came runner-up behind Theo Walcott in the BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year 2006. Having been selected for the final 10 on the last two occasions surely he will make the top next year.

EVANS BRILLIANCE RECOGNISED

At a glittering ceremony in Derby for the annual East Midlands BBC Sports Awards, Gavin Evans was awarded Junior Sportsman of the Year.

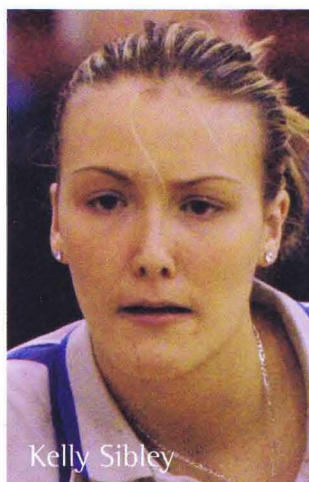
Against stiff competition from gymnastics and golf, Gavin's table tennis talents shone through. This is another award in a long line of achievements as Gavin continues on his path to his ultimate ambition, competing at the London 2012 Olympics, and with such a glittering career at the tender age of 13, who would bet against him achieving just that. Gavin also played a short exhibition game with former England no.1 Alan Cooke, another East Midlands based player, which rounded off another superb evening for the talented youngster, and again demonstrated the quality of English table tennis at junior level.



Sportsman of the Year awards, Kelly along with Gabriel Agbonlahor, Aston Villa and England under-21 footballer, were presented with this prestigious award due to their outstanding achievements in 2006.

TOP ACHIEVER

Lewis Gray became the proud winner of the 12 years and under Junior Sports Achievement Award at an annual awards evening organised by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The awards are sponsored by Buss Murton Solicitors, King Charles' School Old Boys' Association, Daisy Fletcher and Angley School - a sports college, with the winners in each category receiving training grants to assist them with future competition and training expenses. The individual awards and certificates were presented by the Mayor of Tunbridge Wells, Cllr Mr Ron Weeden.



SIBLEY SHINES AGAIN

Kelly Sibley has been presented with the BBC Local Radio Breakthrough Award. Presented at the BBC Midlands' Sports Personality of the Year and



Red Card

Geoff Twiss, Chairman of the Tournaments Committee, is confident the corner has been turned in the bid to curb the behaviour of a minority.

By Jim Beckley

Table tennis is winning the battle against bad behaviour. Most sports have to deal with unruly players at some time or another and our sport is no exception but latest figures suggest there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Umpires have been using the card system for some time, but it is only since sanctions came into play at the beginning of last season that positive improvements have begun to take effect.

"Few umpires were using cards during 2002-03, but the number of umpires and cards increased during 2003-04 as people became aware that sanctions were under discussion, and as umpires realised that there was at last some point in using their cards," says Geoff.

"NURC issued guidelines at the start of the 2004-05 season, when sanctions were introduced, to try to ensure consistency between umpires. The first player went under penalty on 9th October 2004, having already received 5 cards - and by the end of that season 11 players had been penalised under sanctions. Two players had their sanctions 'clock' re-started for receiving a further card while under sanctions, but all the others completed their three month penalty period without further offence.

"We predicted at the outset that the number of cards would increase as the system 'bedded down' and as umpires became more confident in using their cards - and it did! We also indicated that the effectiveness of sanctions would be confirmed if the number of cards began to decrease again".

The numbers certainly suggest that there are good grounds for optimism. In 2002-03, 91 cards were handed out, in 2003-04 the figure rose to 138 cards and the following year it peaked at 238 cards with umpires encouraged to penalise misconduct. But since the introduction of sanctions the figures have dropped to 167 and that trend has continued.

Almost 270 players have received at least one card in the last four-and-a-bit seasons for which we have records, but only 94 have ever received more than one card within a single season. However, 12 players have each received more than ten cards during that time.

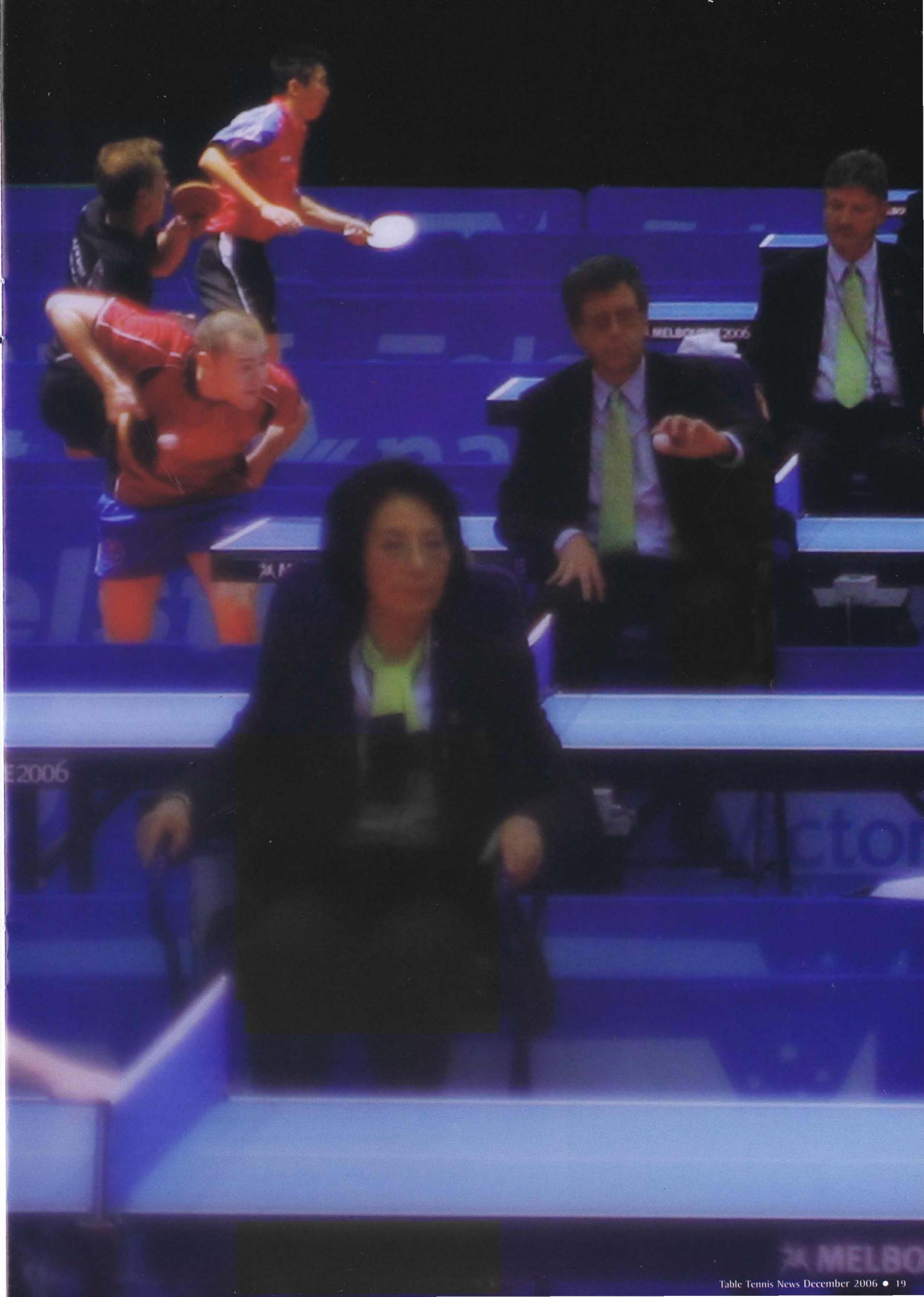
Forty-nine players have received more than two cards within a season, 30 players have received more than three cards, 20 players more than four cards, and 11 players more than five cards.

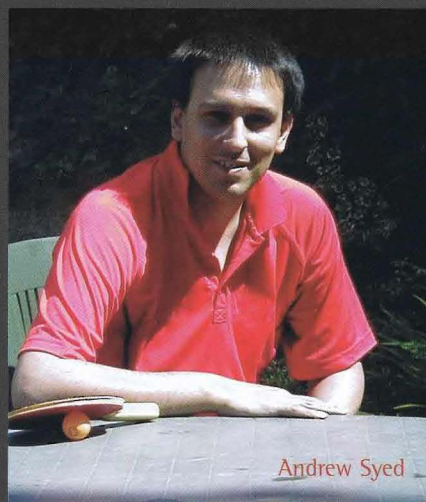
Says Geoff: "Perhaps we should remember - and certainly celebrate - the fact that the overwhelming majority of players never receive a single card in their entire playing careers, but there is clearly a small core of players whose misbehaviour is disfiguring our sport. Sadly this group contains some of our more promising young players.

"It became evident towards the end of last season that the existing sanctions were not a strong enough deterrent for a few players, who kept collecting large numbers of cards, season after season.

"The regulations were therefore tightened from the start of this season, allowing only one further card while a player is under sanctions. That card will mean a new period of three months under sanctions, but any further card under those new sanctions will prevent that player from entering all major competitions for three months.

"We have tried very hard to avoid interrupting a player's development in this way, and the sanctions were originally set up so that offending players could continue playing, albeit with the extra cost of a single tournament licence fee on each occasion. This latest change will never trouble the vast majority of players who behave themselves on court, but the small core of players who think that they can misbehave with impunity will now need to fall into line very quickly."





Andrew Syed

Stephen Lebens

I am writing this article in appreciation of the Table Tennis club that is run for members of the Resource Centre. The table tennis team have performed well with much hard work, and have won promotion to Division 5 of the Reading League.

There is a friendly atmosphere among the team members, and thanks go to our coach, Andrew Syed, who is always on hand to improve members' skills and encourage individuals. His great ability as England champion earns him our respect and makes us want to do well, both in practice and competitively. He always has a good word for players and welcomes new members to the team whatever their standard.

Table tennis plays a part in helping people with mental health problems. It reduces people's fears and brings out positive attitudes. We all enjoy each other's company and, of course, the table tennis, which is an excellent therapy and provides the exercise needed for a healthy lifestyle. Playing against those who do not suffer with mental health problems also teaches players to mix and form relationships in everyday life.

Reading Resource Table Tennis Club

In the space of four years this team of unlikely stars have made quite a name for themselves

by David Sharp

Reading Resource Table Tennis Club is not a name many will know, but in the short space of four years this team of unlikely stars have made quite a name for themselves on the Berkshire table tennis scene writes David Sharp. Twice winners of the Reading and District TTA Knockout Cup and current Division 6 Champions, they've also gained recognition locally with a number of prestigious awards, including the Mayor of Reading Special award in 2003 and, most recently, the Electronics Cup 2000 for service to sport and the community.

What makes Reading Resource so special, however, and what has drawn television crews from both BBC and Sky to the town, is not the team's victories or awards but the players themselves and what they have had to overcome.

Resource is a mental health charity that is changing the way people see mental illness. With the help of lottery funding, its new centre in Reading is a focus for a whole range of social activities and learning opportunities, as well as being a place to meet, chat and make friends. It also helps its members find work, if they are able, and supports them if they cannot.

Table tennis had always been one of the activities the charity provided but it was only in 2002, when Andrew Syed offered his services as a coach, that things really began to take off for the club.

Andrew is the elder brother of the former Commonwealth Champion and England no 1 Matthew Syed, and was always considered by those in the know (including Matthew) to be the better player of the two. Indeed, back in 1985 great things were predicted for him. He had been an England champion at U-14 and U-17 levels and had beaten players like Jean-Philippe Gatien, Jorg Rosskopf and Zoran



Syed brothers demonstration to Reading Resource Table Tennis Club at Warehouse in Reading for Sky Sports.

Primorac. A glittering career seemed to lie ahead.

But then a shoulder injury put him out of the game and chronic fatigue from ME soon followed. At the age of just 17, it looked like his table tennis career was over.

Andrew, however, had other ideas, and gradually, over a period of many years, he regained some of his former strength; only now it wasn't champions or Olympic glory he was interested in, it was helping others less fortunate than him.

Using his skills as a table tennis coach, Andrew has been able to help many different groups, including victims of brain injury at the Headway Centre in Henley, school children from around Reading and those with mental health problems at the Reading Resource centre.

Andrew's Resource team are quick to acknowledge what he has done for them, and they readily praise his inspirational leadership. Chris Norris, one of the players, is in no doubt: "I used to be absolutely hopeless until I met Andrew. Now I'm a reasonably good player. He's there for everyone no matter what their ability. He encourages you. It's like a gift for us."

The team's victories, notably their exciting win in the 2005 final of the Knockout Cup before a record-breaking audience at Our Lady of Peace in Reading, has won them a lot of favourable coverage in the local press, as well many friends. One of those friends, John Cunningham (Team Manager of OLOP), has always supported close links between the two clubs and generously offered the venue for the final and all of Resource's home games.

Table tennis aside, each member of the team has his or her, much more important, personal victory to celebrate.

Living with mental illness is never easy. It's a constant battle against many things: your own fears and anxieties and feelings of helplessness, on the one hand, and the prejudices and discrimination of society on the other. Sometimes even getting out of bed in the morning can seem like too much effort. At Reading Resource, however, each member is encouraged and supported.

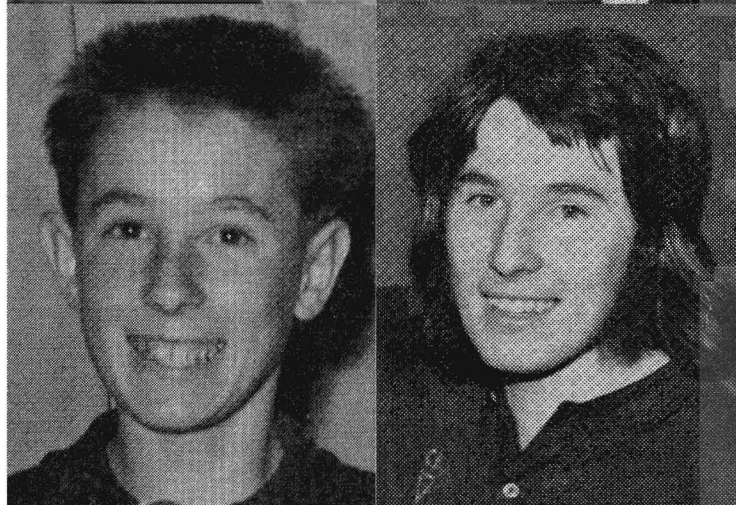
Stephen Lebens, one of the Resource team's most enthusiastic players, praises table tennis for the help he and others have received: "It reduces people's fears and brings out positive attitudes. We all enjoy each other's company and [it's] an excellent therapy." Players have gained in confidence and each member of the team has a renewed sense of self worth and self belief. All their mental health problems haven't gone away, but they are now, perhaps, a little better able to cope with them.

Although the team has been very successful in league and cup competitions, it isn't trophies or awards that motivate Andrew. Speaking to reporter Roger Finn on BBC South Today, he explained that it was his Christian faith that had guided him through his own personal ill health and that now made him want to help others. "Life is more than achievement," he said. "Life is about caring for other people, and about people having love for other people and showing kindness, rather than purely achievement being the be all and end all."

Andrew's faith has also inspired him to set up a table tennis group for children at the Warehouse in Reading, where guest speakers are invited to give a Christian message. But whether he's coaching children, the victims of brain injury or those with mental health problems, Andrew never

Team Members:

Andrew Syed, Matthew Syed, Syd Montgomery, Neil Havard, Gerald Allchurch, Maureen Allchurch, Jez Beskin, Stephen Lebens, Adrian Pacey, Nicki Parton, Chris Norris, Russell Ward, Joyce Crockford, Teresa Williams, Elvis Duncan, Brian Nicholson, Greg King, Brendon Brown



Chester Barnes

Chester Barnes. To any table tennis enthusiast of a certain age, just those two words are enough to evoke images of excitement, glamour and even a dose of magic.

By Jeremy Wilson



A five-times national champion, Barnes's place among this country's greatest players is secure. Yet he was something much more than that.

A maverick and a one-man publicity machine, few would doubt that he is the most charismatic personality that table tennis in Britain has produced, certainly over the last 50 years.

"A complete one-off – a product of the 1960s," says his friend and former England and Essex team-mate Stuart Gibbs. "At that time, you had George Best, Alex Higgins and then Chester and I think they all became bigger than their sports.

"County matches in Essex at venues holding 6-700 people used to be sold out the season before when Chester was playing and people would queue for hours to watch him because you never knew what would happen next.

"When he walked into a room, it was like the show had arrived and

speech and will that is supposed to be the birthright of every British citizen."

His honesty, of course, only enhanced that popularity.

"Even now, I could arrange an exhibition with him playing and I would sell 1,000 tickets tomorrow without any trouble at all," says Gibbs. "I don't think you could say the same about any other table tennis player."

The chances, however, of Barnes ever publicly picking up a table tennis bat again would appear to be something around zero. He has forged an extremely successful career as a race-horse trainer at the stables of the 15-times champion trainer Martin Pipe and has no further involvement in table tennis.

He turns 60 next year and when I telephoned to see if he would talk about either his career in table tennis or horse-racing, he politely declined.

"Someone called Syed has phoned me before and I told him exactly the same thing," he said.

everybody would look. If anyone got close to beating him in a tournament, the play on the other 20 or 30 tables would stop to see what was happening."

At the height of his fame Barnes said that he would be World Champion if a sportsman's talent was measured by the publicity he could generate.

John Clarke, an emerging county player during the 1960s, says simply: "Chester Barnes was an entertainer; someone you would pay to watch."

Barnes was the first – and perhaps only – table tennis player to surround himself with an "entourage". It included his own manager and even photographer. By the age of 22 he had written an autobiography, featured on prime-time television, appeared regularly on the back pages of the national newspapers and even made it into Sports Illustrated (the leading American sports magazine) alongside the likes of Muhammad Ali.

Amazingly, Barnes only started playing table tennis seriously at the age of 12 when he was the 'boy of the week' at a Butlins holiday camp. Under the tutelage of the former international Harry Venner he became England's youngest ever senior champion at the age of just 15. By the time he was 16, he was brash and confident enough to issue a statement prior to the 1963/64 English Championships predicting that he would go through the tournament without losing a single set.

When he did win the title for a second successive year (he dropped one set), he issued another statement saying he would never play for England again unless the selectors ranked him number one in the country.

They did; but throughout much of his career Barnes found himself in dispute with officialdom.

Diplomacy was never an option and his views on those running English table tennis were recorded in his book More Than A Match.

"I suppose they take on the job to satisfy an inner urge to control other human beings," he wrote, adding: "All I had ever wanted to do was get on with playing the game, but at the same time keeping the freedom of

Barnes's refusal to speak about table tennis probably only deepens the aura which surrounds him. It is 40 years since the peak of his success but, after Desmond Douglas, he is probably still the sport's most famous name in Britain. Tales about his antics continue to be recounted to this day.

There was the time that Denis Neale was forced to dive off the high board at Crystal Palace after losing a bet as well as the English singles final to Barnes.

He was also known for an ability to beat Butlins holiday-makers with a frying-pan as a bat as well as his joke-telling while playing.

"I just don't know what comes over me I'm tensed up, something snaps inside and I become a different person" Chester Barnes interviewed by Johnny leach after he appeared to throw away two vital matches in English Open 1965

Watching other competitors at work during the Essex "Open" I noticed a solemn lad with a cute crew cut. This little chap, who was not much taller than the table was belting the ball with one of the most orthodox and casual forehands in the game. I discovered that he was 14 came from Essex and was named Chester Barnes

Nigel Ive 1960 Table Tennis Magazine



"Essex had never won the county championships and I remember we were playing Surrey in the final," recalls Gibbs, "it was 4-4 and Chester was playing the deciding match. He won the first, lost the second and went 11-3 down in the third. Our coach shouted at him to stop larking around. Chester turned around and, so that everyone in the hall could hear, he said, 'You don't think I'm going to lose to him do you? I'm just dragging it out so that the crowd get their money's worth!'"

Barnes, of course, went on to win.

On another occasion Barnes had been banned from an international fixture but still turned out to watch his team-mates.

The match was against Czechoslovakia and was being broadcast on BBC. "We were just about to start and because I was from Essex as well, the umpire briefly got confused and said 'Barnes to serve'," says Gibbs. "With that, Chester jumped over the barrier, took the bat off me and served the ball in his suit and tie. It brought the house down.

"All the ETTA officials were sat there and the Czechoslovakian didn't know what was going on. But that was Chester – he made things happen and instantly saw a way of saying to everyone 'don't worry, I'm still here.'"

Barnes's bans usually stemmed from his reluctance to allow ETTA officials to dictate how he should train and where he should play.

"He would miss training camps or tournaments and he didn't agree with a lot of the things they tried to get him to do," says Gibbs. "They might decide he needed to be lifting weights and he would refuse because he thought it would affect his touch.

"They would try and get him to run around a circuit at Crystal Palace and he would hide behind the trees and take a short cut but, if you put him on a table, Chester would play for 24 hours a day. He was never off the table – I can remember going out on Christmas Day with him at 9am and us practicing until 8pm."

Although capable of defending, Barnes's strategy was simple and remains just as relevant today. "You must think, eat, breathe, sleep and dream attack-attack-attack, no half-measures," he wrote in his 1969 autobiography.

As well as being dominant domestically, Barnes made his mark on European and World table tennis.

In 1966 he won the Dutch Open and also reached the quarter-finals of the European men's singles at Wembley. At the previous year's World Championships, he won 18 out of 22 matches in the team events and was ranked 16 in the World. But he was denied the chance to play in the European Championships of 1968 after being banned by the ETTA for missing a match earlier in the season against Holland.

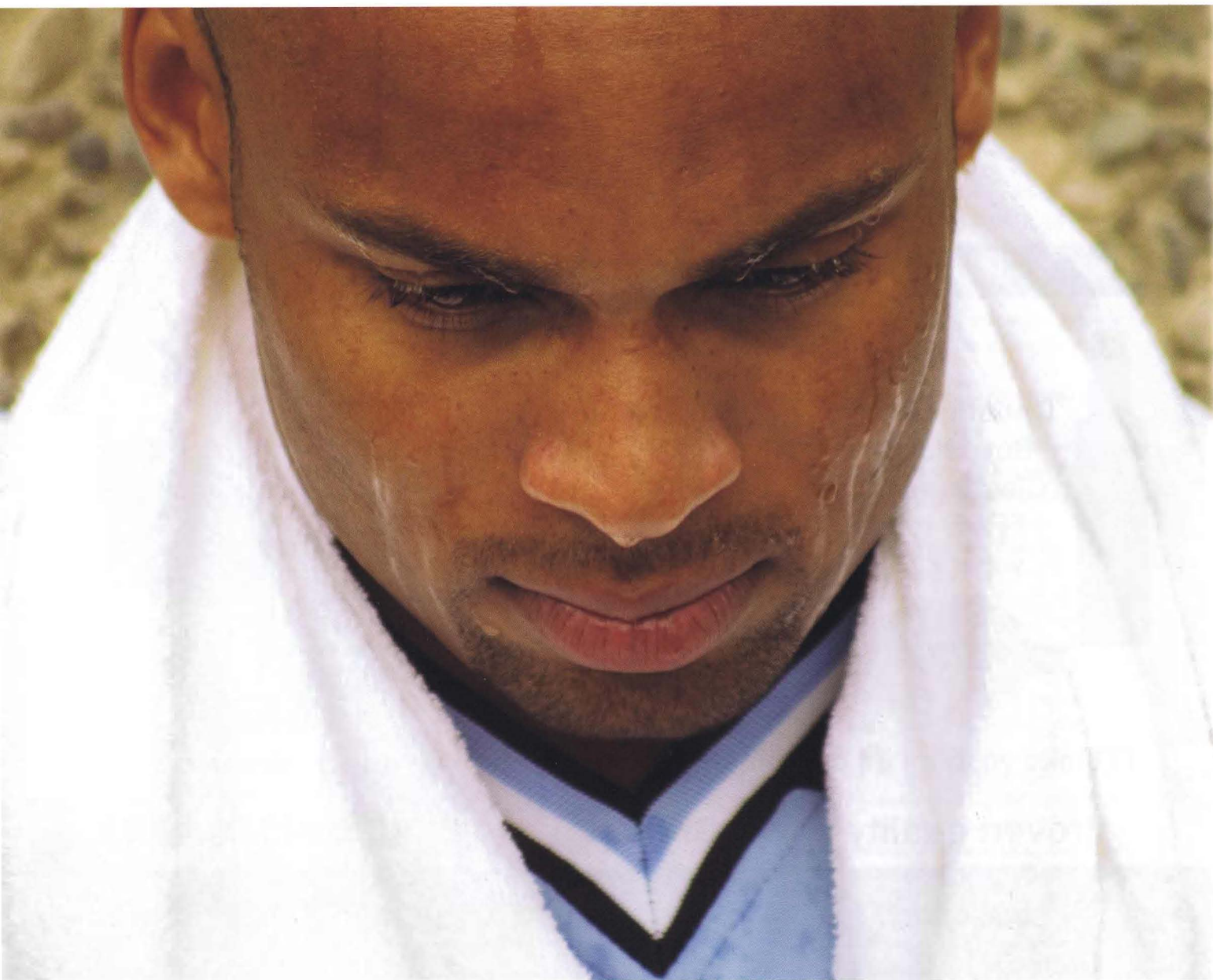
Venner believes that Barnes became too sidetracked by all the "fun" he was creating to completely fulfil the talent that could have made him challenge the world's top players.

"The thing with Chester was that he might lose to a lower player but also beat the highest player in the world," says Gibbs. "He had a confidence about him and he didn't think he was beatable. That was his downfall although he also won a lot of games because of who he was. I've seen him 20-16 down in the fifth and the opponent just freezing against him. People were frightened of him – it was like the effect Ian Botham had when he played the Australians at cricket."

It is, of course, a shame that Chester Barnes has nothing more to do with table tennis, yet the over-riding emotion towards him must be one of thanks. He put bums on seats and he put table tennis on the front page, the back page and the centre-pages. For that, the sport should be eternally grateful.

Even when you are **losing** you are learning

by Matthew Syed



I am often asked what is my greatest disappointment in table tennis and my stock answer is failing to have qualified for the Olympic Games in Atlanta after losing to Zoltan Batorfi from Hungary in a nail-biting decider at the qualification competition in Manchester in 1996.

It is, of course, a red herring designed to placate journalists who would be mystified if I were to offer the far profounder disappointment of failing to win a maximum against Sonning Common A in the Reading local league in the early 1980s.

What on earth is Sonning Common A, they would ask. And what, for that matter, is the local league? These, of course, are questions that cannot be answered in anything less than a 200,000-word novel or a yearlong personal induction into the foibles, perversions and glorious idiosyncrasies of what is commonly referred to as the "grass roots".

Office comprising the legendary figures of Dave Jones (he of the green bat) and Burt Foster.

It was a uniquely conducive place in which to learn one's trade for it boasted every imaginable style (and some unimaginable ones), technique, rubber and stratagem. One minute one was competing against a Barna-bat wielding chiseller, the next against someone with homemade anti-loop. When one has played local league table tennis there is little that has the capacity to surprise, even on the international circuit.

The most memorable team of all in the Reading League was that of Sonning Common A represented by the eternal triumvirate of Wally Allanson (classically elegant chopper of the old school), Jonathan Samuel (Dave Barr wannabe with the most embellished forehand topspin ever seen) and Brian Halliday (tenacity personified).

"...for it was on this occasion that we were most conscious of our inability to provide anything more than a cup of tea and a crumbling digestive..."

Local league table tennis has been on my mind a lot in recent months, having been drafted in to play for my brother's team in the Reading League, the place where I started out as a youngster more than a quarter of a century ago. It was an era when one would take one's homework as well as a bat to matches along with other essentials such as gloves (in winter) and milk (if it was our turn to provide refreshments).

I played for Omega, a club that was nothing more than a dilapidated wooden hut fused with the genius of Peter Charters, a local schoolteacher who ran the operation on a bag of loose change. From one street alone (Silverdale Road in Earley) he discovered and nurtured Karen Witt (who went on to win the Commonwealth Championships), Andrew Syed (England junior and cadet champion), Andy Wellman (top 12 senior player), Paul Beck (accomplished junior) and myself.

The worst thing about the local league was playing host to Gillette for it was on this occasion that we were most conscious of our inability to provide anything more than a cup of tea and a crumbling digestive given that, at their place, we were lavished with drinks from the upstairs bar (blackcurrant and lemonade was my tippie) and chocolate biscuits that tasted like heaven, particularly after a gruelling three-setter against Felix (their captain and icon of Reading table tennis).

Other teams that stick in the memory are Polish, whose line-up of Kozolowski, Rosinski and Fafinski seemed every bit as formidable as Grubba, Kucharski and Drysel, and Post

Each of them was a defender but in such different ways that it seemed a crime against logic to classify them using the one term. What they had in common, however, was a healthy competitiveness and an unerring capacity to find their opponent's weaknesses. They also possessed the rather more prosaic advantage of a home venue that was the devil to find, tucked somewhere off a crossroads in darkest, rural Berkshire.

Time and again I would arrive with high hopes of taking a maximum and on each occasion I was foiled by that man Halliday who, by his own admission, was the weakest of the three. The fact that I seemed incapable of defeating Halliday caused considerable vexation to Charters who took the rather uncharitable (and, it has to be said, mistaken) view that Halliday could be beaten if one played exclusively to his forehand.

My perennial team-mates of Paul Savins and Sue Collier were similarly unable to make the break-through of taking a maximum such that it became something of an obsession until one day, in my final season playing local league table tennis for Omega, I managed to defeat Halliday. I was euphoric for all of twenty minutes, by which time I had gone and lost to Allanson.

So, no maximum against Sonning Common but an early lesson in the manifold dangers of hubris. And that really is the thing about local league table tennis: even when you are losing, you are learning.

Stockton-on-Tees Junior 4 Star Championships

Surrey's Darius Knight took full advantage of the non-appearing locals

Surrey's Darius Knight took full advantage of the non-appearance of locals Paul Drinkhall who was playing in the German Pro Tour and Danny Reed's arm injury to dominate the Boys Singles in the Stockton on Tees Junior 4 Star Championships which were sponsored by Tees Active Limited.

Darius's toughest match was in the semi-finals against Vyatas Rybakus of Essex who took the Surrey player to 5 sets before winning 11-7 in the decider. In the final Darius beat Darlington's David Meads in straight games with Meads beating Liam Pitchford of Derbyshire in the semi-final. Pitchford earlier outed third seed Ben Barlow from Yorkshire.

The women's events were dominated by Alice Loveridge from Guernsey who remarkably won both the Mini Cadet and the Junior Girls' Singles titles. In the Junior event, Alice beat Scotland's Natasha Milliken in the semi-final 3-0 and Cheshire's Jordan Layfield by 3-1 in the final. To win the Mini Cadet, Alice defeated Lucy Davidson of Derbyshire 3-0 in the final and Yorkshire's Laura Robinson 3-1 in the semi.

In the final Darius beat Darlington's David Meads in straight games with Meads beating Liam Pitchford of Derbyshire in the semi-final.



Alice also added the Grade 1 Junior event to her total haul. The only competition that she lost was the Cadet Girls' Singles where she had great difficulty with the long pimples used by Rebekah Griffith of Lancashire who defeated the Guernsey girl by 3 games to 1. In the other half of the draw, Ormesby's Karina Lefevre came through with victories over Scotland's Natasha Milliken, Ireland's Chloe Nealon and Derbyshire's Lucy Davidson to reach the final where the Ormesby girl beat Rebekah Griffith in straight games.

The Cadet Boys' event was won by David McBeath of Hampshire who beat Daniel Lowe of Derbyshire in a very close semi-final 11-7 in the fifth and Ireland's Paul McCreery in the final.

The competition received the largest entry for many years which necessitated the organisers re-arranging the playing hall to accommodate a maximum of 20 tables. Even with this extra space, not all the entries could be accommodated.

Sun Jin (CHN) beats Egle Adomelyte

Sun Jin is the most successful Women's player to ever grace the Butterfly Grand Prix Circuit since former Women's World Champion Tong Fei Ming played, just under two years ago.

With such a considerable amount of international experience taking the top seeding, anyone who could nip a game off the Olympic Women's Doubles Silver Medalist would have displayed an exceptional performance. Butterfly Grand Prix regular Egle Adomelyte put on a valiant display to stretch the Olympic

medalist as much as she possibly could. Winning the first two games 11/4 11/7, Sun Jin was on her way to what she had done all day, disposing her opponents. These being Clare Langford (last 16 - 11/2 11/2 11/4), Sarah Perks (1/4 final - 11/2 11/6 11/7), and England international Helen lower (Semi final - 18/16



11/8 11/3).

Egle played some high quality table tennis, her devastating backhands consistently put Sun Jin under pressure, and she was never allowed to dictate the match. Bravely overcoming a match point Egle smashed a backhand down the line to take the game into a fourth set, something which nobody else had achieved during the day.

Keeping up with Sun Jin until the business end of the set, Egle faded in the final few points, allowing Sun Jin to pull away and stamp her authority.

Again, experience was the winner on the day, but not without a brave fight from Adomelyte.

Nottingham Open Butterfly Grand Prix

Alan Cooke is hailed as the consummate athlete, winning the Nottingham Open Butterfly Grand Prix and is one of the nation's favorites through his softly spoken charm and steely determination to win. His passion for excellence and dedication to success make him a model table tennis player that will be celebrated for generations to come. Cooke may be retiring from professional table tennis, but his legacy will carry on.

Cooke as expected, cruised to the final without dropping a game, his experience all too much for the players who tirelessly tried to divert his route of destination. Players such as David Arrowsmith (last 32 - 11/5 11/2 11/4), Darius Zurowski (last 16 - 11/2 11/6 11/9) Abdul Wuraola (1/4 final - 11/8 11/5 11/2), and Stephen Jenkins (semi final - 11/5 11/9 11/7) all gave valiant efforts but on the day it really was experience that counted. The withdrawal of Alex Perry, due to an unfortunate reoccurring shoulder problem, left the door open for the other seeded players to have a genuine chance of reaching the final and putting up a fight for the £300 cheque.

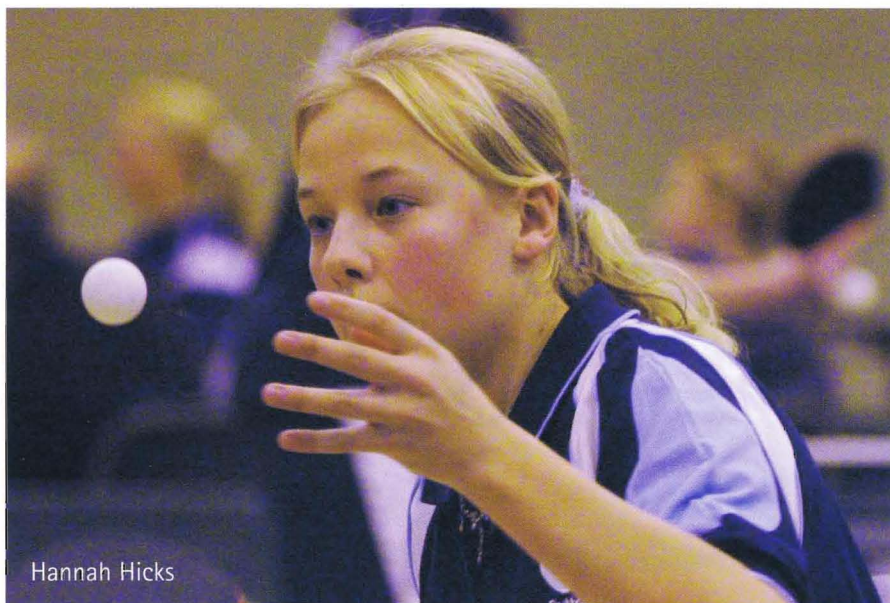
Both Gavin Rumgay and Jing Wei Zhao made it to the quarter final stage relatively easily, only dropping the odd game, although it has to be noted that Rumgay once again entered the main draw as a runner up, loosing out to Darren Reed, who went through as the group winner.

In the respective quarter finals, both Rumgay and Wei Zhao defeated Damien Nicholls 11/8 11/4 11/8 and Tim Yarnall 11/4 11/8 4/11 11/8 to create a fascinating semi final clash between themselves. Fascinating the clash certainly was, Jing Wei Zhao, a penhold player was simply too agile for Rumgay, as everything the Scot threw at him was returned with precision accuracy and lightning speed. Jing Wei Zhao defeated Rumgay and booked his place in the final over four games 11/4 9/11 11/3 11/9.

Alan Cooke lost the first game of this final 11/13. The final was certainly a spectator friendly clash, lengthy rallies allowed Cooke to really get his forehand going and try and find a way past the penholder.

One of Cooke's great strengths is that he does not wilt under pressure and always maintains an unbending belief in himself and his game. This early deficit nudged Cooke into another gear and he took the remaining three games with ease 11/6 11/6 11/5.

It certainly was the power of positive thinking that came to Cooke's rescue when returning to the second game. He sprang back to the table with the clear intention of backing his ability to turn matters around. His formidable forehand, laced with spin, speed and pinpoint accuracy was all too much for his opponent.



Hannah Hicks

Hereford GP

Usually it's the hope that gets you, but the weekend of 2/3 December, expectation delivered its sharpest blow. It was not supposed to be like this of course. England international Darius Knight was supposed to win this one, after all, the most perfect of opportunities was paved out for him with the withdrawal of Gavin Rumgay, who had been summoned to represent Scotland.

So, with Darius Knight and Jing Wei Zhao respectively taking the top two seedings, the Men's Singles event effectively became a two horse race, with both players reaching the final with comparative ease.

There are very few players who can win a Butterfly Grand Prix by sheer force of personality but Jing Wei Zhao did exactly that. Taking the first two games he was set for imminent victory, but for an extraordinary comeback from Knight, who was gradually building consistency combined with momentum. After Knight recovered the two game deficit and took it to a final game, mere mortals would have started to write their runner up speech.

Almost inevitably Wei Zhao broke back and miraculously, the all out attack play, which had faded during Knight's comeback, once again appeared out of nowhere. The Filton College student created too much of a gap in the final game, and in the end was victorious 11/3. This Men's Final was truly a game of tactic and strategy, a memorable finale indeed.

Hannah Hicks, 15, unseeded in the Women's Singles achieved some remarkable results to take her chance in the final against Olympic medallist Jin Sun. In the group stage Hannah brushed aside higher ranked player Sally Smith of Devon and Lindsey Armstrong of Middlesex to make her way into the first round. There awaited the more experienced Terri-Anne Nolan of Cheshire who she defeated in four games. A quarter-final victory over Sanja Clements gifted Hannah with an exiting opportunity to try her luck against England international Helen Lower in the semi-final.

It was evident that Hannah's style of play would be a contributing factor in upsetting the England ace. This style gifted her the first game, which she took 11-7. Unfortunately, after a fall, Helen decided to scratch the match with her concerns over the floor surface. This left Hannah with a place in her first ever Women's Butterfly Grand Prix Final.

In the other half of the draw, the highly talented Chinese Olympic medallist cruised into the final, without dropping a single game. Sun Jin knows just how much of a formidable force she is in the Butterfly Grand Prix circuit and how she would relish a challenge.

The final was over in three straight games. Hannah, who already excelled in simply reaching this stage fought bravely but experience really did count for everything on the day. Sun Jin now picks up her second consecutive title and £175 cheque.

'more players, better players'

The mission statement of the LTA has been 'more players, better players' and it is a theory which is currently serving Hampshire table tennis extremely well.

The county has traditionally been also-rans in county competitions but, after consecutive promotions, the Hampshire junior table tennis team are on course to be crowned national champions for the first time in the county's entire history.

The team of Mathew Ware, David McBeath, Garth Kinlocke, Hannah Hicks and Becky House were undefeated in the first weekend of matches to go to the top of the national Premier Division table.

With all five of the team rated in the top 50 in the England rankings, Hampshire currently have easily their best crop of young players in living memory – and they lived up to their promise by beating Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Essex all by a 9-1 scoreline.

The team was spearheaded by Ware, McBeath and Hicks, who were all unbeaten throughout the entire weekend.

The success is a tribute to the efforts of many

coaches and parents in Hampshire, notably Ken MacLeod and John Fox at the Waterside Club and Gary and Anne Longland at the Southampton West Club.

Both centres have introduced table tennis to many young people in the county and there continues to be a conveyor belt of players beneath the team which performed so well in the first weekend of matches.

The Waterside Club currently has 12 teams in the Southampton League, while Southampton West has 23 teams mostly made up of junior and cadet players.

Bournemouth based Ware, in particular, has improved hugely over the past year and is currently rated number 12 in the England juniors and in the men's top 50 after some outstanding recent tournament results.

He also enjoyed a clean sweep of wins at the recent Hampshire senior closed championships.

Yet he is closely followed by McBeath, an England cadet player and Kinlocke, who has improved enormously over the past 12 months and is a member of the London Progress British League team.

Among the girls, Hicks is rated just outside the top ten in the juniors.

It is a far cry from the situation regarding Hampshire's senior team, who recently pulled out of county competition because of a lack of available players.

Of most excitement for Hampshire table tennis, though, is the fact that the current junior team has another three years left in the age group and the possibility of dominating the event in the foreseeable future.

The next round of matches takes place in April against Devon, South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and the defending champions Buckinghamshire.



Matthew Ware



Paul Whiting

Leicestershire shine in Veteran County Championships

Leicestershire opened the Veterans Premier Division at Halifax Table Tennis Centre with a fine 6-4 victory against reigning champions Yorkshire.

VETERAN PREMIER

They followed this up with a 7-3 victory against another newly promoted county Surrey before completing the weekend with a 6-4 victory against Cheshire.

Leicestershire's top man, Chris Rogers, lead from the front winning eight out of nine sets played, losing only to Yorkshire's Keith Rodger, deuce in the fifth, whilst his sister Karen Smith also produced championship form by remaining unbeaten in her singles. Rogers and Smith's contributions in singles were vital but a major factor in the success of Leicestershire was their doubles play, winning seven out of nine doubles played and keeping the same pairing for all three matches.

Reigning champions Yorkshire bounced back after their opening match defeat to record a 7-3 victory over Cheshire followed by an epic 6-4 success over Kent.

This most competitive of divisions sees Kent, Devon and Lancashire all one point behind Yorkshire on three points with Surrey and Cheshire on two and last season's runners-up, Essex, in bottom spot with a solitary point. All to play for in Ashford, in February, the deciding weekend.

SENIORS 1A

With similar personnel the result also proved the same as Leicestershire lead Division 1A after the first round of matches played at Wellhouse house School, Nottinghamshire.

Karen Smith, Chris Rogers and Keith Fellows were joined by Dave Gannon and Jose Bongers as an all round team effort saw

them drop only one point from five matches to head the division on nine points.

Northumberland head the challengers, one point adrift of their rivals, and had their men players to thank for a successful weekend as they won three and drew two, of their five starts: Eddie Smith was nine out of ten, one more than his team mates Andrew Wilkinson and Dave Godbold.

The division is completed in February when Leicestershire have to face Northumberland in what looks like a cracker, but with the north eastern side also to face third placed Nottinghamshire who are only one point behind them, there is all to play for.

JUNIOR PREMIER

After two years of domination Buckinghamshire came down with a bump losing all three matches. This was mainly due to the absence of the three Evans brothers. The impetus is now with the up and coming Hampshire who's rising young stars beat everyone in sight.

Last year's runners-up Essex's first match was a draw with Derbyshire who were forth last season with only one set going the full distance as Ashley Stokes (England no. 26) beat Daniel Lowe (England no. 29) 6, 8, -12, -5, 9.

On Sunday, Devon had a tough match facing Essex as Richard Marshall managed a win over Ashley Stokes in a pulsating game -13, -11, 8, 7, 9, and Emran Hussain beat the higher ranked Chris Smith 12, -8, -9, 1, 11. With Devon only collecting two of the girls' matches when Laura McLeod and Vicky Smith both beat Essex new girl Clare

Austin, and Richard Marshall beating Essex's Vytas Rybakas -8, 9, 6, -9, 10, Essex ran out comfortable 7-3 winners.

Also on Sunday there was the clash of the Yorkshires as South Yorkshire lost a close match 4-6 to Yorkshire. Richard Element, the hero of the match against Bucks, found it much harder here as he was defeated 3-0 by Damien Piper and 3-2 by Chris Parker. With upwards of 180 places in the ranking between Richard and his victors, it was no wonder he failed to register on the score-sheet. The big game in this match was the defeat of Piper by Kim Daybell -9, -8, 5, 7, 8, an excellent comeback by the younger player with just six places between them on the rankings. The two girls from South Yorkshire, Melissa Wright and Laura Robinson, won three of their four in this match.

Derbyshire got their second win out of three matches and remain undefeated as did Hants. They beat South Yorkshire 7-3 with no real surprises as only Kim Daybell (2) and Melissa Wright (3-0 over Kerry Mansell) managed to register any wins. Daniel Lowe, Sean Cullen and Kerry Mansell each won one, and Emily O'Sullivan and Mark Naylor were unbeaten.

Lincolnshire, third after the weekend, overcame Yorkshire 6-4, with Laura Springthorpe, Emily O'Sullivan and Stewart Mudie all unbeaten. No joy here for Paul Johnson who lost 0-3 to Damien Piper and 1-3 to Chris Parker, and Michael Bates who lost 2-3 to Joe Dunn and 0-3 to Parker.



Richard Marshall

Junior Premier Division Team Hold Their Own

Without the Country's top ranked Junior Girl player - the injured Sarra Wang, any team would expect to struggle and in the circumstances the Essex Junior First team did very well to record one win and a draw in their opening series of CC Premier Division matches.

Replacing an injured Sarra and Holly Stubbings (who was also unavailable for the Saturday match) were the Fellows Cranleigh duo of Sara Akata (aged 12) and Daisy Hughes (aged 13) and Chelmsford's Claire Austin (also aged 13) and although none of these players were able to pick up a victory they all performed admirably at a level far higher than they are accustomed to.

Essex's boys excelled against Derbyshire enabling the team to score a creditable 5-5 draw. Vyatas Rybakas was back to his best and he beat both Daniel Lowe and Mark Naylor whilst Ashley Stokes was an 11-9 fifth game winner over Lowe and he also beat Shaun Cullen 3-0. Emran Hussain played his part with a vital win against Naylor.

On Sunday, with Holly Stubbings restored to the side Essex scored a fine 7-3 win over Devon with Ashley Stokes, who has clearly made great strides at the Bristol Academy winning twice. After defeating Chris Smith he scored an even better win over England no. 14 Richard Marshall, coming from behind to triumph 13-15, 11-13, 11-8, 11-7, 11-9. Emran and Vyatas both beat Devon no. three Simon Poyner whilst Emran produced his best play of the weekend in beating England no. 44 Chris Smith after a really hard-fought encounter 14-12, 8-11, 9-11, 11-1, 13-11. Holly Stubbings made no mistake as she beat Vicky Smith.

You don't normally expect a promoted team to be the favourites to win a higher division, but, Hampshire look to be very strong contenders to finish the Season as Champions. Matthew Ware, the highest ranked boy taking, currently ranked no. 12 in England and the fast-improving Hannah Hicks (ranked no. 13 nationally) form the nucleus of their side and they hammered Essex 9-1. With additional 9-1 wins over Yorkshire and Lincolnshire they look to be well on course to take the title. The Essex side fought valiantly and three of their defeats were by 3-2 margins. Ashley Stokes was the Essex Winner on this occasion and he beat England no. 32 Garth Kinlocke 3-0. With five wins out of six games from the weekend Ashley proved to be an excellent number one, and he will be pushing on the door for selection for the Essex Senior teams as well. Emran Hussain with three victories out of six made an excellent debut at this level.

BUTTERFLY
THE BRITISH LEAGUE
OFFICIAL BALL



Hotting up at the top

Rarely has a 4-4 result in round eight of a British League match produced such contrasting emotions

League leader's Oxford Fireplace Centre 1's draw with eight times British League Champions DHS London Progress 1 in the second weekend of Premier Division matches. After a match that both teams will be rueing missed opportunities and believe they could have taken the match. Oxford now head up the division with 15 points out of 16 opening up a two point gap on their rivals Progress. The influence of the Table Tennis Superpowers - China and Sweden was evident as Oxford paraded new signing - Sun Jin, the 2000 Sydney Olympics Ladies Doubles Silver Medallist as well as team-regular Zhao Jing Wei; although last year's British League Player of the Season Wu Yu Jiao was unavailable through illness. DHS London Progress had also ventured into the "Transfer market" by signing Swedes Kalle Ralfson and Sebastian Andersson, the Men's Singles Finalists at the recent K2 Crawley Grand Prix.

PLAYER	TEAM	AVERAGE
S Anderson	DHS London Progress 1	100.00
Sun Jin	Oxford Fireplace Centre	100.00
Wu Yue Jiao	Oxford Fireplace Centre 1	87.50
Zhao Jing Wei	Oxford Fireplace Centre 1	87.50
C Slevin	DHS London Progress 1	85.71
K Ralfson	DHS London Progress 1	83.33
G Rumgay	Oxford Fireplace Centre 1	81.25
M Marsden	Sycamore	75.00
V Rybakas	Oxford Fireplace Centre 1	75.00
S Crawford	Oxford Fireplace Centre 1	75.00

Results

OXFORD FIREPLACE CENTRE 1 VS DHS LONDON PROGRESS 1 4 - 4

Gavin Rumgay Beat Terry Young	3-0
Sun Jin Beat Colum Slevin	3-0
Zhao Jing Wei Lost to Sebastian Anderson	2-3
Stewart Crawford Lost to Kalle Ralfson	2-3
Gavin Rumgay Lost to Colum Slevin	1-3
Zhao Jing Wei Beat Terry Young	3-1
Sun Jin Beat Kalle Ralfson	3-0
Stewart Crawford Lost to Sebastian Anderson	1-3

British League Tables

PREMIER DIVISION								DIVISION 2 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oxford FPC 1	8	7	1	0	53	11	15	Guin Polska 1	4	4	0	0	27	5	8
London Prog 1	8	6	1	1	48	16	13	Ashford 1	4	4	0	0	24	8	8
Ellenborough 1	8	5	0	3	33	31	10	London Sharks	4	3	0	1	22	10	6
Sycamore	8	3	2	3	28	36	8	Guernsey	4	2	0	2	18	14	4
BATTS Peniel 1	8	3	1	4	33	31	7	Kingshurst Bribar	4	1	2	1	16	16	4
Ormesby 1	8	3	1	4	33	31	7	EBS-Orange W 2	4	0	1	3	10	22	1
Harvey Barnets 1	8	1	0	7	14	50	2	Bed Modern 2	4	0	1	3	9	23	1
DML Woolwell 1	8	1	0	7	14	50	2	De Vere Netts	4	0	0	4	2	30	0
DIVISION 1 NORTH								DIVISION 3 NORTH							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
DC Glasgow 1	4	4	0	0	30	2	8	Barrow	4	4	0	0	29	3	8
Derwent 1	4	3	1	0	20	12	7	Derwent 2	4	4	0	0	27	5	8
McClymont Nat	4	1	3	0	19	13	5	Uxbridge Burton	4	3	0	1	24	8	6
Grantham	4	1	2	1	17	15	4	Halton Croda 2	4	2	0	2	13	19	4
Seasiders	4	1	1	2	12	20	3	Elgre Nottin'm 3	4	1	0	3	11	21	2
Ormesby 2	4	1	1	2	11	21	3	Formby	4	1	0	3	11	21	2
Elgre Nott'am 1	4	1	0	3	12	20	2	St Mary's Hull	4	1	0	3	10	22	2
R Scorpions 1	4	0	0	4	7	25	0	Murrayfield	4	0	0	4	3	29	0
DIVISION 1 SOUTH								DIVISION 3 SOUTH							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
London Prog 2	4	4	0	0	22	10	8	TTK G'house 2	4	4	0	0	23	9	8
Cippenham 1	4	3	0	1	21	11	6	Ellenborough 2	4	3	0	1	22	10	6
Harvey Barnets 2	4	3	0	1	19	13	6	Eastbourne	4	3	0	1	20	12	6
Brighton 1	4	2	0	2	18	14	4	Cippenham 3	4	2	0	2	15	17	4
Byng Hall 1	4	1	2	1	16	16	4	Brighton 2	4	1	1	2	14	18	3
York Gardens 1	4	1	1	2	15	17	3	Horsham 3	4	1	0	3	12	20	2
Fusion 1	4	0	1	3	13	19	1	Hastings	4	0	2	2	11	21	2
Horsham 1	4	0	0	4	4	28	0	Sout'pton West	4	0	1	3	11	21	1
DIVISION 1 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS								DIVISION 3 SOUTH AND WEST							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TTK G'house 1	4	3	1	0	25	7	7	Ashford 2	4	4	0	0	24	8	8
London Prog 3	4	3	0	1	21	11	6	Fusion 3	4	3	0	1	21	11	6
Bed Modern 1	4	3	0	1	19	13	6	Kingfisher Read	4	3	0	1	20	12	6
Oxford FPC 2	4	3	0	1	18	14	6	NWF	4	2	0	2	18	14	4
OLOP Impact 1	4	2	1	1	21	11	5	Oxford FPC 3	4	2	0	2	16	16	4
EBS-Orange W 1	4	0	2	2	14	18	2	V.I.P. Entertain	4	2	0	2	15	17	4
Cippenham 2	4	0	0	4	6	26	0	DML Woolwell 2	4	0	0	4	8	24	0
Elgre Nott'am 2	4	0	0	4	4	28	0	Waterside	4	0	0	4	6	26	0
DIVISION 2 NORTH								DIVISION 4 NORTH							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chesterfield 1	4	2	2	0	21	11	6	DC Glasgow 2	4	4	0	0	28	4	8
Halton Croda 1	4	2	2	0	20	12	6	Har'pool Brierton	4	3	1	0	21	11	7
Northfield	4	2	2	0	18	14	6	Pudsey	4	3	0	1	23	9	6
Ormesby 3	4	2	0	2	19	13	4	Elgre Nott'ham 4	4	2	1	1	17	15	5
Grimsby	4	1	2	1	16	16	4	Barrt Green	4	1	1	2	14	18	3
Sheffield	4	2	0	2	16	16	4	R Scorpions 2	4	1	0	3	14	18	2
Woodfield	4	1	0	3	9	23	2	Chesterfield 2	4	0	1	3	7	25	1
Fastbats	4	0	0	4	9	23	0	Isle of Man	4	0	0	4	4	28	0
DIVISION 2 SOUTH								DIVISION 4 SOUTH							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Generation 2	4	4	0	0	24	8	8	York Gardens 2	4	3	1	0	21	11	7
London Prog 4	4	3	0	1	20	12	6	Brighton 3	4	3	0	1	20	12	6
Mossford	4	2	1	1	16	16	5	SEH-Brit Ipswich	4	2	1	1	21	11	5
Fusion 2	4	1	2	1	16	16	4	Stepney Green	4	2	1	1	19	13	5
Club Cornwall	4	1	1	2	15	17	3	TTK G'house 3	4	2	0	2	16	16	4
Horsham 2	4	1	1	2	13	19	3	Guin Polska 2	4	2	0	2	15	17	4
OLOP Impact 2	4	1	0	3	12	20	2	London Prog 5	4	0	1	3	12	20	1
BATTS Peniel 2	4	0	1	3	12	20	1	Byng Hall 2	4	0	0	4	4	28	0

NEWS

School Sports Partnerships

The annual conference for School Sport Partnerships saw more than 1,000 delegates and 70 exhibitors descend on the Telford International Centre.

Organised by the Youth Sport Trust (YST), and sponsored by Concept 2, it included presentations by Dame Kelly Holmes – National School Sport Champion, Australian Olympian Brennon Dowrick, who performed his presentation from a pommel horse, and Pat Duffy – Chief Executive of sports coach UK.

strategy's vision that all young people will be offered at least four hours of PE and sport each week, in school and the community, by 2010.

Steve Grainger, Chief Executive of the Youth Sport Trust, said: "The conference was a great success for all concerned. Everyone who attended really embraced the



The event was entitled "School and Sport Partnerships Conference: 'making the vision a reality' ". It was aimed at School Sport Partnerships (SSPs), County Sport Partnerships (CSPs), National Governing Body (NGBs) and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) - who are working together to increase and improve young people's participation as part of the national strategy for PE, sport and club links (PESSCL).

It also focused on the PESSCL

message of working together to increase and improve young people's participation in sport at school or college. The conference also highlighted the importance of key sports, like table tennis, linking with the school sport network. This work is invaluable."

Mr Grainger concluded: "Our next aim is to ensure all young people can get access to at least four hours of PE and sport each week by 2010."

Commonwealth questions

The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) has decided that a maximum of 17 sports will be contested in future Games, starting with New Delhi in 2010. Ten of the 17 will be core sports; these are athletics, aquatics, boxing, badminton, squash, weightlifting, lawn bowls, netball, rugby sevens and hockey. The other seven are decided upon by the hosting nation.

This means the future of Commonwealth Games table tennis is entirely dependent on the host nation's selection, something which is surely unjust when you consider the participation levels and viewing figures of table tennis in comparison with several of the other selected core sports.

Delhi 2010's selected 17 sports are aquatics, athletics, badminton, boxing, cycling, gymnastics, hockey, lawn bowls, netball, rugby sevens, shooting, squash, table tennis, weightlifting, wrestling and events for athletes with disabilities.

McOlympics 20 Questions

In a world where corporate responsibility is high on the agenda of most companies, just why will McDonald's be able to dominate the landscape of London 2012, probably our most prestigious sporting event ever..... Is cash king? And does it really matter where it comes from?

With almost daily reports on the obesity problems facing our country, it is of little surprise that the organising committee is on the receiving end of some serious questions.

McDonald's was agreed as a sponsor some time ago and recent developments have seen them confirmed as, basically, being able to have McDonald's outlets around the Olympic sites, whilst other burger sellers will be denied access.

Part of the problem here is the organiser's bid which promised "consumption of local, seasonal and organic produce", an area in which the global burger chain fails on all levels. Suggestions have been made that McDonald's should be providing foods that fit into this ethos, rather than the normal collection of burgers and fries.

The problem really arises because the deal was made with the IOC, rather than the London wing of the organisers, so to a certain degree hands are tied. There is also the need to ensure the supply of funding needed to host an international exhibition of sport.

The question of McDonald's involvement in the Olympic landscape is part of a wider debate on sports sponsorship, with companies like Coca-Cola and Budweiser having a long tradition of corporate sponsorship. What are your thoughts on 2012; in particular what legacy would you like to see for table tennis?

Sport England has announced a £828,000 Lottery investment in runningsports

Sport England boosts support for sports volunteers

Sport England has announced a £828,000 Lottery investment in runningsports, the portfolio of skills and support resources for sports volunteers. runningsports resources are designed to support those involved in team, club or community sports group administration and management. The website, www.runningsports.org, contains a hive of information to help sports volunteers, including top tips, best practice guides, volunteer case studies and answers to frequently asked questions. The new funding, which runs over the next three years to 31 March 2009, is designed to give more of England's 5.8 million sports volunteers access to runningsports' resources and support. As part of Sport England's drive to get more people involved

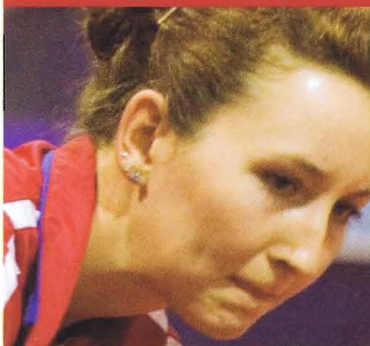
in sport, the investment will help runningsports to work with the national governing bodies of sport and voluntary sector organisations to roll out runningsports resources to a wider audience. Alongside the website, runningsports also publishes a range of guides on topics such as fixtures and events planning, through to fund raising and even taxation. It also holds workshops covering a range of key issues for those involved in running a sports organisation, such as volunteer recruitment, retention, management and motivation, club finances, links with schools and accessibility in sports clubs. These are led by accredited tutors and recommended by 94% of attendees.

Darius Displays Promise

In the Under 21 Singles at the Polish Grand Prix event in Warsaw, Darius Knight reached the quarter-finals playing against players up to six years older. In the qualification Darius progressed undefeated against Seo Myung Duk of Korea and Mikhail Paykov of Russia. In the last 32 his opponent was Tiago Apolonia of Portugal and Darius took a wonderful win over the Portugese no 2 and world 187 in the sixth set. Next up Feng Xiaoquan of Austria, also higher ranked, and yet again in six sets Darius ran out the winner. His opponent in the quarter-final was last year's World Junior Champion, Patric Baum of Germany. The German was just too good, he went on to win the Under 21 event, and although Darius claimed the fourth set at deuce it was not to be as Baum proceeded with a 4-1 win. A truly excellent performance for a first year junior.



Successful Finland Open



England women finish in style with Joanna Parker recapturing top form. The Finland Open has managed to spark a resurgence of form as our jubilant pair, Kelly Sibley and Joanna Parker, triumphed against Holland 3-2 in the final of the team event. This was swiftly followed by an excellent display from Joanna Parker in the singles as she rounded off the tournament in third place. Men's Event: The England men did not experience the same success; however, for the young star Gavin Evans (13) this again would have proved invaluable international experience. Selected players: Kelly Sibley, Joanna Parker, Gavin Evans, Andrew Rushton.

EUROPEAN LEAGUE

HOLLAND 3-1

Holland proved too strong as England crumbled under yet another exceptional talent from China representing a European nation. Li Jiao, currently ranked 25 in the world, confirmed her superior ranking with a dominant display in the first of a two legged home and away tie in the European League. Steen Hansen, ETTA Technical Manager

commented: "Li Jiao was exceptionally strong, however we had a few possibilities. It is crucial we get a quick start in the return leg if we are to turn this result round". The match was played in the Sporthall TTV Return, Amsteleindstraat, in front of a crowd of over 300. Results:-

Helen Lower V. Li Jiao 3-11, 7-11, 11-9, 9-11
Joanna Parker V. Elena Timina 11-9, 7-11, 8-11, 5-11. Kelly Sibley V. Carla Nouwen 12-10, 11-9, 12-10. Joanna Parker V. Li Jiao 3-11, 10-12, 2-11

The return leg will be on the 9th of January at the Holton Stadium, Lower House Lane, Widnes WA8 7DZ. Tickets available from the ETTA & Halton Stadium Adults £6 - Concessions £4 Box office 0151 510 6020

ROUNDUP

COUNTY



DAVID WETHERILL - DEVON

Berkshire by Colin Dyke

The county senior 2nd team got their fixtures underway with a group session against Surrey 2, Sussex 2 and Sussex 3. They fielded what was probably the youngest county senior team ever when they included Ayonija Sundararajan (12), Richard Andrews (14) and Tom Maynard (15) alongside Susan Johnson and Steve Murgatroyd. They all acquitted themselves well with Sundararajan winning a brilliant 4 out of 6 and Andrews and Maynard a nearly as good 3 out of 6. Surrey 2 were the first opponents and Maynard started superbly with a three straight win over Steve Davis. Murgatroyd then had a great win over Wahab Adam to make it 2-0 but from this point Surrey proved too strong, running out 7-3 winners. However Sundararajan made her mark when beating Kinga Oryl in four and only just losing in five to Carmen Vajdi. Then followed a creditable draw with Sussex 2 and had captain Murgatroyd not lost a narrow five setter to Rory Scott, a win would have ensued. It was Johnson's turn to star with great wins over Sheila King and Sarah Coggon. Maynard beat Marc Burman, Andrews beat Scott and Sundararajan beat King to clinch the draw. Finally a 6-4 win over Sussex 3 ended a very satisfactory day, this time with Andrews and Sundararajan unbeaten, the latter playing

impressively for three straight wins against both Lisa Standen and Stacey Furnival. Andrews had to work hard in five setters against Harry McCarney and Liam Vine in the last set. With Murgatroyd beating Vine and Maynard winning in three against McCarney a successful day was concluded. The Berkshire Inter-Town tournament got underway with the Senior and Veterans Division 1s taking place at the Kingfisher Club recently. With Newbury withdrawing through lack of an organiser, this left just three towns to battle out for the trophy. The organisers of the tournament, the Bracknell Association, have rescheduled the event. A strong Bracknell team won the Senior Division with comfortable wins over Reading (5-1) and Maidenhead (6-0). Martin Adams and Jared Smith were unbeaten for Bracknell whilst Phil Prady lost only to Reading's Tom Maynard. Prady, however, had excellent wins over Abhay Gehlot and Tim Goodship to complete a good day. Reading took second spot with a 6-0 win over Maidenhead.

Cheshire by Alan Blears

The second tournament in the Stiga 3* Junior Grand Prix series, held in Widnes, was almost a victim of its own success. With 80 entries, and some later ones returned, and with Cheshire's show-piece table tennis centre at Halton bursting at the seams, the event didn't finish until roughly 9 p.m.

Organiser Tony Meredith may have a problem here, but it's the right sort of problem to have.

There were no Cheshire winners this time, though Sarah Weatherby did take the Girls' Consolation prize. Brother Matthew (he's not a monk) was one of the favourites but lost to fellow Cheshire player Neil Baker, not for the first time this season, before Neil himself lost in the semi-finals.

The junior tournament scene may be thriving, but league table tennis in parts of Greater Manchester is struggling. The Stockport League, once with eight or nine divisions, has only avoided the slow, painful death suffered by two other leagues thanks in part to the number of players - young and old - from the big Raven club. C-in-C, Phil Barratt has just completed 50 years as a player in the league. Congratulations, Phil, but 50 years? We never thought you were a day older than 40.

With little events news to report, this gives me the opportunity to pay tribute to one of the sport's unsung heroes, namely Ian Willsdon of Macclesfield. Ian has been organiser of the table tennis section of the Cheshire Youth Games, has run the Cheshire schools competitions, both team and individual, seemingly since dinosaur times, and has teams in both the National Cadet and National Junior Leagues.

He enjoys an excellent relationship with other coaching groups, in particular Mid - Cheshire and Stockport's Hillcourt Club, which has had many players from the Macclesfield borough area. There is a considerable interchange of players between Hillcourt and Macclesfield, with a number of Hillcourt players having represented Macclesfield in the Youth Games. Amy Walker plays for Henbury in the Macclesfield League, but trains at Hillcourt and plays for them in the N.J.L. - against Macclesfield while Jordan Potts is currently "on loan" to Macclesfield for the N.C.L. He served them well, winning 11 of his 12 sets in round one. Nor is Ian a one-sport wonder. An all-round sportsman in his youth, he retains an active interest in cricket. Keep up the good work, Ian: sport needs people like you.

Cleveland by Alan Ransome

Mixed fortunes have beset our leading players of late in that 16 year old Paul Drinkhall has risen to No 1 on the Senior Men's ranking list whilst our No 2, Danny Reed, who has risen to No 10 on the England Men's list and No 3 on the England Junior list, has been ruled out until at least the Spring of next year with an arm injury.

Wetherill picked up 480 ranking points during the event, majority of them against Zakhele Khuzwayo.

Paul becoming No 1 means that he has joined a list of prominent table tennis players from the county who have achieved this position in the past, including Denis Neale, Nicky Jarvis, Chen Xinhua and Carole Knight (Moore). Paul is the youngest to achieve this position and looks set for a long period into the future as a key member of the England Senior team.

Paul's long term goal is a medal in the 2012 Olympics but in the shorter term he is hopeful of more medals at European Youth level.

For Danny Reed, it is a big disappointment. The progress that Danny has made since finishing second in the Junior Masters at Cippenham at the end of last season has been remarkable, establishing himself in the 3rd position behind Paul and Darius Knight in the England Junior team. Being selected to represent England Seniors in the important European Senior Qualification event in Ljubljana in October was evidence of his significant improvement.

We hope that Danny will be back in time for the important Junior events in the April/May period and then to re-establish his position for the European Youths in Italy in July.

On the girls' front, Karina Lefevre has been excellent in winning back to back Cadet Girls singles titles in the important 4 Star competitions at Grantham and at Stockton. Karina has played a major part in helping Ormesby to be in the title race for the 2nd Division of the Women's British League and the 1st Division of the Junior British League. She has had a number of remarkable wins in the Butterfly Grand Prix events in Newcastle and Nottingham where she produced a string of victories in both events against players ranked way above her in the England Senior list.

In addition to Karina, Chloe Whyte, Katherine Lefevre and Jessica Dawson are also producing good results and showing exceptional promise which bodes well for the future of Women's table tennis in the county.

Cornwall by Jeremy Williams

With the new season in Cornwall now well underway it is pleasing to be able to report on a number of high points at an early stage of the season.

Darren Reed (Bridge TTC) is now Cornwall's number 1 ranked senior player following his victory over Adrian Noott in the final of the County Closed at the end of last season, thereby condemning the Falmouth player to number 2 in the rankings,

having previously been at 1 for a number of seasons. Reed will lead both the Senior and junior county sides this season in the Duchy's quest for glory. He also won the Junior Boys Singles at the recent East Midlands Junior Grand Prix already this season, and his progression up the England junior rankings remains steady.

Our junior second team have already tasted action this season coming away from Okehampton with two excellent 6-4 wins over Somerset 2 and Devon 3. They also sustained a narrow 6-4 defeat at the hands of Avon 1 in what was a very creditable overall start to the season. St Ives' Rachel Trevorrow was the star of the day winning all six games in which she played, and there were also good performances from Kelly Reed (Bridge) and Shaun Cuffin (Mylor) who each won four games. Debutants Andrew Henderson and Henry McGee from the Palace Club in Truro also performed very well.

Club Cornwall have been promoted in the British League, twice in as many seasons, and are now up in Division 2 South where they emerged reasonably well from the first round of matches. Two narrow defeats against London Progress and Generation Fareham but a draw against Mossford and a win over Peniel at least got some points on the board. Darren Reed will return to the squad for the second session and this will strengthen the team. However, the up and coming debutant Matthew Trevorrow, played gallantly in the first session to claim five out of eight scalps – and with a fairer wind his tally could well have been more.

On the domestic front the county's principal league West Cornwall has commenced with an extra division and things appear to be going well – there is regular coaching at a number of clubs and plenty of juniors coming into the game. Despite the abundance of young players there are still a number of old warhorses hanging around in the Premier Division, the oldest of which is John Bassett. At nearly 67 years of age and having survived a world war (although not many bombs dropped on St Ives), Bassett remains one of Cornwall's finest players. His style and attitude, as unforgiving as the granite Cornish coastline itself, has kept him at the top of Cornish table tennis for nearly 50 years. He could still perform well at county and British League level and must surely still be one of England's best hard bat exponents. His wish is for St Ives to win the West Cornwall Premier this season – that remains to be seen.

Derbyshire by Neil Houghton

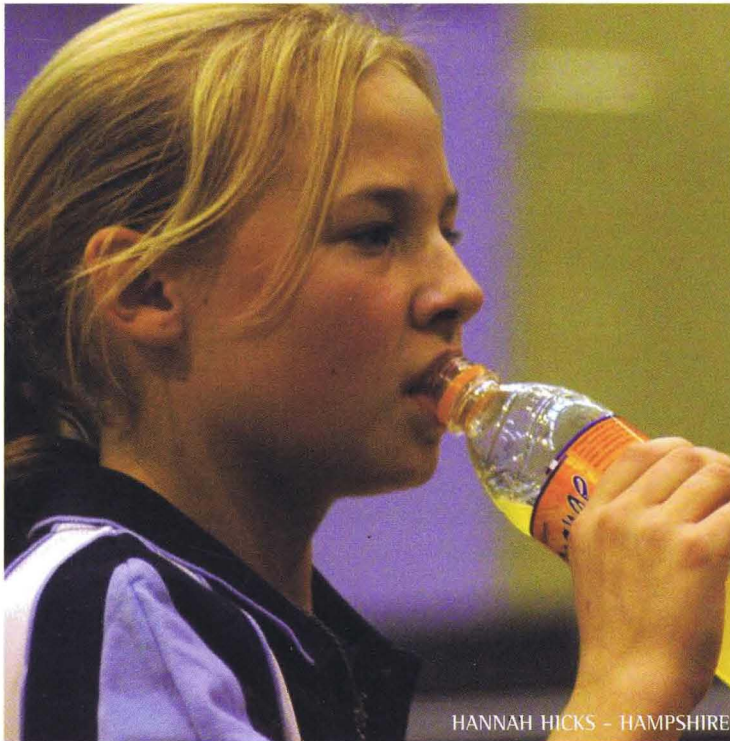
A correction - Jamie Smith is of junior age and playing for Pilsley in Chesterfield Division One and as it happens I saw him playing well the other night. His Derbyshire squad colleagues recently went down to Cippenham for the Junior Premier weekend. Emma and Liam were away, a much more significant feature in a weekend county format than in days of single county matches. However, Emily O'Sullivan and Kerry Mansell did a good job winning 11 from 12 sets and super brain/super talent Emily, who only dropped one game, was in a class of her own!

Daniel Lowe, Sean Cullen and Mark Naylor (top scorer with a street-fighting 4 from 6) in their junior premier debut (fresh from a successful Grantham 4* and playing well to their rankings) found that seasoned juniors have the determination and consistency to resist young talent in a team event. Junior county premier is good experience and in a number of matches can be more difficult than international cadet play as most of our players have four years left in the juniors so are up against playing minds that seem much older still! We had a good weekend with a first match draw and two wins putting us currently in second spot. Our juniors seem always to have good team spirit and this is beginning to gel with our young team – pleasing!

First club report is Speedwell Premier T.T. Club, Derbyshire's newcomer, the Staveley Club making its mark in and beyond Chesterfield. Recently achieving Clubmark status, Speedwell was started in summer 2004 by a group of enthusiasts including Perry Palmer, Briony Cooney and Billy Cooney. Having obtained grants from various funding bodies they established club/coaching and match nights and entered teams of all ages into the Chesterfield League. As their new younger members improved they also entered cadet league teams. Their first team gained promotion from Division 2 and currently leads Chesterfield Division 1, and their Cadet 'A' team of young improvers gained a very creditable result in topping the Division 2 table in the first weekend of National League at Rotherham. Chairman Billy Cooney says such "well-speedy" success is the result of the efforts of all volunteers who have supported the club and its players. "We are very proud of our young players and a big thank you to everyone involved!"

ROUNDUP

COUNTY



HANNAH HICKS - HAMPSHIRE

Devon by John Smith

The county's major tournament, the Clare Pengelly Memorial Satellite Grand Prix, provided a wonderful opportunity for local young players to show off their talents. Cadet international Richard Marshall won Bands 3 and 4 on Saturday. The Band 4 final was a close call against county colleague Chris Smith who had led in the final game.

Hampshire's Matt Ware reached the semi-final of the open event but couldn't break the Devon stranglehold in the juniors, losing a high class semi-final to Smith in four games. Marshall had cruised through the other half to provide another final between the two 15 year olds who live 500 metres apart in Woolwell, and whose local rivalry has been going strong since the age of eight. This time Marshall took his third title with a straight game win.

Not to be outdone by her brother, 17 year old Sally Smith took the Band 2 final, defeating Hannah Hicks, and then the Band 1 with a stunning victory over England number 11 Naomi Wilson. The following week, Sally, only two weeks too old to play in junior events herself, followed this up with a straight game victory over current national junior number one, Sarra Wang, in the Under 21 final at the K2 Grand Prix in Crawley.

David Wetherill could be set for automatic entry into the 2008 Beijing Paralympics after a superb

performance at the Montreux 2006 IPC World Table Tennis Championships saw him climb from 33rd to 15th in the world. The top 10 world ranked disabled players will be guaranteed a place in Beijing.

Wetherill, who is disability class six, picked up an astonishing 480 ranking points during the event, the majority of them coming from an excellent victory in the open event against South Africa's Zakhele Khuzwayo, a more able-bodied class eight player. Despite being the youngest and lowest seeded player, David cruised to an impressive 11-4, 11-6, 18-16 success.

Devon has a proud county championships tradition with currently more junior and senior teams than any other county, and its junior, senior and veterans first teams all in the Premier Division. A very successful two-day county trial was held this season with 43 players taking part, more than half being under 15. In addition, a further 22 even younger players competed in the sixth Plymouth Primary Schools Championships, so the county's future is looking bright.

Hampshire by Jeremy Wilson

Mathew Ware became the youngest Hampshire table tennis champion when he enjoyed a clean sweep of titles at the senior closed championships. The Boumemouth 15 year old won a hat-trick of

events by adding the U 23 singles to victories in the men's singles and doubles events.

The tournament was dominated by Hampshire's crop of emerging young players with Andover's Hannah Hicks also dominant in the women's events where she claimed both the singles and doubles titles.

Ware defeated England cadet player David McBeath in four games in a close semi-final before taking on the Frenchman Eric Duduk in the final.

Duduk had disposed of Ashley Willetts in the semi-finals and took a 1-0 and 2-1 lead in the final. Gradually, though, Ware found consistency with his two winged attack and came through the fourth and fifth sets 11-5 and 11-7 to claim a first Hampshire men's singles title.

Hicks experienced less difficulty in the women's events as she overcame the experienced Barbara Savage in straight games before teaming up with Southampton's Becky House to defeat Savage and Katie Bradford in a similarly one-sided doubles final.

Perhaps the surprise of the day, however, was provided by Shaun Newcombe in the men's doubles event. Newcombe is one the top wheelchair players in the country and gelled brilliantly with Waterside's Brian Hayes to defeat a number of seeds on the way to the final against Ware and Garth Kinlocke. The rules for wheelchair players in doubles mean that alternative hits are not obligatory and Ware and Kinlocke initially struggled with the Newcombe/Hayes combination, falling two games behind before recovering to win 11-6 in the fifth set.

Ware and Kinlocke then faced each other in a see-saw final of the U23 singles. Kinlocke took a 2-1 lead and had chances to close out the match in the fourth set before Ware showed his nerve under pressure to claim a narrow victory by 11-7 in the fifth.

The mixed doubles saw Jackson Migade and Liz Inzam defeat Kinlocke and House 3-1 in the final while Charlie Childs was a straight-sets winner of the men's veterans' final against Rod McMullan.

The recent Hampshire junior closed saw Ashley Willetts defeat John McBeath in a five-set final before also clinching the doubles title with Anton Swartz.

Southampton's Becky House took both the U18 and U15 girls' singles championships while Jonathan Evans and Teresa Armitage were winners in the U13 events.

Lewis Creighton become U15 singles champion but

The tournament was dominated by Hampshire's young players with Hannah Hicks also dominant in the women's events

missed out on also adding the doubles title when he and House were beaten by Jonathan Evans and Kieran Wells in the final.

Hertfordshire by Ann Fereday

Much of this column over the past few months has been filled with news of Herts juniors. Reason? They achieve much that is worth mentioning. Well, they have done it again. After the first weekend of the Junior British League, Barnet are top of the Boys Premier Division. They finished just ahead of York Gardens. The team was Alim Hirji, Ben Barlow and William Maybanks - who also topped the averages.

As these stars age, who will take their place? Top of the cadet rankings is Jordan Harvey. At 10 years old he started playing in an after school club, encouraged by his D.T. teacher who played. By 11 he realised his potential and took the game more seriously by attending the Barnet Centre for coaching. He has been part of the team for county friendly matches and played once in the British League team. While he is happy playing for Herts juniors now, he would one day like to play in a senior British League team.

The winter season has begun for our veterans. On the last weekend in October, 4 of the 6 teams were in action. Herts. 3 played group matches in Division 3C at Ashford. They beat Wiltshire 2 by 7-3 with Mark McCarthy, Andrew Nash, Dennis Robinson and Jeanette Maybanks all contributing. They lost 7-3 to Surrey 4 though Andrew won both his singles. Herts. 4 were at home to Durham 1 in Division 3A. The result was a draw, 5 sets each. We won all the doubles and June Nelson won her singles. Herts. 5 also played at home against Somerset 1 in Division 3D resulting in a draw. This is a good start for these two teams as they are newly promoted to the third division.

Herts. 6 travelled to Wiltshire to play Devon 4. They lost 7-3 but congratulations to their lady, Jackie Channel, who won her singles and both mixed.

Northants by Dennis Millman

All eight teams were in action when this season's EBS Mobile Phones Ltd. Northants Super League got under way at Northampton's Unity College. Unity, using home advantage to the full, made a positive start, with Kieron Dabbs and Steve Silk unbeaten against Westfield, although John Fuller took both to close fifth ends. Dave Welsman was not so fortunate, beaten in straight games by Greg Yamall, then getting the better of Daniel Smalley in

four, before retiring injured after dropping the first end to John Fuller. His wife Margaret replaced him against Turvey and though she lost to Jamie Chamberlain, Unity took the remaining singles.

With four points for a seven two win, or better, Unity ended the day on maximum points, one more than Higham Band who beat Cold Higham nine nil, but faltered against Harborough's Andy LeButt who accounted for Andy Trott, Richard Elliott and Mark Nannery, all in easy fifth end finishes, to restrict the Band to three points. LeButt followed up with another treble against Farthingstone, with Dave Grundy adding the two rubbers that completed a narrow Harborough victory.

DCA Jaguars Chris Doran was the only other player to remain unbeaten, and was joined by Michael Edwards and Paul Gatiss in a nine nil romp against Turvey. Westfield provided stiffer opposition with Doran the only player to score and that only after a pulsating encounter against his Kettering Town and Westfield team-mate Fuller. Doran, at full stretch, scraped through 0-11, 12-10, 9-11, 11-9, 13-11. Farthingstone's Alan Chery also had a successful day with a maximum against Cold Higham supplemented by a double from Matt Carter.

However his 100% record for the day disappeared when after winning twice he went down to LeButt. On the local league scene Kettering's Premier Division appears to be a straight fight between Higham Band and Kettering Town. Currently the Town hold a seven point lead but Higham's Trott, Elliott and Keates, supplemented by Nannery and Steve Brown, have a game in hand and at the time of writing have a 100% tally. Full strength Burton Baptist and Harborough sides could still determine the final outcome.

The Wellingborough Premier section could become a three way battle between Turvey, Higham Band and Westfield but player availability, or the lack of it, could well prove the major factor, with both Higham and Westfield having already ended on the losing side.

Westfield, with eleven teams featuring in the Wellingborough League, had an auspicious start to the season when the first week's matches coincided with the opening of the purpose built Weavers Table Tennis Centre. This splendid facility could be the forerunner of big things for Westfield, Wellingborough and Northants in general.

Northumberland by Pauline Long

I received the October issue of TT News, only to find that my report had not been included, as it

had apparently never arrived! However, I have been assured that the copy for the November issue is safely in the editor's hands, so fingers crossed for inclusion in that publication.

I would like to record my thanks to my previous typist, our Treasurer, Brian Pierce and our Chairman and League Secretary, Dave Scholfield, who has kindly agreed to e-mail my typewritten reports to the editor, so hopefully they will appear in all future issues.

Although some of us have already played in three tournaments this season at the time of writing (the third weekend in October) - the North East and Midland Masters and the Newcastle Grand Prix - the first senior and veteran county weekends were not due to take place until 28-29 October. The seniors (promoted last season) will be in Division 1A. There will be no junior teams this season due to a lack of girls, but promising boys will receive some funding to compete in up to three suitable regional tournaments if they so wish.

The leagues early leaders are as follows:- Premier - Washington A Division 1 - North Shields YMCA C Division 2 - Newton B Division 3 - Old England FATTS Division 4 - Cramlington Dynamos.

South York--shire by Robert Loxley

Newly promoted South Yorkshire represented by youngsters from the Sheffield Table Tennis League and the Rotherham Table Tennis League, emerged with some credit against higher ranked opposition at the recently held Junior Premier County Championships at Cippenham. Catherine Hayes (Bucks) ranked 50 narrowly defeated Don Valley's Laura Robinson (88) 11-8, 8-11, 12-10, 1-11, 11-6. However, Kim Daybell (Crookes TTC) defeated Ben Wiseman and Miles Evans and Abbeydale's Melissa Wright took 2/2. South Yorkshire's 6-4 win was completed by Rotherham's Richard Element (Wadsley Bridge) as he overturned the rankings beating Tim Hoare 1-11, 11-6, 9-11, 11-9, 11-8. In the clash with neighbours Yorkshire, Element lost 3-0 to Damien Piper and 3-2 against Chris Parker. Kim Daybell featured in the game of the match when he defeated Piper 11-8 in the fifth. Good performances by Melissa Wright (2/2) and Laura Robinson (1/2) proved insufficient as South Yorkshire slumped to a 6-4 loss.

In the final match a 3-7 loss was sustained against Derbyshire with Kim Daybell collecting a maximum and Wright taking out Kerry Mansell 3-0. In the Sheffield League, defending champions Stocksbridge hammered Crookes C 9-1 to head the

ROUNDUP

COUNTY



SALLY SHUTT - YORKSHIRE

first division and emerge as favourites for yet another championship.

Sheffield Wheelchairs A are undefeated and lead Division Two with Arnie Chan (12/12) and Jamie Rawson (11/12) in irresistible form. Wheelchairs seconds are also unbeaten at the top of Division Six, the squad of Roger Hales, Billy Leake, Sue Gilroy and Mick Prendergast have already established a two point cushion after just six weeks.

Surrey by Chris Andrews

Joanna Parker is now playing for TTK Anrochte in the top flight of the German Women's League having left 3B, Berlin's second team.

At Madeira the England Women's team beat Estonia, Luxembourg, Portugal and Bulgaria, all as 3-0 victories, with Joanna as number 1 or 2 in the team. This set up a semi-final against Holland next February. The young England Men's team, with Darius at number 2, only had one victory in which they beat Switzerland.

In the Halifax Veterans Open, Dave Harding destroyed former European Champion and top seed John Hilton in three straight games 11-6, 11-7, 11-6 in the quarter-final. The semi-final saw Harding beat Steve Turner and in the final, Harding overcame second seed and defending champion David Godbold to take the title. In the doubles final, reigning champions Dave Harding and Tim Dyson lost to Tony Gelder and Keith Williams.

At the Clare Pengelly Memorial Satellite Grand Prix event, Abdul Wuraola reached the final of the veterans' event but had to leave as the last train for London was at 7.40pm. However he did win the Men's Band 1 event. Zbyszek Kordula was runner-up at the K2 Crawley Open Grand Prix in the Men's Band 6 event. Leo Veinsreider was also an unlucky loser in the restricted event of the same tournament.

Chris Bush is playing for DHS London Progress in Division 1 of the British League, with Marcia Ma playing for York Gardens. Henry Medellin has moved to TTK Greenhouse 1 in Division 1 South and Midlands. In the Women's Premier British League, Marcia Ma is playing for DHS London Progress.

Warwickshire by Caroline Williams

Leamington made a good start in the first session played on 21st October of the Heart of England Cadet League by winning their three matches. The team of Phil Blowey, Ryan Oldham, Lawrence Sweeney and Alistair Nicholson beat Birmingham 6-4, Kidderminster 7-3 and Sutton Coldfield 7-3. Alistair Nicholson and Chris Peaves from Evesham were the only players in the league to finish the day with a 100% record.

The Warwickshire Closed Championships will take place on Sunday 26 November at St Nicholas Park, Warwick. This includes events for all ages from

Under 11 to Over 60, plus restricted events for the average player from which the better players are debarred. This is the first time the Warwickshire Closed has held an Under 11 event, but reflects the changes in the age groups at the national trials. Those who are not yet in the league but attend club coaching can enter the Closed Championships on payment of a temporary membership fee. Some Under 11s and Under 13s do play in leagues, especially in Leamington's 2-a-side league, but many are only able to attend club coaching, so it is hoped that many of those players will be encouraged to enter

Yorkshire by Barry Snowden

The YTTA county trials were recently held at Armley Sports Centre in Leeds under the watchful eye of ESTTA representative Richard Hudson, and it was refreshing to see that the successful players in each of the categories came from differing parts of the county.

This wide cross section of young players throughout the county emphasised the good work done throughout the county by a number of coaches, namely Peter Thompson and Sandra Rider (Leeds), Alan Dickinson (Halifax), Sally Shutt (Bradford), David Adams (Craven/Keighley) and John Wilkinson (Castleford and Pontefract) All the above have an excellent core of supporters, too plentiful to name but whose help is invaluable in the development of the young players in our county.

Trial Results - U11 Boys - 1st - Matthew Hull (Leeds), 2nd - Daniel Judowski (Craven), 3rd - Michael Whitaker (Bradford), 4th - James Celaire (Bradford). U11 Girls - 1st Phobe Foster (Keighley), 2nd - Anna Sinclair (Craven), 3rd - Sarah Johnson (Keighley), 4th - Olivia Knott (Castelford/Pontefract). U13 Boys 1st James Foster (Halifax), 2nd - Adam Percy (Halifax), 3rd - Jack Katterfield (Craven), 4th - Daniel Johnson (Keighley). U15 Boys 1st - Mark Johnson (Doncaster), 2nd - Edward Fambley (Ryedale), 3rd - Dhruvad Karwa (Doncaster), 4th - Daniel Adams (Leeds). U15 Girls 1st- Steffi Garrett (Bradford), 2nd- Alex Lee (Scarborough), 3rd - Jessica Ramplin (Harrogate), 4th Kelsey Howson (Leeds).

The top four players in each category will represent Yorkshire in the ETTA regional trials along with U13 girls Anjeli Kullar (Bradford), Katie Lee (Scarborough), Victoria Oxley (Bradford) and Anisah Rasul (Keighley) as no trial was held in this category.



KELLY SIBLEY

Kelly Sibley has completed another stage in her remarkable sporting rise by becoming the number one. The 18-year-old international has overtaken team-mate Joanna Parker at the top of the latest set of English Table Tennis Association rankings. It caps a remarkable year for Kelly who said: "Becoming number one has been one of my goals for a long time so to fulfil it is a great feeling." No stranger to the senior game, Kelly played at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in March and has appeared at a host of other top tournaments. She therefore knows the challenges ahead. "From junior to senior level there's a completely different style of play," she said. "You have no chance in the senior game of getting away with scoring the sort of points you would get away with in the junior game."

Kelly's Favourites

Colour: Sky Blue **Film:** Mary Poppins **Music genre:** Chart/Pop **Band/Artist** Robbie Williams **Book:** Harry Potter Chamber of Secrets **Comedian:** Lee Evans **Sports person:** Paula Radcliffe

PLAYER RANKINGS 2006/2007

TOP 25 SENIOR MEN

Ranking	Player
1.	DRINKHALL, Paul (CV.)
2.	PERRY, Alex (DV.)
3.	RUSHTON, Andrew (LA.)
4.	BAGGALEY, Andrew (BU.)
5.	KNIGHT, Darius (SY.)
6.	HERBERT, Gareth (BK.)
7.	YOUNG, Terry (BK.)
8.	YARNALL, Tim (NP.)
9.	MEADS, David (DU.)
10.	REED, Daniel (CV.)
11.	TRUMPAUSKAS, Lawrence (E.)
12.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
13.	BRYANT, Craig (DV.)
14.	HOLLAND, John J (Dy) (E.)
15.	BARHAM, Dale (CA.)
16.	SMITH, Mark Richard (Y.)
17.	WURAOLA, Abdul (SY.)
18.	BLAKE, Darren (SY.)
19.	EVANS, Bradley (BU.)
20.	DOLDER, Kevin (LA.)
21.	VENNER, Ritchie (SX.)
22.	MARPLES, Shaun (DY.)
23.	PAPANTONIOU, Costas (MI.)
24.	CLEMINSON, Peter (E.)
25.	ROGERS, Chris (LE.)

TOP 5 JUNIOR BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	DRINKHALL, Paul (CV.)
2.	KNIGHT, Darius (SY.)
3.	REED, Daniel (CV.)
4.	MEADS, David (DU.)
5.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)

TOP 5 CADET BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
2.	PITCHFORD, Liam (DY.)
3.	MCBEATH, David (HA.)
4.	CULLEN, Sean (DY.)
5.	DAYBELL, Kim (YS.)

TOP 5 UNDER 13 BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	GRAY, Lewis (K.)
2.	MITCHELL, Edward (BU.)
3.	BOULT, Joshua (CH.)
4.	WALKER, Sam (NG.)
5.	TAN, Reece (E.)

TOP 5 VETERAN MEN

Ranking	Player
1.	WURAOLA, Abdul (SY.)
2.	ECKERSLEY, Nigel (SX.)
3.	CARTHY, Clive (E.)
4.	VENNER, Ritchie (SX.)
5.	GILES, Paul (DV.)

TOP 25 SENIOR WOMEN

Ranking	Player
1.	SIBLEY, Kelly (WA.)
2.	PARKER, Joanna (SY.)
3.	LOWER, Helen (ST.)
4.	BAWDEN, Natalie (E.)
5.	EMBLING, Abigail (E.)
6.	REYNOLDS, Lindsey (LA.)
7.	ROBERTS, Joanna (Y.)
8.	MA, Marcia (SY.)
9.	KEAST, Lesley (LI.)
10.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.)
11.	SMITH, Karen (LE.)
12.	WILSON, Naomi (SO.)
13.	SHEPHERD, Karen (CH.)
14.	RADFORD, Lisa (DV.)
15.	CHAPMAN, Gemma (BK.)
16.	BONGERS, Jose (LE.)
17.	HALLOWS, Caroline (CH.)
18.	RAINTON, Rosemary (SX.)
19.	YARNLEY, Gemma (K.)
20.	COHEN, Michele (WI.)
21.	BALDI, Andrea (Ys) (Y.)
22.	UZAL, Shelley (E.)
23.	MAY, Elizabeth (DV.)
24.	HOWARD, Alice (CH.)
25.	NARENDRAN, Aparna (MI.)

TOP 5 JUNIOR GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	SPRINGTHORPE, Lauren (LI.)
2.	WANG, Sarra (E.)
3.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.)
4.	HALLOWS, Caroline (CH.)
5.	FARQUHAR, Melanie (BK.)

TOP 5 CADET GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	WRIGHT, Melissa (YS.)
2.	GRIFFITH, Rebekah (LA.)
3.	LEFEVRE, Karina (CV.)
4.	FULLER, Mary (Y.)
5.	TRAVIS, Martha (CO.)

TOP 5 UNDER 13 GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	BATES, Emily (LI.)
2.	DAVIDSON, Lucy (DY.)
3.	KING, Yolanda (SX.)
4.	WHYTE, Chloe (CV.)
5.	FURNIVAL, Chelsea (SX.)

TOP 5 VETERAN WOMEN

Ranking	Player
1.	HUANG, Shu (K.)
2.	JOHNS, Jan (CH.)
3.	SMITH, Karen (LE.)
4.	HARPER, Sandra (BD.)
5.	MUDGE, Kim (K) (SY.)



For the full list of player rankings go to our website

www.etta.co.uk



DATES

for your diary

Table Tennis events
for January 2007



Cornwall 2 Star Satellite Grand Prix
VETTS Western Hereford

Saturday 20th:

ESTTA Team Zone Finals
National Junior League
Womens British League - Nottingham

Sunday 21st:

ESTTA Team Zone Finals
Stiga 3 Star Grand Prix

Saturday 27th:

Chesham U/15 Girls
Chesham U/18 Boys
London Open - Butterfly Grand Prix
British League
National League

Sunday 28th:

London Open - Butterfly Grand Prix
British League
National League

Tuesday 2nd:

Chesham U/15 Girls
Chesham U/18 Boys

Saturday 6th:

County Championships all Categories

Sunday 7th:

British League

Saturday 13th:

Cadet - City of Liverpool 4 Star
Cadet/Junior - Cippenham YPNYF
Cornwall 2 Star Satellite Grand Prix
VETTS Western Hereford

Saturday 13th:

Cadet - City of Liverpool 4 Star
Cadet/Junior - Cippenham YPNYF

2007 COPY DATES

February Edition
1st January
March Edition
1st February
April Edition
1st March
May Edition
1st April
July Edition
1st June

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