

# table tennis news

Official Magazine of the English Table Tennis Association



## London Progress

Crowned Champions

## David Wetherill

The new super star

**Plus:**

Perfecting your equipment  
Travelling for Table Tennis  
**and**  
the latest news and results

Eggle Adomelyte  
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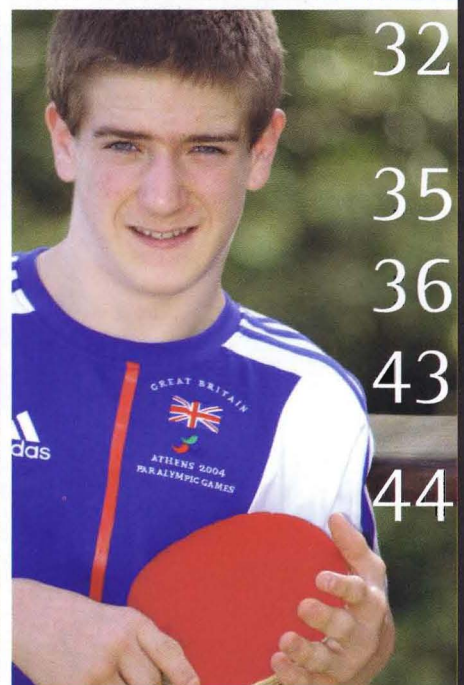
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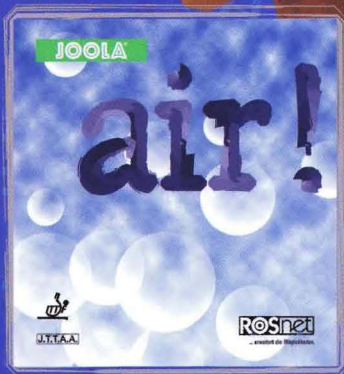
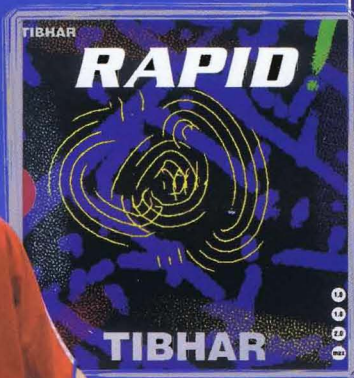
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# from the editor



**RICHARD PETTIT, EDITOR**



**RICHARD EATON**

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



**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.

Brilliant is the best word to describe the opening of 2007: for sometime Drinkhall and Knight have been household names in the table tennis world and over the past year they continued with the exceptional form that many of the table tennis alliance have become accustomed. However, with the explosion of interest in future 2012 contenders Drinkhall and Knight are swiftly capturing the attention of and grabbing the imagination of everyone, spreading the speed, passion, desire and professionalism of elite table tennis as they rise to the top as figureheads for British youth sport.

The same traits are also prominent in a young man from Devon, David Wetherill; in this issue we find out about his worldwide escapades as he continues to elevate himself up the world ranking list and towards his ultimate aim of competing in Beijing at the 2008 Paralympics.

Jumping on a jet plane appears to be second nature to many table tennis professionals Richard Eaton delves into this phenomenon and finds out if the lure of the foreign league is a desire or necessity.

With a new era of table tennis around the corner and the continued development of faster more ferocious carbon blades, speed glues and rubbers, plus the inevitable threat of global warming, the endangered breed of dazzling nullifiers could well find itself extinguished from the top flight. Matthew Syed runs down his top five of all time in celebration of his fellow talented tormentors.

Please keep your letters, articles and photos rolling in and I look forward to meeting many of you at the National Championships in Sheffield early next month.

“WE ARE 99.9% CERTAIN OF GOING THROUGH” STEEN HANSEN PAGE 8 “IN JANUARY HE WAS ALSO HEADING TO HONG KONG FOR A PRE-OLYMPIC TRAINING CAMP” JEREMY WILSON PAGE 10 “NEARLY ALL SUFFERERS COMPLAIN OF GRADUAL ONSET ELBOW PAIN” DR KAY BRENNAN PAGE 12 “HE VERY POLITELY ASKED ME TO TAKE A BANANA SKIN FROM HIM SO HE COULD SIGN SOME AUTOGRAPHS” KEN MUHR PAGE 14 “DEFENSIVE TABLE TENNIS IS, SADLY, A DYING ART” MATTHEW SYED PAGE 18 “FOR A SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER FUTURE IT NEEDS BETTER FUNDING” RICHARD EATON PAGE 22

# Continued Success...

To say I am pleased about the success of the GB team, which consisted of four English players at the Australian Youth Olympic, would be the "understatement of the year". Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight winning between them one Gold, two Silver medals and a fourth place, backed up by Emma Vickers and Melanie Farquhar reaching the quarter-finals are outstanding results for our players at this major prestigious event.

This fantastic success continued at the European Junior Top 12 with Paul finishing First and Darius 6th. England's first number one spot in this event since 1985, for your information we are bidding to run this event in 2008 which will be the last season for them in the Juniors.

These results have increased the profile of our sport with our funding partners and the media, it is a fact that international success increases participation for a sport and we shall continue to strive to emulate these results in the coming years leading to English successes at senior level.

It is interesting to note that the four players who were involved in the schools events are part of our Talent and Youth Programmes and are also closely involved with four major PremierClubs. Both Paul and Darius spent time at the Academy in Nottingham, albeit this closed some three and half years ago and I believe that our efforts to establish a National Training Centre as soon as possible is vital in bringing through more talent to match that which the boys have brought to us.

Negotiations continue with Sport England for additional support in the regions for our National Coaching Department. Final decisions on the allocation of funding for this club/coach programme will be made at the end of March.

We must as a sport be concerned about increasing our own income streams some and we also must be concerned about the fact that we have to negotiate with many different bodies for our funding which is a very difficult and in some cases a long drawn out process. It is not just my view but that of many other sports that more 'joined up and lateral thinking' needs to take place involving sport from school level all the way through to the elite. I am sure these comments may not be liked by some people but the opportunities with 2012 and the legacy beyond only comes once in a lifetime, and sports, together with the Government and its funding agencies have to ensure that the national governing bodies are the leaders in these endeavours and are recognised in this role.

Information will be sent out and published on the website in the next month in regard to the UKCC and its programme, costing and link with our existing coaching awards.

The UKCC is an essential element in driving our sport forward via a national programme recognised by the government, councils and schools.

I have proposed to National Council a request for the Rules

Committee to look at the ETTA Memorandum and Articles which included all the "rules" of the old Association when incorporation took place and was accepted by the AGM at that time.

It is clear that we need to change some parts of our corporate governance to align ourselves with other sports and to create a better and more modern decision-making process.

This is not intended to take away the responsibilities from the membership; it is a method to ensure that the membership is involved in the key decision-making processes including, for example, fees, voting rights, AGM procedures, membership etc. It is an attempt to ensure that the decision-making process runs quicker and smoother, and to ensure that the AGM concentrates on the major issues and direction of our sport.

We have many parts of the rule book which could be passed over to National Council/Management to approve or change which makes no real impact on the way our sport takes place at grass roots level. Such rules are in place for the day to day requirements of running our sport and to meet any governmental requirements.

Examples of these are anti-doping policies, changes in "cinographic photography, publication of reports, disciplinary procedures etc, etc. The present system means that any 'rule change' has to be presented and approved by National Council in January for submission at that year's AGM, this could mean some minor word change as was seen at last year's AGM where there were 3 pages of them.

I cannot emphasise enough that any of these potential changes to the Company Memorandum and Articles (Rules) cannot be put in place without the approval by the membership at an AGM. It is a streamlining and modernisation programme, not part of a process to undermine or take away the critical involvement in our sport by the membership.

Significant modernisation funding has been allocated over the coming months to improve communications to the membership, which is key to the development of our sport. Some restructuring will be discussed and decisions made to improve some aspects of the ETTA's support and work programmes within the present organisation.

Earlier I mentioned about a need for our sport to address the problem we have in regard to a significant dependence upon our governmental funding partners. This will never disappear completely but we must lower the percentage of income from them and generate more ourselves, not an easy or quick task.

Let me firstly give you a brief background on our present position based upon the audited accounts for 2005/6. The total income for the ETTA was £1,908,735; of which grants from our Funding Partners were £1,313,978, forming almost 70%. Affiliation Income of £160,246, represented little more than 8%, whilst the remaining £434,511 is generated from sponsorship, ranking, competitions, tournament levies and bank Interest etc.

Clearly the Grants are vitally important to us and we will, of course, keep pushing for more. Any improvements in our own income streams will not only help, as it is invested back into our sport, but will also help with our negotiations with our funding partners and overall reduce our vulnerability to Governmental changes. France with over 125,000 members

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](mailto:richard.pettit@etta.co.uk)



## Straight Talk

by Alex Murdoch  
ETTA Chairman

still needs government support albeit at a much lower percentage of their total income.

It is a fact that international success generates income for the NGB from sponsors and other revenue sources, and can at the same time assist the local grass roots with their own local sponsors and income. We have a fantastic sport to sell in terms of its basic credentials but it is limited by how many members we have and how our international players perform.

### HOW CAN WE GENERATE MORE INCOME?

I believe that in the longer term our individual affiliation/membership fees must increase but this can only happen if the members understand and believe that they are getting 'value for money'. The present level through our team affiliation is £4.28 per annum or marginally over 8p a week. Some perceive this is too much already for what the ETTA does for them whilst any changes have to be justified in terms of support and benefits.

The website is a clear way for us to generate income which should not just be from our present excellent trade sponsors but also from outside of the sport from, for example, the service industries. The website must show we have a very high level of activity for us to get these advertisements; a programme of looking at these fees is now in place.

Our events do get major sponsorship from our trade partners and we thank them for this. Some venues are at reduced costs and others give us free venues. Further efforts will be made into getting more council support and local sponsorship for individual events.

We have just announced the 2000 Club, profits to be used to support our young players who are not funded by our partners, which we would like every member, parents and friends to join. Application forms are being printed for circulation and can be downloaded from the website. This can be an effective source of income and at the same time give the opportunity for its members to win some money. The odds are much better than the Lottery!

Getting a major sponsor for the ETTA and our sport remains a very difficult but potentially significant way of generating income. Two important factors prevail in any negotiations, namely international success and demographics about our membership. We are making progress in both of these areas, our young players are having International success and the return of all the Individual Registration forms will enable us to put together the data required by our sponsors. Please ensure your forms are completed asap. The data generated does not mean giving lists of names to potential sponsors, it does mean that we shall be able to analyse the returns and hence profile the best potential sponsors for our sport related to our membership.

Finally the fact that Table Tennis is an Olympic Sport will give us some more potential 'doors to open' once the agreements are in place for the major sponsors for London 2012; I am sure a spin off from this will help in our negotiations. If any of you have any ideas in this area, please contact me and I hope to meet you soon during my travels around the country; invitations to attend any local meetings are warmly welcomed by my team and myself.

# NEWS

## Coach Hans Soova

### You've got to hand it to the Hans

Hans, a pensioner has just been awarded a 'b active' award by Bradford Council in honour of teaching the district's young people about the sport. He has been guiding the district's youngsters to table tennis success for over 40 years with incredible results and helped establish leagues across the district in the 1970s. Hans was born in Estonia but Bradford became his home as he took solace there in 1951 after enduring refugee camps throughout the Second World War. Now living in Baildon, Hans has been holding coaching sessions at Nab Wood Sports Centre for hundreds of people, and his expert help has seen a host of youngsters from the district competing at national junior and senior levels, with numerous winning European Commonwealth and national titles. In 2004, Hans celebrated his 40th year of coaching in style when his latest prodigy Mary Fuller won the England under-12 girls' singles title to become his 50th player he had coached to win a national title. A staggering 24 of Hans' pupils have progressed to international level and 15 have reached the top of the national rankings.

In addition to his coaching clinics at Nab Wood Sports Centre, Hans also teaches youngsters at Bradford Girls Grammar School, Beckfoot School and Oakbank School, concentrating on four 'As': attendance, attitude, ambition and attention to detail.

Hans Soova said: "Receiving this award from Bradford Council is a real honour and I am very proud to accept it. I really enjoy coaching and the district has some really talented table tennis players - I'm sure there are a lot more out there too.

"I coach people aged from seven to 70 and from nine different nationalities, so I would encourage everyone who wants to take part in sport to give table tennis a go and get involved in the Council's 'b active' campaign."

Bradford Council's Head of Sport and Leisure Steve Warner said: "Hans has a terrific track record of producing top class table tennis players but his contribution to sport in Bradford is far, far greater.

"As a coach he has inspired and motivated innumerable young people in this district for 40 years and in doing so has made a real difference to their lives. Our b active award recognises the value of his work and the contribution he has made."

## Korean Kicks and Flicks

### Lee Dong-Gook

Paul Drinkhall may have some tough opposition waiting for him when he returns from his overseas tournaments. **Middlesbrough FC new signing** Lee Dong-Gook has made quite an impression on his fellow players.

Apparently the South Korean's eyes lit up when being introduced to his new colleagues **he spied a table tennis table** in the changing room.

"I can tell you he's more than good at table tennis. **There's no-one here who can touch him.** When he saw the table his eyes lit up it seemed to be more important than the soccer." said **teammate Andrew Davies.**

"He started playing with his agent and it was unbelievable. **We thought we were good but he was like a machine.**

"We used to have table tennis competitions among the players but after seeing him play, I think those days will have gone out of the window."

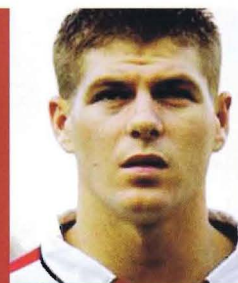
## Soccer ace enjoys a serve

Soccer star Steve Gerrard is planning a gym at his home on Merseyside and playing an important part of the Garrard's new Games Room will be a table tennis table.

Gerrard has just received permission to build the

games room in his back garden which will be as big as a detached house.

So planning permission became an big issued.. But the local council finally



backed his plans and one of the first items of sporting equipment to arrive at

Gerrard's Formby home was the table tennis table.

## Australian Youth Olympic Festival

### Paul Drinkhall Flies the Flag for Team GB

Paul Drinkhall led by example in the Australian Youth Olympic Festival after being handed the honour of leading Team GB out during the opening ceremony. As one of the most experienced members of Britain's 112-strong squad down under, he was a natural choice.

"Holding the flag's a big honour and leading Team GB out into the arena was an amazing feeling," he said.

"When it was action and everybody came in it was a great experience. I went to the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and that was massive. The opening ceremony to that was just amazing, but I wasn't carrying the flag there so this one's right up there with that."

The promising youngster is aware the opportunity of being a flag-bearer may not come around again.

**"The AYOF provided an excellent opportunity for our young athletes to experience high-level competition against some of the world's leading nations. It was a tremendously positive experience for our young competitors and they performed exceptionally well".**

BOA Chief Executive Simon Clegg

"Steen (Performance Director) told me that he had nominated me to the BOA to carry the flag," he said. "I thought, fair enough, I've done well to get there, and when they announced it I was really pleased. I

just tried to have as much fun as possible".

The opening ceremony was held at the Sydney Entertainment Centre.

#### Gold and Silver

Paul Drinkhall continued to put his best foot forward both in the singles and with the assistance of his excellent partner Darius Knight in the doubles as they completed the tournament with a four game victory over their Chinese opponents in the Boys' Doubles competition.

After conceding the first game 8-11 they gradually began to find their rhythm and completed the victory with some consistent play, winning the last three games 11-4, 11-8, 14-12. Drinkhall narrowly failed to make it two gold medals - just losing in a gruelling five game match to his Taiwanese opponent in oppressive heat.

Drinkhall started in confident style winning the first game 11-2. He went off the boil in the second game losing 4-11 but recovered in the third pegging Chiang back to an 11-8 score. Finally, the conditions appeared to take their

toll and Drinkhall conceded the last two games 6-11, 4-11.

Darius Knight just missed out on a second medal losing to Chen (Chinese Taipei) in the bronze medal match. After a good first game Darius was gradually worn down by his opponent's consistent play who won the next three games.

Both Melanie Farquhar and Emma Vickers also put up valiant performances in the singles and doubles. Vickers, a player improving all the time, reached the quarter-finals of the women's singles, whilst in the doubles the pair succumbed to the exceptional Chinese Taipei team of Hsuing and Kung

## Team GB

Paul Drinkhall  
D.O.B. - 16/1/1990  
Darius Knight  
D.O.B - 22/2/1990  
Emma Vickers  
D.O.B - 6/2/1991  
Melanie Farquhar  
D.O.B - 6/7/1989



Emma Vickers

## Results

#### Men's Singles

Semi-Finals - Darius Knight lost to Chiang (Chinese Taipei) 11-8, 5-11, 6-11, 8-11  
Paul Drinkhall bt Chen (Chinese Taipei) 7-11, 14-12, 7-11, 11-7, 11-4  
Final - Paul Drinkhall lost to Chiang (Chinese Taipei) 11-2, 4-11, 11-8, 6-11, 4-11  
3rd/4th playoff - Darius Knight lost to Chen (Chinese Taipei) 11-9, 9-11, 6-11, 8-11

#### Men's Doubles

Semi-Final - Knight and Drinkhall bt Davis and Frank (Australia)  
Final - Knight and Drinkhall beat Wang & Zhang (China) 8-11, 11-4, 11-8, 14-12

#### Women's Singles -

Quarter-Final - Emma Vickers lost to Lee (Hong Kong) 4-11, 3-11, 11-9, 4-11  
Women's Doubles - Emma Vickers and Melanie Farquhar lost to Hsuing & Kung (Chinese Taipei) 4-11, 5-11, 7-11



# Vickers, a player improving all the time, reached the quarter-finals of the women's singles



Left to right Darius Knight, Jia Yi Liu (England Coach) and Paul Drinkhall

## Drinkhall tops Europe

England's Paul Drinkhall took another major step up the table tennis ladder when he overcame some of Europe's most talented young players to win his first European Junior Top 12 singles title in Riga, Latvia. In doing so he emulated Carl Prean who last won this title in 1985 in San Marino.

From the eleven matches he played during the three day tournament, the Loftus player won ten losing only one to his teammate Darius Knight on the opening day.

But after that upset it was mostly one way for the well travelled 16 year old whose form throughout has been of a high standard and he still has two years at this level.

His moment of truth came against Turkey's Jiang Penfei, who, like Drinkhall, had until then an identical record, played 9 lost 1. But no nerves from Drinkhall who simply stepped up a gear to win 4-2.

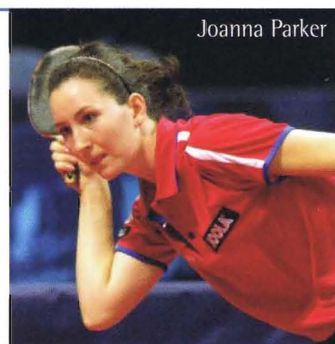
England's other competitor Darius Knight the only player to take a match from Drinkhall finished sixth.

	Boys												Games	Rallies	Pts	Place
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				
	ENG	TUR	ENG	HUN	LAT	BEL	CZE	FRA	HUN	FRA	HRV	HUN				
1 Drinkhall Paul	ENG	2 4:2	1 3:4	2 4:0	2 4:1	2 4:0	2 4:2	2 4:1	2 4:0	2 4:1	2 4:0	2 4:0	43:12	575:418	21	1
2 Jiang Pengfei	TUR	1 2:4	2 4:2	2 4:0	2 4:1	2 4:0	2 4:1	2 4:1	2 4:0	1 3:4	2 4:2	2 4:0	41:15	594:476	20	2
3 Knight Darius	ENG	2 4:3	1 2:4	2 4:0	1 0:4	2 4:2	2 4:3	1 3:4	2 4:1	1 0:4	2 1:4	2 3:4	32:30	610:593	17	6
4 Vajda Attila	HUN	1 0:4	1 0:4	2 4:0	2 4:0	1 1:4	2 4:3	2 4:2	1 3:4	1 3:4	1 0:4	2 4:2	26:33	521:585	16	7
5 Burgis Matiss	LAT	1 1:4	1 1:4	2 2:4	2 4:1	2 4:3	2 4:1	2 4:0	2 4:1	2 4:0	2 4:0	2 4:1	35:23	545:490	18	3
6 Rogiers Benjamin	BEL	1 0:4	1 0:4	1 3:4	1 3:4	1 3:4	2 4:0	1 0:4	2 4:2	1 2:4	2 4:1	2 4:1	23:36	535:598	14	11
7 Tregler Tomas	CZE	1 2:4	1 1:4	2 4:3	1 2:4	1 1:4	2 4:0	2 4:0	1 0:4	1 0:4	2 4:1	2 4:0	26:28	526:512	16	8
8 Bezard Pierre	FRA	1 2:4	1 1:4	1 1:4	2 4:2	1 1:4	1 1:4	1 0:4	2 4:1	1 2:4	2 4:3	2 4:0	23:37	554:603	14	10
9 Nagy Krisztian	HUN	1 0:4	1 0:4	2 4:0	2 4:3	1 0:4	2 4:2	2 4:0	2 4:2	2 2:4	2 4:3	2 1:4	29:28	543:546	18	5
10 Salifou Abdel-Kader	FRA	1 1:4	2 4:3	1 1:4	2 4:0	2 4:3	1 1:4	2 4:0	2 4:2	2 3:4	1 3:4	2 4:2	34:29	630:614	18	4
11 Kovac Borna	HRV	1 0:4	1 2:4	2 4:3	1 2:4	1 0:4	2 4:0	1 1:4	1 3:4	1 2:4	1 3:4	2 4:1	25:36	535:594	14	9
12 Moricz Matej	HUN	1 0:4	1 0:4	1 0:4	1 2:4	1 1:4	1 1:4	1 0:4	1 1:4	2 1:4	1 1:4	1 1:4	11:41	402:541	12	12

## Englands 3-0 victory

Portugal 0 - 3 England  
England cruised to a 3-0 win in Madeira and now look certain to win their place in the Premier Division at the European

Championships in Belgrade next month.  
In the Santa da Ponta stadium they hardly moved into top gear against a lack lustre Portugal side that will now come to play the second leg of this tie in Draycott with little hope.  
Kelly Sibley, Helen Lower and



Joanna Parker

Joanna Parker were hardly tested in a largely one way match.  
"We are 99.9% certain of going through with the opportunity of playing against some of the best players in Europe. It will be a real challenge," said a delighted Performance Director Steen Hansen.



# Paralympics offer great optimism

A group of emerging young players have been travelling the world in search of ranking points to achieve qualification for the competition in 2008 when the eyes of the sporting world will be fixed firmly on China.

By Jeremy Wilson

Among the leading prospects is the 17-year-old Devonian David Wetherill, who currently combines four A-Levels with an intensive training programme. Aside from his studies in Chemistry, Biology, English Language and French, an average week includes three gym sessions, four evening practice sessions and weekends packed with training camps and competitions.

So far, he has successfully balanced the demands of his school and college work, attaining eight A stars and three A grades in his GCSEs last year while still climbing the table tennis rankings where he currently resides at world number 14. Results in tournaments all over Europe in the next 12 months will determine whether or not he is on the plane to Beijing next year. "This is the big year," he says. "Basically there are eight tournaments and they take your best results in six of those competitions. Only 16 players qualify for Beijing in each class so you need to be in the top 10 or 12 to be sure of getting through." The events are all organised into five different classes for standing and wheelchair players according to the severity of each player's condition.

Wetherill is in Class Six, putting him with the most severely impaired standing players.

He plays with a crutch, which is used for balance as well as pushing off to play strokes. "It is not too bad," he says, "I can't run around onto my forehand and I can get caught on the cross over and with wide balls but you work on it like anyone else."

Most of his practice is with players in and around Torpoint and he regularly plays and practices against some of the best able-bodied players in Devon in Division One of the Plymouth League. "I play an orthodox attacking game with speed glue although the tactics can be quite different if I am playing an able-bodied player," he says. "You almost have to have two different games for able-bodied and disabled players. For example most able-bodied players try to serve short but if I do that it can put me at quite a disadvantage as that gives an angle to my opponent, so often it is better to play it down the middle. I had only really played against able-bodied players so when I started playing tournaments it did come as a bit of a shock as the tactics are very different."

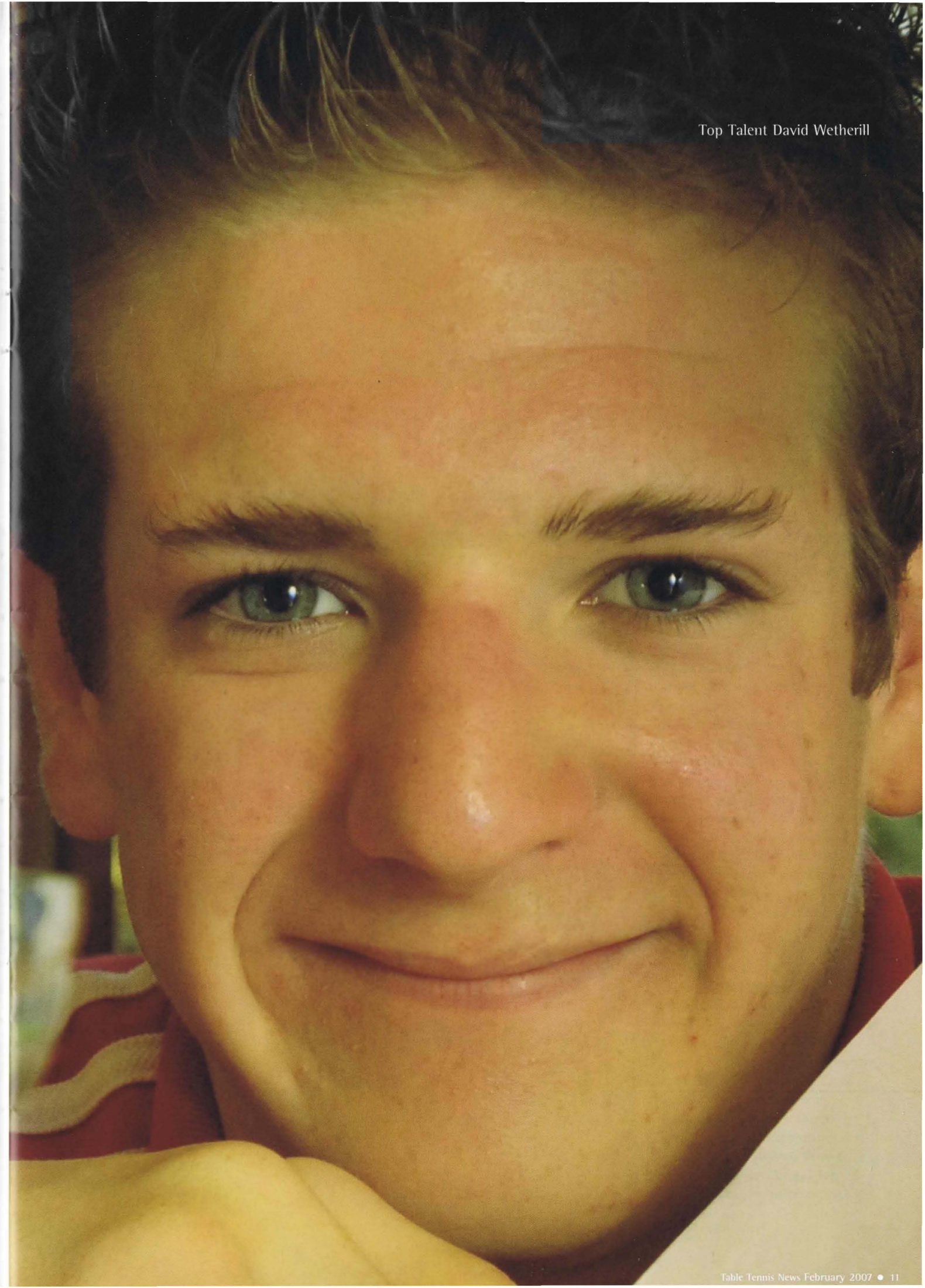
Tournaments over the past year have taken Wetherill as far afield as Las Vegas, where he played in the same Convention Centre hall

(holding 100 tables) which was the venue for several of Muhammad Ali's world heavyweight title boxing matches. In January he was also heading to Hong Kong for a pre-Olympic training camp. Before his trip to Nevada he was named the South West Regional Sportsman and also picked up the prestigious National Sportsman of the Year award at the Disability Sport Events Awards in Manchester.

Wetherill was born with the rare multi-epiphyseal dysplasia disease. "I think there are less than five people in the country with this disease," he says. The main effect is on his joints and bones and movement in all limbs is affected. He was also born with a hole in the heart, requiring a pacemaker to have been fitted. "I look normal enough and I do everything as normal," he says, "I ride my bike to school and use my crutches to get around. The right side of my body is more mobile than the left and my gym work is very important. I do a lot of cardiovascular work and weights which definitely help my mobility." As Wetherill is quick to point out, there are many other medal prospects among the British team. Kent's Will Bayley plays in the same Class Six category as Wetherill and is rated number 19 in the world. Both players reached the semi-finals in the singles events in Las Vegas. Together they promise to make a formidable GB pairing in the team event. Bayley is also in his teens and they took bronze in Las Vegas in the doubles. "Most of the other top players are over 25 so for both of us to be in the top 20 at our age is very encouraging," says Wetherill.

There is also the Swansea based Paul Karabardak who has a world ranking of 8 in the Class Seven category. Others Britons in the world's top 50 include Farrell Anthony and Joe Stotesbury. There is further talent in the wheelchair events. Neil Robinson is a previous Paralympic medallist and is currently world ranked at number 4 in Class Three while James Rawson and Arnie Chan, who was a finalist at the European Championships, are rated 11th and 12th respectively.

Further major medal hopes include Sue Gilroy, who is a Commonwealth and European Champion, Cathy Mitton who is rated number 3 in the world at Class Three as well as Jane Campbell, Claire Robertson and Sara Head.



Elbow pains in young table tennis players are usually caused by overuse injuries. An uncommon but important example of these is Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) of the elbow, also known as 'little leaguers' elbow' due to it being much more common in athletes involved in throwing sports, such as baseball.

#### WHAT CAUSES IT?

OCD is caused by overstressing the elbow joint when a ball is hit or thrown. Many of the tendons that move the wrist come from the elbow and repetitive overstretching of some of these tendons can cause swelling of the bone and cartilage where the tendons attach. If the stress continues the top layer of bone and its cartilage can separate from the underlying bone. The most common area of the elbow for this to occur is at the medial humeral epicondyle, which is the knobby bit you can feel on the inside of the elbow joint.

OCD, as already mentioned, is rare. Adolescents boys between the ages of 9 and 15 are most commonly affected and are usually involved in throwing sports such as baseball, especially pitchers. However OCD has also be found in table tennis and tennis players, footballers, golfers, wrestlers and shot putters!. It usually affects the dominant arm and can run in families.

#### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Nearly all sufferers complain of gradual onset elbow pain. Pain is usually intermittent and occurs with activity. Other symptoms and signs include clicking,

grinding, stiffness and swelling. If the problem becomes chronic, locking can occur and there can be a sensation of a loose body in the joint. Athletes often have problems fully extending the elbow, with focal tenderness over the medial epicondyle. An Xray is not usually needed but if the pain is acute it may be necessary to rule out a fracture.

#### TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatment involves rest from the aggravating activity until the symptoms subside. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication and icing can also help to settle down the pain and swelling and help the bone to heal. Physiotherapy initially consists of stretching exercises for the tendons and then as the pain improves, a strengthening program can begin. Many athletes return to activity gradually once the pain resolves and technical problems should be addressed. Full recovery can be expected. Sometimes surgery needs to be considered if conservative measures don't improve things after 2-3 months. Surgical options include drilling of the bone where the tendons attach to help it heal, or removal of loose bodies and scar tissue.

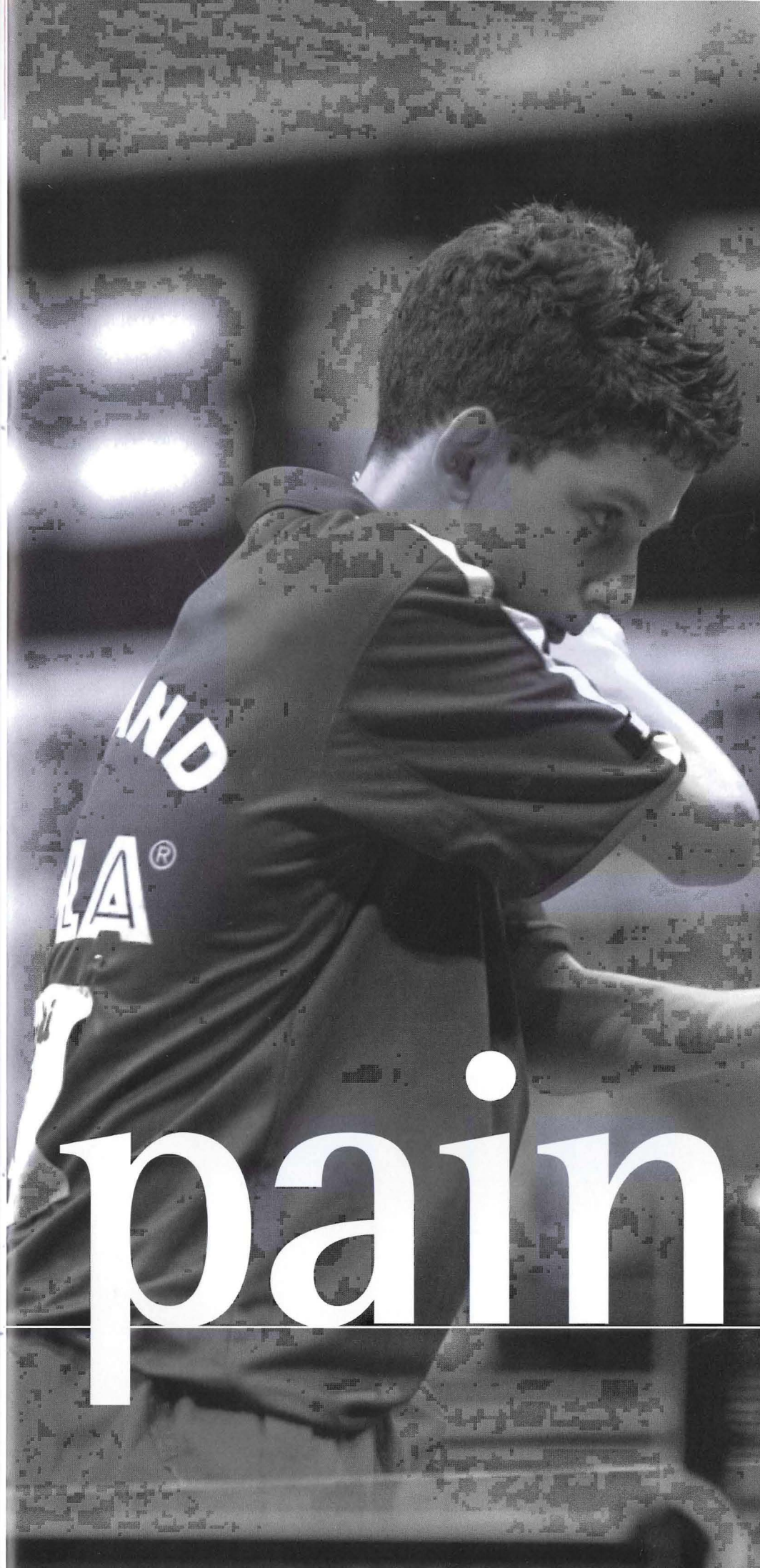
#### PREVENTION

Since OCD of the elbow is an overuse injury, prevention is the most effective management strategy. Coaches and parents need to know about the vulnerability of the young elbow and the dangers of over-training. Proper technique and conditioning including stretching and strengthening of the forearm muscles are also important.

So remember If a young player complains of elbow pain they should be assessed by a doctor as soon as possible. If OCD is diagnosed then rest and early treatment can help speed recovery and limit the time needed away from training.

# elbow

With one of the England excelling young super stars suffering from Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) or Little Leagues Elbow as its more commonly known we asked the Team England Doctor Kay Brennan to provide an explanation of just what this injury is.....



The most common area of the elbow for this to occur is at the medial humeral epicondyle, which is the knobby bit you can feel on the inside of the elbow joint

#### REED'S RECOVERY

Danny Reed who required an operation at the latter part of 2006 has recently received some excellent news. Surgeons have confirmed that the recovery has gone better than expected and Danny is now practising and hopes to be back in competitions before the end of February as he gradually builds up to full strength and form prior to the National Senior Championships at Sheffield in March.

Despite the set back Reed's pre-operation performances earned him the title of Most Improved Player of the Year at his Ormesby Club. This was based on his phenomenal improvement from being purely on the periphery of the England Junior team last April to winning a prime place in the team for the European Youth Championships in the Czech Republic in July and again in the England Men's team for the crucial European Qualification matches that were played in Ljubljana, Slovenia in October, which was Danny's last competition before his operation.

# Performance Parallels

There is a strong correlation between football and table tennis interest and ability, particularly among the English boys

Several Newcastle United players under Kevin Keegan's reign in the mid 1990s liked to have a hit (one from Eastern Europe was pretty good, but I forget his name), and it was sometimes difficult to get them off the tables at Maiden Castle, University of Durham (where I was based as ETTA RDO), so 'real' table tennis players could play! On one occasion I had a brief chat with Les Ferdinand after he came off the table, and he very politely asked me to take a banana skin from him so he could sign some autographs for the hordes of kids waiting outside!

As a teenager I was aware that football legends Georgie Best, Pele and Johan Cruyff were reputed to enjoy table tennis, and in the early 1970s I was pretty impressed by West Ham United's Bryan 'Pop' Robson (who married England TT international Maureen Heppell), when I saw him practising with the charismatic Chester Barnes at an English Open in Brighton.

I think my first TT coach 43-odd years ago, John Cornwell, had played football for Cambridge City. The talented Cams no.1 junior at the time, Alan Ponder, was a keen footballer. Ever since at 16 I first got into coaching nearly 40 years ago, I have found that many of my best pupils have also been competitive footballers, some carrying on playing after giving up table tennis (but sometimes later returning to the table game after retiring from football!). Of course a lot of the brightest football talents only dabble fleetingly with table tennis. In the late 1970s several members of my Ealing Schools TT squad were connected with professional football clubs and they did not stay with me long.

At the same time, one of my most talented table tennis pupils ever, Eddie Gorniak, had half a dozen of the top London and nearby football clubs chasing him. It was Eddie who had to suffer being humiliated in front of his class by his form teacher for deciding to go to England table tennis trials instead of playing for the district football team! He excelled in several sports, but suddenly gave them all up owing to (excessive) pressures exerted on him. However, he did return to football, including I think playing semi-professionally. When I last spoke to him he was coaching and running junior football teams.

Occasionally, a skilled footballer chooses table tennis in preference, and these nearly always end up doing very well. Locally to me in Kent, national under 12 champion Lewis Gray still turns out for football when he can, while Harry Lumb has shot up the under 13 rankings since he dropped Sunday football. I understand that European cadet champion Paul Drinkhall had played district representative level football, and there are numerous similar examples from the past (such as former England champion Bobby Stevens, who had to choose between table tennis and pursuing football with Leyton Orient).

Didn't England and Commonwealth women's champion Carole Moore take up table tennis when by chance she was spotted by Alan Ransome trying her hand when a football match was called off, owing to bad weather?! Recently, a local (Kent) journalist has informed me that he plays for the same football club as England table tennis internationals Terry Young and Darren Blake!

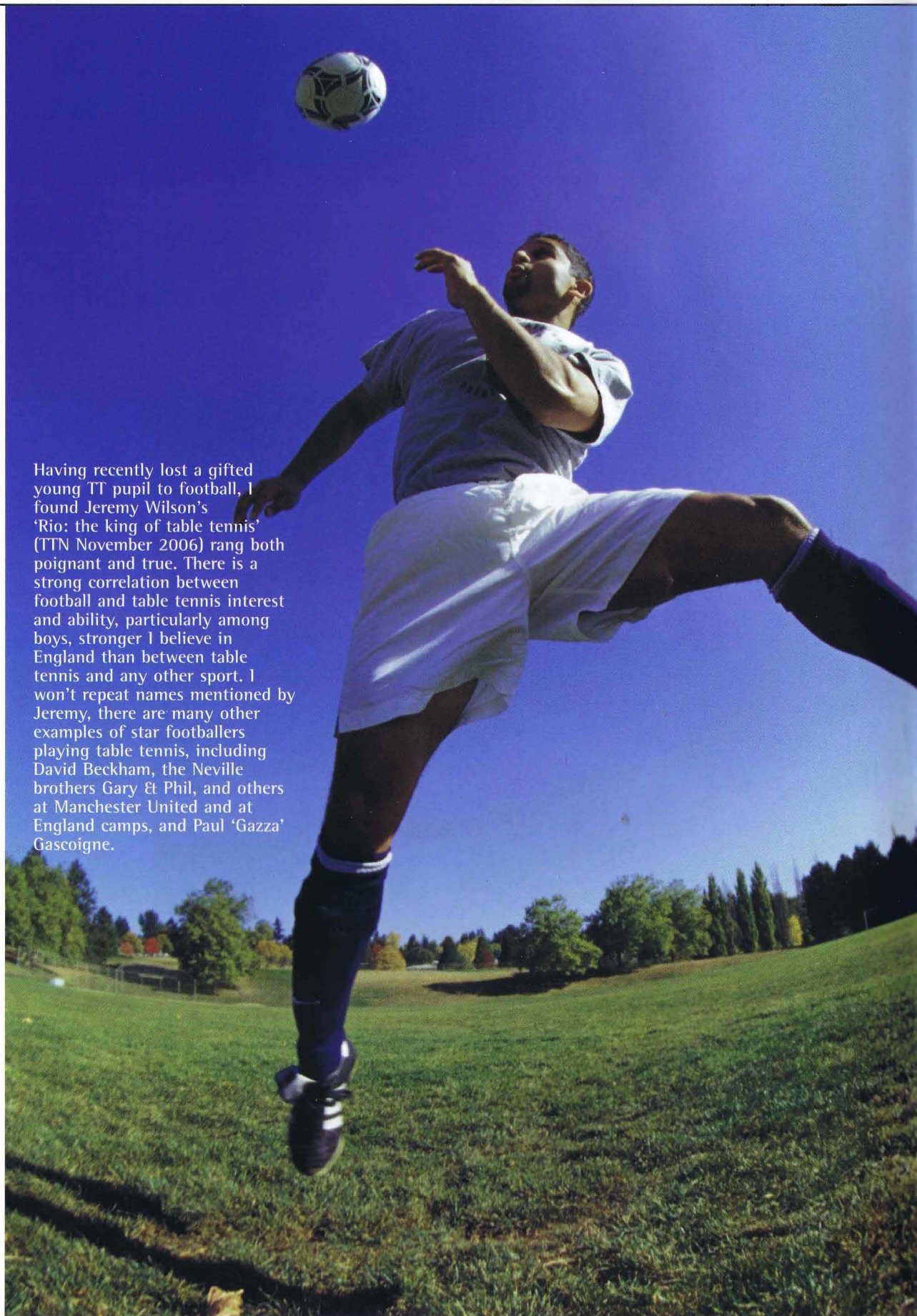
Football is probably in the genes of former table tennis stars: Nick Jarvis and John Hilton both have footballing sons forging very successful professional careers. It is also there at the top of our performance coaching hierarchy. I believe that England Technical Manager Steen Kyst Hansen once played football professionally (or semi-professionally), and one of his former protégés, Danish world singles bronze medallist Michael Maze, could have been an exceptional footballer. ETTA Vice-Chairman for Selection, Peter Charters, has been Manager of Reading Schools FA under 12/13/14 and 15 teams and recruitment officer/scout for Reading FC Academy.

Why are footballers good at table tennis, and why, despite the obvious differences, is there a connection between the two sports? Both require good co-ordination, spatial ability, cardio-vascular fitness (though only at the higher levels in table tennis), a sense of tactics, pace, spin and angles, and a combination of explosive strength and subtlety.

True, owing to its exceptional cultural status, kudos, profile and wealth, football probably creams off the best talent, so that someone reaching a high standard in it is likely to be good at any sport. But I think a commonality for football and table tennis is that they probably attract the same kind of people; both are fairly classless sports that are not impressed by social pretence. Yes, there are links between table tennis and other sports, notably tennis and cricket, but the closest link in England is between table tennis and football.

Finally, I am not claiming knowledge, experience or expertise in football. Although it was my first sporting love, I quickly dropped football when my mother took my family to New Zealand sometime after my father died, because then it was considered a 'Pom's game' there. It was while returning back to England by ship when I was nearly 12 that, like Jon Kaufman, I took up table tennis – but that is another story! I never really got hooked on football again, though as an unskilled but enthusiastic extra who could run for ever, I did sometimes play for the school team.

What I know as a coach though, is that when I get a pupil who is good at football, he will almost certainly become good at table tennis – but there is a high risk that I will lose out to the other sport.



Having recently lost a gifted young TT pupil to football, I found Jeremy Wilson's 'Rio: the king of table tennis' (TTN November 2006) rang both poignant and true. There is a strong correlation between football and table tennis interest and ability, particularly among boys, stronger I believe in England than between table tennis and any other sport. I won't repeat names mentioned by Jeremy, there are many other examples of star footballers playing table tennis, including David Beckham, the Neville brothers Gary & Phil, and others at Manchester United and at England camps, and Paul 'Gazza' Gascoigne.



Egle Adomelyte

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Women's British  
League Sponsors

# A tight finish for Women's British league

The Progress women, led by the incomparable Egle Adomelyte, fought their way to a nail-biting finale with last year's winner, DML Woolwell. Having already defeated the formidable Irish Ladies in the morning, they needed only a draw against Woolwell in the final match.

London Progress Table tennis club managed to establish a firm hand on another British league title but this time it was the ladies who squeezed through in what must have been one of the tightest finishes ever to a Women's British league title.

The Progress women, led by the incomparable Egle Adomelyte, fought their way to a nail-biting finale with last year's winner, DML Woolwell. Having already defeated the formidable Irish Ladies in the morning, thanks to a wonderful victory by Adomelyte over Chinese star, Na Liu, the Progress team needed only a draw against Woolwell in the final match of the tournament in order to capture the title. This draw did not come easily. Defending expert Marketa Myskova, was in truly remarkable form, winning both her encounters against Adomelyte and Marcia Ma to give the Woolwell team renewed hope.

But Joanna Roberts was to get the better of Liz May, Adomelyte swept

aside Lauren Spinks, and in the all important final match, the outstanding Marcia Ma, on loan from York Gardens, totally dominated against Woolwell's Liz May, to bring the title back to London for the second time.

Recognition for the Progress victory should also go to young Hannah Hicks who, although unable to play in this weekend's drama, played such an important role in the first weekend. The Progress team expect Hannah to play an equally important role in next season's defence of the title. Credit should also be given to Woolwell, whose magnificent team has held the title for the past two seasons, and came perilously close to retaining the title for a third year.

But the final word must go to Egle Adomelyte who epitomized the true London Progress spirit and with assured performances which earned an exceptional 80% playing average.

# Woman's BL Tables

## PREMIER DIVISION

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
DHS London Prog	7	3	0	45	15	17
DML Woolwell A	7	3	0	43	17	17
Irish Ladies 1	6	2	2	39	21	14
Draycott & Long Eat.	2	2	6	23	37	6
Cippenham Ladies A	0	4	6	18	42	4
Woodfield 1	0	2	8	12	48	2

## DIVISION 1

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wirral Prem Ladies B	4	4	2	31	29	12
Hollington	4	3	3	35	25	11
Wirral PremLadies A	4	3	3	34	26	11
Leeds Ladies	3	5	2	32	28	11
Cheltenham	3	3	4	27	33	9
Halton TT 1	1	4	5	21	39	6

## DIVISION 2

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ormesby	7	2	1	43	17	16
Guernsey A	5	4	1	36	24	14
Elgre	5	1	4	31	29	11
Irish Ladies 2	3	3	4	28	32	9
Spicers Ladies	3	0	7	22	38	6
Sutton at Hone	1	2	7	20	40	4

## DIVISION 3

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uxbridge TTC	7	2	1	40	20	16
St Andrews TTC	5	2	3	36	24	12
Staffs County Ladies	4	2	4	31	29	10
Ashford	4	2	4	29	31	10
Cippenham Ladies B	4	1	5	30	30	9
Midland Elgre	1	1	8	14	46	3

## DIVISION 4

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
DML Woolwell B	7	0	0	34	8	14
De Vere Netts	4	1	2	26	16	9
Waterside	3	3	1	24	18	9
Halton Table Tennis 2	3	1	3	21	21	7
Woodfield 2	2	2	3	22	20	6
Guernsey B	2	1	4	18	24	5
Byng Hall	1	3	3	14	28	5
TTK Greenhouse	0	1	6	9	33	1

## DIVISION 4 TOP HALF

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
DML Woolwell B	10	0	0	47	13	20
De Vere Netts	1	2	3	35	25	12
Waterside	4	3	3	31	29	11
Halton Table Tennis 2	3	2	5	28	32	8

## DIVISION 4 BOTTOM HALF

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Woodfield 2	3	3	4	31	29	9
Byng Hall	1	5	4	22	38	7
TTK Greenhouse	3	1	6	21	39	7
Guernsey B	2	2	6	25	35	6

# London Open Butterfly Grand Prix

Full to the brim with nearly 300 participants, the highest ever turnout for a London Butterfly Grand Prix was treated to a tantalising display of table tennis. With former Olympic medallist Sun Jin again in exemplary form, the rest of the field were simply blown away. This included the current England number 2, Joanna Parker, who was defeated in the final 11-2, 11-7, 11-9.

Alex Perry, current National Champion, showed his class with an unstoppable display defeating many top opponents on his way to another Butterfly Grand Prix title. These included Jason Sugrue in the semi-final 11-6, 11-4, 11-6 and the current Butterfly Grand Prix series leader Gavin Rungay, 11-7, 11-8, 11-6 in the final.

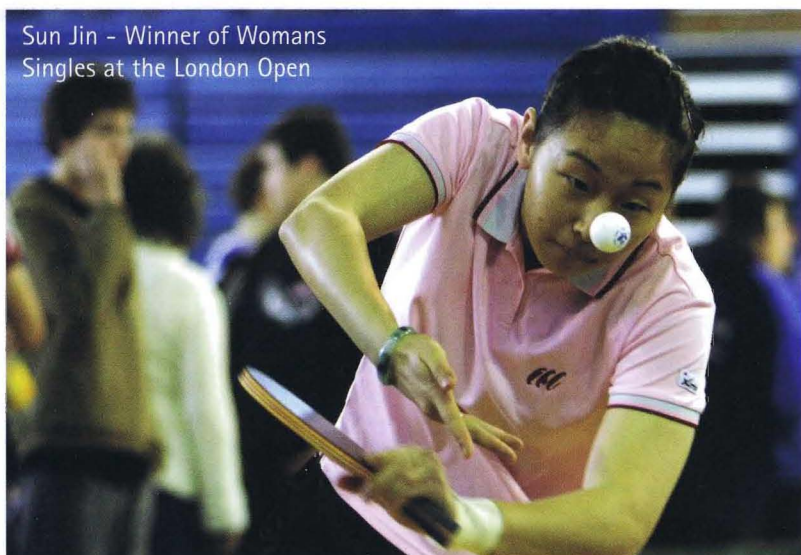
Tees Sport player of the tournament went to Richard Andrews.

## Results

Men's Singles: Alex Perry bt. Gavin Rungay 7, 8, 6  
 Men's Band 1: Chris Lewis bt. Neil Charles -6, 8, -8, 7, 8  
 Men's Band 2: Richard Marshall bt. Mark Simpson 11, 9, 5  
 Men's Band 3: Ryan Collins bt. Edward Brown W/O  
 Men's Band 4: Ryan Collins bt. Harvey McCamey -3, 10, 7, 8  
 Men's Band 5: Paul McCreery bt. Christopher Hall 6, 7, 7  
 Men's Band 6: Paul McCreery bt. Robert McMillan 5, 2, 9  
 U21 Men's: Damien Nicholls bt. Alim Hirji 5, 9, -12, 6  
 Veteran Men's: Abdul Wuraola bt. Nigel Eckersley 7, -7, 9, -6, 7  
 Restricted Men's Singles: D Zurowski bt. K Lesser 9, 4, -5, 4

Women's Singles: Sun Jin bt. Joanna Parker 2, 7, 9  
 Women's Band 1: S Smith bt. R Jamieson 9, -10, -7, 5, 10  
 Women's Band 2: Fiona Dennett bt. Kelly Skeggs -10, 9, 7, 7  
 Women's Band 3: Isabel Teruel bt. Megan Sparrey 8, 2, -10, 6  
 U21 Women's: C Campbell-Innes bt. C Hallows -10, 6, -9, 5, 10

Sun Jin - Winner of Womans Singles at the London Open



# The Greatest

Defensive table tennis is, sadly, a dying art, unlikely to be revived unless there is a decisive change in the rules.

Matthew Syed

## defenders

### 1 Ding Song

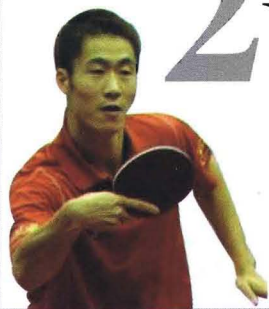


The first time I saw Ding Song play in an ITTF event was at the World Team Cup in Nimes in 1994. As with many Chinese players making their debut for the national team, he was overcome with nerves. He lost his opening game against a player from Nigeria and, although he went on to win the match, looked completely out of sorts.

The following week I arrived at the Swedish Open and witnessed one of the most remarkable transformations in table tennis history. Many assumed that Ding would lose in qualification to Olivier Marmurek from France, but the defender struggled through. He never looked back, going on to defeat many of the world's most fearsome players against defence including Ding Yi, Jorg Roskopf, Kim Taek Soo and Zoran Primorac.

This was largely achieved through the devilish use of short pimples on the backhand, something that bamboozled the attackers who were used to playing against long pimples. But later in his career Ding demonstrated his all round brilliance with great retrieving and the most spectacular and unerring counter loop ever seen.

### 2 Wang Hao



Chen Xinhua's understudy became a brilliant player in his own right in the late 80s and early 90s. He had a similar style to Chen but lacked his authority with serve and consistency in defence. He did, however, have a superior forehand topspin, particularly when deployed away from the table.

Li had the most stunning retrieving ability of any defender, making him the most spectacular player of the 1980s. English audiences were introduced to his marvellous scything backhand slice and muscular footwork at the Euro Asia in 1988 where he lost in a classic contest against Jan-Ove Waldner (beautifully filmed by Cheerleader Productions and commentated on with considerable verve and authority by Simon Reed and Donald Parker). But it was during the Swedish Open that his skills reached their zenith. He seemed to spend most of the time diving around at the back of the court, fielding the venomous smashes of his many opponents. Against all the odds, he triumphed. His North Korean team-mates were Chu Jong Chol (Asia's answer to Jacques Secretin) and Kim Song Hui (a spectacular penholder), making the North Korean team of the late 80s the consensus pick as the most thrilling in history. I will always remain grateful that I postponed dinner to watch their epic 5-4 victory over Grubba, Kucharski and Drysel of Poland in the group stages of the men's team event at the World Championships of 1987.

### 3 Li Gun Sang

Defensive table tennis is, sadly, a dying art, unlikely to be revived unless there is a decisive change in the rules that gives those of us who ply our trade from the back of the court a fighting chance. It is, perhaps, because the future is so bleak that I am often asked to compare the legendary names of the past. So, as a celebration of defensive table tennis in all its many forms (and a lament for its impending demise), here is my personal list of the greatest defenders of my lifetime. I limit the list to those defenders that I saw in their prime, so it excludes such past masters as Scholer, Takashima and Liang Geliang.

Disagree with my choices? Or do you have any reflections on the great defensive players of the past? I would be interested in your views. Please email or write to the Editor and we will publish your responses in the next edition.

# Chen Xinhua

Perhaps the most complete player in table tennis history, Chen combined balletic footwork with a technically flawless defensive repertoire (played with a perfectly straight back and bent knees). He also had, arguably, the best service of all time, a hidden forehand serve which, unlike the infinitely adaptable version pioneered by Jan-Ove Waldner, consisted of exclusively of either chop or float. Perfectly concealed behind his muscular left shoulder, it seemed to come whizzing out of nowhere and foxed nearly everyone. Only Carl Prean (who possessed something approaching genius when it came to the reading of spin) seemed immune to its poison.

Chen also possessed an explosive forehand topspin, which he could deploy over the table and at long range, something that was particularly impressive because he never used speed glue or particularly thick sponge.

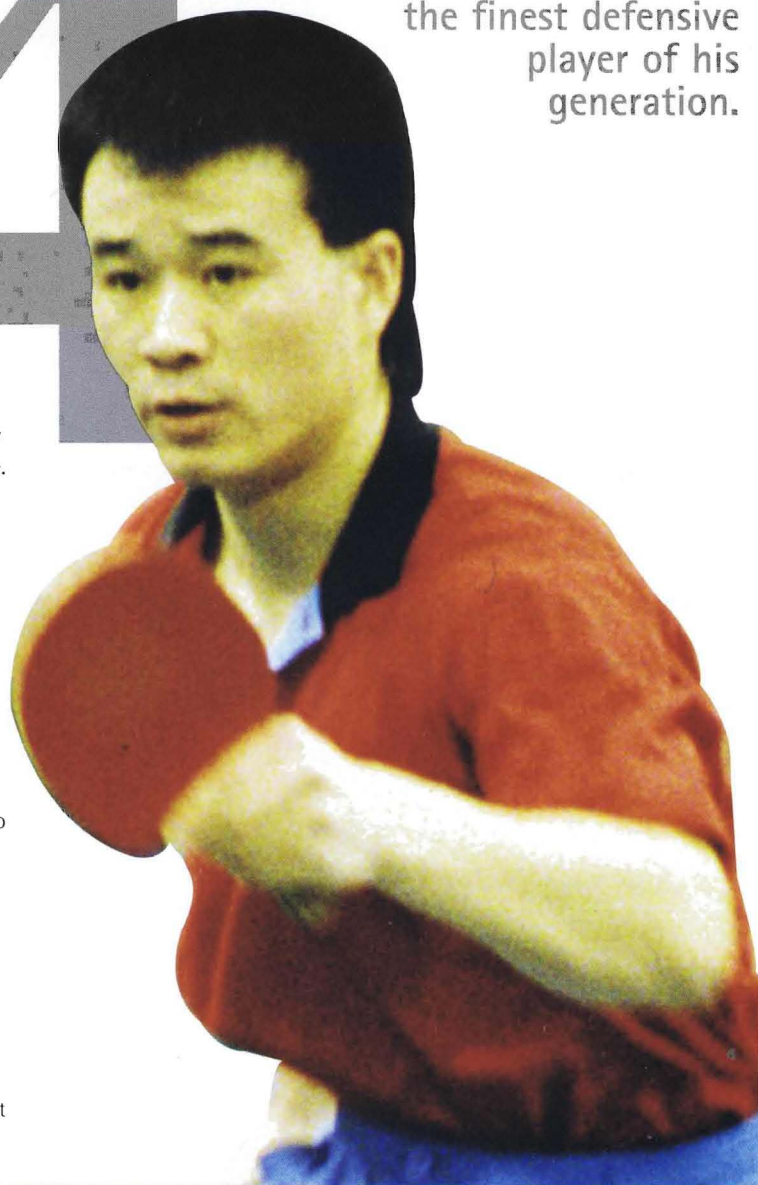
It is not widely known that Chen broke his blade when competing in the mid 80s and never became completely comfortable with any wood thereafter, always scratching at the handle with the thumbnail of his right hand. This is something he would do for hours in his hotel room and became something of an obsession. Once, the night before the men's singles final of the Swedish Open, I came back from a local nightclub at 3am to find Chen (who was due to play Grubba the following morning) pacing the corridor of the hotel with bat in hand, fretting about the shape of the handle.

His trademark grin while playing led many to assume that he was of a relaxed disposition. The truth was quite the reverse. He would become so worked up at big competitions that he rarely slept for more than a couple of hours.

His best competition was undoubtedly the World Championships in Gothenburg in 1985 when he was undefeated in the team event en route to gold, but lost to Miyazaki of Japan in the singles.

His joining of the England team in the early twilight of his career was, and remains, controversial. His detractors will point to the fact that he denied an English born player a place in the team and was both disruptive and selfish. His supporters will argue that he was a major asset in competitions.

What is beyond dispute is that he was the finest defensive player of his generation.





# The ones who play away.

Table tennis remains unique, not only for being the quickest, slickest most sleight-of-hand sport of them all, but because it remains the only sport where nearly every leading English player competes in leagues abroad.

By Richard Eaton

It's not a new situation, but it should become increasingly anomalous with the increasing emphasis being placed upon performance since the success of the London 2012 bid.

Table tennis needs more than just a decent share of quango funding and a national centre, but a professional club system offering competition and practice, and if necessary coaching and training, to players of quality and potential.

Despite a British League which began almost three decades ago, we still don't have that. As a result the time and the energy expended by our players trying to earn a living and/or to improve are much greater than in an ideal world they should be.

Currently Paul Drinkhall, Alex Perry, Helen Lower and Kelly Sibley all travel to the French League, as did Matthew Syed for some of his career; Jo Parker and Tim Yarnall go to Germany; Andrew Baggaley competes in Spain, Andrew Rushton in Belgium, and Alan Cooke, who has already had two stints in Sweden and one in France, still makes more money by competing in Switzerland than he could here, even at the age of 40.

Meanwhile Darius Knight has been contacted by teams in Sweden, Austria and France, and although he has decided to postpone signing for a season due to the number of tournaments and to complete his studies at Filton College, it seems likely he will sign for Montpellier next season.

"Our players improve by playing in foreign leagues," says Steen Hansen, England's head coach. "They all get some kind of money. But

they are under pressure in every match they play, and that's important for their development.

"I know there has been a more professional league here before, and it couldn't succeed because of the economy. But something has to be done."

Many agree, though there is another point of view. "The league has a vibrant programme, and we are delighted at the way things are going," says Keith Ponting, the long-serving Chairman/Secretary of the British League, which has 726 registered senior players.

A change which led to the league's increased popularity began five years ago, when clubs which used to compete on 14 separate dates agreed to play over four weekends. This was more than just a more economic way of doing things. It became a significant social success.

Women's Veterans' and Junior Leagues (with 128, 201, and 283 registered players respectively) had for a long time been held over weekends, and even the premier division does it now. It creates a different atmosphere, and perhaps implies an altered emphasis.

The social side has been helping it to succeed. All well and good. But for a significantly better future it needs better funding than that.

Ponting admits that sponsorship is an issue, but reckons that "the over-riding issue is that the European Table Tennis Union won't allow players to play in more than one national league.

"So if we attracted foreigners they wouldn't be able to play in their own leagues," he said. "I believe that's a backward step. The ETTA welcomes foreigners. I think it's stupid."



**“So if we attracted foreigners they wouldn’t be able to play in their own leagues,” he said. “I believe that’s a backward step. The ETTA welcomes foreigners. I think it’s stupid.”**

Certainly the British League has declined in standard, something which seems partly related to the decline of the England men’s team since the heyday of players such as Desmond Douglas, Carl Plean, and Alan Cooke, as well as Chen Xinhua.

During that time the French League has made conspicuous improvement, thanks to a more governmental model of funding sport. The majority of clubs are funded through cities and local authorities.

The Swedish League, apparently funded through a mixture of sources - local authorities, sponsorship, or attachment to bigger organizations such as football or sports clubs - was once very prominent too, - though since the retirement of greats like Jan-Ove Waldner and Mikael Appelgren it too has declined. But it still remains more professional than our own.

The Belgians and the Swiss also have improving leagues, and the Spanish League has also been developing significantly recently by all accounts, thanks to sponsorship, and is arguably now the third best.

But the Bundesliga remains the best league. It has professional marketing, good television coverage, and high wages. These assets developed hand-in-hand from as far back as the 1950s, when it was less difficult to develop table tennis because the competition from major sports was that much less overwhelming. Start too late and you can become involved in a long struggle to make up lost ground. This has been the fate of English table tennis.

But French development offers a beacon of optimism and a lure of Euros. “Though their national league is not a system which can really deliver the practice players need,” claims Syed, who used to play for Sesta, the Bordeaux club for which Drinkhall recently signed.

“France has a national centre so none of the clubs can have their players (for prolonged training and practice). But the competition is good, and it is an income earner.

“It is also an extremely pleasing experience - very laid back, with nice, decent, humane people, whom I hope live long! The Germans can’t believe it! Bundesliga clubs place high burdens on players and if they don’t win, tend to criticize.”

The two best continental leagues thus have very different models of operating. While French clubs usually allow players to fly in the day before the match, or even on the day, German clubs often insist on actually having players live nearby and train with them and hire a coach to work with them.

But even if travelling to France can become a chore, the advantages for Drinkhall in playing for Sesta are obvious, he can get opposition of the standard of Kalin Kreanga, Michael Maze, Damien Eloi, Peter Karlsson, Yang Min, and many others.

“I am not so much looking for the money - at the moment it’s about improving,” Drinkhall says. “If I stop working hard now, in the future I will be struggling.”

But playing in a foreign league can offer other things. Even for established international players it can be a broadening experience. When Jo Parker played in Berlin, the squad had a Belgian, a Russian, a Rumanian, a German and two Chinese women; now she is at Anrochte, the team has a Croatian, a German and a Chinese.

But, surprise, surprise, the women are paid quite a bit less than the men, which is one of the reasons why Jo has spent a great deal of time since she was 12 away from home, trying to improve enough one day to earn a living at the game. “It’s still my dream,” she says.

By contrast, Alex Perry makes decent money with St Denis in the French League though when he was younger and went to Enby in the Swedish League it was principally to get practice with the two greats, Waldner and Appelgren. He used to live off savings and to help make ends meet he used to sell lottery tickets outside a shopping centre.

It was similar motives which caused Cooke to leave the British League many years ago to play at Falkenburg, and there is no doubt the great Swedish world title-winning team helped make him the excellent player he became. Now, however, he plays in Switzerland for the brass. He has a family to support.



“The stage of your career will determine which league you want to play in,” he said. “We try to see our players get a balance of financial rewards and good training,” Cooke added, quickly donning his coach’s hat.

“But at some stage they make their own minds up and then it’s difficult to help them,” he said. Perhaps it was a warning of what might happen further down the road for Drinkhall, Knight, Yarnall and others.

But there are reasons to be hopeful. About 40,000 players compete in 250 leagues in England altogether. Sales of equipment are increasing. And a push by the ETTA to develop table tennis facilities has increased the total value of stock in this country to about £100 million.

In the past, successful clubs have tended to rely on one energetic or charismatic leader to bring in the money. And when he stops, it stops. Future financial success will surely involve elite achievement attracting companies’ sponsorship.

But in the meantime with more clubs now owning, or having secure tenancies on their own facilities, more of them may have a greater credit-gaining capacity than before. It may be a new and stable way of raising funds. Perhaps the opportunity to adopt the big continental club model of development is not so far away after all.

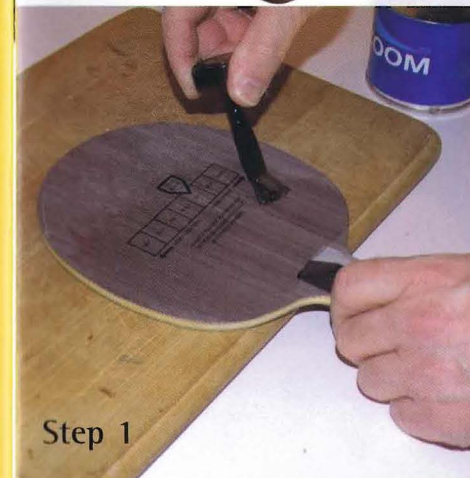
# everything you need to know about blades and rubbers

There are a large number of companies offering a larger choice of equipment than ever before, making purchases very confusing. Equipment with the 'ITTF' logo from an established company will generally be of higher quality and is required for national and international tournaments.

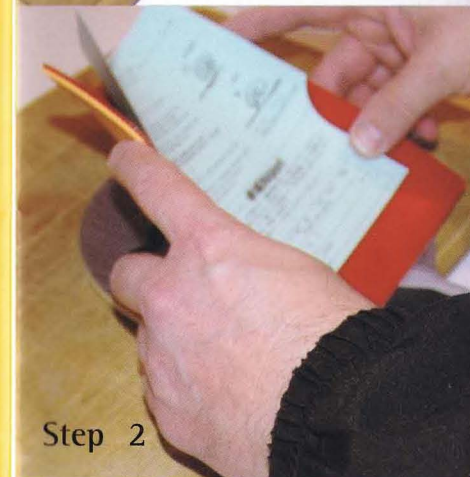
Over the next few pages we look at the various elements that make up a bat and how to put them all together. It is then up to you to make yourself the ultimate combination to get the best from your game.



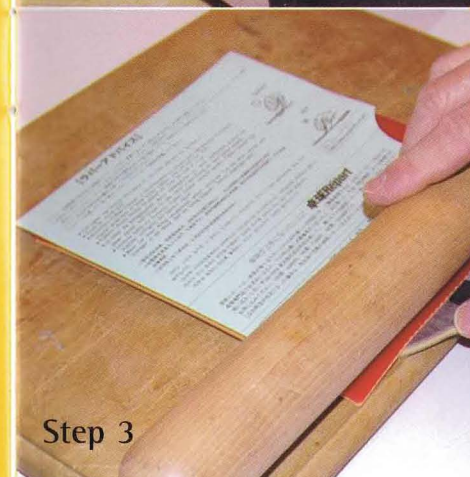
Equipment



Step 1



Step 2



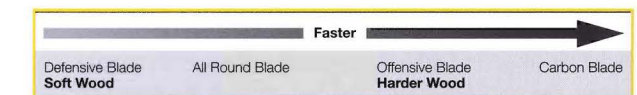
Step 3

## blades

The 'blade' is the bat without the rubber. 85% of the blade must be natural wood and can be of any size, shape or weight providing the surface is flat and rigid. Thin layers of 'carbon' fibre are one substance that has been successfully used in blades, adding to the speed, but also to the cost.

In general, blades are categorised as follows:

- Defensive blade
- All round blade
- Offensive blade
- Carbon blade
- Soft wood harder wood



Faster blades tend to lose the 'feeling' required for touch shots such as short push. Most top players tend to choose all round or offensive blades, with faster rubbers to give them speed and feel.

## rubbers

'Rubbers' come in an incredible number of types and prices. Rubber must be 'ITTF' approved for use in national or international tournaments.

Rubber can be divided into the following categories:

- Short pimples
- Long pimples
- Reverse
- Anti-spin

Rubber needs to be changed much more regularly than blades, but this depends on the amount you play and the level you wish to play at.

### Short Pimples

With 'short pimples', the pimples face outward and are short, wide and close together. Short pimples are often used on one side of the bat, usually on the backhand to:

- Provide variation of spin and speed with the normal sponge rubber.
- Assist with block and counter attack strokes.
- To help players with a weaker backhand.

### Long Pimples

With 'long pimples', the pimples face outwards and are usually longer, thinner and further apart than short pimples.

Long pimples will react as follows:

- If the player A with normal rubber pushes the ball (backspin) and player B with long pimples return the ball with a push stroke, the resulting return will be slight topspin or no spin (instead of expected backspin).

- If player A with normal rubber topspins the ball and player B with long pimples chops (backspin) the ball, the return will always be backspin. The faster the initial topspin, the heavier the backspin.
- If you topspin or counter attack with long pimples, the blade must be more open and the ball will travel slower and have backspin relative to the same shot with sponge rubber. Sidespin is reversed on return.

Long pimples are difficult to play against in the beginning but also difficult to play with and alter significantly the technique. Not recommended for beginners or until good technique is established.

## reverse rubbers

By far the most used rubbers are reverse rubbers. With reverse rubbers, the playing surface is flat and attached to a layer of sponge. Various combinations of sponge and the playing surface are available which will affect the spin, speed and control of the rubber. Generally soft sponge rubbers are slower than hard sponge rubbers, though the introduction of 'speed glue' (see 'glues') can alter that.

## anit-spin

Anti-spin is a reverse rubber with little friction on the surface so that it does not impart any spin on the ball and negates spin. Rubber should be maintained by:

- Cleaning with water at the end of the practise.
- Having a cover for your bat to keep it 'dust free'.
- Keeping the bat out of direct sunlight and high temperatures.

## glues

Table tennis specific glues are available from all major manufacturers and allow for easy removal of the rubbers without tearing. 'Speed Glue' is a special type of glue, used by most top world players to increase the speed of the rubbers. 'Soft sponge' rubbers increase the effect of the speed glue. With speed glue the rubber is removed, often several times a day, with several layers of speed glue applied. This has the effect of expanding the sponge and making the rubber much faster.

The negative side is:

- It must be done every day.
- The effect lasts only a short time, especially in hot conditions.
- It reduces the rubber-life.
- It is expensive
- Breathing glue vapours can be hazardous to the player's health.

Therefore speed glue is not recommended for beginners or cadets until they have mastered the basics or are training seriously.

# Gluing Recipe

## Ingredients:

- 1 x Blade
- 1 x Forehand Rubber
- 1 x Backhand Rubber
- 1 x Tin of Glue

## You will need:

- Rolling pin
- Stanley knife\*
- Cutting Board

\* It is important that you use a sharp (new) blade to ensure a clean cut around the new rubbers.

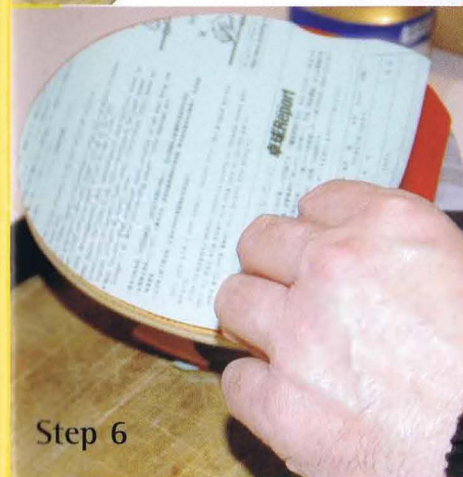
Time:  
15-35 minutes



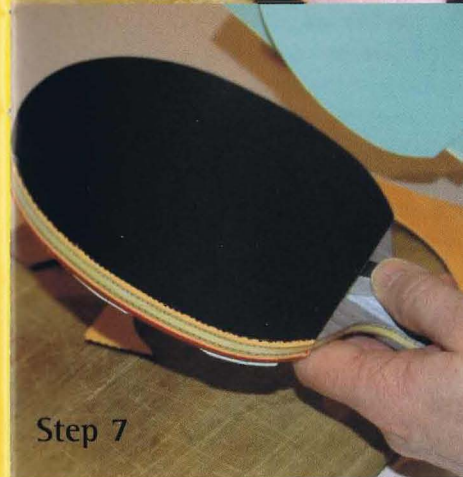
Step 4



Step 5



Step 6



Step 7

## glueing your bat

**Before you start:** Which side is red and which is black? It is a general rule of thumb to place the forehand side (Red) on the same side as the logo on the blade (Photo 10).

Caution whenever using a toxic substance such as glue it is essential to make sure you have a well ventilated area. In addition, adult supervision is required when using sharp implements and solvent based glues.

**Varnishing your blade:** Some people advocate varnishing the blade prior to gluing, this is to protect the blade surface when switching rubbers. However, this could slightly alter the playing characteristic of the blade

- 1 **Glue the Blade:** Shake the glue and apply evenly over one side of the blade above the handle line (Step 1).
  - Points to note: if you are reusing a blade make sure the surface is smooth and clear of any glue residue from the previous rubber. If this is the case rub over lightly with some fine sandpaper and wipe clean. The surface must be dry prior to application of your selected glue.
- 2 **Glue the Rubber:** Keep the packaging card on the rubber surface to protect the face of your rubber and spread the glue evenly over the whole of the sponge.
  - Points to note: Keep the rubber preserved in its original packaging until you are ready to glue, this allows it to retain its elasticity and remain clean.
- 4 **Attaching the rubber to the blade:** With the blade resting on the cutting board and with the glued side facing upwards, place the logo edge of the rubber onto the blade up against and square to the handle top. Then gently smooth over the rubber with your hand from the handle upwards ensuring that there are no air bubbles/uneven patches (Step 2).
  - Points to note: always keep the protective film over the rubber.
- 5 **Firming up:** Next use a rolling pin to press the rubber to the blade. Start from the handle and work your way up holding on to the handle of the blade and applying a light and even pressure as you roll the rolling pin over the rubber (Step 3).
  - Points to note: Make sure the logo and information about the rubber is close to the handle, this is a requirement of the ITTF as all rubbers need to be certified for competitive play.
- 6 **Getting rid of the excess:** With caution use a sharp stanley knife and work your way around the blade using the edge of the blade as a guide (Step 4 & 5).
  - Points to note: It is important that you cut right though to ensure you have a crisp edge to your new rubber, it is always best to start with a new knife blade to ensure you create a clean cut.
  - Repeat this process for the reverse side of your bat and there you have it.



# SUPERB VICTORY FOR MICHAEL MARSDEN

Round ten of the British League Premier Division played at the splendid recently refurbished Ellenborough Table Tennis Club saw the four higher placed teams storm to convincing victories and it also produced one of the most stunning results of the season.

The very talented Michael Marsden (Sycamore) became the first player to get the better of Oxford Fire Place Centre's 2000 Sydney Olympic Ladies Doubles Silver medallist Sun Jin (China). Hovering around the England top 20 mark Marsden remains one of the country's most enigmatic players, and put simply "when he is good he can be very very good". This was one of those occasions and the excitement began to mount after he had won the first two ends narrowly 11-9, 12-10. Sun Jin, the former World no. four hit back strongly and she took the fourth end 11-5 but Marsden was right at the top of his game and with a succession of destructive opening loops he took the fourth game 11-8.

Game on..... but Sycamore were unable to add to this fantastic start as the all-action Gavin Rungay blitzed his way past Shaun Marples 3-0 and for good measure he also beat Marsden 3-1. Stewart Crawford again showed what an effective number four he is and he disposed of Adam Frost 11-8, 11-6, 11-2 and Jason Ramage 11-8, 11-7, 11-7. Final match result 7-1 to the leaders - Oxford Fire Place Centre l.

Second-placed DHS London Progress were equally emphatic winners and they hammered BATTs Team Peniel l 7-1. Terry Young had to retrieve a 2-1 deficit to get the better of John Holland but he eventually came through 11-8, 9-11, 5-11, 11-9, 11-9. It wasn't until the last game that BATTs picked up their solitary win - a good one, as Neil Charles beat Darren Blake 11-9, 11-4, 11-9. DHS London Progress number one Colum Slevin had things pretty much his own way as he disposed of Ritchie Venner 11-3, 11-7, 11-3 and John Holland 11-4, 11-4, 11-5.

Third-placed Ormesby added a further two points to their total as they put DML Woolwell l "to the Sword" 8-0. Mike Short fared best of the

Woolwell players pushing England number seven Junior Damien Nicholls very hard before succumbing 11-7, 12-14, 4-11, 11-4, 7-11. "Shortie" also gave a good account of himself against Ormesby's new Chinese Junior Star Zhang Weng (Johnson) and he came close to pinching an end before he missed out 10-12, 7-11, 9-11. Pen-hold player Kevin Buddell played equally well against Nigel Eckersley and he wasn't too far away from taking the match to a decider, eventually losing 11-7, 7-11, 6-11, 9-11.

Ellenborough's clash against Harvey Barnets l featured two sets of players, who will have met in local League matches on numerous occasions, and Ellenborough came through with a strong second-half performance to win 6-2 (a result that was later amended to 7-1). Lorestas Trumpauskas and Gary Tandler were both double winners whilst Jimmy Walsh and Ian Black both won once. In the opening encounter Lorestas Trumpauskas came through strongly to beat Marc Armstrong 8-11, 9-11, 11-5, 11-3, 11-6 whilst in the seventh game Jimmy Walsh came back from 2-0 down to beat William Maybanks 7-11, 9-11, 11-7, 12-10, 11-7 and finally Ian Black saw off Esser Maniga with an excellent 12-10, 7-11, 6-11, 11-9, 13-11 victory.

**BUTTERFLY**  
THE BRITISH LEAGUE  
OFFICIAL BALL







# Super Sussex

The Cadets Premier County Championship event was played at Draycott TTC and provided Sussex with the county title as they remained unbeaten over the weekend with six wins and one draw from their seven matches.

It was a solid all round team effort from the Sussex squad with all five players on duty making major contributions to the south coast county's cause as Steven Eckford and Ricki Weston, playing at 1 and 2, both scored 10 wins from 14 starts while Helshan Weerasinghe playing at 3 dropped just two sets from his 14 sets.

The girls in the team both scored heavily as Sarah Russo scored 8 wins from 12, but was eclipsed by team mate Yolanda King who managed 10 wins from a possible 12.

Sussex began strongly and recorded three successive 9-1 victories against Cleveland, Middlesex and Surrey before facing the only other unbeaten side, Yorkshire, in the final match of the first day. Despite the match score standing at 4 all Sussex were just a shade better than their northern rivals and completed the match 6-4 which left them sitting pretty at the top of the table on Saturday night.

Sunday morning saw Sussex open with another comprehensive win as Warwickshire succumbed to the Sussex juggernaut 8-2 and with second place Yorkshire losing their first match surprisingly to Cleveland 7-3, Sussex found themselves four points ahead with two matches to play as none of the chasing counties had been able to overhaul Yorkshire.

Sussex required a point from their two remaining matches and they got just that in their next match as they were made to fight really hard in a nip and tuck encounter. They faced a buoyant Lincolnshire who never lost the lead against the champions elect, and it was perhaps fitting that Weerasinghe, took the final set to earn his side a draw by beating Dale Coverley 11-9 11-9 12-10 to begin the celebrations for Sussex.

Early on Sunday it was looking like Sussex were the form team and would take the title so the battle for the runners-up spot became intense with any one of three counties capable of taking second spot as the final round of matches got underway.

Yorkshire, Middlesex and Lincolnshire were all in with a chance of second spot but Lincolnshire were soon ruled out as they dropped their second set against Warwickshire and were then unable to catch either Yorkshire or Middlesex. With Yorkshire holding a two sets' lead over their opponents going into the match, a draw was sufficient for the White Rose county.

Yorkshire actually reached their fifth set with three sets to spare to secure the runners-up spot, and a draw was what they looked like getting until Daniel Adams beat Ping Ho in an entertaining five game set 12-14 21-19 4-11 11-4 11-9 to give Yorkshire a 6-4 victory.

Yorkshire had the male player of the weekend in Mark Johnson who was unbeaten in 12 sets, while third placed Lincolnshire had the top female player over the two days as Emily Bates matched Johnson's perfect record from 12 sets.

By virtue of a 6-4 last match victory over Warwickshire, Lincolnshire leapfrogged Middlesex to take third place as Middlesex slipped a place to fourth and maintain their Premier status for next season along with Warwickshire and Cleveland.

Sadly the Premier Division says goodbye, for at least one season, to last year's runners up and third placed teams Gwent and Surrey, although Gwent will be aggrieved that they played all weekend with no girl player and starting every match from 4 nil down was always going to be a Herculean task. Surrey never recovered from being mauled in their first three matches although to their credit they did draw three of their last four matches.

The event got off to a late start on Saturday morning due to electrical problems but the hard working members of Draycott TTC could have not made all the players and officials more welcome, and with at least another three county events booked this season, the popularity and reputation of the recently opened centre was enhanced over this weekend.



# A stroll in the park for Zheng

Wang Zheng was just in a different league to his rivals, he won the title without breaking sweat, although finalist Liam Pitchford registered a one game win against him

Our very long journey from the south coast in Poole, to the Greenbank Sports Academy, home of this year's Liverpool Junior event, was all of 270 miles and "keeping awake" driving that long way up and back in one day, I knew would prove difficult.

Then, coming to our rescue, at the 24th hour, were our good friends Keith and Chris Doran, who kindly offered to take us up in their car, stopping on the way, on Saturday, to play in a local fun tournament at Leamington Spa. An offer of bacon butties at their home in Northampton, more or less half of our journey to Liverpool, plus the invitation to share their room at the Travelodge near Liverpool could not be refused.

As I don't play that often now in Tournaments, the thought of having some quality matches, instead of being in Matt's corner, sounded appealing. We were greeted with a warm welcome at the Lillington table tennis Club, and soon I was frustrating the locals with my long pips. I turned around and to my amazement, Kelly Sibley and Joanna Parker were cheering me on, or was it my local club opponent?

Apparently they called in to see how the event was going, meeting up with old tt. Friends, prior to flying out to Croatia.

For me, it was really special to meet them both and have a chat, with two of England's top young women players taking time out for grass roots table tennis, with their support and presence giving an extra buzz to the whole atmosphere.

Meanwhile back in Liverpool.....

The first day's under 13 and cadet events would prove to be a major headache for the organisers as it was full to capacity, with Deputy Referee, Dave Cochrane reluctant to turn anyone away. This was probably due to last year's lack of entries and cancellation of the event.

The under 13 boys event was won by unseeded Nottingham star, Joseph Thursby who knocked out number 1 seed, Lewis Gray in the 2nd round. Joseph outpointed Irish player, Stephen Slater in the final. Alice Loveridge, the extremely talented

12 yr. old from The Island of Guernsey won the equivalent girls event, in what was probably the closest fought" final of the day", overcoming a determined challenge from Emily Bates, another star in the making, in a five set belter.

The final of the cadet boys open, went as per seeding with both Cadet international players, Liam Pitchford and David Mcbeath treating the crowd to a see-saw climax. Liam finally running out the winner, 12-10 in the final end. Ireland's duo of Paul McCreery and Sam Hanley were the losing semi-finalists. Sam had earlier won the cadet boy's grade 1, finding a rich vein of form throughout the day.

In the cadet girls events, another England player, Melissa Wright

was the victor over Emily Bates in the main event, with Kirsty Wilson and Karina Le Fevre, filling the remaining semi final places. Cornwall's Martha Travis, was taken to 4 sets by unseeded Rachel Farquar, the vastly improved young Berkshire lass, in the band 1, competition.

By Sunday mid morning, the junior events were well under way, as we were leaving our Hotel in Ellesmere Port to find the venue.

I am now certain that the Tom Tom navigational system we used must have been produced by the Liverpool tourist board. After crossing the Mersey, albeit in the tunnel we were guided to Goodison Park and as Everton had a home game with Reading, we were caught up in heavy football traffic. We found out later that Sylvester Stallone was making an appearance to promote his new film. So taking a quick u turn back to Liverpool city centre, passing by the Liver Building, through Toxteth, (fortunately no riots), down Penny Lane (I feel a song coming on), and eventually reaching Greenbank and at last the table tennis venue.

The junior entry was a strong one, with most of the newly formed BTTF talent ID group taking part, plus the added spice of two Chinese players, Wang Zheng, hot favourite to take the boys event; Liz Insam was top seed in the girls, with unknown quantity Liu Meihan from China at two.

The junior band 1 events were scheduled for the

morning. The boy's event was left wide open with the top two seeds, withdrawing.

Daniel Lowe, seeded 7, took full advantage, to win the title, from a spirited Tom Maynard, in the final. Both boys had several tough matches to reach the final. Maynard, played exceptionally well to fight off the very useful Sean Cullen in the semi's. Lowe didn't have it easy by any means, in a tight four setter against Jake Collins.

There were a few upsets in the girl's band 1 event, with Top seed Hannah Hicks losing out to bright prospect Alice Loveridge in the semi final, whilst Ayonija Sundararajan and Melissa Wright, seeds 2 and 3, both stumbled at the qtr final stage. Martha Travis once again delighted us with her strong attacking play, with wins over Becky Griffith and Claire Nelson in the latter stages to set up a gripping final with Alice. It was a classic match with some superb play from both girls, Martha eventually coming out on top, in the final leg.

The main event, the Junior Boys Open, was a relative stroll in the park, for long odds on favourite from China, Wang Zheng. This young man was just in a different league to his rivals. He won the title without breaking sweat, although finalist Liam Pitchford registered a one game win against him and took him to deuce in the first leg.

Daniel Lowe lost out to Pitchford in the semi, whilst Matt Ware had no answers for Zheng in the other semi final.

The main event for the young ladies, was the Junior Open. This went almost to seeding, with top seed Liz Insam, taking the Title. Hannah Hicks, had some remarkable wins along the way, to reach the final, notably knocking out the number 2 seeded Chinese defender, Liu Meihan in the second round, coupled with determined victories over Melissa Wright, in the quarters, and Alice Loveridge in the semi final. Unseeded Rachel Baker, from Lancashire, filled the other semi final place, having gained some excellent wins. She finally succumbed to the powerful, Liz Insam, the eventual winner.

After a late finish on the Saturday, the tournament organisers fully made up for this with a nice early finish on Sunday, giving us all a good head start for the long journey home.



# ROUNDUP

## COUNTY



MCK STEAD

### Avon by Dave Banks

In the Bath league, there are some good new players, notably Neil Cartwright (Bathford A-ex Dorset), who currently leads the averages with Clive Ellison (Frys A) and Bob Murray (Mayfield A). Frys A lead the Premier Division, with Mayfield A a close second.

The Bristol league continues to flourish, with newcomers Filton Academy currently topping the Premier Division at the third-way stage, but Failand A are close on their heels. Dave Richards and Brian Reeves of Failand A head up the performance averages.

The Avon junior first team are doing well, winning all their games so far, with victories over Cornwall 2nds 6-4 (Tom West securing victory in a final tense match), against Wiltshire 8-2, Avon 2nds 9-1, Devon 3rds 10-0 and Devon 4ths 10-0. (Team: Alex Banks, Lloyd Gregory, Joe Ratajczak, Hayley Ruderham, Jessica Coggins, Coach: Bernard Nash).

The junior second team have played well, winning two out of five, beating Somerset 2nds and Devon 4ths. (Team: Tom West, Patrick MacFarlane, Michael Qian, Rebecca Gregory, Jess Wood)

Avon Vets have managed two wins out of three so far. Although they lost 7-3 against a strong Essex 4ths, they bounced back against

Buckinghamshire and Sussex 3rds, winning 8-2 and 6-4 respectively, with Clive Ellison playing well, taking four out of four and Paul Hooper three out of four.

### Cheshire by Alan Blears

My request for more information from the south of the county has brought a response from Dave Terry of Chester, who has disclosed that not only does life exist south of a line from Birkenhead to Macclesfield, but that it is a very advanced form of life indeed. In fact the Chester and Ellesmere Port League is obviously a very successful and dynamic affair with forty teams competing in four divisions, and attracting players for its Premier Division from the Wirral, Runcorn, Whitchurch and Wrexham and one even from Anglesey, a 160-mile round trip!

The standard of play is high with Gary Watson, their VETS champion, having recently beaten Darius Knight, and the league last season having the only Cheshire men's team in the Lancashire and Cheshire first division. Former leading juniors Neil Powell and Aaron Beech, with Simon Jones and Ron Weatherby, another of that well known dynasty make a powerful combination. The league secretary is Andy Moulton.

Regional Cadet Trials - This was not the best of days for the county's youngsters. Because of

illness and unavailability there were no Cheshire girls at all competing, while the only two boys actually resident in the county to reach the last eight were the two Stockport Hillcourt youngsters Jordan Potts and Dan Brown. Jordan finished third and thus qualifies for the National Trials. The results of the younger age groups are not available.

National Junior League North West - The N.J.L. has reached the halfway stage, with Lancashire teams leading the way in both south area divisions. In Div. 2B (West), St. Helens 'A' have a massive 18-point lead over Halton 'A', who are just one point ahead of neighbours Chester. Of those playing in both rounds Steve Jameson leads the Cheshire averages with 90%. In Div. 2A (East), a strong Failsworth team, which would not be out of place in the JBL, lead Hillcourt 'A1' by seven points, with Jordan Potts and Dan Brown heading the Cheshire averages with 92%. Hillcourt 'B1' are third, having played a match more.

### Cleveland by Alan Ransome

China Coup - An initiative from the Hartlepool Club through their treasurer, Keith Thomas, in conjunction with the Ormesby Club has produced a coup for the County in bring 3 high level players from the People's Republic of China into

# David Wetherill took the Young Sports Personality of the Year award.

Teesside for the next 6 months.

The 3 players – Wang Zheng (Johnson), Xu Shu Yin (Katie) and Liu Meihan (Maria) will have the benefit of significantly strengthening the regular practice and coaching sessions at both clubs every week, potentially providing a schools development programme, subject to finalisation, and will improve both Ormesby's and Hartlepool's teams in the British League.

The Ormesby Club have signed Johnson who will strengthen the team following the transfer of Paul Drinkhall to the French club, SAG Cestas, and with Danny Reed's injury problems. Katie and Maria are both playing for the Brierton team in the 4th Division North where their impact will be substantial.

In addition to playing in the British League, the trio will be entering a number of open tournaments in this country over the second half of this season.

Xu Shu Yin (Katie) and Liu Meihan (Maria) made their debuts for Hartlepool Brierton in the 4th Division North at Widnes on 7 January. Hartlepool won both of their matches against Rotherham Scorpions 2 and Elgre Nottingham 4 and have leapfrogged Drumchapel Glasgow to lead the table going into the final weekend in Blackpool on 24 and 25 February. Both of the Chinese girls won their 2 singles in both matches as Hartlepool beat both teams by 6-2.

Darren McVitie also played well for Hartlepool to win both his matches against Scorpions whilst 13 year old Jake McVitie won one of his matches against the Nottingham team.

Most Improved Players at Ormesby – Danny was his nomination as the Most Improved Player of the Year at the Ormesby Club which was based on his phenomenal improvement from being purely on the crust of the England Junior team last April to winning a prime place in the team for the European Youth Championships in the Czech Republic in July the England Men's team for the crucial European Qualification matches that were played in Ljubljana, Slovenia in October, which was Danny's last competition before his elbow operation.

The female Most Improved Player of the Year was Karina Lefevre who did well in the first half of the year to finish 5th in the Cadet Masters which won her a place in the England Under 15 team for the 6 Nation Championships in the Netherlands in June.

Super Ten Tournament – The Ormesby Club has

recently held the Super 10 Tournament for its members the top three in each category were as follows:

Category 1: 1st Wang Zheng (Johnson) – 10 wins, 2nd David Meads – 9 wins, 3rd Xu Shu Yin (Katie) – 8 wins  
Category 2: 1st Martin Rutter – 10 wins, 2nd Edward Fambely – 8 wins, 3rd Gary Whyman – 7 wins  
Category 3: 1st Jane Lynas 8 wins, 2nd Malcolm Muldoon – 7 wins, 3rd Jessica Dawson – 6 wins  
Category 4: 1st Grant Walker – 9 wins, 2nd James Murphy – 8 wins, 3rd Chris Lynas – 7 wins

## Derbyshire by Neil Houghton

Last year an official in another county said to me they wondered why they bothered – the trigger being "simply" getting players sorted for East Midlands Ranking Trials. Of course with new multi age groups this involves many invites and more complex getting round to asking reserves etc. (players, even newcomers, often seem to think county officials just automatically know they exist but communication the other way would be good!) but many did not reply and it became a protracted problem. I mention this as Derbyshire had a few problems of this sort with the recent East Midlands event. That said could it be as prize is now an annual long trip to Bristol (with no 'Masters' involved) there is less interest – whatever, but please tell us promptly for all invites/selections so we know and can save a few phone calls and other costs and above all have time to give somebody else a chance to play! Not many there overall so apparently other counties have these troubles.

Derbyshire, however, does seem to get the largest number there, which deserves credit for those who do go and EAST MIDLANDS organisers and county officials' work in sorting it. Thank you to event organisers for their work. However, it has always puzzled me why there have never been prizes sorted out. (Not a huge cost and is this a missed opportunity to stimulate interest?) When years ago two of 'my' players won Junior Boys and Girls I felt it right to fork out for a trophy for them – this year it only cost me a couple of medals but, in view of above, maybe I will manage to get some for all Derbyshire placings as effort deserves some reward.

Well done to all who went for playing well to their experience and standard, and congratulations to those in line for a 'well-nice' trip to Bristol in a few weeks. Been to National

Trials all over, but King's Lynn is handier (hint for next year!) although the Middlesbrough bunch would likely prefer a first time at Thornaby Pavilion L.C. ? – especially two of Alan Ransome's Ormesby Club kids whose Mum was telling me they live almost next door ! Had a look at Senior 2nd team, at the debut of Draycott's new venue, in County Division 2A. Derbyshire team finished r/u to Yorkshire. Keith Bird got 6 from 8 and good to see Stuart McIntyre playing well and David Arrowsmith with (must be just about into VETTS by now!) Jonathan Bayliss, Helen Rainford, Sarah Bayliss and Kathryn Arrowsmith.

Hear reigning Derbyshire Men's Champion Allan Fulwood won Under 21s and Band 1 at Hereford taking home enough barrow loads of points to romp up to 26 (!!) in men, even overtaking 'Super Shaun! Could this be the highest rise up men's rankings for a Derbyshire player first year out of U18 juniors?

## Devon by John Smith

Table tennis provided two winners at the prestigious Plymouth Sports Awards. Paul Whiting added to his ETTA title by winning Coach of the Year, while David Wetherill took the Young Sports Personality of the Year award. Wetherill then notched up two more distinctions at the Disability Sport England Awards. At one of the world's most famous cricket grounds – Old Trafford, Manchester, he won both the South West Regional award and the national Rising Star prize.

Shortly afterwards he was adding to his impressive trophy haul for the year by gaining a bronze medal in the doubles event at the USA Paralympics Open in Las Vegas. Wetherill, who is edging closer to his dream of winning selection in the GB squad for the 2008 Paralympics, also reached the semi-finals of the singles competition, after failing to make it past the group stages the previous year.

Shortly he will be travelling in the opposite direction, to Hong Kong. There he will join up with the rest of a four-strong GB squad in a training camp to train with Chinese players in preparation for the Beijing Olympics.

Five young county stars have produced some stunning performances to gain a wealth of impressive results at the regional finals of the junior national trials. The quintet – Laura McLeod, Jack Marsh, Vicky Smith, David White

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and Ollie Buddell - gained two first places, two seconds and a third between them.

The talented youngsters saw their efforts rewarded with automatic qualification to the national finals at Bristol on March 24 and 25 next year. The event at Okehampton saw both boys and girls trying to finish in the top three of the under 11, 13 and 15 age groups to qualify. Buddell & White took the under 11 & 13 boys titles respectively while Marsh gained a creditable third place finish behind White.

Smith, last year's national under 11 champion and giving almost two years to some of her opponents, narrowly missed out in the girls under 13s, finishing runner-up, and to cap a successful competition for the county, in the under 15 girls', Plymouth's McLeod also finished second. Winners at the Devon Schools Teams Championships were :-

Boys U11 - Yealmpstone Farm, Plympton, U13 - King Edward VI College, Totnes U16 - King Edward VI College, Totnes U19 - Ilfracombe. Girls U11 - St Andrews RC, Plymouth, U13 - Exmouth College, U16 - Devonport High, Plymouth, U19 - Devonport High, Plymouth.

### Hertfordshire by Ann Fereday

Since the last County Notes all the six veteran teams have been in action. Here are the results.

Team 1 travelled to Milton Keynes where they played 4 matches over one weekend. They had 2 wins, a draw and 1 loss. This is a good start. Of course it makes a difference if a quality player turns 40 and joins the squad. Glen Wilkes played for the veterans for the first time and won 6 of his 8 singles matches plus 3 mixed doubles with Sally Bax. In detail - Herts.1 beat Norfolk 1 by 8 sets to 2 then Oxfordshire by 7 sets to 3. They drew 5 - 5 with Worcestershire but lost to a very strong Middlesex 1 by 2 sets to 8.

Team 2 drove the long way to Cippenham for 2 matches. They beat Surrey 3 by 7 - 3 and drew 5 - 5 with Bucks. 2.

Team 3 have made two visits to their usual venue at Ashford. On the first visit they drew 5 - 5 with Kent 3 and Oxfordshire 2. They gained another two points on the second visit by beating Wilts. 2 by 7 - 3 then losing to Surrey 4 by 3 - 7.

Team 4 are playing their matches one per month. They lost 2 - 8 away to Northants 2 though all the matches went to 4 or 5 games. It was much closer than the final score sounds. At home in Barnet they beat Shropshire 2 by 7 sets to 3. That was a very good win for a newly promoted team.

Team 5 lost away to Glamorgan but drew 5 - 5 at home to Somerset 2.

Team 6 have had their best start for sometime.

Away they were pleased to beat Berks. 6 by 8 - 2, then amazed to beat Berks.3 by 6 - 4. At home they lost to Herefordshire 2 by 6 - 4. Teams 4, 5 and 6 were again in action at the Barnet Centre. 3 matches all on the go at once makes for a very good and exciting atmosphere. A fine post match spread was laid on with home made mince pies. When everyone ate together afterwards it was one big party. Good luck to all the teams.

### Leicestershire by Derek Butt

The Leicestershire Senior first team played five of their county matches recently and among the squad making her first appearance for the County was Jose Bongers she joined up with the regulars Chris Rogers, Dave Gannon, Keith Fellows and Karen Smith. The first match was against Lincolnshire and Dave got the county off to a good start beating Lincoln's Andy Wignall, this was followed up with victories for Keith, Karen and Chris finishing the match off 7-3 to Leicestershire. This was followed up with a good result against Worcestershire as they won the first five sets and Jose and Karen managed to win their second matches and to a 7-3 win. On the Saturday against Nottinghamshire this proved to be the toughest match Dave and Keith lost the opening two games but a good fight back and taking the final doubles we managed a draw.

Next match was against Durham and we won this 5-3. The final match of the weekend saw the opponents Norfolk with only one lady player and Karen and Jose both beat her comfortably. Chris chipped in with a brace while Dave and Keith got one each. This saw Leicestershire go to top spot in the current table. A special mention for Karen who finished the weekend unbeaten with good wins over Lesley Keast and Sarah Perks.

The veterans first team also had a successful start to their campaign in November in Halifax. The team of Chris Rogers, Keith Fellows, Maurice Newman and Karen Smith. They met the Premier Division champions Yorkshire in their first match and a close match resulted and ended with an excellent mixed doubles win to secure a 6-4 win. Leicestershire's next opponents were Surrey and former Scottish No 1 Richard Yule gave them a good start beating Keith, Maurice levelled the match as he beat Dave Harding in five. Karen had an excellent win over Chinese penholder Marcia Ma, despite being 8-0 down in the first Karen clawed her way back to win the game 14-12. A

## The veterans first team also had a successful start to their campaign in November in Halifax.

close match wore on and Karen found managed to finally break her opponent down taking the final game. Leicestershire finally won 7-3. Their final match was against Cheshire and another close match saw us home 6-4 and this leaves Leicestershire at the top of the current table. On to the local scene and the Leicester league in their 75th year see Division One being led by Knighton Park first leading the way and are currently unbeaten in ten outings with Leicester Electricity in second place also unbeaten. The top player at the time of writing is Andy LeButt ( Electricity ) unbeaten in twenty three games. In third place are Arnesby but the two top teams are well clear of the pack. Northwood who have struggled along with Park's seconds look favourites for the drop both with similar records.

### Northamptonshire by Dennis Millman

The second series of the EBS Mobile Phones Ltd. Super League reached a thrilling climax when Higham Band and Unity met in what could prove to be the defining match of the season. It was a match of decisive comebacks with Higham's Andy Trott coming from two games down to beat Unity's Dave Welsman in the opener. It was a different story in rubbers two and three with the unbeaten records of Unity's Steve Silk and Kieron Dabbs destroyed in straight games by Mick Harper and Richard Elliott respectively. Two leading veterans then went head to head in a pulsating encounter in which Welsman opened Unity's account with an 11-9 fifth end decision against Harper. Former county champions Dabbs and Trott met in game five and though Dabbs took the first end 13-11, Trott made sure of the next three. Elliott next had an absorbing tussle with Silk and though the Unity player led by two games to one and 7-3 in the fourth, Elliott was not to be denied and an 11-9, 11-5 finish made certain that Higham would take three points with a fourth still to be decided. The seventh rubber seemed likely to provide Unity with some relief when Dabbs led Harper two nil and 4-0 in the third. However Harper took six points in a row, closed out 11-5 and went on to victory. In game eight it was Elliott's turn to be on the wrong end of a comeback, when needing four points in the fourth end he failed to stop Welsman from winning seven points in succession, before going on to an unlikely triumph. Finally the Trott - Silk encounter would make the

difference between a four nil or a three one scoreline. Trailing 8-4 in the third Trott picked up four consecutive points and though he lost the fourth, he made sure in the decider. Westfield moved into third place with two eight one successes against Turvey and Cold Higham. John Fuller led the way, winning all six rubbers without dropping an end, while Mike Hawes and Daniel Smalley lost only once, with Smalley's win over Gary Deakin his personal highlight. Dave Grundy took six out of six to help Harborough into fourth place, while Farthingstone, helpless against the might of Higham, got the better of DCA Jaguars with hat-tricks from Alan Cherry and Dave Murphy. Friday 24th November was a red letter day for Northants table tennis when a brand new centre was opened at Wellingborough by the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, Lady Juliet Townsend. Most of the credit must go to Westfield's Dave Marsh who, ten years ago as Northants Development Officer, set the wheels in motion. There were many pitfalls along the way as sometimes the dream became a nightmare, but he persevered until the dream became a reality. After the official opening the Alan Cooke/John Hilton road-show entertained some two hundred enthusiasts with quality of play interspersed with humour, mostly perpetrated by the ebullient Hilton. Cooke comfortably fought off allcomers, while England no.1 Joanna Parker was most impressive as she demonstrated her considerable prowess together with Westfield's own no.8 rated England player Tim Yarnall. So ended a memorable day at a splendid venue that should eventually prove a watershed in the fortunes of Northants table tennis. County championship results have been slow to materialize but the Veteran Seconds under the guidance of Chris Gibbons have made a positive start, while the Junior Firsts with Chris Doran, Matthew Carter and Daniel Smalley prominent look certain to have a successful season. Almost six hundred players are included in the first ranking list of the season issued by administrator Trevor Ore. The leading players are: 1. Andy Trott 2. Dave Welsman 3. Richard Elliott 4. Greg Yarnall 5. Chris Doran 6. Andy LeButt 7. Chris Ross 8. Kieron Dabbs 9. Ken Philipson 10. Mick Harper 11. Ryan Keates 12. Steve Silk 13. John Fuller 14. David Murphy 15. Mark Nannery 16. Dave Grundy.

### Northumberland by Pauline Long

The County senior team of Eddie Smith, Andrew Wilkinson, Dave Godbold, Caron Guthrie and Christine Burke won two and drew three of their matches to lie in second place following their series of Division 1A fixtures at Nottingham. They beat Durham and Worcestershire 6-4, Norfolk 7-3 and drew 5-5 with both Lincolnshire and Cleveland. Eddie lost only one set - to Norfolk's Ian McLean - and both Andrew and Dave each won eight of a possible ten singles. Caron got three sets and Christine one, which put the team only one point behind the current leaders.

The veterans' team of Dave, Geoff Salter, Jimmy Scope - replacing the unavailable "Benny" Robertson - and Christine beat Norfolk 6-4, lost to Essex II 4-6, and drew 5-5 with Middlesex and Oxfordshire in a hard-fought and close series of Division 1A matches over the weekend of 25-26 November at Milton Keynes.

Dave and Geoff led the way by each winning seven out of eight singles and also combining to take three out of four men's doubles. Jimmy and Christine each won a singles, and Christine especially was unlucky not to win more, while Geoff and Christine also combined to win a mixed doubles.

The second half of the Northumbria League commenced early in January following the Christmas and New Year break, current division leaders are: Premier Division - Washington A, Division 1 - Old England Jacks, Division 2 - North Fire B, Division 3 - Ouston A, Division 4 - Cramlington Dynamos.

The County Closed tournament has been provisionally arranged for Sunday 11 March 2007 at the Sporting Centre of Cramlington, with the alternative of 15 April if this date is not available.

### Shropshire by Terry Ridgway

Telford First Division - Telford's top division is currently led by Lilleshall A, the north Shropshire side are exceeding expectations but with new signing ex-England junior star Trudie Bloor in top form they could stay the pace and capture the title for the first time ever. Albrighton A are still unbeaten and would be looking to take the trophy for the fifth year running. Top four places: Lilleshall (37pts), Albrighton (36pts), Bridgnorth (33pts) and Bearings (28 pts). Division Two - This year's second division appears to be a battle between the Albrighton C and D

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as Clive and Wendy Baggot's C side (along with Bob Vaughn) have taken the division by storm, five successive wins have given them a good lead from Ray Farnworth's D squad. Mathesons C team currently lead the third division with a 5 out of 5 record.

Shrewsbury Premier - For many years the Shrewsbury Premier Division title race had been a two horse race as Pontesbury A and Cricket Club A were always battling it out for the ultimate prize, however this season Dean Pountneys Cricket Club B have pulled off a masterstroke by signing ex-Indian international Nupur Santra as their new no1, the former world ranked topspin attacker is now residing in Whitchurch and enjoys supporting his local league (a point that some highly ranked Shropshire players should take note of !!).

Telford's presentation evening was a little late this year but we were privileged to enjoy a presentation evening and exhibition with Matthew Syed at the Bridgnorth Leisure Centre in October. The former Commonwealth Champion spent hours with the Highley Club juniors before the main event and played several matches against Telford's best players, many thanks to Matthew for a superb evening.

### Surrey by Chris Andrews

At the World Junior Championship in Egypt, Surrey's Darius Knight partnering Paul Drinkhall in the doubles reached the quarter-final. Knight also reached the last 16 in the mixed doubles with Kelly Sibley.

England won Gold in the team event at the Finland Open with Surrey Joanna Parker partnering Kelly Sibley. Joanna also won Bronze in the singles.

The Polish Grand Prix event in Warsaw, in the under 21 event, saw Darius Knight reached the quarter-final stage, beating the Portuguese no.2 and World no.187. Fang Xiaoquan of Austria was the next player to be defeated by Darius. Patrick Baum of Germany was just too good for Darius and went on to win the event. After playing in the Polish Open, Abdul Wuraola flew back into the World ranking at no. 649. Abdul Wuraola won the Veterans Mens Singles at the Nottingham Open Grand Prix. In the Hereford Grand Prix Men's Senior Singles event Darius Knight lost to Jing Wei Zhao.

Surrey Schools Individual Championships Results :- U11 boys singles Winner - Ewen Stevenson of Whitgift Runner-up - Nicholas Jelacic of Homefield U13 boys singles Winner - Michael Ho of Wilsons Runner-up - George Robinson of Ernest Bevin U13 boys doubles Winners - Ayman Al-Sidassi/Michael Ho of Wilsons Runners-up

George Robinson/George Taylor-Walker of Ernest Bevin U13 girls singles Winner - Fei Fei Pei of Guildford County Runner-up - Lydia Regan of Coombe Girls U16 boys singles Winner - Wing Yung Chan of Whitgift Runner-up Dorian Robinson of Reigate Grammar U16 boys doubles Winners - Wing Yung Chan/Patrick Hui of Whitgift Runners-up - Adam Hitchcock/Michael Hitchcock of Glyn Technology U16 girls singles Winner - Fei Fei Pei of Guildford County Runner-up Laura Higham of Burntwood U19 boys singles Winner - Wing Yung Chan of Whitgift Runner-up - Patrick Hui of Whitgift U19 boys doubles Winners - Tom Lundy/Michael Spiteri of Bacons Runners-up - Ben Larcombe/Michael Power of Glyn Technology.

### Sussex by Graham Carter

Ladies' teams grabbed the headlines in Sussex in January following a spectacular double promotion in the Women's British League. Hastings club Hollington booked themselves a place in the Premier Division by finishing second in Division One, thanks to a good allround team performance at Nottingham University by Rose Rainton, Sara Coggon and Sheila King. Rose and Sara both won seven out of 10 to spearhead three wins, a draw and only one defeat which was all the more remarkable as it was achieved without unavailable Sussex first team player Sarah Stedman.

St Andrews from Worthing repeated the feat in Division Three, when they needed to beat unbeaten leaders Uxbridge to go up - and this they duly did with an emphatic 5-1 victory. Congratulations go to the youthful trio of Lisa Standen, Stacey Furnival and Alison Woodland. Incredibly, both Hollington and St Andrews achieved back-to-back promotions, having gone up from their respective divisions as champions. Sussex Veterans are well on the way to winning promotion back into the Premier Division. With one session of matches remaining, they lead Division One of the County Championships by two points after two 7-3 wins against Surrey II and Wiltshire.

Paul Barry made a successful first team debut in place of the unavailable England no.3 Ritchie Venner and became part of a triumphant line-up alongside Adrian Moore, Peter Bartram and Sheila King.

Sheila has already got two successes to savour this season - not only did her Women's British

# England won Gold in the team event at the Finland Open with Surrey Joanna Parker partnering Kelly Sibley.

Veteran's British League side BATTs PPP finished runners-up in the Women's Premier Division. Sheila is well known in the sport as an administrator at the ETTA HQ in Hastings. On the table she is a tenacious performer and she managed seven wins from 10 matches in Doncaster, where she teamed up with Bedfordshire's Sandra Harper and Yorkshire's Helen Shields. The experienced all-Sussex trio of Andy Meads, Barrie Gilbert and John Millward also won promotion in Doncaster as runners-up in Men's Division Four, playing for OLOP.

A promising crop of juniors coming through suggests a bright future for table tennis in the county.

Helshen Weerasinghe became the youngest player ever to play for Sussex Juniors at the tender age of nine. The former Sri Lanka National Under 12s champion from Brighton stepped up from the cadets team and won five out of six for Sussex III, as they gained two wins and a draw. He is doing well against much older opponents, and remained unbeaten with 15 wins in the National Junior League for Brighton Bats.

Tom Baxter also finished on 100% and the pair combined with Zac Kenton to rise to the top of the South East table with five straight victories from a session in Tunbridge Wells.

Sussex no.1 girl Stacey Furnival (Hastings) was unbeaten with six wins and Horsham's Sussex no.1 boy James Rivers made his debut for the Sussex first team as they won twice and lost once.

Stacey's sister Chelsea is also turning heads in the junior ranks, having won five out of six for Sussex II and four out of four for Sussex III.

## Warwickshire by Caroline Williams

The 2006/7 Warwickshire Championships was held at the St Nicholas Park Sports Centre in Warwick and the results were as follows:

Men's singles - Scott Prime bt. Steven Bertie, Women's singles - Rachel Pilgrim bt. Samantha Apostol, Men's doubles - Michael Brown/Steven Bertie bt. Ian Packford/Earl Sweeney, Women's doubles - Sarah Riach/Helen Turner bt. Rachel Pilgrim/Samantha Apostol, Mixed doubles - Rachel Pilgrim/Ian Packford bt. Tracey Fletcher/Earl Sweeney, Veteran singles - Andy Lebutt bt. Michael Brown, Over 50 singles - Alan Jones bt. Bob Harman, Over 60 singles - Neil Wheatley bt. Roger Ellerington, Veteran doubles - Dave Grundy/Andy Lebutt bt. Michael

Brown/Steven Bertie, Junior boys singles - Xioayang Ma bt. Alan Caffrey, Junior girls singles - Rachel Pilgrim bt. Sanika Karandikar, Cadet boys singles - Xioayang Ma bt. Jack Williamson, Cadet girls singles - Sanika Karandikar bt. Jessica Birbeck, U13 boys singles - Matthew Outhwaite bt. Ian Anson, U13 girls singles - Sanika Karandikar bt. Jessica Birbeck, U11 boys singles - Luke Spencer bt. Jesse Kendrick-Hill, Junior boys doubles - Alan Caffrey/Jack Williamson bt. Xioayang Ma/Matthew Outhwaite, Men's restricted - Ryan Stockham bt. Paul Savins, Junior boys restricted - Nabil Kalfey bt. Lee Bennett, Girls restricted - Charlotte Spencer bt. Jessica Birbeck.

## Yorkshire by Barry Snowden

Halifax Table Tennis Centre staged a day of junior and veteran action in the Yorkshire League as the junior first division played their second round of fixtures alongside their more senior counterparts who were opening their campaigns. In the junior event it was reigning champions Halifax no 1 who caught the eye as Jonny Giles, James Berry and Alex Giles show no signs of relinquishing the junior title, and could not have got off to a better start in their defence as they won their first five matches and are sitting proudly at the top of the table.

Following on from their first round of matches at Scarborough in November when they scored 9-0 wins over Huddersfield and Harrogate and an 8-1 victory over Hull, the first team were made to work harder on this occasion as they recorded a 7-2 victory over Scarborough no 2 which was followed by a hard fought 6-3 victory over York. Jonny Giles led the way for the first team and is sitting on a 100% record with 15 wins from his 15 starts so far and has fully justified his county selection with performances like these.

James Berry is only a set behind Giles as he is on 14 wins from 15, losing his first set in the victory over York, while Alex Giles had a disappointing day but is still providing solid support from no 3 with 10 wins from 15 starts as Halifax continue their title defence. When they complete the division at Hull in March their first match will be against the another unbeaten team Ryedale.

In the veterans division Bradford no.1 are defending their title and they too got off to a good start by winning their opening three matches although they were taken all the way by Harrogate before completing a 6-4 victory.

Bradford had county first teamer Mick Stead to thank for their victory as he scored a fine maximum against a Harrogate side who included two county first team players, but although Steve Cooper and Richard Whiteley both scored two wins for Harrogate they were unable to overcome Stead who was in ruthless form.

Stead was supported well by Richard Priestley and Neil Harris who each beat Harrogate third player Paul Stephenson which, added to a Bradford doubles victory, secured victory for the West Yorkshire team.

Another Yorkshire first team player was also in action as Tim Dyson joined over 60s team-mates Keith Powell and Geoff Brook in what turned out to be a disappointing day for the 2004 champions as they lost two matches and were only able to gain a victory against a two man York team.

After losing 8-2 to Bradford no. 2, Huddersfield were beaten 7-3 by Harrogate which included a victory by Whiteley over the higher ranked Dyson, and despite a comprehensive 10-0 victory over York, the former champions have a mountain to climb if they are to repeat their success of 2004. Yorkshire Closed Championships - After a break of three seasons, the Yorkshire closed championships makes a welcome return to the calendar and has a change of venue as the event moves to the Halifax TTC under the watchful eyes of organiser Barry Snowden and Referee John Hardcastle.

The Championships will have 13 events and be held over two days on 5th/6th May 2007. There will be 6 events for young players which will be held on the Saturday with the remaining 7 events being held on the Sunday

Entry forms for the event will be available from your local league or can be downloaded from the YTTA website, [www.ytta.co.uk](http://www.ytta.co.uk), or from the organiser Barry Snowden at 17 Brunswick Road, Pudsey, Leeds. LS28 7NA, 0113 2363537 or 07745 018836, [barrysnowden@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:barrysnowden@hotmail.co.uk).



# MATHEW WARE

Mathew Ware has become the 9th individual to receive the Taut 100 award since it commenced last April.

Taut 100 is an initiative designed to support sports stars of the future. Working with SportsAid, the charity for sportspeople, its goal is to identify and highlight the next generation of talented athletes, helping them on their way to sporting success.

The Taut 100 is a list of up and coming sporting talent in the UK. Nominations are gathered each month and our panel of experts elects one outstanding athlete for the Sportsperson of the Month award. The overall Taut 100 Sportsperson of the Year will be selected in October 2007.

The Taut 100 is chaired by four times Olympic Gold Medalist, Sir Matthew Pinsent. Matthew is well aware of how important recognition is to future success and what it takes to become a top sportsman. It is for this reason that Matthew and Taut decided to set up this initiative.

Congratulations Mathew.

## PLAYER RANKINGS 2006/2007

### TOP 25 SENIOR MEN

Ranking	Player
1.	DRINKHALL, Paul (CV.) 5581 *
2.	COOKE, Alan (DY.) 5566 *
3.	PERRY, Alex (DV.) 5522 ***
4.	KNIGHT, Darius (SY.) 5406 *
5.	RUSHTON, Andrew (LA.) 5273 *
6.	HERBERT, Gareth (BK.) 5042
7.	YOUNG, Terry (BK.) 4897
8.	YARNALL, Tim (NP.) 4701 *
9.	MEADS, David (DU.) 4688 *
10.	TRUMPAUSKAS, L (E.) 4669
11.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.) 4660 *
12.	REED, Daniel (CV.) 4584 *
13.	BRYANT, Craig (DV.) 4570
14.	HOLLAND, John J (Dy) (E.) 4471
15.	BARHAM, Dale (CA.) 4428 ***
16.	SMITH, Mark Richard (Y.) 4303
17.	WURAOOLA, Abdul (SY.) 4292
18.	MARSDEN, Michael (DU.) 4234
19.	EVANS, Bradley (BU.) 4225 ***
20.	HILTON, John (CH.) 4174 *
21.	ECKERSLEY, Nigel (SX.) 4173
22.	VENNER, Ritchie (SX.) 4130
23.	BLAKE, Darren (SY.) 4120
24.	DOLDER, Kevin (LA.) 4104 *
25.	FULLWOOD, Allan (DY.) 4050

### 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.) 4646 *
2.	PITCHFORD, Liam (DY.) 2501
3.	MCBEATH, David (HA.) 2459
4.	LOWE, Daniel (DY.) 2141
5.	CULLEN, Sean (DY.) 2092

### TOP 5 UNDER 13 BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	MITCHELL, Edward (BU.) 1159
2.	GRAY, Lewis (K.) 1128
3.	THURSBY, Joseph (NG.) 1040
4.	BOULT, Joshua (CH.) 1017
5.	WALKER, Sam (NG.) 1014

### TOP 5 VETERAN MEN

Ranking	Player
1.	WURAOOLA, Abdul (SY.) 4299 *
2.	ECKERSLEY, Nigel (SX.) 4162 **
3.	VENNER, Ritchie (SX.) 4141 *
4.	STEAD, Michael (Y.) 4113 1*
5.	KENNEDY, Joe (K) (E.) 4107

### TOP 25 SENIOR WOMEN

Ranking	Player
1.	SIBLEY, Kelly (WA.) 4959
2.	PARKER, Joanna (SY.) 4925
3.	LOWER, Helen (ST.) 4875
4.	BAWDEN, Natalie (E.) 4679
5.	EMBLING, Abigail (E.) 4229
6.	REYNOLDS, L (LA.) 4215 **
7.	SPINK, Lauren (NK.) 4025
8.	ROBERTS, Joanna (Y.) 3905
9.	KEAST, Lesley (LI.) 3820
10.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.) 3799
11.	SMITH, Karen (LE.) 3782
12.	WILSON, Naomi (SO.) 3751
13.	SHEPHERD, Karen (CH.) 3670
14.	HALLOWAYS, Caroline (CH.) 3651
15.	RAINTON, Rosemary (SX.) 3619
16.	MAY, Elizabeth (DV.) 3609
17.	UZAL, Shelley (E.) 3607
18.	COHEN, Michele (WI.) 3603
19.	BALDI, Andrea(Ys) (Y.) 3593
20.	BONGERS, Jose (LE.) 3584
21.	WHITE, Nicola (Y.) 3583 *
22.	YARNLEY, Gemma (K.) 3581 *
23.	CHAPMAN, Gemma (BK.) 3572
24.	WANG, Sarra (E.) 3572
25.	VICKERS, Jane (DY.) 3569

### TOP 5 JUNIOR GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	SPRINGTHORPE, Lauren (LI.)
2.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.) 3302
3.	WANG, Sarra (E.) 3267 **
4.	FARQUHAR, Melanie (BK.) 3181
5.	HALLOWAYS, Caroline (CH.) 3108

### TOP 5 CADET GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	WRIGHT, Melissa (YS.) 2220
2.	TRAVIS, Martha (CO.) 2029
3.	LEFEVRE, Karina (CV.) 2017
4.	GRIFFITH, Rebekah (LA.) 2004
5.	BATES, Emily (LI.) 1922

### TOP 5 UNDER 13 GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	BATES, Emily (LI.) 1922
2.	DAVIDSON, Lucy (DY.) 1527
3.	KING, Yolanda (SX.) 1438
4.	WHYTE, Chloe (CV.) 1220
5.	FURNIVAL, Chelsea (SX.) 1192

### 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](http://www.etta.co.uk)



# DATES for your diary

Table Tennis events for March 2007



**Friday 2nd.:**  
Senior National Championships

**Saturday 3rd :**  
Senior National Championships

**Sunday 4th :**  
Senior National Championships

**Saturday 10th :**  
Cadet: Derby 4 Star  
Junior: Chesham Junior Boys Graded  
Senior: North Herts 2 Star Satellite G.P.  
- Hitchin

**Sunday 11th:**  
Cadets: National Cadet League  
Junior: Derby 4 Star  
Senior: North Herts 2 Star Satellite G.P.  
- Hitchin

**Saturday 17th**

Senior: Bangor Satellite G.P  
VETTS Northern – Blackpool  
ESTTA Team National Finals

**Sunday 18th:**

Cirencester U/11 & U/13  
Senior: Bangor Satellite G.P  
VETTS Northern – Blackpool

**Saturday 24th:**

Cadet: Regional Trials Finals  
Senior: British League Premier

**Sunday 25th:**

Cadet: Regional Trials Finals  
Senior: British League Premier  
Veterans: Cippenham Veterans

**Saturday 31st:**

Cadets: County Championships  
Junior: County Championships  
Senior: County Championships  
Veteran: County Championships

## 2007 COPY DATES

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

The Association would like to thank all of the following for their support during the season 2006/07



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



Grand Prix 2005-2007  
ETTA Senior/Junior/Cadet  
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