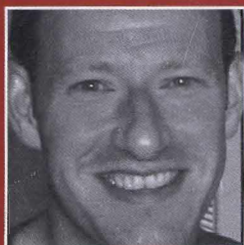


# table tennis news

Official Magazine of the English Table Tennis Association

## Carl Prean Exclusive

Interview by Paul Rainford



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# first word

Are you clear on the equipment regulations? Well the officials within the game would like to think you are as they thrive on every rule infringement, clamping down on each player who dares to cross the line. Rightly so I hear you cry! However, in a game where the slightest of margins can make the difference between winning and losing how can they uphold the regulations with such microscopic tolerances for everyone?

The reason I pose this question is that the last month has highlighted two occasions where upholding the rules to the letter of the law has proved a touch troublesome for both sides (players and officials). First, the Olympic qualifiers in Budapest, where our very own Paul Drinkhall came a cropper to sticklers who found his bat a nanometre or two over the allotted 4mm sponge/rubber width. This forced him to play with an

unfamiliar borrowed bat (find out more on Page 24 in our Olympic Qualifier review). Then at the Junior and Cadet National Championships officials were found wanting, and players baffled, by the new (well, relatively new) gluing rules as the now infamous bat tester, or box of uncertainty as it should be named, seemed to disqualify bats on a whim.

So with all the complexities of equipment, boosters, tuned rubbers and seemingly infinite glues flying around, how can the players be certain that their equipment will pass inspection? How can the officials be sure about their decisions? And how do the manufacturers ensure they are complying with the regulations? Some say the answer is simple, standardise the equipment. Yet others thrive on the equipment complexities, continually striving to find the perfect blend of

blade and rubber. To them standardisation would be like losing a dimension of their beloved sport. I sit somewhere in between mainly because I continually lose to players playing with anti spin.

Anyway, no matter what the next move is, it is clear that it needs to be transparent. To my mind the very uniqueness of the sport is the fact that you can pick up a bat and play. The continual over engineering of equipment that perplexes even the most studious within the sport is undoubtedly jeopardising this uniqueness.

Why not let me know your thoughts on glue and what should be done about it? Or any other topic simply email me at [richard.pettit@etta.co.uk](mailto:richard.pettit@etta.co.uk) or write to the address on page 1.

I hope you enjoy this magazine.

[Richard.pettit@etta.co.uk](mailto:Richard.pettit@etta.co.uk)  
Richard Pettit, Editor

## The highlights from our main contributors...

"Volunteers and our grass roots are the backbone of table tennis in England" Alex Murdoch

Page 4 "I have long believed that table tennis has always been a sport developed through

parasitical culture" Brian Kean Page 12 "This season DHS London Progress were a class apart

and their three Chinese stars lost a total of one game between them" Steve Kerns Page 30

"With his Buddy Holly specs and his rather awkward demeanour, he looked more like a chess prodigy than a potential star of English table tennis" Paul Rainford Page 22

# Straight talk

## **Another winter league season is coming to its finale with the remaining matches for promotion and relegation being decided.**

These League programmes are put together by many hard working volunteers, I hope that you will attend your League Annual General Meetings and thank these volunteers for their efforts on your behalf, whilst at the same time offering your services as a volunteer to reduce their workload. An hour a week from you would make all the difference and could result in further competitions taking place in your League, help to attract more players and generate more income. Volunteers and our grass roots are the backbone of table tennis in England.

### **England Teams**

After the success in China the next major international event for our players is the European Youth Championships in Italy during July. A squad has been put together by the ETTA Selection Department, with training/competitions and final selection taking place during June. It would be fantastic if the players could increase the medal count from last year and I believe we have a great chance to do so.

### **Sport England**

Following the review by Sport England instituted by the Sports Minister, a strategy and policy document was submitted and approved by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This resulted in a letter being circulated by the Sport England CEO Jennie Price to the national governing bodies of sport in England; a copy of this was given to your county representatives during the April National Council Meeting.

It is quite clear that for the 2009 to 2013 funding period the strategy will be to work with the national governing bodies (NGB) in conjunction with grass roots organisations and funding will follow the approval of a whole sports planning process by the NGBs. This is a surprise and welcome change from the previous policies of splitting the funding and reducing the emphasis on the NGBs. This of course will not impact the way we shall complete our planning process to include consultation at national, regional and county levels, as well as our involvement with the County Sports

Partnerships (CSP), Community Sports Networks (CSN) and the Competition Managers structure being implemented across the country. It will though address the key needs of the ETTA and our sport, including increased participation, club and league development, coaching, volunteers, talent identification and competition structure.

Table Tennis is well placed to meet the new policies of Sport England and our goal is to get the support and funding needed to achieve our ambitions.

### **British Table Tennis Federation (BTTF)**

The programme of training and competitions for the BTTF GB squad that involves many England players is growing and during the next few months additional coaching and sparring support will be put in place.

You may or may not have seen the recent report by the government's Audit Commission on funding for 2012, which stressed a potential problem with £100M promised in the funding announcement in 2005 by the Chancellor. I do not believe that this will impact Table Tennis and our funding will remain at least at its existing level.

UK Sport will in the coming months put out a document in regard to the funding with the formal announcement of Olympic sports funding taking place post Beijing during the last quarter of 2008 for the next funding cycle 2009 to 2013.

Table Tennis status and presentations regarding the Mission 2012 have been fully approved and accepted by the Mission 2012 Panel, and a further meeting with them is planned in June.

### **Insurance**

Approval was given at the April National Council Meeting for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to be held prior to the Annual General Meeting on 28th June 2008, in order to consider a proposition for compulsory insurance payments for leagues to be included as part of the affiliation process. Details of this proposal will be circulated in advance of the EGM and I ask you to request that your representative voting members from county and league support this proposition

via attendance at both the AGM and EGM, or by proxy votes completed in advance. I as Chairman am happy to have these proxy votes and will vote in accordance with your wishes. What we must avoid on an issue so important as this is that the membership does not register a vote one way or the other on this proposition via your appointed representatives, which requires a 70% majority. What is needed is a 100% turnout of votes. From my perspective I am fully supportive of this proposition. The large majority of leagues who took up the offer of an ETTA group policy this season at a much reduced cost to them was of great benefit to their members. My local league was paying over £220 per annum and now pays less than £150 per annum.

Our insurance company has made it clear to us that, as with all other NGBs it insures, from November 2008 it will only cover ALL organisations/members affiliated to the ETTA. This would be grossly unfair to those who might voluntarily pay whilst those that do not get the same cover. Without making the insurance compulsory it will be impossible for the ETTA to continue offering this benefit to its members. In the event that this proposition is not approved by the members, the vast majority of leagues who took up the offer of a ETTA group policy this season at a much reduced cost to them will have to go back and negotiate with insurers independently, which will burden the leagues and players with additional cost and workload.

#### Long Pimpled Rubbers

It was agreed following a recommendation I made at National Council, which was accepted, to propose to local leagues a year's "cooling off" period in regard to the changes in long pimpled rubbers, which will come into force from 1st July per the ITTF approved rubbers list at all ETTA events including county matches. Each league has its own regulations in regard to racket coverings and the Laws of English Table Tennis does not include a mandatory requirement that only ITTF approved rubbers should be used in local league play, the decision therefore in regard to what rubbers are approved by a league is within its mandate to decide. I felt that most local league players, particularly those in the lower divisions, had never seen an ITTF approved rubbers list, but the question relating to the changes in long pimpled rubbers had been widely discussed and publicised, therefore some recommendation should come from the NGB. Similar recommendations have been made within other European countries to their members.

#### Technical Officials

Concerns have been raised over a number of years in regard to the recruitment of technical officials, which includes referees, umpires and tournament organisers. A number of initiatives have taken place, which have not significantly increased these officials, in fact they continue to decline. With the increase in the ETTA competition programme the burden on this small band of technical officials has reached breaking point. In an attempt to stop this decline, following papers submitted to National Council, a number of positive proposals have been put forward and Council agreed that detailed draft plans, with budgets, will be produced by a group involving all areas of our sport, headed by the

National Umpires and Referees Committee, these will be presented to Management Committee for consideration and approval by National Council in the next three months.

The website is being updated in the near future to feature an Umpires and Referees section to include the process and procedures of how to become one of these technical officials.

#### Glue

A document approved by Management, which is on the website, in regard to racket testing (glue) at appropriate ETTA events was produced by the ETTA Events Department and Peter Bradley (Deputy Chairman), who is a member of the ITTF Equipment Committee. Albeit this will only apply to ETTA junior events this season, it will apply to senior events from September 2008. It is of course impossible for testing to take place at every event or cover testing at local league competitions. I am sure though that with the advent of new rubbers and glues without Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) this problem will disappear within the next 12 months.

#### Major Events

The first major event planned for 2009 will take place at Bridlington during the May Bank Holiday, it will be the English International Cadet Open Championships. Further details will be distributed at a later date.

Discussions and planning is continuing in regard to having an English Open, part of the ITTF Pro Tour circuit, in the second half of 2009. These negotiations are with venues in Sheffield and Birmingham.

Further events in 2010 and 2011 are being planned with negotiations taking place with organisations involved with London 2012, these are a lead up to the 2012 trial event which will take place before the Olympics at the Excel Centre. The potential funding agency UK Sport for these events, apart from the 2012 trial event which comes under the jurisdiction of the London Olympic Organising Committee, is very supportive of us. Proposals are being put forward to run an England versus India Test Series in 2009, prior to the Commonwealth Games Table Tennis Federation Championships, which are to be staged in Glasgow during May 2009; representation is being made to the Table Tennis Federation of India.

#### Individual Membership

Not kept to last because of its insignificance, as it is key to our affiliation process in the near future and the way we monitor the membership of our sport.

Further documents following the very important consultation process will be submitted to the National Council July meeting and the Rules Committee are looking at what changes are needed within the ETTA Memorandum and Articles which include the Company Rules. This whole process has taken time, but it is very important that when propositions are put before the membership at an AGM full consultation and the grass roots are supportive of the process.

Keep in touch and I am always happy to visit your region, county, league and club to discuss any issues of our great sport with you.



Alex Murdoch, ETTA Chairman

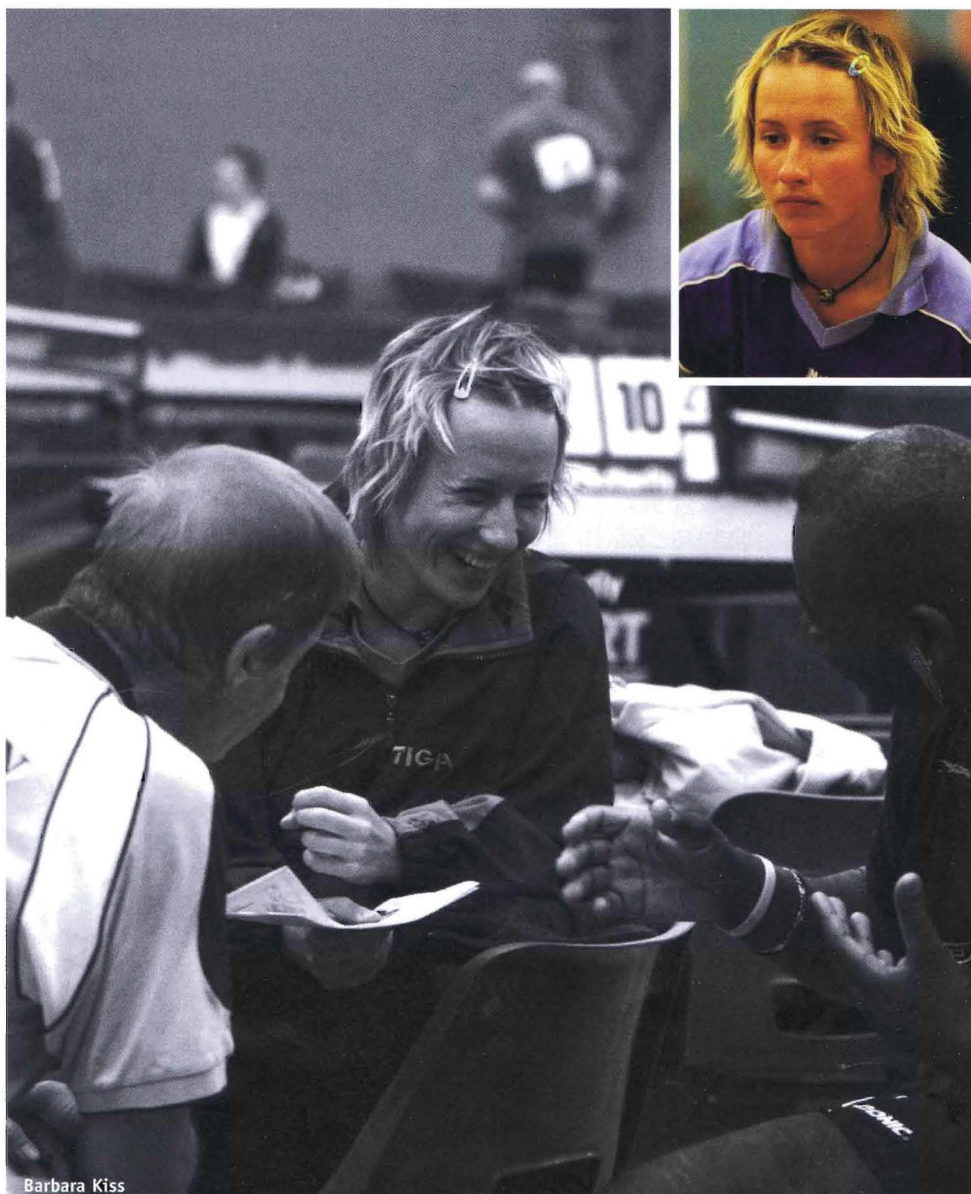
**“ Table Tennis status and presentations regarding the Mission 2012 have been fully approved and accepted by the Mission 2012 Panel and a further meeting with them is planned in June.”**

# Headlines

The latest stories from the Table Tennis World

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Scores of learning disabled athletes from across the country came to Crewe for the Special Olympics Great Britain (SOGB) National Table Tennis Competition. Coppenhall Leisure Centre in Coronation Street hosted the two-day tournament, which saw nearly 100 athletes competing for 50 gold, silver and bronze medals. Ten athletes also used the 350 game competition as a warm-up before representing Great Britain in Austria and Spain. National Grid, SOGB's official partner, provided manpower for the event drawn from a dedicated 80 strong employee volunteer taskforce. Coppenhall Leisure Centre is also home to South Cheshire Special Needs Table Tennis Club and the North & West Cheshire Special Olympics Group. The club runs two national competitions from the venue each year. Special Olympics is a community-driven programme of local clubs and events open to anyone who has a learning disability.



Barbara Kiss

## BARBARA KISS - TRIBUTE BY G.URBAN

It is with sadness and deep regret that I have to announce the tragic loss to table tennis of Barbara Kiss. After twelve months of fighting cancer she passed away at 1 am early morning on Tuesday 6th May 2008. Many top juniors trained by Urban Progress will remember hours of quality coaching and instruction by Barbara over a four year period.

I think I can speak for everyone in stating that table tennis has lost one of the most colourful and talented women's players on the Butterfly Grand Prix circuit. A memorial service was held in Lille (France) on Saturday 10th May, followed by the funeral in Budapest on 22nd May.



# Headlines

## TWO SLOUGH SPORTS AWARDS FOR CIPPENHAM

Cippenham Table Tennis Club came away with two more awards from the Slough Sports Awards, hosted by the Mayor of Slough. David Hayes became only the second Cippenham member to be honoured as Senior Sportsperson of the Year (the first was Gareth Herbert), four years after being Junior Sportsman of the Year. The Club itself received the accolade of Junior Club of the Year for the fourth time, the eighth time that the club has received an award, the others being Senior Club of the Year once and Community Club of the Year three times.

David's award, which like the others was for achievements in 2007, came after a year in which he had trained full-time in France and represented Ireland at the World Championships.

The Junior Club of the Year award arose from achievements on and off the table. Stephanie Mitchell, who with her brother Eddie, received the trophy on behalf of the Club, was the ETTA Young Volunteer of the Year

and Jan Chapman won the Female Coach of the Year at the same ETTA annual presentations. On the table, Gavin and Bradley Evans, Melanie and Rachel Farquhar, plus Eddie Mitchell, all had notable successes in national or international events, and the Cippenham girls' team were runners-up in the Premier Division of the Junior British League.

Cippenham also received a number of other nominations:

**Community Club Of The Year:**

Cippenham Table Tennis Club

**Sports Personality of the Year:**

Graham Trimming

**Junior Sportsman of the Year:**

Eddie Mitchell

**Junior Sportswoman of the Year:**

Rachel Farquhar

**Most Promising**

**Sportsperson:** Rachel

Farquhar

**Senior Sportsperson of the Year:**

Martin Adams

**Service to Sport:** Jacquie

Lovell

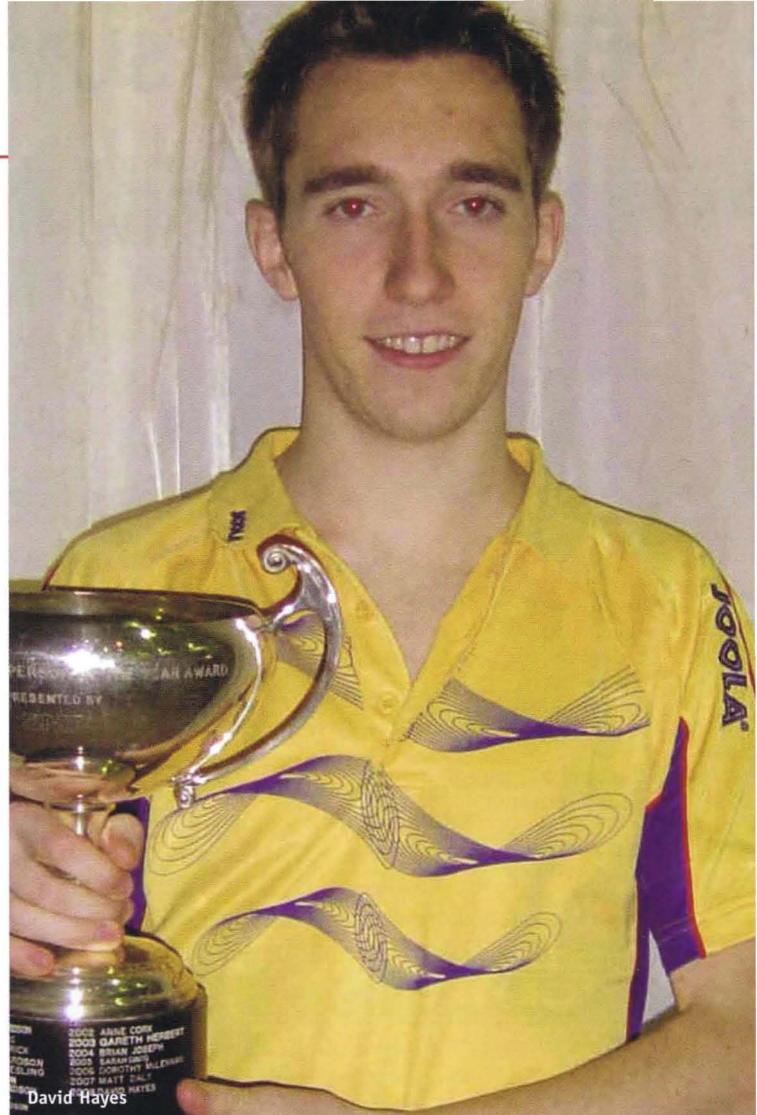
**Sports Coach of the Year:**

Jan Chapman

Interspersed in the

proceedings were

demonstrations of sports and



dance. Cippenham Table Tennis Club was pleased to accept an invitation to participate in this and Martin Adams, David Hayes, Eddie Mitchell and Malcolm Makarian put on a performance that thrilled the capacity audience. Eddie (aged 13) and Malcolm

(70) playing together showed that table tennis is truly a sport to be enjoyed by all ages, whilst Martin and David ably demonstrated the speed of the modern game.

**By Graham Trimming**

## HEADING TO THE FAR EAST

Our top players will be challenging the best the world has to offer as they head out to the Far East.

**China Open Squad (15th-16th May)**

**Men:** Paul Drinkhall, Daniel Reed and Gavin Evans **Women:** Joanna Parker

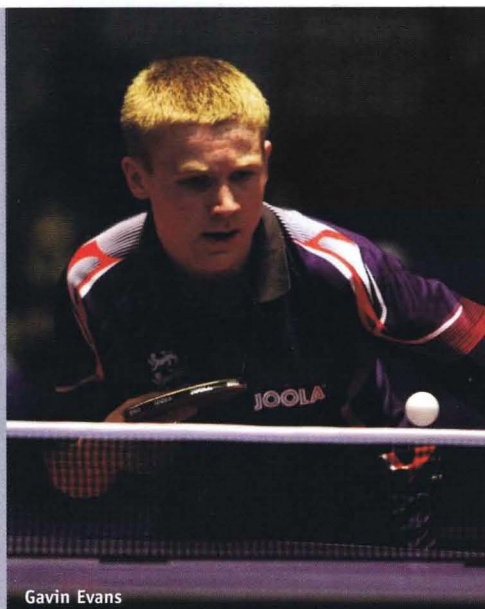
**Korea Open (29th May-1st June)**

**Men:** Paul Drinkhall, Daniel Reed, Gavin Evans, Liam Pitchford and Gavin Runggay (Scotland)

**Women:** Joanna Parker, Kelly Sibley and Naomi Owen (Wales)

**Singapore Open (5th-8th June)**

**Men:** Paul Drinkhall, Daniel Reed, Gavin Evans and Gavin Runggay (Scotland) **Women:** Kelly Sibley and Naomi Owen (Wales)



Gavin Evans

## ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMEN

At the last National Council meeting, voting to determine the election of the Vice-Chairmen took place. Effective as of 29th June, your Vice-Chairmen will be:

Administration, J E Dignum  
Marketing, M R Holt  
Competitions, K T O Ponting  
Development, Mrs E Shaler  
Public Relations, J Beckley  
National Coaching, K T Childs  
Selection, P A Charters

## REA BALMFORD TRIBUTE BY RICHARD HUDSON

Rea Balmford, who had the Hull Table Tennis Centre renamed in his honour, passed away on Wednesday 2nd April.

For 60 years Rea's name has been linked with table tennis wherever he happened to be. In 1968 Rea was a founder member of ESTTA, his work here saw him honoured by the ETTA (Vice-President), and ESTTA (Vice-President).

Having been Tournament Secretary and Press Officer for Yorkshire TTA for many years, Rea was rewarded for all his hard work by initially being made a Vice-President and then a Life Member. Locally he spent nearly 50 years on the Hull & District Committee in a number of capacities, and an equal amount as Secretary to the Hull YPI Table Tennis Club at a time when they had over 30 teams in the local league. In his capacity as a teacher he introduced hundreds of local children to the game of table tennis (many of whom are still playing today). Rea was also a qualified International Umpire. In 2006 he became the Life President of Hull & District, and Hull, in particular, and table tennis in general owes Rea an enormous debt of gratitude for his contribution to our sport.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS IN THE ETTA

The ETTA is proud to announce four new appointments: two new Regional Coaches Matt Stanforth North East and Katy Parker North West, plus two new Regional Development Officers (RDOs) John Andrews, East Region and Tony Taylor, North East Region, to once again complete the team of nine RDOs split into the nine Sport England regions across the country.

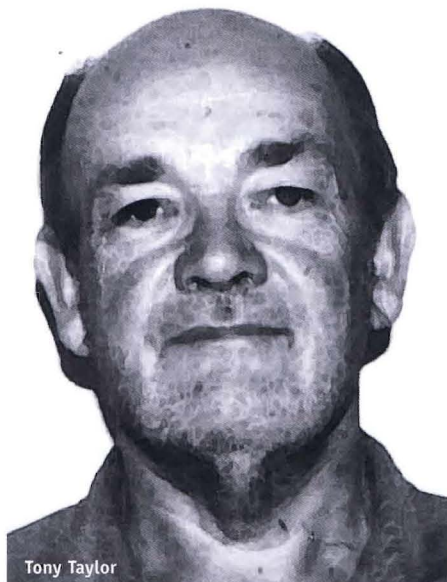
Here is a quick insight into one of our new recruits - Tony Taylor:

Having played in a number of local leagues between Northumberland and Middlesbrough over the last 40 years, notably Durham & District and Hartlepool, he currently represents Sedgefield in the Darlington League and Sacriston St. Bede's in the Sunderland League.

Tony has been coaching table tennis in schools, mainly in the Derwentside, Durham, Sedgefield, Chester-le-Street, and Wear Valley districts of County Durham. He qualified as a level 2 coach at Northfield, Billingham, in May 2003, and completed his practical assessment under Keith Wilson at the Dolphin Centre, Darlington, by the end of July that year. He has also been Honorary Treasurer of the Durham County Table Tennis Association for the last four years.

Based at an office in Durham University's House of Sport ( Elvet Hill House, Elvet Hill Road, Durham DH1 3TH), he is looking forward to the challenge, saying:

'I just want to see more people playing and enjoying the sport again. Table tennis has

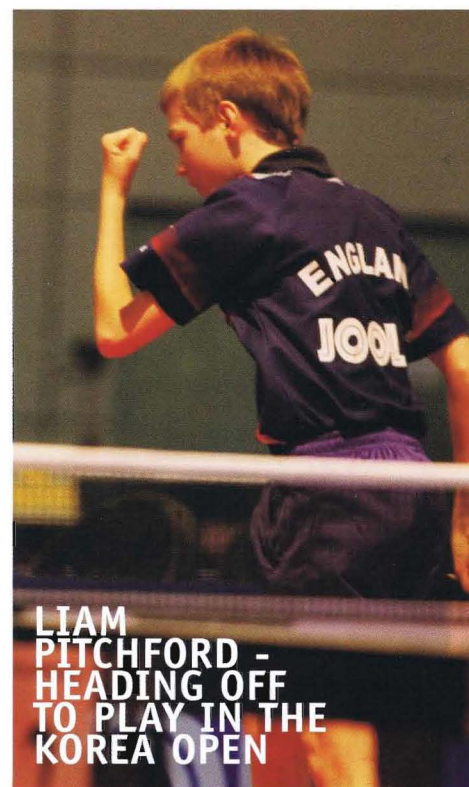


Tony Taylor

given me enormous pleasure over the years, and I want others to benefit from having the opportunity of playing and competing.'

'I consider the immediate priorities for the North East region to be the recruitment of many more qualified coaches, from both the playing side and teaching staff, together with volunteer workers, to work in schools and at after-school clubs with the youngsters, and the establishment of school leagues. Working on the basis that no one has a copyright on ideas, I would like to hear from anyone who thinks they may be able to help, or have any suggestions or contributions to make towards the future success of the sport'.

Contact details for all our staff members can be found on our website at [www.etta.co.uk](http://www.etta.co.uk) or contact the head office on 01424 722525.



LIAM  
PITCHFORD -  
HEADING OFF  
TO PLAY IN THE  
KOREA OPEN

## SPORTSAID HELP

The Yorkshire and Humberside SportsAid region is the most successful in the country having raised £2m since 1977. Recently they have supported top table tennis youngsters from the Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Table Tennis Associations with £5,000 worth of support. This support has gone to:

Gemma Cundill, Hull, £250  
James Atkins, Selby, £250  
Eric Wan, Sheffield, £250  
Laura Robinson, Sheffield, £250  
Victoria Vuong, Sheffield, £250  
Alexandra Lee, Scarborough, £250  
Rebecca George, Scarborough, £250  
Ross McFadyen, Calderdale, £250  
Gemma Deeley, Scarborough, £250  
Vishal Dattan, Leeds, £250  
Charlotte Dixon, Barnsley, £250  
Jonathon Giles, Calderdale, £250  
James Grayson, Rotherham, £250  
Scott Hollowood, Rotherham, £250  
Mary Fuller, Bradford, £1000  
Kim Daybell, Sheffield, £500



## TOP CONTRIBUTIONS - YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE YOUR VIEWS

With the season coming to a close there are a lot of issues to discuss, we have picked out some of our favourite letters, which draw some interesting conclusions. Why not let us know what you're thinking?

Send your letters to:

Richard.pettit@etta.co.uk or  
Richard Pettit, English Table Tennis Association, Queensbury House (3rd Floor), Havelock Road, Hastings, East Sussex. TN34 1HF

## RESPONSE TO THE PRESENT STATE OF OUR SPORT

I have a long held belief that Table Tennis has always been a sport that has developed through a parasitical culture. By that I mean the game was very much built on the back of industrial Britain and depended very much on local works and commercial organisations to provide the venues (as well as such places as cricket/tennis clubs), all of which meant

that the game was artificially cheap. However, what that did was provide the opportunity for youngsters to continue their involvement in a game that they were first introduced to through schools and youth clubs.

**Firstly schools:** The days of teachers giving up personal time on a large scale to organise out of lesson time sessions are well and truly behind us. It's long been recognised that the importance of sport has diminished as schools have been obsessed with academic league tables. This has also seen the wholesale selling off of playing fields, which in itself has contributed massively to the decline in sporting excellence in many other sports.

**Youth clubs:** Where are they? How often do you hear of kids going to the local youth club? Youth clubs have disappeared in line with the falling attendances and allegiances to local churches. The basic fact is kids are growing up too fast and bypassing many of the normal activities that were part of development through adolescence. From the early teens they are

servicing an apprenticeship in binge drinking, sex and sitting behind a computer talking to their mates on FaceBook (When in our younger days would we ever have heard of youngsters of 13 being shot dead by kids of 15)?

Believe it or not I am aware of some volunteers who are no longer prepared to get involved with youngsters, due to having to pay for the pleasure by having themselves run through the CRB checks and stump up for insurance, etc. They have also highlighted concerns over the plethora of do's and don'ts designed to protect them from being accused of any minor misdemeanour... sounds far fetched but I have witnessed it with local football teams.

**Lastly industry:** If we take a historical look at a declining graph it will become obvious that there is a co-relation between the demise of industrial Britain under Thatcher and the gradual slippage that has brought TABLE TENNIS to the present situation, whereby we are staring into a tunnel of extinction.

I have no love or hate of the present administration, however, before we start shooting from the hip, we need to be clear as to how valid the criticisms are, as I believe for all the aforementioned reasons Table Tennis is going through much of what is being experienced in other sports.

What would I do ... well as I have said there are so many outside influences over which we have little or no control,

# present state of our Sport



however where I believe world administrations have failed us is in their inability to control the growth and variety in the equipment we use. How can it be right that I can play for 30 years beating players who could never get more than 15 points against me, and then find that because of the trickery attached to the use of combination bats with weird and unfathomable rubbers I can no longer compete? Additionally the adoption of speed glues has taken away any recognisable skills and table craft resulting in a game that produces no rallies and is bereft of any attraction to the uninitiated.

This is one of the reasons the media have lost interest in us. Another reason TV no longer loves us is as a result of the growth of satellite channels and this country's obsession with football, which sees much of the available cash being pumped into sports that will attract high viewing figures for advertisers. The effect this has had on terrestrial channels is that it has upped the price they have to pay for viewing rights in mainstream sports, leaving little or nothing for minority sports.

In some ways if my local experiences were widely representative, players themselves never showed a progressive approach to the development of table tennis. 20 plus years ago I recognised a downward trend as venues were gradually being lost. On two separate occasions I was

## **Brian Kean, a former Scottish international, Cheshire county player, ETTA level 3 qualified coach and lifelong table tennis fanatic, provides us with his opinion on the present state of the sport.**

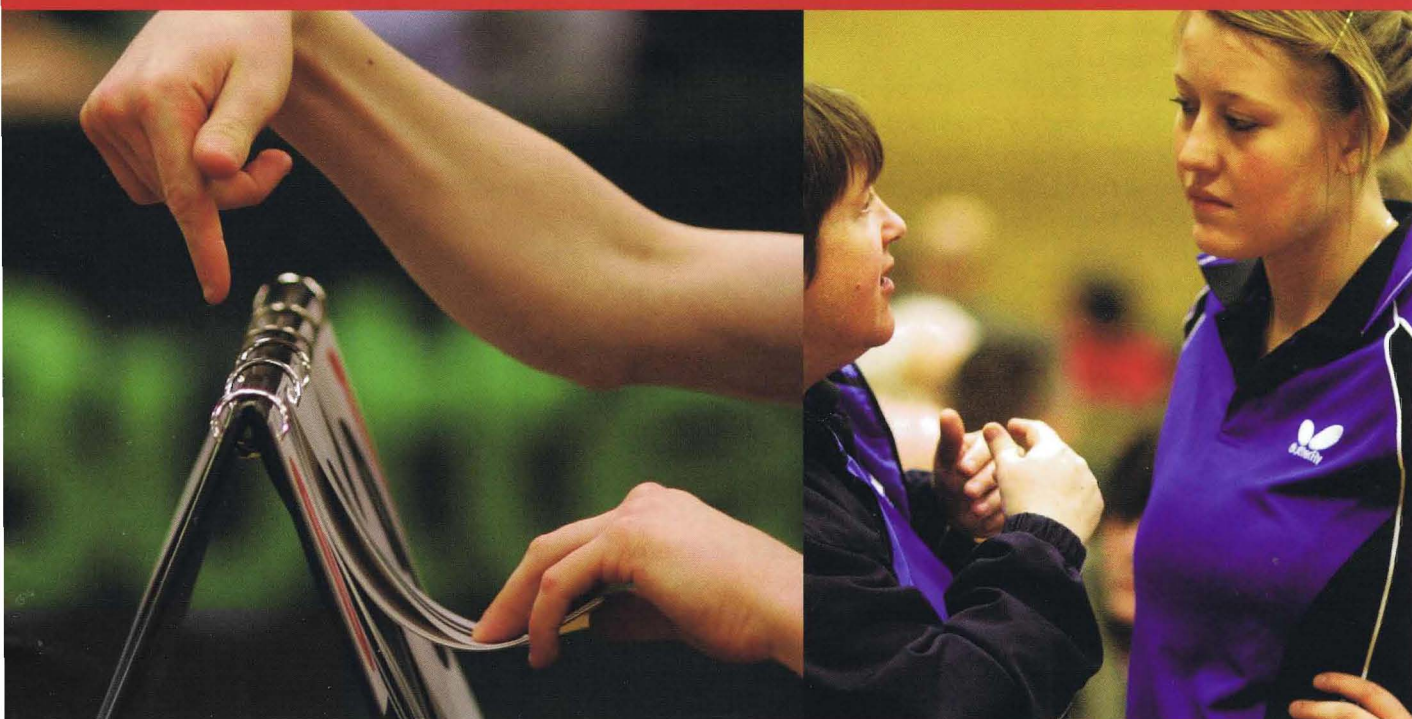
involved in major meetings trying to attract local league clubs away from venues over the top of pubs, freezing cricket clubs, etc, and move them into central venues which would have given the game a more potentially viable and attractive platform from which to hopefully attract its future players.

I was astonished at the depth of feeling against such a move, the main opposition being due to cost. The prospect of paying around £2 or £3 a night for the majority who paid £10 a year to play at the local cricket club overwhelmingly won the day, and as such I left the meetings quite depressed and concerned over the future of the sport.

As you may well guess I could go on for hours but basically the problems we are faced with are much wider than what value are we getting for the paid for staff within the association.

It is my belief that the strength of the game has always been due to the enthusiasm and dedication of local volunteers, and in truth the game has always operated under a two tier system. The dependency of the bedrock of the game (local leagues) on the national association has always been minimal. Remember in 1977 when the national association tried to impose a £1 levy (I stand to be corrected on the figure but not the principle) on all registered players to assist with the funding of the world championships and was unanimously rejected. Reasons cited then was that local leagues could not relate to the national game and felt they flourished in spite of and not because of the national association, and felt they paid in through registration fees but for 95% of them saw little in return.

**By Brian Kean**



fascinating ranking

# Tables



Jan-Ove Waldner

## RESPONSE TO THE ALL TIME TOP TENS

Ranking lists of table tennis all time greats are always fascinating, subjective and controversial, so I have enjoyed Matthew Syed's series of top 10 articles. I too would plump for Jan-Ove Waldner as best player ever (October 2007), and would not seriously argue with the rest of Matthew's list, though Stellan Bengtsson at his peak merited consideration. Matthew's list of top 10 English (male) players is a bit more debatable and he gives a lot of weight to titles gained. If judged by his performance against contemporaries, I accept that twice world champion Johnny Leach, a 'complete' player, would rank highest, but the quick silver Des Douglas (despite reaching world no.7 only) successfully competed in a new era when the world game was technically much stronger, faster and more sophisticated: changed out of recognition by the new domination from the East, particularly Japan and then China. So my vote for best English player would go to Des.

England's other world champion Fred Perry, who Matthew placed third, competed only at the outset of the international competitive sport, and despite his undoubted ability and competitive spirit I think his achievements cannot be compared with what followed. The gutsy tactician Denis Neale may not have had the talent of several others who I list below him, but his quick reflexes and deft placements gave him very good results at a time when England still expected to do well -

so he is my no.3.

John Hilton is difficult to judge but I think that at fourth Matthew puts him too high, though he was better than most people give him credit for. For a few years around winning the European Championships (when his unique, same colour anti-loop/grippy rubber twiddling style gave him an edge, particularly when attacking in a noisy hall where opponents could not hear the ball being struck) he was quite a good, awkward and successful international player, maybe about Nicky Jarvis's level. Taking careers as a whole, I would put John just after Matthew Syed, Carl Prean and the all rounder Alan Cooke - and also behind Chester Barnes and Trevor Taylor because in their shorter careers these two were, at their best, in a different class. But if innovating and becoming European Champion

is the major consideration...?!

For a time Matthew was the world's best and most spectacular retriever, and in a pre speed-glue (and before that pre funny-rubber) era I think would have been world ranked top 10. Carl Prean is difficult to place, reaching a peak so early when one could still play with same colour rubbers. Despite an ungainly, combination bat style, Carl had remarkable anticipation and control, and was brilliant against defensive players. I was unsure who to rate highest, but - a statistician might prove me wrong - believe Matthew was more frequently world ranked higher. It grieves me to put the stylish Chester Barnes and Trevor Taylor behind Neale, Syed and Prean, because they were brilliant, albeit unfulfilled talents, recording notable wins over the world's best. Much has been written about Chester, who I think would have been superb with speed glue, but given the right supportive environment I really do believe that Trevor, with his fantastic topspin ball control, could have become world champion - a real tragedy that following being sent home in the 1973 World Championships in which he beat Japanese superstars Ono, Kohno and Takashima, he became disillusioned. I recall that after helping me out as a feeder at a coaching session at Cambridge YMCA around 1970, the next day he overcame the defensive West German world no.2, Eberhard Scholer, in an international match! And my memory may deceive, but think I saw Trevor as a youngster defeat the legendary Yugoslav Dragutin Surbek at an English Open in Brighton.

My uncertain list therefore would be something like this: Douglas, Leach, Neale, Syed, Prean, Barnes, Taylor, Cooke, Hilton, Jarvis (and Paul Day considered) - with apologies to the memory of the like of Fred Perry, Aubrey Simons, Adrian Haydon, Harry Venner and Brian Kennedy, because I can't judge them in comparison to the modern sandwich players.

By Ken Muhr

**Matthew Syed's World Top 10:** 1. Jan-Ove Waldner 2. Zhuang Zedong 3. Guo Yuehua 4. Wang Liquin 5. Richard Bergmann 6. Viktor Barna 7. Li Furong 8. Kong Linghui 9. Jorgen Persson 10. Liu Gouliang / Jiang Jialiang

**Matthew Syed's English Top 10:** 1. Johnny Leach 2. Desmond Douglas 3. Fred Perry 4. John Hilton 5. Carl Prean 6. Denis Neale 7. Trevor Taylor 8. Alan Cooke 9. Chester Barnes 10. Aubrey Simons

**H**owever, the trip did not get off to the greatest of starts, with Richard Andrew's bag not arriving with us at Malta. Fortunately he had packed his bat and TT shoes in his hand luggage. So we put this distraction behind us as we got ready to play in the team competition against tough opposition, including the might of China and Chinese Taipei.

Peniel Academy represented England in both the boys and girls schools team events. The boys (Billy Deville, Oscar Selfridge, Andrew Lee, Jack Cleminson and npc Nick Jarvis) found the going tough and finished in 15th place. It is worth noting that many of the opposition teams were specialist sports schools and the boys did well to win their last two matches.

The Peniel girls (Rachel Jamieson, Charlotte Calcutt, Rebekah March, Rachael Anslow and npc Justin Goodall), claimed bragging rights over the boys by finishing in 12th place.

England boys (Chris Doran, Will Maybanks, Wing Yung Chan, Richard Andrews and npc Paul Birch) played superbly to reach the third/fourth play-off, having lost only to the two Chinese teams. The bronze medal play off was a case of 'what could have been', as the boys went down to a strong Slovakian team 4-0, but on another day it could have been a 4-0 victory - that was how close the match was.

Not to be outdone by the lads, the England girls (Emma Vickers, Karina Le Fevre, Melissa Wright, Rebekah Griffiths and npc Gail Johns) also claimed the fourth spot, again losing out to the Slovaks 4-3 after beating Bulgaria, Puerto Rico, Turkey and Greece not being stuffed by China and Chinese Taipei.

Unique to the World Schools Championships is the Cultural Day when the players have the day off before the Individual Events begin. This included a sightseeing tour to learn about the history of Malta, followed by a cultural evening when the players share their culture with the other teams. For me, the Chinese

## The bronze medal play-off was a case of 'what could have been', as the boys went down to a strong Slovakian team 4-0

showcasing their Kung Fu skills had to be my personal favourite.

The Individual Event gave players the chance to show just how far they had come along in the tournament. Unfortunately, Peniel found the going tough, with only Billy progressing into the main event with a good win over the Israeli number 1. Rachel Jamieson made a spirited run in the consolation before losing in the semi to Michelle Quach of Sweden (formerly of Progress). It was a similar story for the England girls, with only Rebekah Griffiths making it into the main event where she lost in the first round to a Turk. Emma put the disappointment of her group defeat behind her by reaching the consolation final where she beat Quach 3-2 to gain revenge for Rachel's earlier defeat and thus claiming the consolation girls' gold (actually a white t-shirt!).



# World

## School Games

16 players (2 umpires, 4 non-playing captains, 1 head of delegation and a chaperone) arrived at Heathrow airport, eagerly anticipating a once in a life time appearance at the World School games.



# a strong technique is crucial

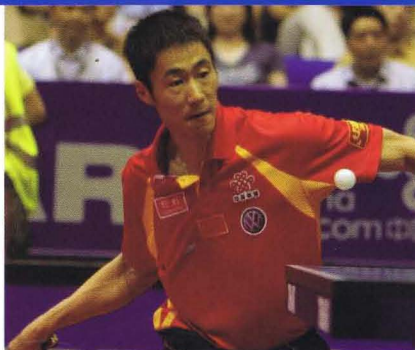
Developing a consistent and correct stroke is fundamental to becoming a competent player. Here we break down the basic items to concentrate on when developing your technique using the forehand topspin as an example. However, the same principles can be applied to develop any stroke.

#### There are four elements that break down a shot:

1. Preparation - ready position
2. Backswing
3. Forward movement - forward swing and contact
4. Follow through

#### Initially you should focus on the following points when striking the ball:

- ✓ Contact at the top of the bounce, especially with attacking strokes
- ✓ Have a relaxed lower arm
- ✓ When playing close to the table the space between the body and the upper arm should have room for an imaginary orange
- ✓ Further, away from the table, the arm should be straighter and the space should have room for an imaginary small football
- ✓ Maintain a balanced position with control over all movements and the bat arm in particular



#### Think about the angle of the bat for different strokes: See Diagram One

Whenever you learn a new stroke/skill:

- ✓ The stroke/skill should initially be learnt in isolation with sole emphasis on the technique from preparation to follow through
- ✓ The stroke should then be developed in combination with movement
- ✓ Next combined with different strokes and movement together to simulate match play

#### The three stages of stroke technique development are:

1. Consistency and technique
2. Placement and accuracy
3. Gradual increase of speed, spin and power

**Contact Points:** By picturing the ball as a clock face, you can comprehend how changing the bat angle changes the amount of spin.

Contacting the ball with a brushing action of: [See Diagram Two](#)

- 2-12 in an upward direction = topspin
- 4-6 in a downwards direction = backspin
- 3/9 in a sideways direction (going round the side of the ball) = sidespin

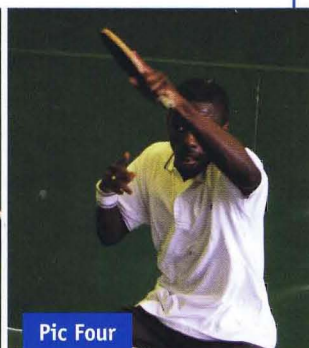
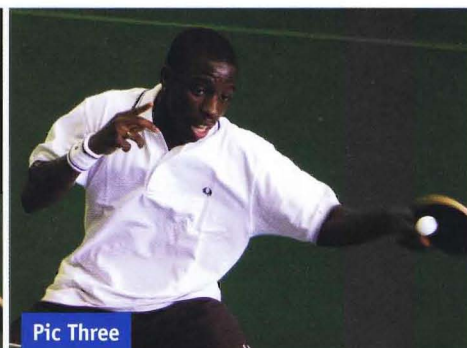
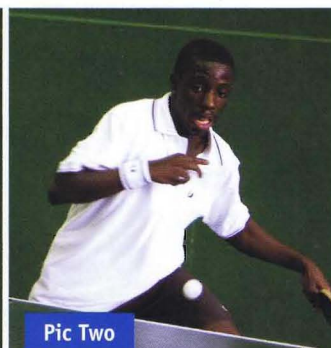
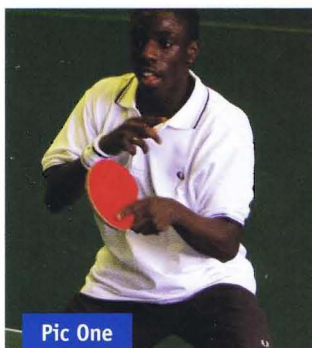
#### Forehand Topspin (refer to photos of Darius Knight)

This is a development of the forehand drive and involves changing the bat angle to a 'closed position' to produce a 'brushing action'.

Description is for right handed player - reverse for left hander.

**Starting position:** Prepare by taking the right foot back into a side on position, and rotate 3/4 turn to the right with the hips and shoulders (Pic One).

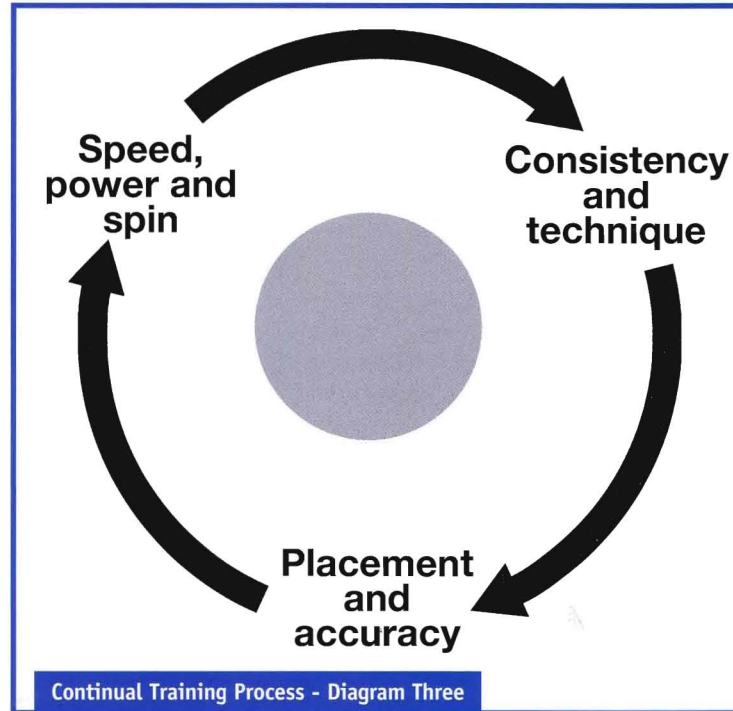
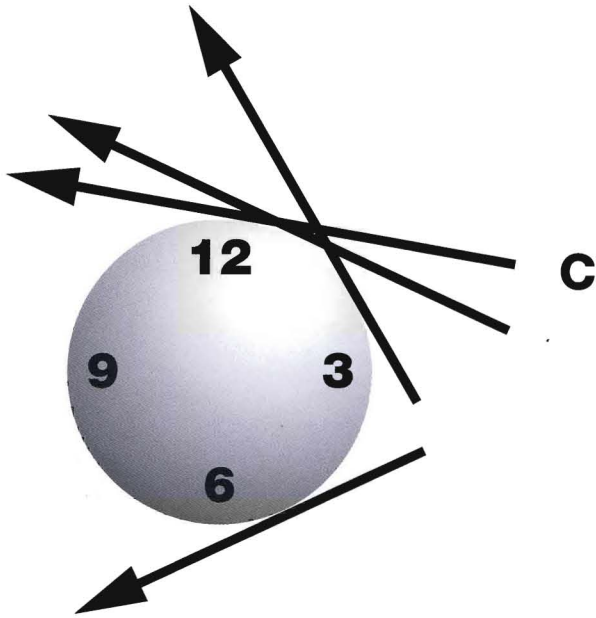
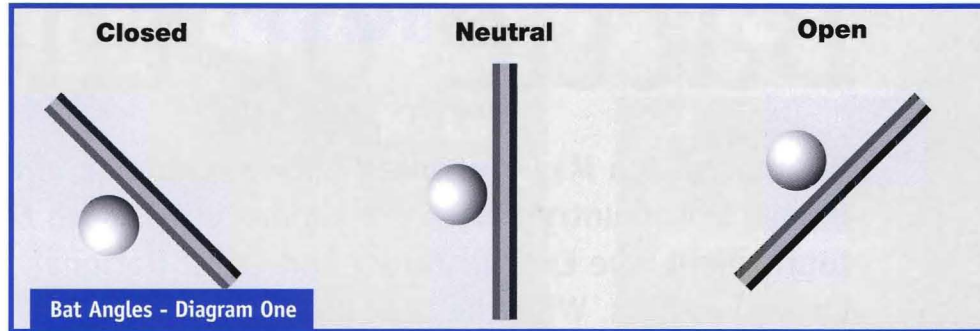
**The action:** Take the bat back and down - try to open the elbow joint so that you can use the speed of the forearm for the stroke - notice the closed bat angle (Pic Two). Create an explosive movement from the



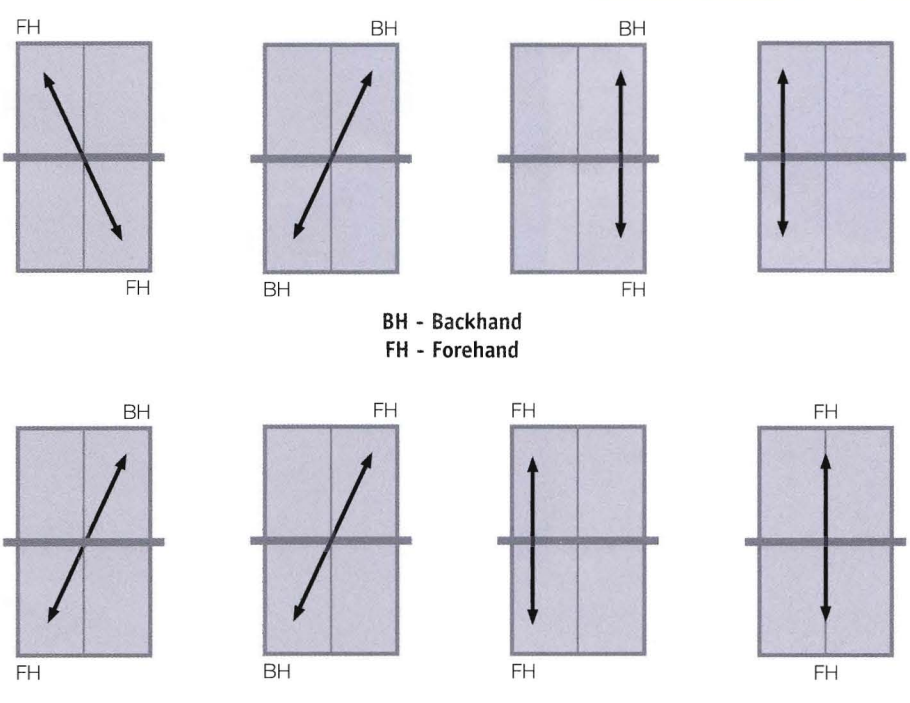
legs to transfer body weight forwards onto front foot. The arm moves forward and up, brushing the ball at 2 o'clock (Pic Three). Accelerate through the ball - notice the bat angle is still closed (Pic Four). Recover ready for the return ball (Pic Five)!

**The Continual Training Process**

Each time you increase the use of spin, speed or power you need to repeat the

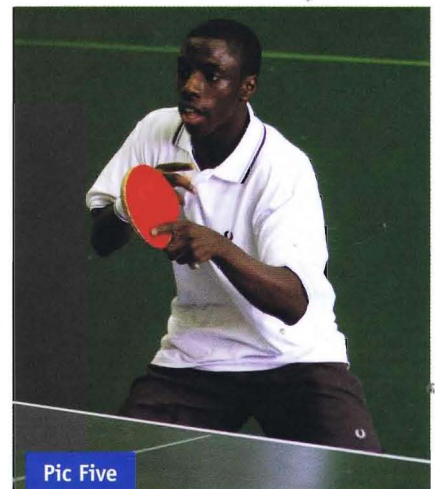


**Player Drills - Diagram Four**



sequence so as to maintain your consistency, technique and accuracy of placement. Diagram Three illustrates the circle of progression.

**Playing Drills for Stroke Development** refer to Diagram Four for some basic drills to develop consistency in your technique:



# Battle of the Elite

On 3rd and 4th May Rivermead Leisure Complex in Reading hosted this country's most prestigious elite youth table tennis tournament, the English Junior and Cadet National Championships. With the best young talents in the land pitting their wits against each other, this tournament proved to be a superb showcase of table tennis.

## Junior Singles

Perhaps of most national interest was the Junior Boys' Singles as the illustrious talent of England's top two were both on display, Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight. Drinkhall, who travelled to Budapest in a bid to qualify for the Beijing 2008 Olympics straight after the tournament (Olympic Qualifying review page 24) looked calm and composed throughout the tournament and eased his way into the final with exquisite skill. Likewise, Knight replicated his adversary performances on the other side of the draw and, as anticipated, both the favourites booked their place in the final. Knight, who so often relies on a good start to win got it, and ran out as eventual winner 11-7, 10-12, 12-10, 11-9. Collecting joint bronze were Chris Doran and Gavin Evans. Doran, a player who has improved considerably throughout the season, at times tested Drinkhall's resolve; however, experience

told as Drinkhall went on to win 13-11, 11-6, 12-10. Evans started spritely against Darius Knight taking the first end. Knight then applied greater pressure and took the next three winning 11-13, 11-8, 11-9, 11-6.

In the Junior Girls top seed Emma Vickers beat rising star Karina Le Fevre in what was to be the tightest match of the weekend 7-11, 15-13, 12-10, 12-10. To get to the final Vickers just managed to slip by Caroline Hallows in five ends and Le Fevre put in a great performance to oust the no 2 seed Sarra Wang in another five set encounter 11-7, 8-11, 11-13, 11-4, 11-8. Wang and Hallows earned a bronze medal each for their efforts.

## Junior Doubles

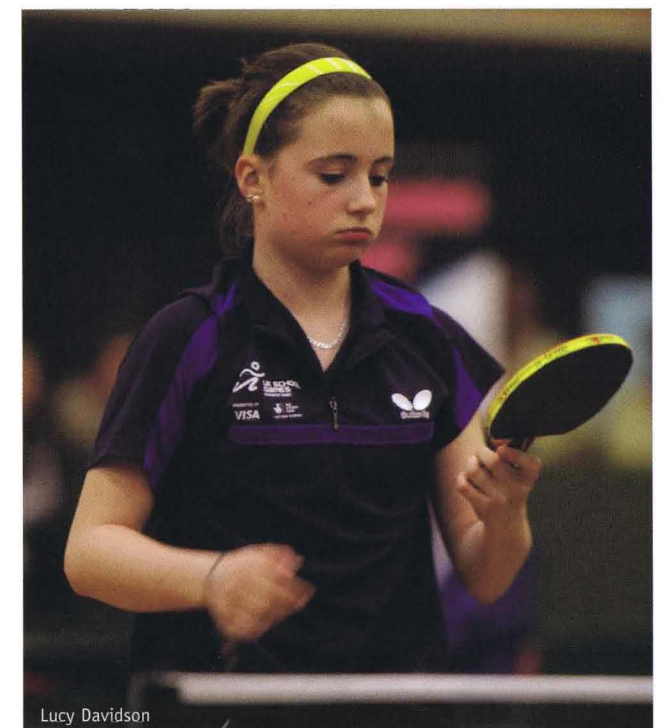
The Junior Boys' Doubles was as expected: Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight won but wow, did they have to fight for it. Matt Ware and Chris Doran, having overcome the no 2 seeds Myles and Gavin Evans in the semi-finals, produced some superbly powerful table tennis and looked strong in the final but the experience of the top seeds prevailed eventually, running out winners 11-6, 11-6, 9-11, 12-10. Drinkhall and Knight defeated Liam Pitchford and Daniel Lowe in the other semi-final. Bronze therefore went to the Evans brothers, and Pitchford and Lowe. In the counterpart Junior Girls' Doubles the top seeds again prevailed, but only by a whisker. A 13-11 victory in the fifth end was all that separated gold medallists Emma Vickers and Caroline Hallows from silver medallists Emily Bates and Mary Fuller. Rachael Anslow and Hannah Hicks and Rachel Farquhar and Yolanda King took the bronze medals. The Junior Mixed Doubles was where the seeds didn't get a look in; no 2 seeds Gavin Evans and Emily Bates were

defeated in the quarter-finals by Chris Doran and Haylee Potts. The semi-finals saw the downfall of the no 1 seeds Paul Drinkhall and Emma Vickers as they lost a tight five end battle with Liam Pitchford and Martha Travis. In the other semi-final Matt Ware and Karina Le Fevre beat Doran and Potts and went on in the final to dominate Pitchford and Travis and take the gold.

Gavin Evans misses out after a tense final

## Cadet Singles

The Cadet Boys' final provided the biggest shock when the dominant Gavin Evans, a player who has never lost a national final within his age group, was defeated by pocket rocket Liam Pitchford in emphatic style 11-8, 11-9, 11-6. Pitchford dominated the match against Evans who was just not allowed time to play his game. An astounding win for Pitchford that was entirely deserved, particularly as the pocket rocket from Derbyshire had managed to not drop a single game en route to winning the championship. The earlier semi-finals had seen the battle between good friends Sean Cullen and Pitchford end in a 3-0 victory for Pitchford. On the other side Evans triumphed over Daniel Lowe 5-11, 11-4, 11-3, 11-6. Lowe and Cullen both collected bronze. Cadet Girls' title went to Emily Bates after a tremendous tussle against the no 2 seed Karina Le Fevre. Following a close first set Bates dominated, taking the championship in three straight ends as Le Fevre just could not absorb the power and precision of the shots coming at her from both wings; final score 12-10, 11-7, 11-7 to Bates. Defeated semi-finalists were Yolanda King (v Bates) and Natalie Slater (v Le Fevre), both lost in three straight and had to settle for bronze.



Lucy Davidson

## Cadet Doubles

Emily Bates was also victorious in the Cadet Girls' Doubles partnered by Lucy Davidson. The Cadet Boys' Singles' finalists faced each other again in the Cadet Boys' Doubles, no 1 seeds Liam Pitchford paired up with Daniel Lowe to take the gold medal in a superb contest from no 2 seeds Gavin Evans and his partner Michael Bates 11-6, 11-6, 9-11, 12-10. Earlier in the semi-finals Evans and Bates had to pull out all the stops to resist the challenge of Sean Cullen and Graeme Barella, finally

triumphing 13-11 in the final game. Pitchford and Lowe had an easier passage defeating Ping Ho and Lewis Gray in three straight. Bronze medals therefore for Cullen and Barella, and Gray and Ho. Two gold medals each for Darius Knight, Liam Pitchford and Emily Bates. Pitchford just seems to continually improve every time he plays and Bates' power play proved too strong for anyone who dared to cross her path.

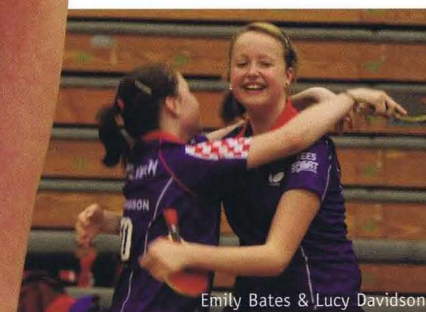


Liam Pitchford & Daniel Lowe

## National Champions

**Junior Boys** - Darius Knight bt. Paul Drinkhall 11-7, 10-12, 14-12, 11-9

**Junior Girls** - Emma Vickers bt. Karina Le Fevre 7-11, 13-11, 12-10, 12-10



Emily Bates & Lucy Davidson

**Junior Boys' Doubles** - Paul Drinkhall/Darius Knight bt. Mathew Ware/Chris Doran 11-6, 11-6, 9-11, 12-10

**Junior Girls' Doubles** - Emma Vickers/Caroline Hallows bt. Emily Bates/Mary Fuller 11-8, 6-11, 11-9, 8-11, 13-11

**Junior Mixed Doubles** - Mathew Ware/Karina Le Fevre bt. Liam Pitchford/Matha Travis 11-7, 11-5, 14-12

**Cadet Boys** - Liam Pitchford bt. Gavin Evans 11-8, 11-9, 11-6

**Cadet Girls** - Emily Bates bt. Karina Le Fevre 12-10, 11-7, 11-7

**Cadet Boys' Doubles** - Liam Pitchford/Daniel Lowe bt. Gavin Evans/Michael Bates 11-6, 11-6, 9-11, 12-10

**Cadet Girls' Doubles** - Emily Bates/Lucy Davidson bt. Ayonija Sundararajan/Natalie Slater 11-3, 11-9, 11-6

Visit [etta.co.uk](http://etta.co.uk) for full results

# The wight Stuff

When, in the late 70s, Carl Prean first appeared on the tournament scene, there must have been many who thought he would probably disappear from it again quite quickly. With his Buddy Holly specs and his rather awkward demeanour, he looked more like a chess prodigy than a potential superstar of English table tennis.

But, as we were soon to find out, the boy could play and how. Super-fast reactions allied to a unique punchy, pimples-assisted playing style and gritty determination saw this unlikely lad become England number one senior at the age of 15. Two years later Carl won the European Junior title, completing a double he began in 1982 when he won gold in the Cadets. He became English men's champion three times over. Respect is due.

As a former player myself, I still like to dine out on the fact that I have indeed beaten Preano, particularly as I now live on the Isle of Wight, where Carl was born, bred and still lives. I usually don't bother to mention the fact that I was 14 and he was 10 or 11. Why spoil a good story? As things panned out, of course, Carl's trophy cabinet filled up with European glory while mine tended to be dominated by misshapen lumps of plastic bearing the words Preston & District Table Tennis League, Lancashire Closed and, indeed, runner-up.

In the light of this, it's perhaps surprising that Carl allowed me into his house on the outskirts of Ryde, let alone offer me tea and top-notch biscuits and an hour or two of his time to have a chat about his table tennis career and find out what he thinks about the state of the game today.

We started with that old chestnut: how can the profile of table tennis be raised so that young players start playing in serious numbers and the local leagues stop shrinking? According to Carl, the answer is simple: it's got to start being seen more on TV and in the newspapers. But, and it's a big but, Carl wonders whether the sport is now attractive enough to get on TV. The game is very quick now and very serve dominated. It's too fast. They've never tried to raise the net: that was one option where they could have tried an experimental tournament. You've got young boys hitting the ball so hard with equipment now.

But it's the same in a lot of sports, such as golf and cricket. The technology improves things in one sense but not in others. You don't get the rallies. With people like Grubba, Appellgren and Secretin you were guaranteed rallies but now, although it's skilful, it's so quick and high-risk.

Carl has little time for the manufacturers and retailers of table tennis equipment who seek to up the ante all the time in terms of spin and speed seemingly at the expense of table tennis as a sport. You've now got your pre-glued rubbers. With normal rubber you could play three or four months with the same sheet and it would still be quite good. Now the pre-glued rubbers are wearing after two or three weeks. It's all very business-orientated. People have got to decide whether they just want to make money or improve the sport, he says. He believes standardisation of the equipment would certainly help matters but doubts whether this will happen. Would the manufacturers sell so much stuff? You've got blades going for 70 a time; if you just had ordinary blades going for, say, 30, they wouldn't make so much money.

Carl is particularly vocal on the sticky subject of speed glue. Glue should have been got rid of. They talked about getting rid of it 15 years ago. They told us that the glues they had were clean glues. The ones that smelt like pear drops that was a disgrace having them on the market and telling people they were clean. I could walk into a sports hall and get headaches

from the stuff. He will follow next season's developments on the glue front with interest.

The lack of young players coming through on a large scale also worries Carl. He points out that, in terms of international sport, many of the top European players are actually quite old. Europe hasn't really produced the young players over the last ten or 15 years: there are exceptions, but not enough of them. There was a golden generation in the 1980s with your Perssons, Waldners, Rosskopfs, Saives and Gatiens, but these are now old men in table tennis terms.

The mention of these names calls to mind Carl's glory days as part of an England team alongside Des Douglas and Alan Cooke that in 1988 reached the final of the European Men's team

**Now, in 2008, at the grand old age of 40, Carl continues to try to pass on some of what he has learned during his illustrious career at a local level**

event, losing a hard-fought 5-3 to the mighty Sweden.

The 88 Europeans was a highlight for me [said Carl]. I won three games in the semi-final when we beat the Russians 5-4. And we gave Sweden a good run for their money in the final we got to 3-3 and lost 5-3 but we did have chances. Lindh((sp??)) was chosen over Appellgren because their coach thought they would be better against my chop-block. We had some very good years in Europe; we were probably the second most successful country behind the Swedes for seven or eight years.

Of all the great players he has played against, another Swede, Waldner, stands out. Waldner was a fantastic player, a big occasion player, just seemed to know where you were putting the ball before you had put it there. He could do things with his hands other people couldn't dream of doing. It was so hard to see where he had hit the ball.

Now, in 2008, at the grand old age of 40, Carl continues to try to pass on some of what he has learned during his illustrious career at a local level, running regular coaching sessions for youngsters at the purpose-built table tennis centre named after him, which opened in 1995 next door to the island's speedway track.

He knows that it won't be easy for any of his prospects to follow in his footsteps, not least because of the logistics and the cost of trips to tournaments on the mainland. At busy times it can now cost over 100 to take your car across the Solent on the ferry no mean amount to throw into the equation of sporting success. Carl remembers, without much fondness, frequently missing the last ferry back to the island and having to wait at Portsmouth for the milk boat in the small hours of the following morning to whisk him across to Fishbourne. That fact alone speaks volumes for the dedication shown by him and his parents, John and Erica, who were rarely far from the action in the early days of his career.

Ah yes, the early days of his career. Am I right in thinking he once lost to that curly-haired left-hander from Preston in 1978? I wonder what happened to him?

He went bald and put his bat in a cardboard box in the attic, that's what.







# Olympic Dreams

The world's Olympic hopefuls travelled to Budapest for their last chance to qualify for Beijing, amongst them were four Brits: Paul Drinkhall, Adam Robertson, Joanna Parker and Kelly Sibley. Here is how they got on.

## Group Stages

**Paul Drinkhall:** After winning his first match 4-1, Paul went on to face Didukh from Ukraine. Unfortunately, he faced the same fate as Shane Overmeyer, losing 4-2. This left it all to play for in the last match. Paul managed a win which secured him second place in the group and a place in the first round of the main draw.

**Results:** Paul Drinkhall bt. Eugeniu Milchin (MDA) 11-13, 11-3, 11-3, 11-5, 11-8 Aleksandr Didukh (UKR) bt. Paul Drinkhall 11-9, 11-7, 11-8, 5-11, 8-11, 11-2 Paul Drinkhall bt. Shane Overmeyer (RSA) 11-5, 11-6, 11-4, 8-11, 11-4

**Adam Robertson:** Coming off the back of a win and ranked 90 positions higher, Adam had a tough battle against Roko Tomic, which he eventually won 4-3. Adam then went on to beat Jose Miguel Ramirez to top the group and progress to the second stage of the main draw.

**Results:** Adam Robertson bt. Roko Tomic (HRV) 11-9, 7-11, 10-12, 11-8, 11-7, 9-11, 11-7 Adam Robertson bt. Jose Miguel Ramirez (GUA) 9-11, 14-12, 5-11, 3-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-6

**Joanna Parker:** Joanna faced two strong Spanish opponents in her group. Sara Ramirez proved dominant winning both her matches. This left Joanna and Chris Xu to battle it out for second place. Joanna won convincingly 4-0 and secured a place in the main draw.

**Results:** Sara Ramirez (ESP) bt. Joanna Parker 11-8, 11-8, 11-6, 11-7 Joanna Parker bt. Chris Xu (ESP) 11-5, 11-9, 11-5, 11-5

**Kelly Sibley:** As in Joanna's group, the last match was crucial, Kelly defeated Malin Pettersson for second place.

**Results:** Tetyana Sorochinskaya (UKR) bt. Kelly Sibley 5-11, 11-5, 11-5, 11-13, 11-5, 11-5 Kelly Sibley bt. Malin Pettersson (SWE) 6-11, 2-11, 11-5, 11-3, 11-6, 11-2

## Main Draw

**Paul Drinkhall:** After having to swap to an unfamiliar bat due to a technical infringement (his rubbers were over the specified 4mm on each side), Paul never got into the game, losing 4-0 to Spain's Alfredo Carneros, thus ending his Olympic dream.

**Result:** Alfredo Carneros (ESP) bt. Paul Drinkhall (ENG) 11-7, 11-6, 11-7, 11-9

**Adam Robertson:** Going straight to the second round of the main draw due to winning his group, Adam's first opponent was Portugal's Marco Freitas. In a tremendous battle with three ends going to deuce, it was the Portuguese player that eventually took the win 4-3.

**Result:** Marco Freitas (POR) bt. Adam Robertson 16-14, 12-10, 4-11, 12-10, 6-11, 7-11, 11-9

**Play-Off:** Adam then entered the play-off for places 17-48, first of all beating Tomas Pavelka from the Czech Republic, who conceded after losing the first set 11-4, before playing world no. 52 Lucjan Blaszczyk, who proved too strong, winning 4-1.

**Result:** Adam Robertson bt. Tomas Pavelka (CZE) 11-4, 11-0, 11-0, 11-0 Lucjan Blaszczyk (POL) bt. Adam Robertson 11-9, 11-4, 11-5, 4-11, 11-9

**Joanna Parker:** With a 4-1 defeat, Joanna's tournament came to an end.

**Result:** Laura Negrisoni (ITA) bt. Joanna Parker 6-11, 11-6, 11-7, 13-11, 11-9

**Kelly Sibley:** With Joanna's demise, Kelly soldiered on to beat Ruta from Lithuania, before being defeated by the Russian no. 3 Oksana Fadeeva.

**Results:** Kelly Sibley bt. Ruta Paskauskiene (LTU) 11-7, 11-13, 9-11, 11-8, 14-12, 11-9 Oksana Fadeeva (RUS) bt. Kelly Sibley 11-7, 9-11, 11-3, 11-5, 11-3

Like Adam, however, Kelly had progressed far enough to reach the play-offs for positions 17th-41st.

With a bye in the first, Kelly went on to meet Sara Ramirez. What a battle this was, going all the way to seven sets to take Kelly to the third round, playing for 17th-24th.

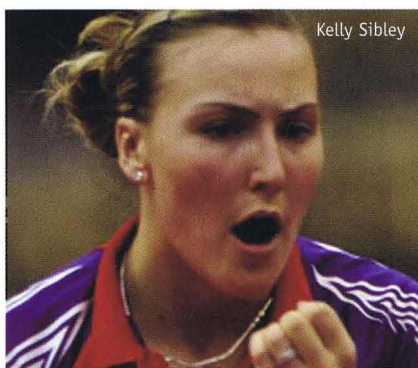
Another close fought seven game battle ensued when Kelly went up against Ekaterina Mtoulaki, Kelly took the last three ends and the match to set up an encounter with Tetyana Sorochinskaya for 17th-20th.

Having lost to Tetyana in the qualifying groups, this was going to be a tough match. Kelly won the second and third end, but Tetyana proved too much, winning the next three ends and the match 4-2, just as she had in their first encounter.

Kelly Sibley bt. Sara Ramirez (ESP) 12-10, 4-11, 6-11, 11-9, 11-9, 9-11, 12-10

Kelly Sibley bt. Ekaterina Mtoulaki (GRE) 11-6, 9-11, 2-11, 5-11, 11-4, 13-11, 11-9 Tetyana Sorochinskaya (UKR) bt. Kelly Sibley 11-5, 9-11, 9-11, 11-4, 11-1, 12-10

This left Kelly out of the fight for the final qualification spots and into the fight for 19th and 20th against Gabriela Feher of Serbia. Having lost to her three times in the past, including in her last European Junior Championships in 2006, Kelly was keen to show how much she had improved, taking the win 4-2 and securing the second reserve spot for the Olympics. Kelly Sibley bt. Gabriela Feher (SRB) 11-8, 8-11, 7-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-7



# FAAR GREATER THAN THE

**It is often said that sport lacks the characters that we see in the arts and entertainment, but I have never bought into this argument.**

Sport is chock full of larger than life men and women who have, in their various guises, made life more fun, entertaining and infinitely more vivid. This is the list of the greatest and most colourful characters to have graced table tennis. For obvious reasons, I have limited my list to those who I have met and got to know - but please write to the editor if you would like to add some of your favourites to the list.

## 1. NIGEL ECKERSLEY

Eck has to go in at number one, for he was a player who could draw the crowds just by virtue of his hairstyle. At his best in the early 1980s, it was a huge mop of curls that added a visual twist to one of the most vivacious personalities in sport. As a young teenager I loved watching Eckersley play: his countenance and body language full of energy, vim, vitality and optimism. His repartee was spectacularly funny, delivered in a lovely northern accent and, often unintentionally, fizzing with satirical and transgressive connotations. Although his catch phrase was, predictably enough - "Eck-cellent!" - he had so much more to say when he



was out on court with a sizeable crowd in attendance, egging him on.

He was also a hell of a fighter and strategist. Although he performed heroics at the Commonwealth Championships in Bombay, it was his victory over Alan Cooke at the Top Twelve a few years in 1987 later that sticks in my memory. Eckersley

was intimidated by nobody and often had the nerve to deliver on his extravagant boasts. English table tennis over the last 35 years would not have had the same verve and zest without his towering contribution.



## 2. MARTY REISMAN

Nobody who has met Reisman will forget him. Hustler, gold smuggler, philosopher and tireless proselytiser for the hard-bat version of table tennis, which died with the advent of sponge in 1952, he is riveting company, whether you are hitting some balls in his favourite ping pong room on East 57th Street or slurping some noodles at the Mee Noodle Bar on 2nd Avenue. English Open champion in 1952, Reisman is a fascinating combination of innocence, naivety and egocentricity. The best person to sum him up is the incomparable Howard Jacobson who wrote: "I first met him at the Ninth



John Hilton

World Veterans Table Tennis Championships in Manchester twelve months ago. He wore a wild beard then and looked unaccustomed, unsure whether he'd come to the right place and what sort of reputation preceded him, like a leftover Beat Poet about to read to a bunch of contemporary kindergarten kids in a non-English speaking country. He was carrying a shoulder-bag containing press-cuttings going back fifty years. Everything you needed to know about Reisman, dated and filed, in multiple copies, there on his person. A walking database of the self. Before I'd known him ten minutes I was in possession of a hundred sheets of photocopied magazine and newsprint, all celebrating - more or less - his genius".

### 3. ANDREW EDEN

Eden was a gregarious northerner with a huge personality, a huge heart and an often-underestimated desire to get himself into the England team, something he managed on numerous occasions in the 1990s. In the Commonwealth Championships of 1994 he played the best table tennis of his career, helping England to team gold and giving Johnny Huang a real scare in the last 16 of the men's singles. Eden's greatest ambition in life, however, was to make people laugh even if it meant that he was the butt of the joke. At the European Championships of 1994 he kept everyone's



humour up for the duration of the trip with his tireless good humour and extravagant mischievousness. When he got a chance to play against Germany in the team event, a match carried by the BBC, he could not help playing up to the crowd, falling on the floor on numerous occasions and gesticulating wildly every time he won a point. It was not something for the purists, but, for those of us in possession of a soul, it was one of the high points of the championship.

The greatest tribute to Eden's sense of humour, of course, is that he consciously modelled his game on Carl Preen, perhaps the possessor of the most eccentric style in the history of the sport. It is a tribute to Eden's talent and desire that he made the style work to his advantage.

### 4. JOHN HILTON

Hilton's great achievement was to win the European Championships in 1980, but those of us who watched him playing in domestic competitions in the 70s and 80s (and, indeed, since) will better remember him for his quirky, idiosyncratic character and his strangely unquantifiable charisma. Skylet Andrew once said to me



John Hilton

that Hilton was so enigmatic you could spend 10 years locked in a room with him and you would come out not knowing what made him tick. His unpredictability extended on to the table where one could never be sure if he would attack or defend, fight or capitulate. He would often bamboozle opponents with his quick and subtle wit, throwing in little comments and witticisms between points that distracted adversaries from the task in hand. The crowds that would congregate to watch him in action did so as much for the joy of his repartee as for the quality of his play.



Nigel Eckersley

# British League

## DHS LONDON PROGRESS - CHAMPIONS FOR THE TENTH TIME

The 2007-8 season will be remembered as the end of an era if, as predicted, the mighty DHS London Progress first team "abdicate" after dominating the British Table Tennis League for the last ten years. Club captain Jason Sugrue has confirmed that "We will be retaining our Premier Division place hopefully for a good few years, but our main aim will be to give our younger players a chance". With club supremo and driving force - the ubiquitous Jon Kaufman likely to be taking a backseat next year, the question arises whether the club will be able to generate quite the same passion without Table Tennis's equivalent of Sir Alex Ferguson in charge. However, this scribe suspects that if the Progress Club can retain the services of two of their outstanding Chinese players, then such fast improving players as Matt Ware, Garth Kinlocke, Emran Hussain and Jake and Ryan Collins will form a Progress first team well capable of challenging for the title.

This season DHS London Progress were a class apart and their three Chinese stars lost a total of one game between them. Hats off to the gutsy Andrew Rushton (TTK Greenhouse) who beat Hong Ming Zhang at Halton Table Tennis Club in November. Jiang Chiang Hong (who played in 2 rounds of matches) and Jiang Zhi Tao (who played in all 14 matches) both stayed undefeated. They won all three of their scheduled matches 8-0 in the final round of games, played at the luxurious and

welcoming Ormesby Table Tennis Club in April, brushing aside the challenges of Sycamore, a below strength TTK Greenhouse and third-placers BATTS Team Peniel to give themselves a record of 27 points out of a possible 28. Surprisingly, it was relegated Sycamore who came closest to pinching a game off the champions and how well they played. Adam Frost gave a great account of himself against former Chinese Universities Champion Jiang Zhia Tao, only succumbing 11-8, 1-11, 11-8, 8-11, 7-11, whilst Scottish international Stewart Crawford came even closer to beating Jiang Chiang Hong, before missing out 11-8, 6-11, 11-4, 12-14, 7-11. BATTS Team Peniel only managed to extend the Champions to five games on one occasion, when Craig Bryant led Terry Young 2-1 before losing 11-8, 10-12, 11-9, 5-11, 8-11. Drumchapel Glasgow I ensured they finished second by beating BATTS Team Peniel I 6-2. Sau Ayemojuba's 12-10, 11-9, 13-11 victory over Wang Zheng was a real bonus for the Glasgow team and although Wang Zheng hit back in his second singles by beating Ryan Jenkins 3-2, the match was already heading in Glasgow's direction. The ever improving Craig Howieson scored a win which must have impressed his contemporaries, a surprisingly straightforward 11-4, 11-5, 11-8 victory over Shuying Xu, but BATTS finished the match on a positive note with Neil Charles getting the better of Craig Howieson 3-1.

BATTS in turn ensured that they finished third by scoring excellent victories over Ellenborough (5-3) and

# Tables

DIVISION 1 NORTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ELGRE NOTTINGHAM I	10	4	0	76	36	24
DERWENT I	10	1	3	76	36	21
DRUMCHAPEL GLASGOW II	8	3	3	64	48	19
GRANTHAM	7	3	4	63	49	17
ROTHERHAM SCORPIONS I	2	5	7	44	68	9
ORMESBY II	1	6	7	36	76	8
HALTON I	2	3	9	46	66	7
CHESTERFIELD I	2	3	9	43	69	7

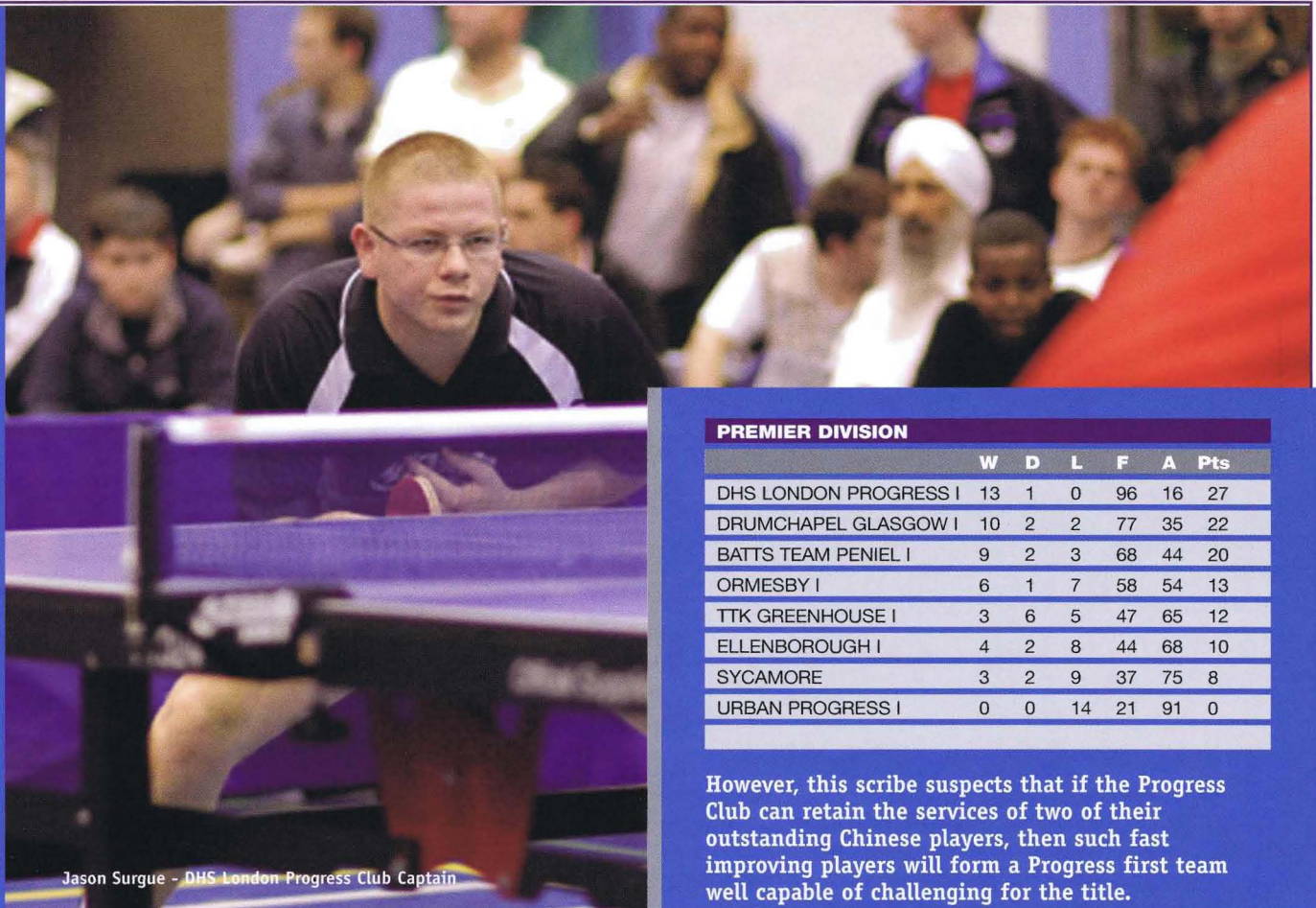
DIVISION 2 NORTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BARROW	8	4	2	70	42	20
FASTBATS	9	2	3	70	42	20
SHEFFIELD	7	3	4	69	43	17
ELGRE NOTTINGHAM II	5	7	2	60	52	17
DERWENT II	5	2	7	48	64	12
NORTHFIELD	4	3	7	47	65	11
MARKET RASEN	3	4	7	52	60	10
ORMESBY III	1	3	10	32	80	5

DIVISION 1 SOUTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FUSION I	8	2	4	69	43	18
BRIGHTON I	8	1	5	56	56	17
DML WOOLWELL I	7	2	5	58	54	16
DHS LONDON PROGRESS II	5	5	4	62	50	15
CIPPENHAM I	4	5	5	55	57	13
GENERATION 2 I	3	6	5	53	59	12
YORK GARDENS I	4	4	6	51	61	12
BYNG HALL I	2	5	7	44	68	9

DIVISION 2 SOUTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BATTS TEAM PENIEL II	13	1	0	86	26	27
FUSION II	10	1	3	72	40	21
DHS LONDON PROGRESS IV	9	1	4	67	45	19
MOSSFORD	9	0	5	64	48	18
BRIGHTON II	4	1	9	43	68	9
HORSHAM II	2	4	8	42	70	8
CLUB CORNWALL	3	1	10	41	70	7
ASHFORD II	1	1	12	32	80	3

DIVISION 1 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
OLOP IMPACT I	10	2	0	72	24	22
WESTFIELD I	8	2	2	66	30	18
DHS LONDON PROGRESS III	7	1	4	63	33	15
CARRARA POLSKA I	6	1	5	52	44	13
URBAN PROGRESS II	4	0	8	35	61	8
BEDFORD MODERN I	2	1	9	27	69	5
CIPPENHAM II	1	1	10	21	75	3
OXFORD FIREPLACE CENTRE II (Expelled)						

DIVISION 2 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
KINGFISHER	13	1	0	83	29	27
HORSHAM I	6	4	4	66	46	16
ASHFORD I	7	1	6	65	47	15
GUERNSEY	5	5	4	61	51	15
EASTBOURNE	5	3	6	53	59	13
KINGSHURST BRIBAR	6	1	7	47	65	13
DE VERE NETTS	3	2	9	41	71	8
BEDFORD MODERN II	2	1	11	32	80	5



Jason Surgue - DHS London Progress Club Captain

**PREMIER DIVISION**

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
DHS LONDON PROGRESS I	13	1	0	96	16	27
DRUMCHAPEL GLASGOW I	10	2	2	77	35	22
BATTS TEAM PENIEL I	9	2	3	68	44	20
ORMESBY I	6	1	7	58	54	13
TTK GREENHOUSE I	3	6	5	47	65	12
ELLENBOROUGH I	4	2	8	44	68	10
SYCAMORE	3	2	9	37	75	8
URBAN PROGRESS I	0	0	14	21	91	0

However, this scribe suspects that if the Progress Club can retain the services of two of their outstanding Chinese players, then such fast improving players will form a Progress first team well capable of challenging for the title.

Ormesby (6-2). Shuying Xu was outstanding in both matches scoring thrilling wins against Ellenborough's Liam Pitchford (3-0) and Jon Nillsson (3-2), whilst she also beat Ormesby's Mike Marsden (3-1) and Eddie Smith (3-0). Nillsson will feel hard done by, as he led the Chinese star 2-0 and had chances to win 3-0 and 3-1 before missing out 11-9, 11-9, 10-12, 8-11, 5-11.

Nillsson also gave a really good account of himself against BATTS no. 1 Wang Zheng and this time he missed out 10-12, 11-7, 11-9, 4-11, 8-11. The stylish Wang Zheng came into his own in the match against Ormesby and he excelled by beating both Michael Marsden and David Meads 3-1.

**DIVISION 3 NORTH**

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HALTON II	10	2	2	67	45	22
MURRAYFIELD	9	2	3	66	46	20
UXBRIDGE I	8	3	3	65	47	19
WOODFIELD I	6	1	7	53	59	13
HARTLEPOOL	5	2	7	56	56	12
DRUMCHAPEL GLASGOW III	4	4	6	54	58	12
ELGRE NOTTINGHAM III	3	2	9	46	66	8
FORMBY	1	4	9	41	71	6

**DIVISION 3 SOUTH**

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
YORK GARDENS II	12	1	1	80	32	25
TTK GREENHOUSE II	12	0	2	79	33	24
SEH BRITANNIA IPSWICH I	8	1	5	63	49	17
OLOP IMPACT II	4	4	6	56	56	12
HASTINGS	5	2	7	46	66	12
HORSHAM III	3	3	8	39	73	9
CIPPENHAM III	3	2	9	48	64	8
ELLENBOROUGH II	2	1	11	37	75	5

**DIVISION 3 SOUTH AND WEST**

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
DML WOOLWELL II	10	2	0	66	30	22
B@S GROUP	6	3	3	58	38	15
WESTFIELD II	7	1	4	51	45	15
NWF	4	3	5	46	50	11
GENERATION 2 II	3	4	5	47	49	10
FUSION III	3	2	7	40	56	8
BRIGHTON III	1	1	10	28	68	3
Oxford Fireplace Centre III	Expelled					

**DIVISION 4 NORTH**

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SUNDERLAND	12	0	2	87	25	24
PUDSEY	11	2	1	76	36	24
ST MARY'S HULL	10	0	4	75	37	20
BARNT GREEN	8	2	4	71	41	18
ROTH' SCORPIONS II	5	1	8	48	64	11
CHESTERFIELD II	4	2	8	50	62	10
ISLE OF MAN	1	1	12	22	90	3
DRUMCHAPEL GLA. IV	1	0	13	19	93	2

**DIVISION 4 SOUTH**

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BRIGHTON CITY	14	0	0	95	17	28
CARRARA POLSKA II	10	1	3	82	30	21
SOUTHAMPTON WEST	8	2	4	72	40	18
DHS LONDON PROGRESS V	7	2	5	55	57	16
DML WOOLWELL III	5	2	7	50	62	12
BATTS TEAM PENIEL III	3	1	10	41	71	7
BYNG HALL II	3	0	11	26	86	6
SEH BRITANNIA IPSWICH II	2	0	12	27	85	4

**DIVISION 4 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS**

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CRUSADERS	12	0	2	78	34	24
FELLOWS CRANLEIGH	11	1	2	74	38	23
DHS LONDON PROGRESS VI	7	3	4	61	51	17
ASHFORD III	6	4	4	63	49	16
TTK GREENHOUSE III	6	2	6	62	50	14
YORK GARDENS III	4	3	7	49	63	11
UXBRIDGE II	1	2	11	30	82	4
WOODFIELD II	1	1	12	31	81	3





# Review of the latest Tournament

## Butterfly Schools' Individual Championships

Over 250 players from 50 counties met at the Doncaster Dome to take part in the Butterfly Schools' Individual Championships. This event with eight age groups, organised by the English Schools' Table Tennis Association, is the largest one day school event in the table tennis calendar, with over 12 hours of continuous play on 20 tables.

The eight events witnessed seven new champions, with only Helshan Weerasinghe (Kent Co.) retaining his Under 11 Boys' crown with a final straight games win over Sam Mabey (Leicestershire). This gave Helshan his second schools' victory this year, having won the British Primary Schools' Championships held in April in the Isle of Man. Nottinghamshire players claimed two titles with Sam Walker defeating Edward Mitchell (Buckinghamshire) in

the Boys' Under 13 and Emma Vickers defeating Karina Le Fevre (Cleveland) in the Girls' Under 19 final.

Both Under 16 events provided much skill and entertainment, each going to a fifth deciding game. Natalie Slater (Staffordshire) beat Lucy Davidson (Derbyshire) 11-5, 11-13, 14-12, 9-11, 13-11 and Garth Kinlocke (Avon) defeating Richard Andrews (Berkshire) 11-7, 8-11, 3-11, 11-5, 11-7.

In the Under 11 Girls, Tin-Tin Ho (Middlesex Met.) was victorious and repeated her British Primary Schools' Championship success. Liam Pitchford (Derbyshire) was the winner of the Under 19 Boys and Yolanda King (East Sussex) the Under 13 Girls.

ESTTA is grateful to Dennis Worrell, Championship Organiser, for a most successful event and would

also like to thank Butterfly for their continued support.

Boys U19 1st Liam Pitchford (Derbyshire), 2nd William Maybanks (Hertfordshire)

Girls U19 1st Emma Vickers (Nottinghamshire), 2nd Karina Le Fevre (Cleveland)

Boys U16 1st Garth Kinlocke (Avon), 2nd Richard Andrews (Berkshire)

Girls U16 1st Natalie Slater (Staffordshire), 2nd Lucy Davidson (Derbyshire)

Boys U13 1st Sam Walker (Nottinghamshire), 2nd Edward Mitchell (Buckinghamshire)

Girls U13 1st Yolanda King (East Sussex), 2nd Evangeline Collier (Essex County)

Boys U11 1st Helshan Weerasinghe (Kent Co.) 2nd Sam Mabey (Leicestershire)

Girls U11 1st Tin-Tin Ho (Middlesex Met), 2nd Emma Torkington (West Sussex)

## John Jermyn Memorial 2 Star Open

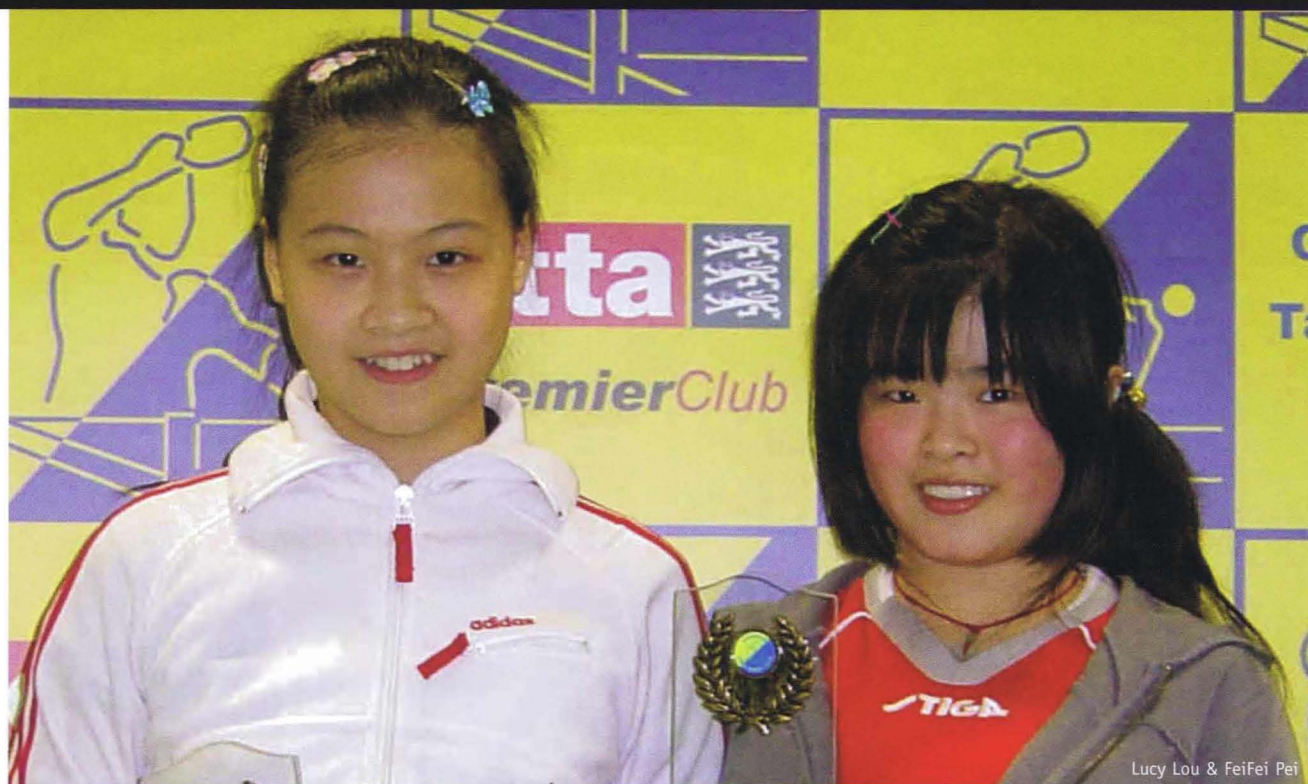
A small but select band of table tennis players from many parts of the country gathered at the Cornwall County Table Tennis Centre, Tregorrick Park. In spite of the small entry, the standard of play was high with fiercely contested competition. Martin Gunn (Av) was the victor in the Men's Open Singles, overcoming Jeremy Williams (Co) 14-12, 11-7, 11-5, 11-2 in the final. Gunn told me that he hadn't played for ten years until very recently

and that he remembered winning a two star tournament run by John in North Herts many years ago - a fitting winner. Williams got his success in the Veteran Singles where he beat Keith Childs (Ha) 11-5, 11-7, 8-11, 11-5 in the final. Childs won Men's Band Two beating Harry Cutler (Dv) 10-12, 9-11, 13-11, 11-3, 11-9 in a hard fought encounter, with Cutler overcoming Shaun Murray (Ca) 12-10, 11-9, 11-6 in the Men's

Band Three final. In the Restricted Singles event Simon James (Dv) was the winner, with Martin Gunn as runner-up. One of the most exciting games of the weekend was the Men's Band Four final featuring spectacular rallies of defence and attack from Shaun Murray versus the attack of Lloyd Gregory (Av). Gregory finally edged home 7-11, 11-6, 7-11, 11-7, 17-15. In the women's events Sally Smith (Dv) was the winner of

the Open Singles with Annabelle Morle (Ha) runner-up, while Morle got her revenge in the Under 21 Singles by winning the event, with Smith as runner-up. Yaina Andrew (Co) won Women's Band Three.

Thanks must go to Mick Strode the referee and to the players for making this the fitting memorial that it was.



Lucy Lou &amp; Feifei Pei

## CIPPENHAM CADET/U13 2 STAR OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

It's unusual for an unseeded player to lose his first match and go on to win an event, but that is exactly what happened for Ayman Al-Sibassi in the Cadet Boys' Singles. The eventual champion from Surrey lost a fantastic scrap with Ross MacNiven 10-12, 11-7, 11-7, 9-11, 9-11 in the first match of the preliminary round group and then only just got the better of Simon Ha 11-7 in the deciding game, to clinch second place in that group. After those early scares it just got easier for Al-Sibassi. In the competition proper, he saw off

challenges from Joshua Robinson 3-0, Rafi Conn-Kowlessar 3-1 and then Foluso Thomas 3-0 to arrive at the semi-final stage in the spot vacated by the absent top seed. In that semi-final it was another storming 3-0 win over Mikael Papatoniou who had played his part in the upsets by eliminating third seed Thomas Dantzig in the quarters. This set up a final encounter with second seed Michael Ho, who until that time had only dropped one game in his majestic route to the final. That all changed when Al-Sibassi got the better of two of the three games that went to deuce points and also won the first 11-8 to clinch the title 3-1.

Ho's path to the semi-final was

### RESULTS OF FINALS:

Cadet Boys' Singles: Ayman Al-Sibassi (Sy) bt. Michael Ho (Sy) 11-8, 16-14, 10-12, 13-11  
 Cadet Girls' Singles: Feifei Pei (Sy) bt. Lucy Lou (Sy) 11-5, 11-9, 11-7  
 U13 Boys' Singles: Michael Ho (Sy) bt. Rafi Conn-Kowlessar (Mi) 4-11, 11-9, 6-11, 11-4, 11-5  
 U13 Girls' Singles: Lucy Lou (Sy) bt. Tracey Simpson (Mi)  
 Cadet Boys' Consolation: Joshua James (Mi) bt. Omar Lofty (Mi) 11-4, 11-9, 11-4  
 Cadet Girls' Consolation: Chantal Wilson (Mi) bt. Tracey Simpson (Mi) 11-9, 11-5, 8-11, 13-11  
 U13 Boys' Consolation: Erick Fuentes (Mi) bt. Mehul Modha (Mi) 11-8, 9-11, 11-4, 11-8

matched by Dritan Sadiku, as the two seeded players in the bottom half of the draw met with little resistance en route.

Ho's disappointment at losing the

Cadet Boys' final was tempered by having already won the Under 13 event in the morning. The top seed started the day's proceedings in which all of the four main events were won by players from Surrey. Ho was not troubled until Reece Placid took one game off him in their quarter-final and then third seed Brandon Crouchman also got one in the semi-final. The final was different however, Ho needed all his nerve to come back from 2-1 down against fourth seed Rafi Conn-Kowlessar. The only shock of the event was the defeat of second seed Ross MacNiven by Jack Thomas in the quarters, but then he lost 3-0 to Conn-Kowlessar in their semi-final. Lucy Lou was the star of the girls' events. In the morning she won a round robin for the Under 13 title, relegating Tracey Simpson into second spot, and then in the afternoon she got through her group, despite a loss to Rachel West, to book a semi-final place against Majeda Yasmin, a match that Lou won comfortably 3-0. In the final she had to give second best to top seed Feifei Pei whose only tough match was a 3-2 win in the preliminary round group against Chantal Wilson.

By Graham Trimming

## ESSEX 4 STAR JUNIOR OPEN - BY STEVE KERNS

The West Essex League tournament proved that fairy tales do come true, as 15-year-old Chris Penrose became the new Men's Singles champion, defeating Steve Codrington 11-8, 11-6, 11-4 in the final. In the semi-final Chris had caused a major upset by defeating top seed Dave Page 9-11, 11-7, 11-1, 9-11, 11-5. Chris was unseeded as he has played the whole season in division two, where he was top of the averages with 92%. In the Restricted Singles final (for players outside of

division 1) he was top seed and beat number two seed Dave Charles in the final 10-12, 11-8, 11-2, 11-8.

In the Women's Singles, Pat Swann had to come from two sets down to beat Thana Zhairy 10-12, 6-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-7, but was unable to repeat her success in the Mixed Doubles as she and her partner, Steve Codrington, lost to Marion and Dennis Sweeney 3-11, 11-2, 12-10, 11-9.

**Player of the tournament: Chris Penrose.**



Rachel Jamieson

### RACHEL JAMIESON IN A CLASS OF HER OWN

The Under 18 events provided contrasting contests at this year's Essex Four Star Junior Open. Whereas Rachel Jamieson (BATTs Team Peniel) had things pretty much her own way winning both the Under 18 Girls' Singles and the Under 18 Girls Elite Singles, the Boys' events were fiercely

contested with as many as eight lads looking capable of taking the two main titles.

It was Chris Doran (Northants), the number two seed, who drew "first blood" by picking up the Under 18 Boys' Elite Singles crown, an event contested by the top 32 ranked players. Stewart Mudie ranked no. 20 in England sensationally axed top seed Matt Ware (Hampshire) at 11-9 in the

fifth end. However, Chris Doran proved to be that little bit too strong and he ran out an 11-7, 11-7, 9-11, 11-3 winner.

The Under 18 Boys' Singles saw Matt Ware prove yet again just what a fine competitor he is. Quite simply he improved as the day progressed. A 3-1 victory against the fierce forehand topspin of Alim Hirji (Hertfordshire) confirmed this, and he duly booked his place in the final by beating Billy Deville 3-0. In the other half of the draw William Maybanks had a superb all action battle 13-11, 11-7, 5-11, 7-11, 11-9 with Chris Doran. After such a successful performance a rejuvenated Matt Ware was in no mood to be denied and after a relatively slow start he ran out a 5-11, 11-9, 7-11, 11-6, 11-9 winner against Maybanks.

The Under 18 Girls' Elite Singles event (for the top 16 ranked girl entrants) was dominated by top

seed Rachel Jamieson (BATTs Team Peniel) and she never looked in any danger of losing, beating Yolanda King (Sussex) 11-3, 11-2, 11-6 in the final. It was a similar story in the Girls' Under 18 Singles and this time Rachel Jamieson only dropped one end, against England no. 27 junior girl - Kirsty Wilson (Kent) in their semi-final. Rachel eventually won 12-14, 11-3, 11-7, 11-8. It was again Yolanda King who she faced in the final and although this game was closer, Rachel still ran out a decisive 11-5, 11-6, 11-7 winner. The Under 18 Boys' Banded event not only featured a very large entry, but it proved difficult to predict who might take the title. In the end it was 14 year-old Joshua Band (Jersey) (aptly named it has to be said!) who ran out the winner. It was Dipa Tamang (Middlesex) who came through to take the counterpart Girls' Under 18 Banded Singles.

### LEWIS GRAY TAKES ESSEX CROWN

Hard-hitting Lewis Gray (Kent) won the Under 15 Boys' Singles. Lewis, ranked no. 8 in England, powered his way to the final beating Anthony Patten (Surrey) 3-0, Michael Ho (Surrey) 3-0, Damilola Thomas (Middlesex) 3-0 and Joe Thursby (Nottingham) 3-1. His final opponent was no. three seed, Luca Mariano, who fought his way past Jack Coleman. The big shock here was the run that the very talented left-hander Azarel Adebajo put together, a run that culminated in his beating second seed Eddie Mitchell (Bucks) 9-11, 11-6, 11-3, 7-11, 12-10 in a thrilling quarter-final. The final featured some excellent rallies, but, after shading a close first end, Lewis just held the edge and he eventually sealed a hard-fought 11-9, 11-4, 15-13 victory.





# County Notes

## **Berkshire by Colin Dyke**

### **Newbury Closed Championships**

Ray Powell retained the Men's Singles title in the Newbury Closed tournament, following a 3-1 sets win over surprise finalist Ian Langley. Earlier, all twelve seeded players had managed to win their preliminary groups, setting up some mouth watering ties within the qualifying groups. Group A contained the number 1 seed, Paul Rattue, who has been in sparkling form for Ashford Hill Ramblers this season, but it was Ian Langley who emerged as group winner after hammering

Rattue in three straight sets.

Group B saw Steve Murgatroyd ease past Dave Wise and Lee Calcutt to reach the semi-final stage, while third seed John Golding held off challenges from John Goodyer and Alan Duke. Second seed Ray Powell overcame a potentially tricky qualifying group, defeating both Colin Wilkes and Tim Pang.

In the semi-finals, John Golding put up a spirited defence but had no answer to Ray Powell's consistent attacking pressure, whilst Ian Langley played out of his skin to hold off Steve Murgatroyd in four



Sean Cullen - Derbyshire

**The Derbyshire lads achieved expected supremacy - Daniel Lowe and Sean Cullen beat Scotland for gold in the team event and Sean beat Daniel in the cadet singles, resulting in three golds and a silver between them.**

close sets.

Sensing some early nerves, Langley took advantage with a deuce win in the first set of the final, but Powell stepped up to take the following three sets with some devastating attacking play, especially on the backhand side.

Ray Powell won the trophy the last time the event was held in 2006 and it is going to take something pretty special to take it off him.

In the Ladies' Singles, Sue Purton was severely stretched by Thatcham player, Celia Hooker, but showed composure to take the title.

Other results:

**Men's Doubles:** Ray Powell/Alan Duke bt. Paul Rattue/Jon Goodyer,

**Mixed Doubles:** Sue Purton

/Anthony Baker bt. Lis

Whittaker/Ian Langley, **U17:** Nick

Cherorbrier bt. Josh Purton, **U15:**

Nick Cherowbrier bt. Sam Goodwin,

**U13:** Sam Goodwin bt. Luke Gregory,

**U11:** Leo Long bt. Matt Goodyer ,

**Girls:** Maria Sharzad bt. Victoria

Berry, **Junior Doubles:**

Cherowbrier/Purton bt. Goodwin/

David Clemo

### **Reading Closed Championships**

Neil Cartwright won the Men's Singles title with a very impressive victory against Ramesh Gehlot in the final by 11-5, 8-11, 11-5, 11-2, while Mary Allan picked up yet another Ladies' Singles title after comfortably defeating Diane Taylor in the final 11-4, 11-7, 11-7.

A hard fought semi-final between Abhay Gehlot and Ramesh Gehlot went to Ramesh in four games 12-10, 11-9, 10-12, 11-5, while Neil

Cartwright made his way to the final after beating Stuart Williams in a great tussle, 12-10, 8-11, 8-11, 11-8, 11-3.

The Junior Boys Singles' went to Kuldeep Gehlot, beating Daniel Moses 11-3, 11-8, 12-10 in the final after Daniel had earlier knocked out Simon Thorne in a great semi-final 11-6, 11-9, 9-11, 8-11, 11-5. Daniel picked up the Cadet Boys' title, defeating Liam McTiernan 12-10, 12-10, 13-11. Liam had an easier victory against Daniel in the final of the U13 event, winning 11-8, 11-3, 11-6. Oliver Shaw had a fantastic U21 Singles victory, beating Kuldeep Gehlot 11-6, 11-13, 11-8, 11-9 in his semi-final, and then Kuldeep's cousin Abhay 11-8, 11-7, 11-8 in the final.

**Other results:** Men's Doubles: Ramesh Gehlot/Stuart Williams bt. Mark Banks/Phil Prady 11-6, 9-11, 11-9, 12-10 Ladies' Doubles: Mary Allan/Jacquie Lovell bt. Diane Taylor/Emma Ashley 11-5, 11-4, 11-5 Mixed Doubles: Ramesh Gehlot/Mary Allan bt. Phil Prady/Jacquie Lovell 11-7, 11-3, 9-11, 11-4 Veteran Singles: Ramesh Gehlot bt. Phil Prady 11-9, 9-11, 11-4, 11-6 Senior Veteran: Tim Pang bt. Colin Dyke 11-9, 11-5, 10-12, 11-3 Boys' Doubles: Daniel Moses/Hanson Xu bt. Liam McTiernan/Daniel McTiernan 11-8, 11-1, 11-13, 11-2 U18 Girls: Fiona Taylor bt. Emma Ashley 8-11, 14-12, 11-7, 11-9 U15 Girls: Fiona Taylor bt. Emma Ashley 11-3, 3-11, 8-11, 11-5, 11-8

Final County Championship results:

Veterans 3 lost to Somerset 2 4-6; Veterans 3 beat Wiltshire 4 6-4; Veterans 6 lost to Middlesex 5 3-7; Veterans 6 lost to Kent 5 0-10

### Cheshire by Alan Blears

**National Junior League (N.W.)** - In a thrilling final day, Wirral 'A' overtook rival Preston 'A' to win the Premier Division title, and as N.W. champions take the Hillcourt Trophy - when it can be found! Someone must have it. Congratulations to Chris Hatton, Stephen Nicholls, Chris Weir and Steven Broad.

In Div. 1 South, the most significant event of day 3 was 16-year-old Nabil Hudda taking over as match day organiser from the unavailable Dave Cochrane. The day passed without a hitch, Nabil managing to play six sets as well!

On day 4, Hillcourt 'A' continued their relentless march, dropping just three sets all season - two of them to the 'B' team's Tom Roberts and Matthew Pearsall! The other was to Macclesfield's David Bruce. Jordan Potts finished with 100%, Dan Brown, Marcus McNulty and Nabil Hudda each losing one. A close battle for runners-up spot saw Tameside 'A' scrape home from the two Macclesfield teams.

**National Cadet League (N.W.)** Results after day 3:  
Div 1: New Ferry/Gaultby Road 'A' lead, with Stephen Nicholls winning 31 from 33 Div 2: Warrington 'A' lead

Halton 'B', with John Ryan-Warnick 27 from 28 Div3: Blackpool lead Halton 'D', with Halton's wheelchair athlete Jack Hunter-Spivey taking 25 from 32. Well done, sir!

### Derbyshire by Neil Houghton

Elsewhere the Derbyshire lads achieved expected supremacy and an awesomely wicked display in the cadet team and individuals in the Guernsey Home International. Daniel Lowe and Sean Cullen beat Scotland for gold in the team event and Sean beat Daniel in the cadet singles, resulting in three golds and a silver between them. Well done! It was also pleasing to see Derbyshire resident and pride of Cornwall, Martha Travis, come back with a team gold! All's well that ends well now that they did well for England and the remaining Derbyshire juniors managed to stay up for next season.

The Derby Junior Four Star happened just too late to go into the last issue and it is very pleasing to report that Saturday was an excellent day for Derbyshire and Chesterfield, with Danny Lowe supreme in the Boys' final and Lucy Davidson scoring a classic victory in the Cadet Girls! I watched most of Saturday but got down later after the main event on Sunday; as I understand it the main local favourite and top seed Emma Vickers was beaten in the semi-final and although not getting as far above her age group as on the Saturday, Lucy again played well. Derbyshire juniors in action also included good play from Abbie Millwain, Mark Naylor and Ben Goodwin.

### Devon by John Smith

Devon's leading male and female juniors, Woolwell club team-mates Richard Marshall and Vicky Smith, have not only confirmed those positions in the past month, but enhanced their reputations as two of the country's leading young players.

Richard produced a brilliant performance to take the Cheltenham Junior Grand Prix title, defeating number one seed Chris Doran's conqueror Kim Daybell, and the dangerous Alim Hirji on the way to the final. There he met Welsh star Patrick Thomas who himself had performed superbly to defeat number two seed Darren Reed in the semis. One of Richard's most outstanding tactical performances saw him take the final relatively comfortably, three games to one. County number two Chris Smith also performed well to convincingly defeat eighth seed Billy Deville, before bowing out to Reed in the quarter-finals.

Two weeks later Richard completed the triple crown at the Devon Junior Championships, winning Boys' Singles and Doubles (with singles final victim Smith) and the Mixed Doubles with Laura McLeod.

Vicky took two titles on the first day at Cheltenham,

the under-13s without losing a game, including an 11-5, 11-4, 11-8 final victory over Charleigh Kirby, and dropping only one game in the banded cadet event, in the final against top seed Abbie Milwain. She played even better in the junior events on Sunday, defeating Milwain again, young Welsh star Chloe Thomas in straight games, and battling through two titanic battles against the long pimples of eventual junior runner-up, Megan Phillips. Both were narrowly lost in the fifth game!

The following weekend she played under-age as the youngest competitor in the cadet national trials at Derby. Having negotiated a tough group undefeated, she beat top seed Chloe Whyte in the quarter-final, number two Rachel Trevorrow in the semis and then frustratingly lost a five game final to Sophie Neil, whom she had overcome in straight games in their group!

Vicky also dominated the Devon Junior Championships at Exmouth, taking the under 13, 15 & 18 singles titles, as well as the girls' doubles (with Amy Whiting) for an amazing fifth successive time at the ripe old age of 12.

#### **Other winners at Exmouth were:**

Boys U15 David White

Boys U13 Ollie Buddell

Boys U11 Erik Wilson

Girls U11 Jodie Kirk

#### **Durham by Kevin Wilson**

I feel I should start with an apology for not writing any Durham county notes for last month's issue of Table Tennis News. I'm afraid that this will happen from time to time when my real work gets in the way of my hobby! As a result of my omission, this month's county notes will be dedicated to a review of this season's senior British League non-premier divisions from a Durham perspective.

Our two top (non-premier) players this season were Mark Simpson and

Andrew Leighton who were representing Derwent I and Grantham respectively in Division One North. Simpson's Derwent side had a good season which ultimately ended in disappointment, as they finished runners-up, losing out on promotion to the hallowed lands of the Premier by just three points to champions Elgre Nottingham I. The division was won and lost in the matches between the two sides as they drew once 4-4 and Elgre took the second 6-2. In the defeat Mark Simpson beat David Arrowsmith 3-1, but couldn't repeat the feat against Lee Neil as he missed out 3-1. His two victories in the return fixture were crucial in securing the draw, however, as he again defeated David Arrowsmith 3-2 and beat Stewart Mudie 3-1. Over the season Simpson was the team's top performer, winning 23 of his 28 matches, and it will be hard to look past him for this division's player of the season award.

Andrew Leighton's Grantham also had a fairly successful season as they finished fourth in the division, just seven points behind the victorious Elgre side. Their best two victories in the season came against second placed Derwent I and third placed Drumchapel Glasgow II, and wins from Leighton were crucial in both matches. In the first they defeated Derwent I 5-3 with Andrew Leighton picking up an excellent 3-0 win over Stephen Horsfield.

Grantham's win against Drumchapel was even more convincing as they took the match 6-2 and again Leighton's 3-2 win against Stewart Mudie was an important one. Durham were also represented this season in Division Two North with Philip Robinson part of a Northfield side who finished in a respectable sixth place, a good effort given that their top player Keith Rodger could only turn out on three of the seven days of play. Two results which indicated just what the team is capable of when they get their best

players out, came in their brace of draws against fourth placed Elgre Nottingham II. Impressively one of these draws came without Keith Rodger, and Philip Robinson played his part in defeating Jane Vickers 3-1.

Even when severely under strength, Northfield managed to pull out a draw against local rivals Ormesby III. Philip Robinson was instrumental in this result winning two close games. In the first he edged out Edward Fambely 3-2 and then followed this up by defeating Rachel Greener 3-1. Robinson finished the season with 7 wins in the 20 matches he played. Sunderland were this season's only Durham based senior British League team and, as it was their first season in the competition, they were in Division Four North. They finished the season as champions but it wasn't all plain sailing as the team lost twice to the second placed team Pudsey, 6-2 and 5-3, and only snatched the title by way of a superior sets difference.

The division was won and lost in Sunderland and Pudsey's matches against the teams in third and fourth place, St Mary's Hull and Barnt Green. Sunderland showed their strength in depth as they won all four of their matches against these teams, whereas Pudsey drew twice with Barnt Green and lost once to Hull.

The match between Sunderland and Hull in the final weekend produced the performance of the season from the north east team, as they dispatched their opponents 7-1. Kevin Wilson produced two 3-0 wins over Julian Gittens and impressively Luke Carrington, and Keith Weatherby also performed superbly to beat Luke Carrington, but went down in his second singles to Gary Usher 3-1. Graeme Barella had a second good win of the season over Julian Gittens 3-1 and also defeated Adam Smith. Anthony Barella played well to beat Gary Usher 3-0 and just edge out Adam Smith 3-2 to avenge

**Hard-hitting Paul Davison became the Men's Singles champion for the first time, whilst Bradley Hudgell caused the most surprises, including beating second seed Steve Kerns 3-0 in his semi-final. Andy McEwan/Andy Doshier were outstanding winners of the Men's Doubles for the first time.**

an earlier defeat to the Hull player.

All of the Sunderland players contributed to the team's success. Graeme Barella was the team's best player over the season with 18 wins from 20 matches, Anthony Barella won 24 out of 28, Kevin Wilson and Keith Weatherby each won 20 out of 28 and Philip Dixon won 5 out of 8.

#### Essex by Steve Kerns

##### Closed Tournament Round-Up

**Braintree** - Hard-hitting Paul Davison became the Men's Singles champion for the first time, whilst Bradley Hudgell caused the most surprises, including beating second seed Steve Kerns 3-0 in his semi-final. Andy McEwan/Andy Doshier were outstanding winners of the Men's Doubles for the first time.

**Colchester** - David Cole became the Men's Singles champion for a ninth time, whilst Holly Stubbings thwarted Sue Welham in her attempt to win the Ladies' title for an amazing twenty second time, beating Sue 12-10 in the fifth end of a thrilling semi-final. However, Holly was well beaten 3-0 in the final by promising Suffolk county player Sian Cooke.

**Romford** - Roland Zaunmayr became the new Men's Singles champion, beating all action Paul Whatton in the final.

Men's Singles: Roland Zaunmayr bt. Paul Whatton 3-1  
Veterans' Singles: Steve Kerns bt. John Tendler 3-1  
Men's Doubles: Paul Whatton/Kevin McNutt bt. Steve Kerns/Paul Morris 3-1  
Restricted Singles: Dave Bowman bt. Tony Bonnici 3-0  
Intermediate (Under 21) Singles: Jamie Bond bt. Chris Penrose 3-2.

**Southend** - Evergreen Stuart Gibbs carried off the double, winning both the Men's and Veterans' Singles titles.

Men's Singles: Stuart Gibbs bt. Duncan Taylor 3-1  
Men's Doubles: George Reeves/Kevin Read bt. John Poysden/Peter Saunders 3-1  
Ladies' Singles: Linda Murray bt. Janet Finch 3-2  
Mixed Doubles: George Reeves/Linda Murray bt. Stuart Gibbs/Sarah Mapes 3-1  
Ladies' Doubles: Janet Finch/Shelley Woolley bt. Sarah Mapes/Pam Swan 3-2  
Veterans' Singles: Stuart Gibbs bt.

George Reeves 3-0  
Veterans' Doubles: Dave Bowles/Peter Saunders bt. Stuart Gibbs/Dave Calleja 3-1  
Over 60s' Singles: John Lott bt. Rob McDonald 3-0  
Over 70s' Singles: Ray Balchin bt. Lou Hopkins 3-2.

**Burnham Closed** - Ace defender Peter Ballard turned back the clock to capture the Men's Singles title for the fourth time. And to confirm what a great competitor he is, this was the third decade in which Peter has won this title. His first victory was back in 1989, and he also won in 1999, whilst he has been successful twice in the new Millennium, in 2003 and again this year. Peter won the title the hard way, scoring a superb 11-9, 11-7, 11-9 semi-final success over top seed Kevin Read and in a dramatic final he overturned a two game deficit to beat George Reeves 9-11, 6-11, 13-11, 11-8, 12-10.

**Clacton Closed** - Still improving Kevin Gowlett did well to overturn a two game deficit to get the better of Colin Stallwood after a seesawing Men's Singles final. Gowlett triumphed 5-11, 6-11, 11-4, 11-8, 11-3.

**Brentwood Closed** - All-action Kevin Read became the Brentwood Men's Singles Champion for the first time, adding to his Singles victory in this year's Basildon Closed. Read blitzed his way to the title with a storming 11-5, 11-5, 11-5 final victory over George Reeves.

#### Hertfordshire by Ann Fereday

The first closed tournament of the year was that of the Watford League in January, William Maybanks, playing in his fourth final in five years, beat Stuart Seaholme to take the Men's Singles. In the Ladies, Sally Bax beat a newcomer Charlotte Clarke. The Veteran Singles was a tactical battle, with Ken Stonerbridge just getting the better of Dennis Robinson.

##### Other results:

Men's Doubles W Maybanks/M Bonyadi bt. D Robinson/K Stonebridge - Mixed Doubles J Channel/D Robinson bt. S/G Bax

Since the results of the Cheshunt League were reported in the last issue, two more closed tournaments have taken place. The Hertford and District was held at Waltham Cross Youth Centre on Sunday April 6th. These are the results.

Open Singles N Gray bt. B Gale  
Veteran Singles J Barnes bt. G Smith  
Veteran Doubles R Blakes/P Fawcett bt. N Gray/F Burdett  
Men's Doubles B Gale/J Torres bt. J Barnes/F Burdett

Mixed Doubles J Swain/N Gray bt. F Frankel/J Barnes  
Super Vet. Singles J Barnes bt. F Burdett

Junior Singles B Tuttle bt. R Bembridge  
Junior Doubles B/D Tuttle bt. R Bembridge/J Pugh

Over several nights at the end of April the Shaw League held its closed competition, there was the usual good entry of 49 people, including four ladies, but only one junior, this was 12 year old Ross MacNiven who made up

for his singular presence by winning three events.

Handicap Singles R MacNiven bt. P Evans Ladies' Singles J Nelson bt. C Rogers Ladies' Doubles J Nelson/C Rogers bt. A Fereday/E Tuit Mixed Doubles A Fereday/R Anderson bt. C Rogers/R Hudson Men's Doubles G Patonai/P Yeoman bt. B Gale/R Shah Veteran Singles L Gregory bt. K Fraher Junior Singles R MacNiven Minor Singles R MacNiven bt. A Rahim Open Singles G Patonai bt. R Murrel

The senior team (captain Janice Laing) was pleased to finish third in its division, having been promoted. During the season the team lost to Middx. 2 & Bucks, drew with Glamorgan, but beat Cornwall 7-3, Surrey 1 by 6-4, Surrey 2 by 8-2 and Wilts. 7-3. Emma Rose won all her matches.

#### **Northants by Dennis Millman**

The EBS Mobile Phones Ltd. County Closed finals night provided some stirring encounters with triumphs for Andy Trott, Steve Silk and Clem Little, mixed with a sprinkling of successful newcomers Charlotte Binley, Jack Coleman and Sarah Hollis, indicating that the county's future is in good hands.

Trott's eleventh men's singles crown came at the expense of Richard Elliott, who partnered Trott to the doubles title when the finals night was first staged in 1993. In a repeat of last year's final Elliott started well to take the opening game, but Trott soon captured the ascendancy and ran out a comfortable winner. Trott won his ninth men's doubles title with Steve Silk. Silk had suffered several unexpected reverses on the Sunday, but 24 hours later he produced the comeback of the tournament: trailing 6-0 to John Fuller in the fifth and final game he clawed back the deficit to level at nine all, before easing through 12-10 for his fourth veteran success. Charlotte Binley matched Trott title for title by taking the singles

against Clem Little with a sparkling fourth end finish, and then joining her beaten opponent to win the doubles against Hollis and Jordan Wood.

Something had to give when Trott and Binley found themselves in direct opposition in the mixed event. Experience won the day when the Trott/Hollis combination succeeded, with Binley and Matt Carter the beaten finalists.

Carter had already ended on the losing side when partnered by Gary Webb in the men's doubles, and he was unfortunate enough to complete a trio of defeats when in the Junior Under 18 final he succumbed to Jack Coleman after a fluctuating five ender was closed out by the Westfield player Coleman at 14-12. Ken Philipson and Fuller dominated the veteran events, with Fuller edging out his Kettering Town teammate at Over 50 level, whilst Philipson took the Over 60 title against perennial winner Bill Fletcher.

Fuller and Philipson held on to the Over 50 doubles, with Fuller now partnered by Gerald Henson, successful in the younger age group, and Philipson and Dennis Millman taking the Over 60s' crown.

In the veteran ladies event Clem Little gained her ninth win in her fourteen finals, a sequence started in 1993 when she was beaten by Margaret Welsman (nee Maltby). Jack Coleman won the Under 15 event after a close fifth end final against Sam Mabey with the latter having a conclusive triumph in the Under 13s only to fall to Miles Chan in the Under 11s.

The girl's events were even more confusing with Jordan Wood beating

the new ladies champion Charlotte Binley at Under 18 level, only to lose in four ends to Rachel Thompson in the Under 15s. Meanwhile Nicole Bird displayed consistency to take both the Under 13 and Under 11 events.

Doubles winners included Dan Smalley and Sam Wildman at Under 18 level with Mabey and Chan taking the under 15 event only to have the result reversed when they met Aaron Ark and Leon Chan in the Under 13s.

The Rod Marchant Memorial Trophy for 18 to 21 year olds went to Matthew Burgess, whilst the Gwll Evans Trophy for the Class One singles saw Northampton's Martin Hall get the better of Jordan Dainty. During the presentation of trophies at the Glamis Hall, County Chairman Ken Marchant received a special award confirming his honorary life membership of the NCTTA in recognition of his 50 years' service and his 40 years as National Councillor.

So ended an outstanding three days of table tennis, with tournament organiser Phil Slade and his willing team of helpers able to look back on a job well done.

#### **Northumberland by Pauline Long**

The senior team of Eddie Smith, Andrew Wilkinson, Dave Godbold, Caron Guthrie and Karen Henry finished fourth in Division 1A following two draws in their final series of matches at Wellow School near Newark.

Unfortunately the veterans' final series of Division 1A matches at Halifax was scheduled for the same weekend as the seniors, and they were consequently weakened by the

## **County Closed finals night provided some stirring encounters with triumphs for Andy Trott, Steve Silk and Clem Little, mixed with a sprinkling of successful newcomers Charlotte Binley, Jack Coleman and Sarah Hollis.**



Charlotte Binley - Northants

call-up of their top players to that squad. The team of Geoff Salter, Dale Aitkenhead, Jim Stamas (last two on debut) and myself, despite best efforts, lost all three matches and will be relegated. A few matches still remain to be played in the Northumbria League at the time of writing, but the division championships have already been decided. Birtley A have regained the Premier Division title from last season's winners, Washington A, while Byker A (Division 1), North Fire B (Division 2), Cramlington Magpies (Division 3) and Maccabi (Division 4) are the other table-toppers. There will be no close season for some players, as the Northumbria Summer League was due to commence on 19th May and will continue until mid-August.

#### Surrey by Chris Andrews

Wing-Yung Chan was selected for the World Schools Championship in Malta. They lost to China 7-0 and beat Puerto Rico 7-0 following which the team of Wing-Yung Chan, Chris Doran, Richard Andrews and William Maybanks beat Belgium Flanders 4-3 and Turkey 7-0. In the semi-final they lost 4-0 to Chinese Taipei and then lost the bronze medal match to Slovakia 4-0, thereby finishing a very respectable fourth.

London Progress won their tenth British League title with Marco Essomba giving a helping hand, as well being Surrey's highest averages player in the British Premier League.

Surrey ran riot at the Cippenham Cadet and U13 Open, taking all four main titles on offer. Unseeded Ayman Al-Sibassi stole the show by beating Michael Ho, also from Surrey, in the final of the Cadet Boys' Singles. However, Michael did take home the under 13 Boys' Singles title. Top seed Feifei Pei took the Cadet Girls' title with only one girl being able to extend her to the full distance. Lucy Lou won the under 13 Girls' Singles and was also a beaten finalist in the Cadet Girls event.

In the Croydon Table Tennis League, Wickham Park A smashed their way to the Division 1 title with 18 wins, no draws and no losses. Akos Baranyai won 100% of his matches, which is always impressive, but in this case it is doubly so as he won 43 matches. Monk Hill B took Division 2 with a 49 point margin and Joe Painter topped the averages. Division 3 was a tight affair with Wickham Park E just above Limpfield A, Limpfield's George Buck was averages leader. Deaf Access A won Division 4 with their players Jonathon Falloon and Nanse K Basnejad joint top of the averages.

The Guildford League saw Burymead B win the Premier League. However, Marc Burman of Mellow D was top of the averages. Godalming won Division 1 with a team of Alain Choo-Choy, Michael Chan and Guy Chan. It was always a case of when they would lift the title rather than if they would. Joel Clancy recorded two big wins this season beating Alain Choo-Choy in the Guildford League and Tom Adams, Graham Spicer's Chairman, in the Thames Valley League. Woking LTC B won Guildford Division 2 with Godalming B's S. Edenhofer on 100% in the averages. Ash B and Cody B won Divisions 4 and 5 respectively with S. Simpson of Ash B and Kevein Barkham of Godalming H being top of the averages.

Rosehill A won the Sutton and District Table Tennis League Division 1 title with Richard top of the averages on 100%. The Division 2 title was won by Rosehill C with N. MacAlpine of Woodmansterne top of the averages. Tadworth B won Division 3 with A. Webster of Tadworth C on the averages summit. Division 4 was won by Crusaders G with their player I. Reza winning all his 34 matches.

#### Sussex by Graham Carter

Ritchie Venner from Hastings has had a successful month. At Six Villages, Westergate, he won the Men's Singles title at the Sussex Championships for the 13th time, equalling the record by Roger Chandler in the 1970s and 80s. He also retained the Men's Doubles title, partnering Mayur Majithia (Crawley), who had been his opponent in the singles final.

At the VETTS Southern Masters tournament held at the superb K2 Leisure Centre in Crawley Venner also won all three main titles. He claimed the Over 40s Men's Singles, the Men's Doubles and the Mixed Doubles events. In the singles he beat Clive Carthy from Essex, and in the doubles partnering Steve Hall from Somerset he cruised home against Joe Kennedy and Carthy. In the Mixed Doubles he joined with Sue Collier from Cheshire to beat Kent duo Kennedy and Di Pearce. His one disappointment came at Wednesbury in Staffordshire captaining Sussex, who surrendered the County Championship crown to Devon, and finished



Ian Ferguson & Samantha Meredith - Warwickshire

third in the Premier Division, having won the title for the last two years.

Rose Rainton, also from Hastings, became Sussex Ladies' Singles champion for the ninth time, beating Sarah Stedman from Worthing in a well-fought final. Evergreen Andy Meads (Crawley) won the Over 50s Men's Consolation Singles at the VETTS Southern Masters when he beat Ray Rider from Yorkshire. The greatest surprise of the tournament was the defeat of Dr Herbert Neubauer who has twice won the World Veterans title and the European Championships three times. John Calcutt from Crawley toppled the legend deuce in the fifth in an Over 40s group game.

Sussex juniors have been successful too, Emma Torkington (Haywards Heath) helped the England team to win the British Primary School Championships held in the Isle of Man. In the individual events she reached the final, beating top ranked players who were older. Her team-mate Helshan Weerasinghe (Brighton) won the boys' individual event.

Yolanda King, 13, from St Leonards, emerged the winner of the Cotswold Junior Four Star Open championships at Cheltenham, and also reached the last eight of the Under 18s Girls' Singles.

Stephen Denman from Brighton won two titles at the Sussex Junior Championships at a new venue, the Sackville School in East Grinstead. He beat Ricki Weston of Horsham in a tense five set final, and partnered by his brother James, beat Weston and Stephen Eckford 3-2 in the Boys' Doubles final, which was a repeat of last year.

#### Warwickshire by Caroline Williams

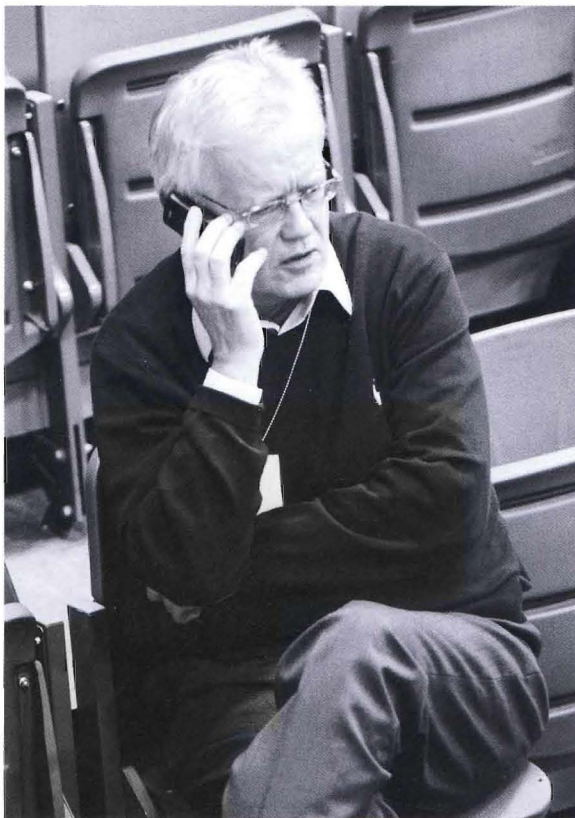
The Leamington Closed Championships, held in March with the finals at the Kenilworth Wardens Cricket Club, saw Colebridge ace Ian Ferguson crowned Men's Singles champion for the first time. His strong looping from half-distance ensured he came out on top in straight sets against the hard-hitting Mark Jackson (Flavels). Ferguson had earlier in the evening defeated Ron Vose (St. George's) in their semi-final, whilst Jackson saw off Ian Randle (Rugby). Ferguson had also met Jackson in the Bombay Tandoori Grade 1 Final, where Ferguson came from two sets down to edge out Jackson.

Top seed Samantha Meredith (AP Sports) produced some consistent powerful hitting to clinch the Wright Hassall Ladies' Singles crown for the third time, beating Charlotte Spencer (Free Church). Charlotte, along with Jack Randle

(Rugby), demonstrated that there are certainly some youngsters in the Leamington League who are improving rapidly. The two youngsters were involved in nine finals over the night, with Jack notching an impressive four wins out of four and Charlotte four from five.

Men's Singles: Ian Ferguson bt. Mark Jackson, Ladies' Singles: Samantha Meredith bt. Charlotte Spencer, Men's Doubles: Mark Jackson/Earl Sweeney bt. Ian Ferguson/Sasha Grokhotov, Ladies' Doubles: Samantha Meredith/Charlotte Spencer bt. Sue Clarke/Tracey Fletcher, Mixed Doubles: Charlotte Spencer/Mark Jackson bt. Samantha Meredith/Navinder Matharu, Veteran Singles: Ron Vose bt. Ian Randle, Over 50 Singles: Ron Vose bt. Mike Bridgman, Over 60 Singles: Brian Aston bt. Derek Harwood, Youth Singles: Tristan Gretton bt. Sasha Grokhotov, Junior Boys' Singles: Tristan Gretton bt. Ben Meakin, Junior Girls' Singles: Charlotte Spencer bt. Holly Thompson, Under 15 Boys' Singles: Jack Randle bt. Ben Meakin, Under 15 Girls' Singles: Charlotte Spencer bt. Holly Thompson, Under 13 Boys' Singles: Loz Sweeney bt. Matthew Outhwaite, Under 13 Girls' Singles: Holly Thompson bt. Jessica Campion, Under 11 Boys' Singles: Niall Herbert bt. Simon Thompson, Under 11 Girls' Singles: Jessica Campion bt. Ruth Mackay, Junior Doubles: Jack Randle/Ben Meakin bt. Tristan Gretton/Luke Hobbins, Grade 1 Singles: Ian Ferguson bt. Mark Jackson, Grade 2 Singles: Jack Randle bt. Steve Proctor, Grade 3 Singles: Philip Blowey bt. Loz Sweeney, Grade 4 Singles: Ryan Lines bt. Holly Thompson, Grade 5 Singles: Niall Herbert bt. Jeremy Knott, Handicap Singles: Holly Thompson bt. Simon Thompson, Parent/Child Doubles: Ian/Jack Randle bt. Earl/Loz Sweeney.





# STEEN KYST HANSEN

**Birth date:** 17/10/1951

**Place of birth:** Copenhagen

**Residence:** Nottingham

**When and how did you get involved in table tennis?**

Playing on the dining table with my neighbour!

**Do any members of your family play?** No

**Who has been the greatest influence on your career?** Christian Juhl

**What is your job title?** BTTF Performance Manager

**What is the purpose of your job?**

Improve British and English Table Tennis

**Do you have any key goals or targets?**

Olympics 2012

**What do you feel will be the biggest challenges in achieving these?** Beating China

**What did you do before taking up this role?**

Table Tennis Player, England Female Coach

**Proudest moment:** Winning the European Youth Championships with Denmark in 1994

**Biggest disappointment:** Not winning in 1995!

## Player Rankings 2007/2008

### TOP 25 SENIOR MEN

Ranking	Player
1.	DRINKHALL, Paul (CV.)
2.	KNIGHT, Darius (SY.)
3.	PERRY, Alex (DV.)
4.	RUSHTON, Andrew (LA.)
5.	BAGGALEY, Andrew (BU.)
6.	HERBERT, Gareth (BK.)
7.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
8.	REED, Daniel (CV.)
9.	YARNALL, Tim (NP.)
10.	MEADS, David (DU.)
11.	YOUNG, Terry (BK.)
12.	BRYANT, Craig (DV.)
13.	TRUMPAUSKAS, Lawrence (E.)
14.	MARSDEN, Michael (DU.)
15.	HOLLAND, John J (Dy) (E.)
16.	DOLDER, Kevin (LA.)
17.	EVANS, Bradley (BU.)
18.	BARHAM, Dale (CA.)
19.	WARE, Mathew (DO.)
20.	NICHOLLS, Damien (SP.)
21.	NOAH, Hubert (E.)
22.	KENNY, Mathew (Y.)
23.	VENNER, Ritchie (SX.)
24.	ESSOMBA, Marco (SY.)
25.	MARPLES, Shaun (DY.)

### TOP 5 JUNIOR BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	DRINKHALL, Paul (CV.)
2.	KNIGHT, Darius (SY.)
3.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
4.	PITCHFORD, Liam (DY.)
5.	WARE, Mathew (DO.)

### TOP 5 CADET BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
2.	PITCHFORD, Liam (DY.)
3.	CULLEN, Sean (DY.)
4.	LOWE, Daniel (DY.)
5.	HO, Ping (MI.)

### TOP 5 UNDER 13 BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	ZILESNIK, Zac (MI.)
2.	WALKER, Sam (NG.)
3.	ADEBANJO, Azarel (E.)
4.	WILSON, Ross (K.)
5.	PATEL, Jared (E.)

### TOP 5 VETERAN MEN

Ranking	Player
1.	WURAOLA, Abdul (SY.)
2.	VENNER, Ritchie (SX.)
3.	WILLIAMS, Keith (LA.)
4.	KENNEDY, Joe (K) (E.)
5.	ECKERSLEY, Nigel (SX.)

### TOP 25 SENIOR WOMEN

Ranking	Player
1.	SIBLEY, Kelly (WA.)
2.	PARKER, Joanna (SY.)
3.	LOWER, Helen (ST.)
4.	BAWDEN, Natalie (E.)
5.	REYNOLDS, Lindsey (LA.)
6.	EMBLING, Abigail (E.)
7.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.)
8.	WANG, Sarra (E.)
9.	ROBERTS, Joanna (Y.)
10.	RAINTON, Rosemary (SX.)
11.	KEAST, Lesley (LI.)
12.	SMITH, Karen (LE.)
13.	JAMIESON, Rachel (E.)
14.	SHEPHERD, Karen (CH.)
15.	LE FEVRE, Karina (CV.)
16.	VICKERS, Jane (DY.)
17.	CLEMENTS, Sanya (DO.)
18.	FARQUHAR, Melanie (BK.)
19.	UZAL, Shelley (E.)
20.	HALLOWES, Caroline (CH.)
21.	WILSON, Naomi (SO.)
22.	BALDI, Andrea(Ys) (Y.)
23.	PERKS, Sarah (NG.)
24.	RADFORD, Lisa (DV.)
25.	WANG, Lucy (E.)

### TOP 5 JUNIOR GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.)
2.	JAMIESON, Rachel (E.)
3.	HALLOWES, Caroline (CH.)
4.	BATES, Emily (LI.)
5.	LE FEVRE, Karina (CV.)

### TOP 5 CADET GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	BATES, Emily (LI.)
2.	LE FEVRE, Karina (CV.)
3.	SLATER, Natalie (ST.)
4.	DAVIDSON, Lucy (DY.)
5.	SUNDARARAJAN, Ayoniija (BK.)

### TOP 5 UNDER 13 GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	BATES, Emily (LI.)
2.	HO, Tin-Tin (MI.)
3.	SMITH, Victoria (DV.)
4.	DAWSON, Jessica (CV.)
5.	KIRBY, Charleigh (MI.)

### TOP 5 VETERAN WOMEN

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



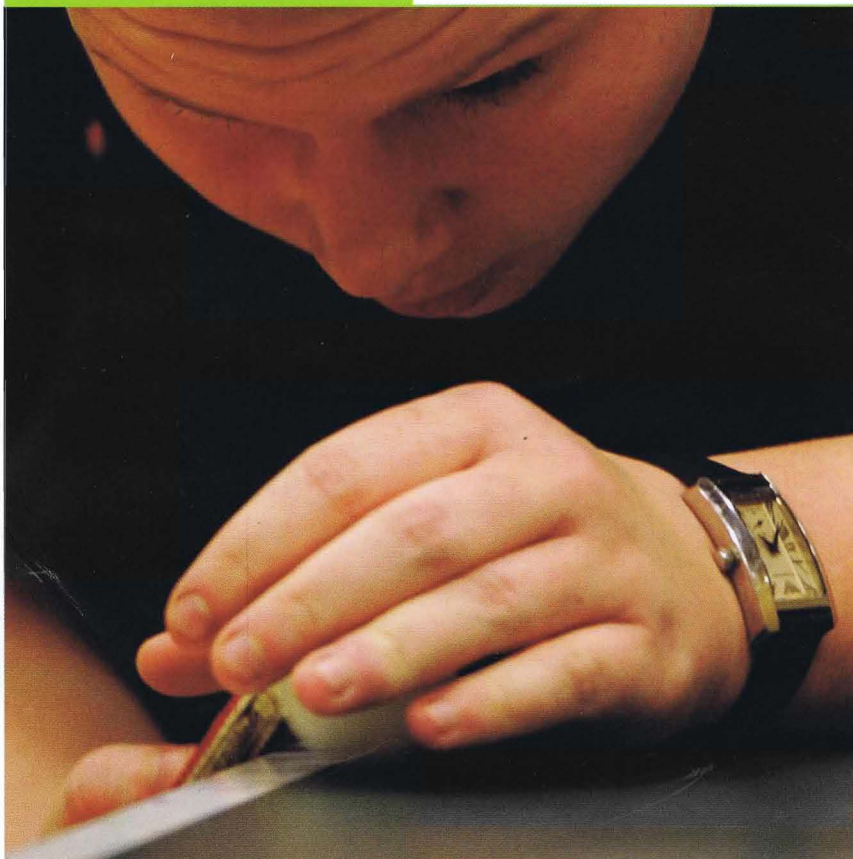
For the full list of player rankings go to our website

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



# Dates for your diary

Table Tennis events for June/July 2008



**2007/2008  
COPY DATES**

July Issue  
Copy Deadline: 09 June 08  
Advertising Deadline: 2 June 08

## Saturday 14th June

Junior: Cippenham YP Summer Festival 1 Star & Carter Cup & Bromfield Trophy Finals

## Sunday 15th June

Junior: Cippenham YP Summer Festival 1 Star  
Senior: Wilmott Cup & Rose Bowl Finals

## Friday 20th June

Cadet: Cadet Six Nations - Lilleshall

## Saturday 21st June

Cadet: Cadet Six Nations - Lilleshall & Ernest Bevin TTK 1 Star  
Junior: Ernest Bevin TTK 1 Star  
Senior: Women's British League

## Sunday 22nd June

Cadet: Cadet Six Nations - Lilleshall  
Senior: Women's British League

## Saturday 5th July

Other: Mini Cadet Tournament - Holland

## Sunday 6th July

Veteran: Cippenham Summer 2 Star

## Other:

**Saturday 27th -29th June**

World Veterans, Rio de Janeiro

**Friday 11th -20th July**

European Youth - Terni, Italy

**Friday 18th-20th July**

DSE Games - Stoke Manderville

The Association would like to thank all of the following for their support during the season 2007/08

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www.bribartt.co.uk

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