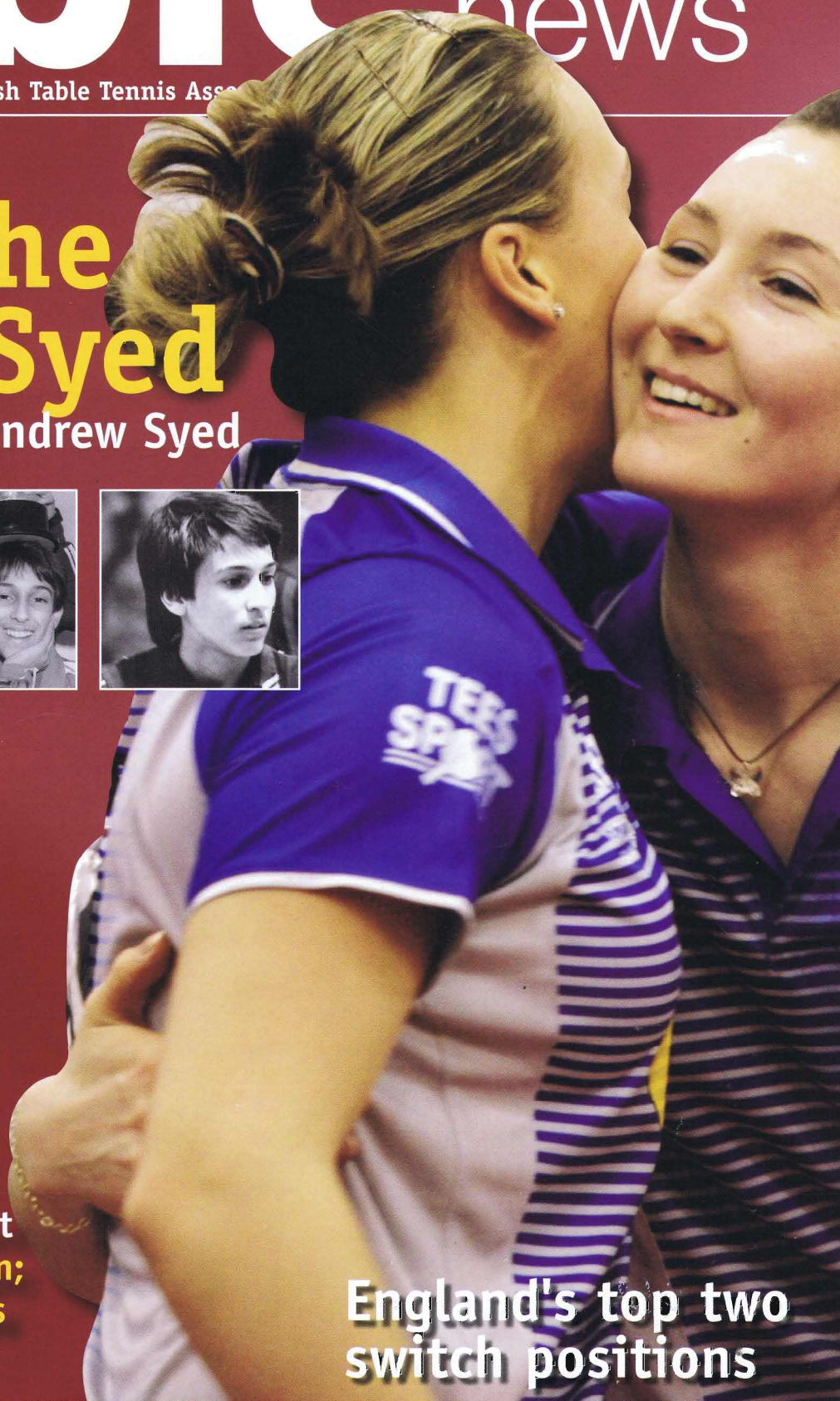
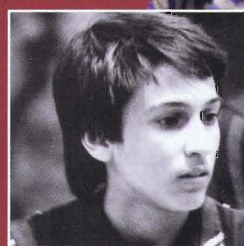
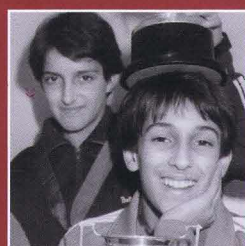
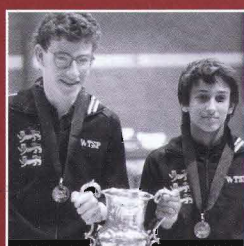


# table tennis news

Official Magazine of the English Table Tennis Association

## Meet the Other Syed

Exclusive with Andrew Syed



Interview with  
England new no.1  
Joanna Parker; Sport  
England's new vision;  
Plus the latest news  
and results

England's top two  
switch positions

**STIGA NCT Wood:**  
Changing the Way the Game is played

**STIGA**

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JULY 08

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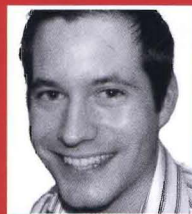
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# first word



I was recently at an old school friend's wedding. It was great to catch up with people I hadn't seen for some while and reminisce. As we did, it struck me that virtually all of my old school friends present had at some point played table tennis in our local league, Cirencester.

Like many other leagues up and down the country, Cirencester was a league that was primarily based in village halls and venues that were too dark and cold in the winter and too hot and bright in the summer. The average age of a league player was well, let's just say old; and there was a serious resistance to change - sound familiar?

So how on earth did we all get involved? Well one man's vision changed everything. This man was Bob Davis, definitely one of the most influential people I have ever met. Bob's first move was to build a strong relationship with the local senior school, and in doing so, he unearthed a key ally and keen table tennis player 'Mr Green' (my

maths teacher and tutor). Together their determination, superb negotiation skills and shared passion to reignite table tennis within Cirencester and particularly the younger generation led to a new facility, and subsequently a boom in table tennis in the local community. Without this enthusiasm and drive to create a welcoming yet competitive league within a central venue, and build that crucial club/league school link, I know my friends and I would never have competitively participated in the sport.

So if you find yourself in the situation described in my second paragraph perhaps it's time for a rethink? Collectively we need to move the game forward and create a new environment with better engagement with the younger generation, making sure that venues have the right balance between competition, social interaction and coaching. Leagues that play in different venues on different nights of the week,

where a match can last the best part of four hours and finish after 10:30 pm, surely don't fit in today's fast-paced world, and are certainly not youth compatible.

So as we step into a new Sport England funding cycle with the Olympics providing the focal point to develop a world-leading community sport system, we all need to evaluate our position to ensure that we can capitalise on the opportunities. The ETTA has begun this process by evaluating its competition structure and commissioning an independent governance review to ensure we are providing our best possible service to support you, the Bob Davis' and Mr Greens of this world. Together we can make a difference and ensure our sport can grow, sustain and excel.

As usual, I would like to hear your points of view on this topic and others.

I hope you enjoy this magazine and your summer break.

Richard.pettit@etta.co.uk  
Richard Pettit, Editor

## The highlights from our main contributors...

One of Colum's greatest matches took place over 20 years ago, at the 1988 English Open Brighton" Steve Kerns Page 6 "The club is not just about elite excellence; it is also tightly focused on engagement with the local community" Paul Rainford Page 10 "The key transition phase occurs when a promising junior moves into the ranks of senior competition" Ben Oakley Page 12 "Her defensive, away-from -the-table approach was unusual, but highly effective as competitors from England and around the world struggled to adapt" Jeremy Wilson Page 26

# Straight talk

**I will cover three main issues in this article which are all key to our sport covering the spectrum of development, coaching, finance, governance and elite.**

A number of meetings, discussions, announcements and reviews have been taking place with our funding partners and others, which will impact our sport over the coming years.

The new strategy from Sport England is an exciting and progressive opportunity for Table Tennis.

## **Sport England**

I mentioned in the last issue of TTN some brief details in regard to the potential new strategy and planning process for 2009 to 2013 by Sport England, full details are available on the Sport England website under announcement article via the Executive Summary and Full Narrative.

Meetings have taken place covering the announcement of the new Sport England strategy, which were attended by the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the Minister of Sport the national governing bodies. These took place on 10th June and both Richard Yule and I attended.

Sport England and the Government have decided that their prime delivery partner will be the national governing bodies (NGBs) who will be commissioned to deliver and achieve the agreed outcomes, whilst at the same time the NGBs will be accountable for these outcomes with quarterly or six monthly reviews.

Funding will be awarded to up to 46 sports as a single pot of money to each of these sports following a planning and engagement process with Sport England. The selected sports are those with over 75,000 participants and/or an Olympic sport and/or designated as a development sport.

The award will be against a Whole Sport Plan for draft submission by mid August and full submission/approval by end of September, with awards announced for 2009 to 2013 during December.

The initial planning and commissioning was started at a meeting for Table Tennis on Monday 16th June where a template was provided, the process explained and the announcement of a Senior Sport England Manager who will be our contact and support person. It is interesting to note

that the Sport England CEO will be allocated four sports to work with; this shows the importance of the process of engagement between the leading partners.

The annual total funding will be £120M per year an increase of 20% (this should not be regarded by any sports as their right for any increase from existing levels of awards) and will be split for each sport by exchequer funding (this covers the Community Club Development Programme (CCDP) and will be for two years) and Lottery funding (this covers the core funding and projects such as Physical Education School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) and Club/Coach and will be for the full four years).

The three areas of investment will be for **GROW, SUSTAIN AND EXCEL**; details of what these mean are within the documents mentioned above.

Additional projects will be funded, for example "DROP OFFS" which means the 16 to 18 year olds who leave sports.

Close links are being established with County Sports Partnerships for support at the community level via local councils and assistance will be given to NGBs in brokering deals between all parties.

The Government emphasised the need for diversity and for the NGBs to ensure they meet the needs of all including more women, people with disabilities and all social/ethnic groups. Key areas stressed were coaching, club structure, volunteers/officials, increased participants and talent pool

This is a very significant and positive change in strategy, which will benefit our sport now and in the future. The Government looks at this new strategy as a major contribution towards the legacy for community sport after London 2012.

Further details will be made available and included on the website and other circulations over the coming months.

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

UK Sport has recently announced the process and principles of the funding application for the Elite Programme for 2009 to 2013 and here is some background information.

The principles of the funding model are being reviewed and any necessary revisions will be agreed with the UK Sport board during June 2008.

At the UK Sport board meeting in October 2008, the provisional figures and sport specific targets for 2012 will be noted and then agreed with Table Tennis on the proposed level of investment in November 2008.

Final funding decisions will be confirmed to Table Tennis and formal offer letters issued in January 2009 following a high level summary plan being submitted by us and agreed.

Our recent submission to the Mission 2012 Panel was accepted and a further submission will be put forward during October.

Two new posts are being advertised in coaching for the elite programme: an assistant performance coach for both the women and men's groups. This with the Chinese sparring partners coming on board will boost the training and support for the players.

#### ETTA Review

The draft document has been completed and here is some background about the report and its intent.

The ETTA is entering an exciting and challenging period for the development of table tennis as a sport in England in the run up to the Olympic Games in 2012. As Table Tennis is one of the designated Olympic sports this period is likely to present significant opportunities for the development of the sport. To ensure that the ETTA is well placed to take advantage of the available opportunities and to rise to the challenges that it faces, it was decided to undertake a review of key roles, its approach to reward, and the current organisation and governance structures.

The consultants with Sport England support were commissioned to assist us with this key business development project that has been established to:

Review internal relativities between roles;

Compare rewards offered by the ETTA with those of other sports bodies;

#### **Review the ETTA organisation structure;**

Review and comment on the ETTA governance structure.

Its overall aim was to provide more appropriate structures to support the future development of the ETTA and to support the bid for funds for the period 2009 to 2013.

All of the aims in this review were completed to our satisfaction, and during the coming months we shall encompass some of the conclusions and recommendations in our planning process for funding and discuss, consult and develop ideas about a number of other recommendations made.

It is the ETTA's decision about how or whether to implement any changes within our existing structures, roles, rules and governance, but the overall review should enhance any funding applications.

#### Bat Testing

Discussions continue with the ITTF and other parties in regard to bat testing which will enable clear, defined procedures and regulations to be in place by 1st September.

This whole matter has not proved easy and has caused problems for us and other associations around the world. I

do believe that our International Federation in conjunction with the manufacturers have understood our concerns and the detailed reports we have sent to them.

Documents have been distributed to National Council on this matter and reported by me on the website, I cannot though emphasise enough that the original recommendation about the use of equipment which contained VOCs was put in place for potential health reasons and to comply with the Olympic Charter in regard to toxic materials.

Some of this has caused distress to some individuals and on behalf of the ETTA I apologise for this, you must though understand that we were following approved procedures with an approved VOC testing machine, and recent changes in Table Tennis equipment and the apparent interaction between products has seriously impacted the whole procedure.

None of this of course alleviates the concerns of players and parents, and I would like to assure you that this whole matter is being taken very seriously and the ETTA will deliver clear and concise instructions by the start of the new season once the ITTF has concluded its findings.

I wish you all a great summer, let us hope the weather enables us to barbecue and sit in our gardens.

Finally let us together wish our players and coaches every success at the European Youth Championships in Italy and bring England home some medals.



Alex Murdoch, ETTA Chairman

“ The Government emphasised the need for diversity and for the NGB to ensure they meet the needs of all including more women, people with disabilities and all social/ethnic groups.”

# Colum Slevin

Ireland's Colum Slevin - the 2006 European Veterans' Men's Over 40s Singles

**A**sk players who was the most experienced competitor taking part in the top-class London Grand Prix and you would have received a plethora of answers. However, there was one player whose experience of playing top-class Table Tennis surpasses any other player by the proverbial mile. The playing career of Ireland's Colum Slevin, the 2006 European Veterans' Men's Over 40s Singles Champion, is beyond comparison in terms of its longevity. Colum can even be judged against the likes of such sporting greats as Sir Stanley Matthews, Sir Steve Redgrave and Colin Jackson.

A quarter-finalist in the European Cadet Championships in 1978 as a 13 year-old, Slevin had high hopes of winning a medal a year later. However it wasn't to be, and he was a second round faller to an unknown Swede by the name of Waldner. Thrown into the glare of international play as a callow 13 year-old, Slevin admits now that perhaps he was too young, but he was certainly not put off by the experience. What's more, he is still good enough to represent Ireland 29 years later.

How does he react to the statement that he doesn't appear to hit the ball as hard as some of his rivals? He grins good-naturedly: "It hasn't held me back, my strength is that I can read spin well".

Arguably Colum's greatest triumph came last June when he won the European Over 40s Men's Singles title in Rotterdam. Having qualified for the quarter-final Colum scored a fairly routine 11-4, 11-9, 12-10 victory over Lars Hauth (Denmark) followed by a superb 11-9, 12-14, 11-8, 12-10 win over former Dutch champion Henk van Spanje, the conqueror of Peter Aranyosi (Hungary), the runner-up in the 2006 World Veterans' Singles Championships. Colum's opponent in the final was Mircea Nicorescu (France), a third round winner over top seed Paul Haldan (Netherlands). Colum dominated this match and deservedly ran out a 11-6, 14-16, 11-3, 11-6 winner.

One of Colum's greatest matches in his earlier days took place 20 years ago, at the 1988 English Open in Brighton when he beat Jan Harkamp (Denmark) after a match full of spectacular rallies and away from the table retrieving. However, what was a truly stunning game paled into insignificance because on the adjacent table Swedish superstar Jorgen Persson was taking on the 1987 World Men's Singles Champion Jiang Jia Liang (China), and this match featured one of the greatest rallies of all time. This resulted in the crowd giving the particular point what seemed like a five-minute standing ovation. Somehow, Colum had to put this out of his mind and concentrate on his own game. He managed this, and went on to win.

Colum was awarded the ITTF Merit Award for fair play in 1997, the same year that Desmond Douglas received such an Award. When one considers that other recipients have included Andrzej Grubba and Timo Boll there can be few higher honours in World Table Tennis.

**"One of Colum's greatest matches in his earlier days took place 20 years ago, at the 1988 English Open in Brighton"**

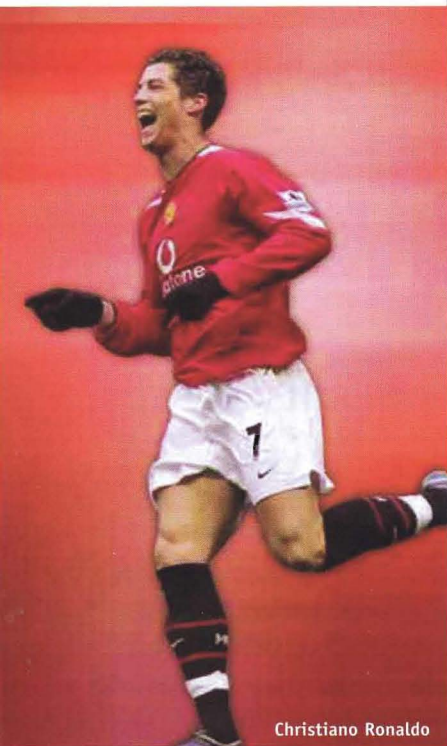


# Headlines

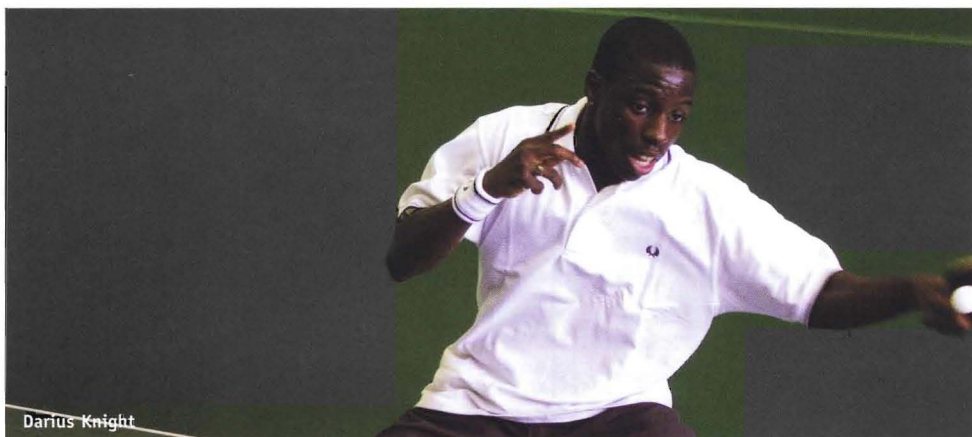
The latest stories from the Table Tennis World

## MAN UNITED ACE RONALDO COULD'VE BEEN A TABLE TENNIS CHAMP!

Manchester United wing ace Cristiano Ronaldo could have given up football as a junior to become a Table Tennis champion! Ronaldo's biographer, Manuela Brandao, said: "He is good at all sports. A champion of table tennis. His coach at Sporting Lisbon's academy tried to convince him to devote as much time to Table Tennis as to football because he was so talented."



Christiano Ronaldo



Darius Knight

## UK SCHOOL GAMES' AMBASSADORS

As the UK School Games continues to grow, with this year's event expanding to nine sports after welcoming hockey, the event's President Richard Caborn MP will host a reception at the House of Commons.

The event is taking place to thank those behind the success of the Games and to launch the UK School Games Champion Ambassadors programme. The Champion Ambassadors programme will honour on an annual basis the outstanding performers from the UK School Games - many of whom will be tipped as competitors at future Olympic and Paralympic Games. Each Champion Ambassador will play an active role in contributing to the future development of the UK School Games and raise its profile as patrons, while meeting annually with Richard to provide an insight into the event as part of the Athletes Commission. From being the driving force behind the concept of the UK School Games, to his current position of President of the multi-sport event for elite young

athletes of school age, Richard has worked closely with the organisers Youth Sport Trust.

Richard said: "I am both proud and delighted to be President of the UK School Games which is fast becoming the pinnacle of the school sport competitive calendar. The annual Games gives Britain's best school age athletes the opportunity to compete against each other - and show the rest of the country how talented they are. "The UK School Games Champion Ambassador programme recognises the performances of those outstanding athletes across each sport who will become role models for their peers, help champion this inspirational event and, we hope, go on to win medals at major elite events. "

£6 million from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has been awarded to the Youth Sport Trust through Legacy Trust UK to develop the UK School Games in Bristol and Bath in 2008 and each year until 2011.

Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson said: "I think it's always great for athletes to have someone who has

been there and competed at the same event as them to look up to and act in a mentor role".

This year's inaugural group of UK School Games Champion Ambassadors are a combination of gold medal winners from the 2006 Games in Glasgow, along with those selected for their potential performance status in relation to London 2012. All 12 Champion Ambassadors represent the four home countries and a range of sports including Paralympic events. It is expected that each ambassador will serve for between one and three years, with future nominations being made by the national governing bodies and home country sports councils, which will then be considered by the panel, and each year a worthy champion will be invited to become an ambassador. Later this year, record numbers of young athletes will compete at the 2008 UK School Games, when it is staged at four venues around Bath and Bristol from 28th to 31st August.



Ron Hedley

## THE LESLIE FORREST MEMORIAL TROPHY

Ron Hedley has received the highest award bestowed by the ETTA for his outstanding contribution to county championships table tennis in England and Wales.

He was presented with the Leslie Forrest Memorial Trophy at the County Championships AGM in Birmingham.

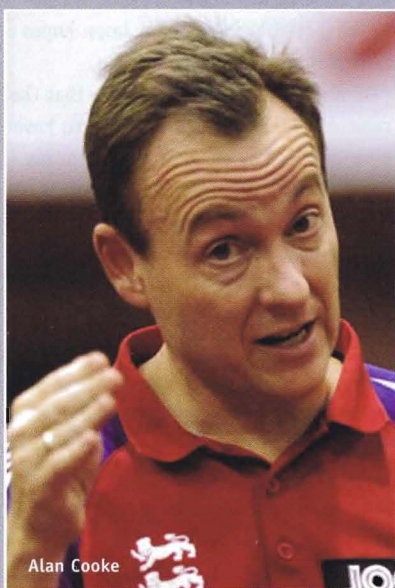
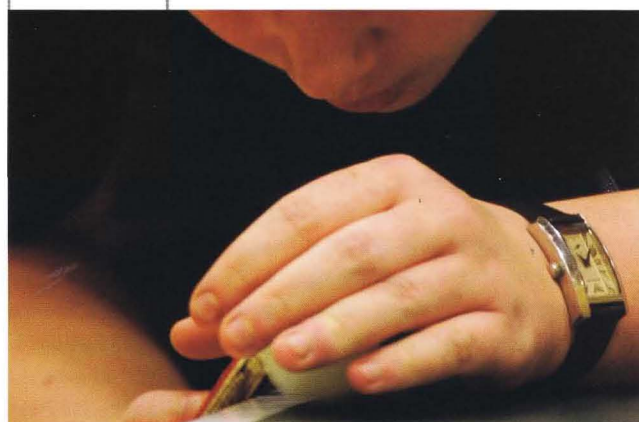
Ron became County Match Secretary for Bucks in 1978 and held the post for 18 seasons. He has also played in the High Wycombe Table Tennis League since 1974 and was a committee member for 24 years and chairman for eight.

## Spreading the Word

Speedwell Table Tennis Club has been spreading the word - by introducing youngsters to the sport.

The Staveley-based club has received a £6,500 local network grant to buy tables and other equipment, supply coaches and hold training sessions in primary and junior schools. Youngsters at seven schools - Woodthorpe Juniors, Norbriggs

Primary, Poolsbrook Primary, Duckmanton Primary, St Joseph's Primary, Birmingham Juniors, Staveley Juniors - were given coaching over an eight week period. Staveley Juniors, with help from their school sports coordinator Pat Addy, were one of the first to put their names down for the scheme.



Alan Cooke

## EUROPEAN YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP SQUAD ANNOUNCED

The ETTA Junior selection panel has announced the England squad for the European Youth Championships. The tournament will be run from 11th-20th July in Terni, Italy.

### The Squad:

Junior Boys: Paul Drinkhall, Darius Knight, Mathew Ware, Chris Doran and Damien Nicholls

Junior Girls: Mary Fuller, Natalie Slater and Martha Travis (Team)

Cadet Boys: Gavin Evans, Liam Pitchford, Sean Cullen and Daniel Lowe

Cadet Girls: Emily Bates, Karina Le fevre, Lucy Davidson and Martha Travis (Individual)

Coaches: Jia Yi Liu (Cadet Boys), Carole Moore (Junior Girls), Alan Cooke (Cadet Boys), Alex Perry (Cadet Girls).

The squad will hope to build on the superb results of last year where they ran away with the junior boys' gold and a further gold and silver in the junior mixed doubles.

### ETTA Junior Selection Panel

Peter Charters (Chair), Steen Hansen, Alan Cooke, Alex Perry and Carole Moore.



# Red Letter Day

July 1st 2008 was a red letter day for DHS London Progress: it marked the end of an era in the club's proud history - and the beginning of a new one

After 20 years at the helm of what has been in recent times the most successful club in British table tennis, Jon Kaufman, the club's charismatic and outspoken leader, is stepping down. His replacement as club manager is Jason Sugrue, who has enjoyed a close working relationship with the outgoing manager ever since Jon came on board to help develop a club that was actually started by Jason's father.

Jon is certainly retiring on a high. This season saw the Southall-based club win the British League Premier Division for the tenth consecutive year with its blend of imported Chinese talent and English stars. An impressive enough feat in itself, this was capped by Progress beating every other club in the country (and we're not just talking table tennis here) to the 'Sports Club of the Year' award, which focuses on sport's contribution to its local context.

This dual achievement captures the essence of the Progress phenomenon. The club is not just about elite excellence; it is also tightly focused on engagement with the local community.

Tim Lamb, Chief Executive of the CCPR, the alliance of sports governing bodies which organises the Club of the Year award, said: "Jon Kaufman, and his team, have made an indelible mark on the world of grass roots table tennis. At a time when so many people complain about young people not having enough to do, they have taken kids off the streets, taught them valuable life skills and, just as importantly, turned them into lovers of the game."

Jon confirms that this is indeed the ethos of the club. "It is all about linking the elite level to the grass roots. We had the vision to do it. It isn't hard to assemble a team of top

players and achieve success; it is harder to create a real culture within a club."

His background as a teacher has clearly influenced his approach to drawing out young people's potential. "My philosophy of teaching was based around the principle that every child matters. I saw 30 individuals in my class, not just a collection of faces.

"At the club we went out of our way to make the kids who just came in off the street feel right at home. We didn't hassle them and in return we never experienced any major behavioural problems."

So why, at the age of 54, is he stepping down now? "It's time to make way for someone else, though I expect I will still have some sort of peripheral involvement."

Jon intends to spend his newly freed-up time "growing leeks" and indulging in what he calls his "scribbling". Jon has already self-published one book offering his views on sport in general and table tennis in particular, 'The Meaning of Success', and he hopes to produce one or two more. He will also continue teaching, at least on an occasional basis.

His successor, Jason, is keen to maintain the democratic ethos of Progress. "It's good for the balance of the club when everyone knows everyone." That way, says Jason, you avoid divisive cliques forming with the club.

In Jon, he knows he has had a good teacher. "Jon has taught me that it pays to always be very open, very supportive and very inclusive, and to give everyone a fair crack of the whip."

He is, however, planning to give some of Progress's home-grown stars-in-the-making a chance to shine in the Premier Division, which has not always been possible in the past due to the foreign talent available. But rest assured that Progress will still be playing to win, and that 'one or two' Chinese

players will still be featuring, if not in every match.

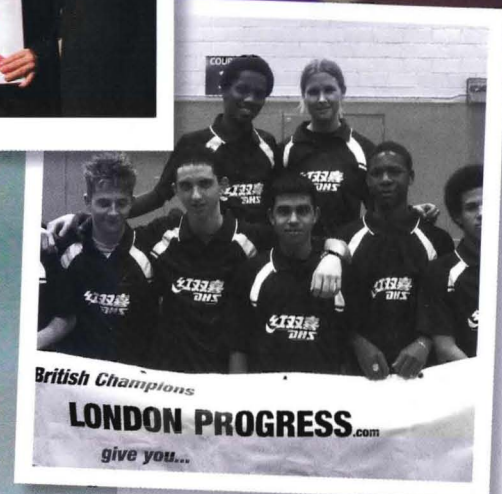
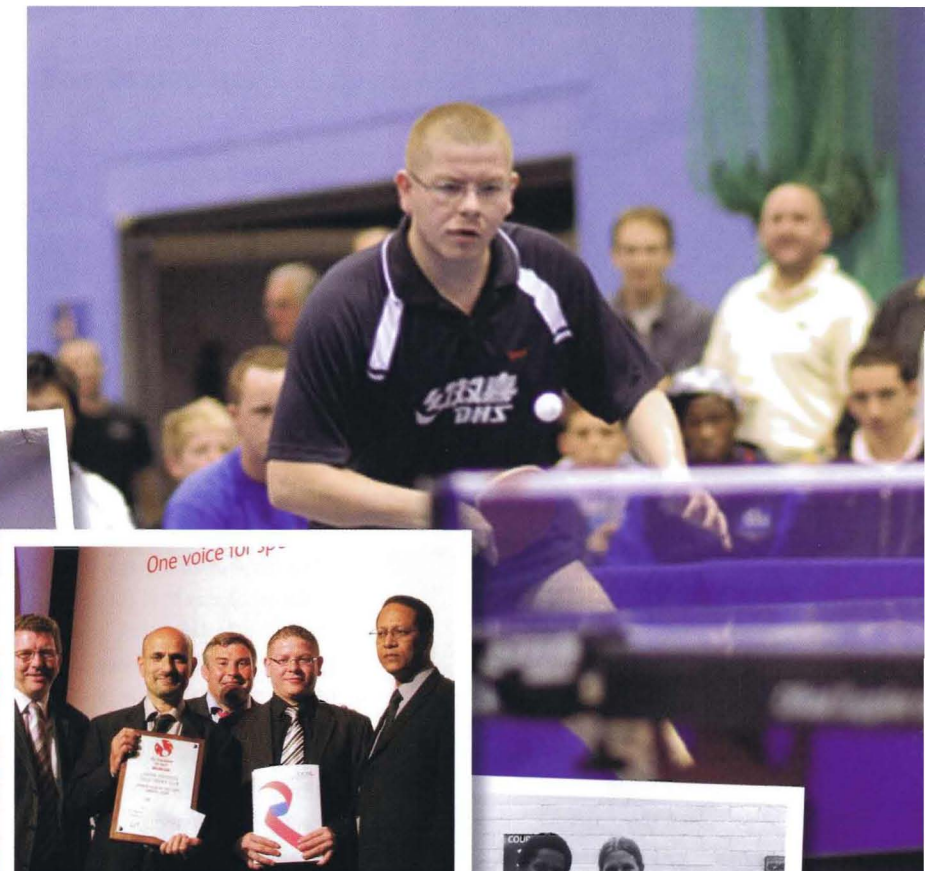
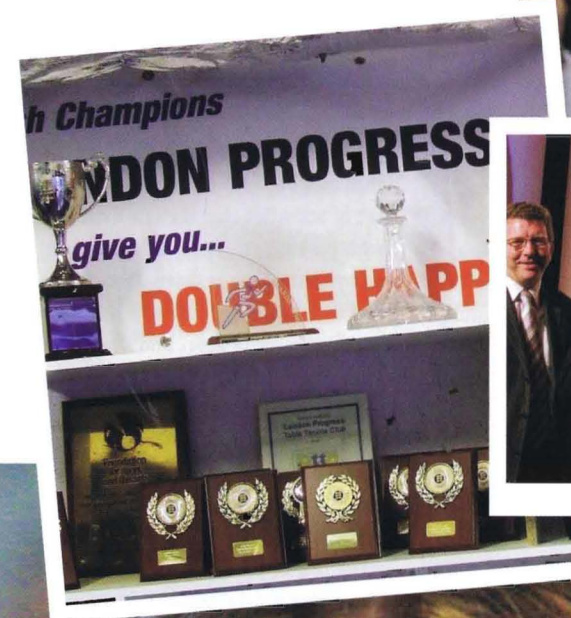
Long term, Jason is hoping to establish Progress as a "brand". He envisages several branches of Progress opening in London, with sub-clubs opening in the northern, eastern and southern quarters of the capital to complement the west London success story. "I want us to be one of the top clubs in Europe, with a very professional approach," says Jason.

But success on this scale takes funding as well as personal commitment. Jason is confident that this won't be a problem: "We have a three-year agreement with Double Happiness which expires at the end of next season but we believe they are keen to stay with Progress." Certainly their sponsor should be able to bask in the reflected glory of their Club of the Year award for the time being.

Jason himself receives funding from the Greenhouse Project, which supports sport in London (and some Welsh) schools. Progress and the Greenhouse Project have a close working relationship, which Jason hopes to maintain in the seasons to come.

On a wider level, Jason believes that the rumours of the death of table tennis have been greatly exaggerated, at least in his home town. "Table tennis in London is thriving. Generally, we just need to start promoting it better in a variety of ways, using people like Matthew Syed and Skylet Andrew more."

As for his own not inconsiderable playing career, Jason is keen to carry on representing Ireland internationally, but he admits that the 'week in, week out' sort of matches are losing their appeal. They would, after all, be something of a distraction. He has a club to run.



"We have a **three-year agreement** with Double Happiness which expires at the end of next season but we believe they are **keen to stay with Progress.**"

# Podium<sup>P.E.</sup> to

## What is the typical journey of being a talented at PE to making it onto the medal podium at senior level?

The range of 28 Olympic sports are diverse in the attributes that they require and consequently each sport has different ways in which talent progresses. However, as a general guide (also true in table tennis), it takes about 10 years of specialised training to progress to the top. We will look at this journey using a four stage pathway that researchers have identified: the sampling, specialisation, investment stages at junior level, and then the transition to senior stage and ultimate podium success.

### The Sampling Years

Firstly, children sample a range of sports (6-13 years.). Here, the key motivation is a focus on 'playful' activities. This sampling of sports is heavily influenced by the content of the school PE curriculum and by parental interests. Schools and clubs are the main organisations involved and in some ways the wider the range of sports sampled the greater the chance that a child will find the one that suits their attributes. It is worth recognising that whilst table tennis tables are available in many schools, it is the clubs that have the specialised coaches.

Talent identification systems have been used with some success in Australia and China. However, in this country the role of family background is still influential in providing opportunities. Research suggests that one in four elite athletes have at least one close relative who has reached top national or international level, whilst one in five attend a private school. This is the first of many influences that contribute to filtering children on their journey to reaching their potential. One of the huge advantages of table tennis is that parental influence should not be such a factor since the sport is widely available and is relatively cheap.

### The Specialisation Years

The next period is a specialising stage in which there begins to be a concentration on specific skills and fewer activities (13-15

years). There are often 'critical incidents' that make a child pursue this more focussed set of activities that include experiences with parents, coaches, success and/or enjoyment of the activity. Perceptions of fun and enjoyment can still rely heavily on the social element of sport and shared experiences with peers. Good coaching at this stage is important and has to balance these elements. As you may know, in table tennis development is often rather earlier than in other sports and this stage may happen earlier.

The role of parents increases in these years sometimes for the better (through day-to-day support) and sometimes for worse (through over involvement and/or pressuring their children).

Clearly, a child's success in their early experiences is a crucial aspect that encourages specialisation and progress in a sport: here the birth date of individuals plays a part. This does not seem to be such an issue in table tennis but coaches should be aware of the 'relative age' issue. For example, analysis of the birth dates of those in England football World Cup squads from

1982 to 1998 shows that 50% of players were born early in the competition year (September-December). These and other findings suggest an inevitable bias at junior level that favour individuals that are more physically mature, particularly in sports where size and strength matter (football, athletics, swimming, tennis, rugby). The relative age effect is especially evident in boys. It means that individuals with the same talent, but at lesser stages of development, are often overlooked and are not nurtured and encouraged as much as

establishing their ranking the costs may need to be borne by the family.

Many families struggle to support these years. A subsequent outcome of this is that those from lower socio-economic groups are underrepresented in elite young athletes; one report also suggests that elite athletes from one-parent families are three times less prevalent than British national norms. The likelihood of this occurring in table tennis is less than other sports due to the lower equipment costs involved.

A further feature of this phase is the

needed in this transition.

During and beyond these years athletes learn how to win and cope with the psychological demands at the top level by competing and evaluating performances with expert help. For example, the increased expectation and responsibility of say, defending a title and thus a shift from chasing to 'being chased', requires an entirely new mental orientation and tactics. It is this psychological aspect of excellence in sport that often determines those that make the Olympic podium. Experience

## Perceptions of fun and enjoyment can still rely heavily on the social element of sport and shared experiences with peers.

their more successful peers and less likely to progress beyond the specialisation years.

### The Investment Years

The decision to concentrate on one activity and commitment to intensive training, normally including elements of scientific analysis, typically over five days a week represents a major step in athlete's journeys. The age of specialisation varies between sports but a reported 'average' age is 15-16 years. In table tennis this stage often happens earlier at 11-13 years due to the complex hand-eye coordination, speed of reaction and almost instinctive reactions that are required.

The resources needed are considerable with time, transport, entry fees and equipment costs. If athletes have reached the required National Lottery performance standards funding becomes available to support these costs. However, when athletes are

incremental provision of competitive opportunities where athletes can learn the craft of winning at higher and higher levels. Sports organisations have a role here in providing clear appropriate competition pathways for talented athletes to follow and the right balance between training and competition. Some may have established themselves as seniors by now but others have to make the difficult transition.

### Transition to Senior

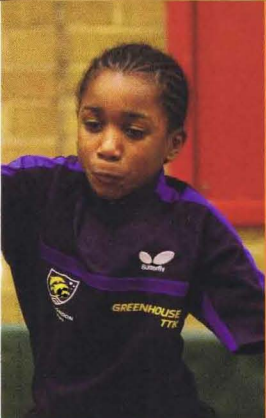
This key transition phase occurs when a promising junior moves into the ranks of senior competition. It is often a jarring experience to go from being a junior champion to an also ran. Coaches report that this crucial time can take up to four years; in table tennis this is some time in the 15-18 years period. A developmental approach to an individual's funding and support that looks beyond rigid competition results is

counts: those in the British Olympic team have been a senior athlete for, on average, seven years. A few final words about the need for an all consuming 'hunger' for success. A champion does not just get to the podium by hard work, they have a deep seated 'need' to win; it might be that they need to constantly prove themselves, that they are a perfectionist or other factors. Becoming a champion is a seven days a week job where there is no room for half measures - this commitment is difficult to teach and needs to come from within an athlete, and is perhaps something that grows as they progress from PE to podium.

The journey to the podium therefore takes a great deal of carefully planned time, dedication and support, and, above all hunger: talent alone is not enough.

Details of the OU's new courses in sport and fitness can be found at [www.openuniversity.co.uk/sport](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/sport).

The Open University's Ben Oakley, a former Olympic coach himself, reviews what is known about the typical pathways to sporting success and the different factors involved in getting on to the podium with special reference to table tennis.



"Talent identification systems have been used with some success in Australia and China. However, in this country the role of family background is still influential in providing opportunities."



# Headlines

More of the latest stories from the Table Tennis World



## WORLD BEATING AMBITION

Sport England has published a radical new strategy to get more people playing and enjoying sport and to help those with talent get to the very top.

The new approach is designed to capitalise on the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity presented by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and to use its power to inspire more people to take part in and succeed in sport.

The strategy commits Sport England to deliver on a series of demanding targets by 2012/13:

- one million more people doing more sport
- a 25% reduction in the number of 16 year olds who drop out of five key sports

- improved talent development systems in at least 25 sports
- a measurable increase in people's satisfaction with their experience of sport - the first time the organisation has set such a qualitative measure
- a major contribution to the delivery of the five hour sports offer for children and young people.

Sport England will work closely with the national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) to deliver the new strategy, and will also create strong partnerships with local authorities. It will reduce bureaucracy by combining its multiple funding streams into a single pot of funding for NGBs, and will be consulting on a

new, more streamlined method of funding wider community projects.

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Andy Burnham said: "This major reform of Sport England marks a new era for sport in this country and will put us on the road to having a world leading community sport system. We want to encourage people of all levels and abilities to play sport for life, to reach their full potential and to remove any barriers in the way of the talented."

"By investing heavily in coaching and the club structure we can maximise the chances for English sporting success and improve the quality of the sport experience for all.

National governing bodies will be key to successful delivery and will play a crucial role in helping us to get one million more people doing more sport by 2012. It'll be a tough challenge but I am confident that together we can do it." Sue Campbell, Chair of the Youth Sport Trust and UK Sport, said "London 2012 offers us a once in a lifetime opportunity to get it right, to create a structure that allows sportsmen and women to maximize their potential from the moment they first encounter a sport - whether that be in their local school, club or ultimately on the world stage. That is our goal, and that will be the focus of all of us in helping Sport England to deliver its new strategy."

### Tessa Jowell takes on BATTs!

Best behaviour was the order of the day when Olympics Minister Tessa Jowell made a dramatic visit to BATTs Table Tennis Club. Not content with a conducted tour, she proceeded to challenge BATTs' youngest member, the precociously talented Ethan Walsh, aged 5, to do battle on the table.

Tessa's visit arose from the recently awarded £110,000 Sport England grant and BATTs' startling success in taking over and turning round a failing leisure centre entirely through voluntary effort. ETTA Chairman Alex Murdoch, his wife Val, Essex Chairman John Andrews, and local MP Bill Rammell were among the invited guests.

### Pro Tour

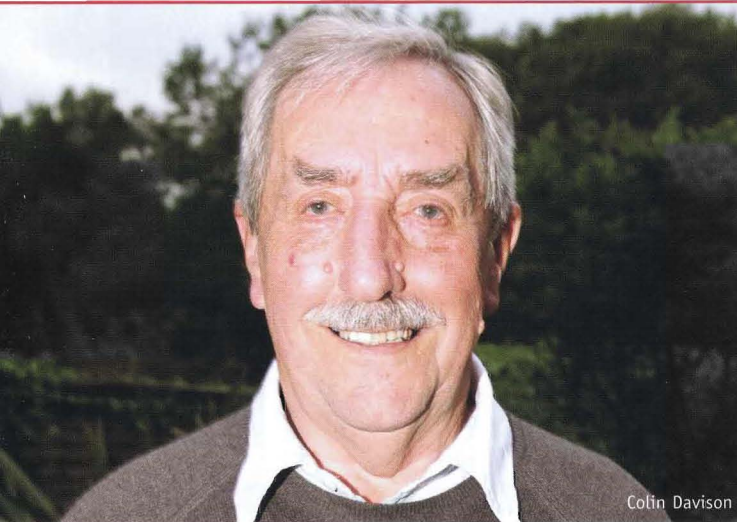
The ITTF has granted Austria the hosting rights of its 13th Pro Tour event of the 2008 season after the French Table Tennis Federation stated that it would be unable to stage the event.

### Sharath eyes Quarter-Final at Beijing

India's top Table Tennis player, Achanta Sharath Kamal, has set himself a moderate target of reaching the quarter-finals in the Beijing Olympic Games, but the lanky Table Tennis player from Tamil Nadu reckons he has to be at the top of his game to advance that far. Let's wait and see.

### Hugo Hoyama invited to Olympics

Brazilian table tennis veteran Hugo Hoyama received an invitation to participate in his fifth Olympic Games. The Brazilian Table Tennis Association announced that Hoyama will travel to Beijing only for the team event.



Colin Davison

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Colin Davison has been involved with table tennis for 62 years, first playing as a schoolboy and later playing competitively for various clubs in the area.

Colin experienced many good times at clubs throughout Stockton, Thornaby and Billingham areas including Billingham Synthonia, Billingham Community Centre, Thornaby and Kiora.

Colin soon became an active member of the Stockton Table Tennis Executive Committee holding several administrative roles. He is and has always been a great ambassador for table tennis, always enjoying the challenges involved in promoting and coaching his chosen sport.

His interest and intention has always been and still is to work with the youngsters in the area, encouraging, coaching and endeavouring to involve them in table tennis.

As an ETTA 3 Star coach he has coached at many venues in the area, including Stockton Sports Centre, Ian Ramsey School, St Michael's School and Northfield School where he continues to coach mixed pupils on Friday evenings.

Throughout his involvement in Table Tennis Colin has been responsible for numerous tournaments/events and has actively helped in organising

many local and national events: the first most successful event to be hosted in the area took place at Stockton Sports Centre between England and Czechoslovakia attracting 800 spectators and bringing together the top players of both countries. The event was to become the forerunner of other national games in the area. Colin is still involved in national and local tournaments attracting many of the world's top players to the area.

Locally, he is supervising the work of the Table Tennis Community Coach who is currently working with schools across Tees Valley; this project is successful and fully supported by all participating schools.

As the North East Regional Chairman, Colin is currently working on plans to increase the involvement and promote interest in Table Tennis throughout the North East. The proposals are aimed primarily at looking at ways to increase the numbers of young players and their families taking part and enjoying the game of Table Tennis.

In 2000 Colin was recognised for his service to Table Tennis when he was made Vice President of the English Table Tennis Association.

## Waldner slips off the List

Jan-Ove Waldner, the world's most famous player, does not appear on the ITTF men's ranking list for June 2008.

Born on 3rd October 1965, the legendary Swede first entered the ITTF men's world ranking list in August 1982 in an era before technology was producing wonderful computerised lists that have turned coaches and players into mathematical wizards.

One year later in March 1983 when the next world ranking was issued, Jan-Ove Waldner had secured a top ten place, being ranked ninth. Now let us put that into current perspective: a new player comes on the scene and on the second ranking, within five months, he/she occupies a top ten place. It is a virtual impossibility, the nearest in the current era to achieve such a feat is the remarkable Feng Tianwei of Singapore. She entered the ITTF women's world rankings in July 2007 at no. 73 and now 11 months later is at

number nine; however, she had a head start on Waldner. She played in China, reaching international level, but of course gaining a place in the Chinese women's team is no easy task; she moved to Singapore and then made meteoric progress. The progress of Feng Tianwei cannot be compared with that of Jan-Ove Waldner.

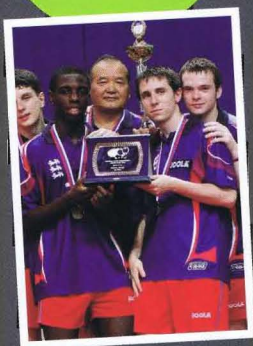
He occupied a top ten spot at the age of 17. In April 1984 he progressed to number four, in June 1987 he was at number two and then in June 1989 at number one; a position he maintained until April 1991. He returned to the top spot in August 1992 and stayed in that position until February 1994, in June 1995 he regained the exalted spot and was also at number one from May to October 1997. Will he return one day? Who knows, but if there is one phrase to describe Waldner, it is "Expect the Unexpected!" .



Jan-Ove Waldner

# Annual Snapshot

# 07-08

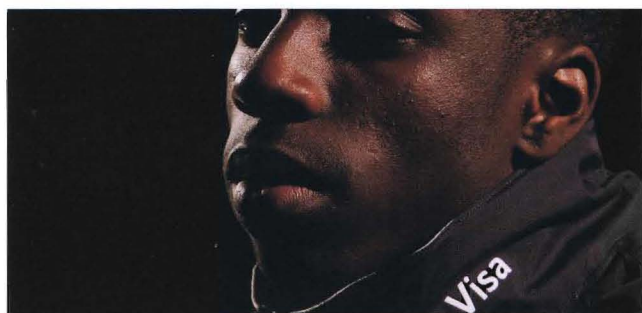


With the 2007/8 season drawing to a close and the 2008/9 season catching us up, it provides a great time to reflect and highlight a few of the more memorable moments that have taken place this year. So here it is, squeezed tightly into four pages, our annual snapshot. Enjoy!

**J**une 07: **Colin Clemett**, table tennis guru and member of numerous international and national committees, was rewarded for his long and outstanding service to table tennis by Adham Sharara, ITTF President, at their AGM in Zagreb.

**The ETTA** celebrated its 80 year history at the 100 club annual dinner.

**Paul Drinkhall** and Darius Knight were selected along with 14 other athletes for Team Visa, an exclusive sponsorship programme designed to help them prepare for Beijing 2008 and London 2012 Olympic Games.



**Andrea Holt** and Alex Perry set a new world record for the longest table tennis rally by playing continuously for 8 hours 27 minutes.

**Liam Pitchford** won a silver medal at the European Cadet 6 Nations, losing out in the final to Quentin Robinot of France 3-1.

**Novlette Rennie** OBE, Chief Executive Sporting Equals, presented the ETTA with the Preliminary Level of the Equality Standards for Sport Award.

**The very** first table tennis coach education course to be organised under the new system of UKCC endorsed qualifications was completed at the Holy Trinity School, Crawley.

**J**uly 07: **Just two** years

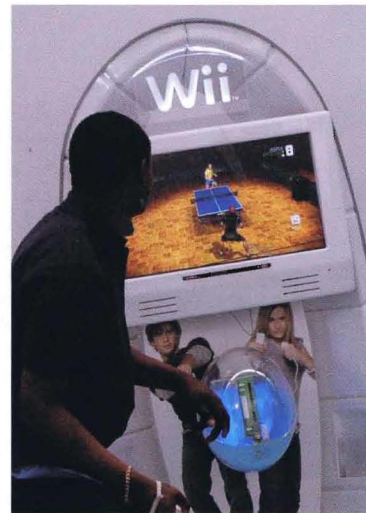


after lifting the prestigious cadet title, England's young 2012 contenders achieved European gold for the second time. With an average age of just 17, the talented squad became Junior (U18) European Youth Champions by defeating the Czech Republic in emphatic style, 3-0 in the final. Darius Knight and Paul Drinkhall also won gold and silver respectively in the junior mixed doubles.

**Gavin Evans** brought home a gold medal from the European Youth Olympic Festival in Belgrade.

**The ETTA** achieved the Intermediate Level of the Child Protection in Sport Standards.

**The ETTA** was awarded UKCC Endorsement for the ISt4sport qualification level 3 certificate in coaching, becoming one of only a few sports to receive this award.



**A**ugust 07: **Paul Drinkhall** and Darius Knight achieved double gold for England at the ITTF World Junior Circuit in the El Salvador Junior Open.

**Rockstar Games** announced that their exceptionally popular table tennis game for the Xbox 360 would also be launched on the Nintendo Wii.

**Paul Drinkhall** maintained

his perfect record in boys' singles events on the ITTF World Junior Circuit, by retaining his title at the Funchal Junior Open in Madeira.

**The UK School Games** took place in Coventry, with wins for the South East girls and North East boys' teams, along with Andrew Harper and Jack Pegram taking the disabled standing and wheelchair categories respectively. The boys' singles event was won by David Meads, with Emma Vickers his counterpart in the girls'.

**Darius Knight** completed a successful five days in Funchal, Madeira, by winning the men's singles title, beating Paul Drinkhall in the final.

**Glasgow was** announced as the host city of the 2009 Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships.

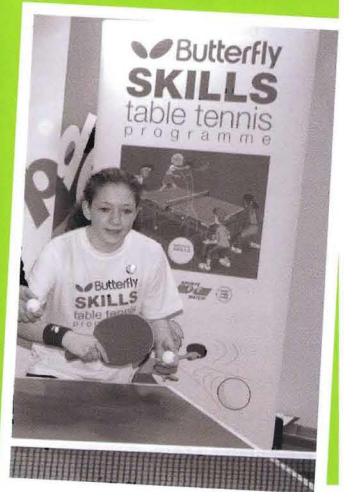
**September 07:** Alex Perry was selected as part of the UK Sport Elite Coach programme. He is one of only 10 coaches to be selected from all the Olympic sports. / **On Saturday** September 15th over 10 million Japanese television viewers switched on to see a game played at Yarmouth Town Hall between 81-year old inspiration Edna Fletcher, winner of multiple titles at World and European Veteran Table Tennis Championships, and six year old Japanese table tennis prodigy Mima Ito. Unfortunately for the older generation Mrs Fletcher lost 3-0. / **Table tennis** became one of a number of sports to base its World Class Elite programme at the English Institute of Sports (EIS) complex in Sheffield. / **Jade Carr**, a 13 year old from Runcorn, won gold at the British Transplant Games. / **Once again**, the ETTA Conference and Volunteer Awards Dinner provided an excellent showcase for table tennis, this was enhanced further by the exceptional keynote speakers: Dr Sue Campbell MBE, Chair Youth Sport Trust and UK Sport, Marc Woods, Paralympic gold medallist swimmer, David Gent, Sport England Regional Director, and Novlette Rennie OBE, Chief Executive Sporting Equals. / **The first** ever Fred Perry Urban Cup was won by Cardiff. Aimed at enhancing the youth club Table Tennis scene, the Urban Cup was hailed a success. This was the first year of a £170,000 Sportsmatch project, which will span an initial four-year period. / **The Liverpool** Open Butterfly Grand Prix almost witnessed one of the most dramatic winning comebacks, however, the former England superstar Carl Prean, just failed at the final hurdle when he was defeated by Scotland's no 1 Gavin Rungay 11-5, 11-6, 7-11, 11-9.



**October 07:** The Shanghai Special Olympics provided Great Britain's highest ever Special Olympics medal tally, Table Tennis was particularly strong with a string of gold and silver medals. Gold winners were Emma Jones (WS, WD, XD), Duncan Feltham (MS), Kimberley Gillian (WD) and Jeffrey Jarvis (MD). / **After** making an appearance in Enrique Iglesias's "Ping Pong Song", Table Tennis was back in the music scene as the sole focus of the video for Carry On, by Bens Brother. / **Britain's top** disabled players returned from the European Championships with one silver and two bronze medals, Arni Cahn and James Rawson took silver, whilst Cathy Mitton won an individual bronze and teamed up with Sara Head and Jane Campbell to take the team bronze. / **TTN reported** that England's World Cup rugby union team regularly turn to table tennis as a way to keep their reflexes sharp. Rumour has it that the best England players are Olly Barkley, Nick Easter, Danny Hipkiss, Matt Stevens and Mark Regan.



**N**ovember 07: The ETTA YouTube site was launched ([www.youtube.com/englishtabletennis](http://www.youtube.com/englishtabletennis)) and became the home of Table Tennis videos on the internet. / **Emma Vickers** was announced by the Youth Sport Trust as one of the first young athletes who will receive funding as part of its "Believe to Achieve with Kelly Holmes" scholarship programme. / **Matthew Syed** was off on another adventure, this time to see who was the best Table Tennis player in the Premier League. The first stop was Reading FC where James Harper, eager to take away Rio Ferdinand's self proclaimed title of "The King Of Table Tennis", beat their American goalkeeper Marcus Hahnemann. / **The Butterfly Skills** teaching initiative aimed to meet the needs of the ever-increasing demand for Table Tennis within schools and the community was launched by James Purnell MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, at the Youth Sport Trust School and Sports Partnerships' Conference in Telford. / **The BBC's** involvement in our sport continued to grow with the start of Olympic Dreams. This programme is a five-year project leading up to the London 2012 Games, following Britain's top young Olympic hopefuls. Two of those hopefuls are none other than our very own Darius Knight and Paul Drinkhall. / **Glasgow won** the race to host the Commonwealth Games in 2014.



**D**ECEMBER 07: In a spate of digital advancements, the ETTA E-zine was launched.

This monthly electronic magazine brings news and features to the audience fast and effectively, along with allowing interactive content



such as videos.

**In what** can only be described as

Dodge Ball meets Mortal Kombat, Table Tennis hit the big screen on Boxing Day with the tongue in cheek style comedy Balls of Fury.

**London 2012** hopeful Jack Pegram beat a host of talented youngsters to take the Rising Star prize at the Nationwide DSE (Disability Sport Events) Awards.

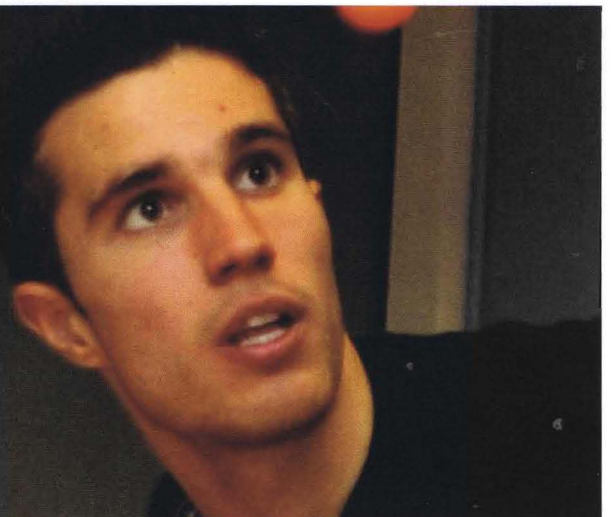
**J**anuary 08: The glue ban came into effect for junior events, preventing the use of speed glues and other equipment containing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) due to health concerns. / **Damon Albarn**, singer, songwriter and Table Tennis player, became the guest editor of BBC Radio 4's Today programme where, as well as his trip to Mali to find out about how they recycle, he also took a trip up to Sheffield to join in on an ETTA training camp. / **Table Tennis** was on prime time breakfast news during a feature on healthy living. The feature stated it was a fitness activity that could be enjoyed by all, no matter what age or financial background. / **England hosted** the Europe Youth Top 10 at the EIS in Sheffield and secured two bronze medals thanks to Paul Drinkhall and Gavin Evans. The event was attended by a number of ETTU officials including its President Stefano Bosi. / **Paul Drinkhall**, Darius Knight, Gavin Evans and Liam Pitchford travelled to Beijing as part of the "Tomorrow's Champions Programme". Drinkhall was selected to play in an exhibition match in front of a host of VIPs including Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao.



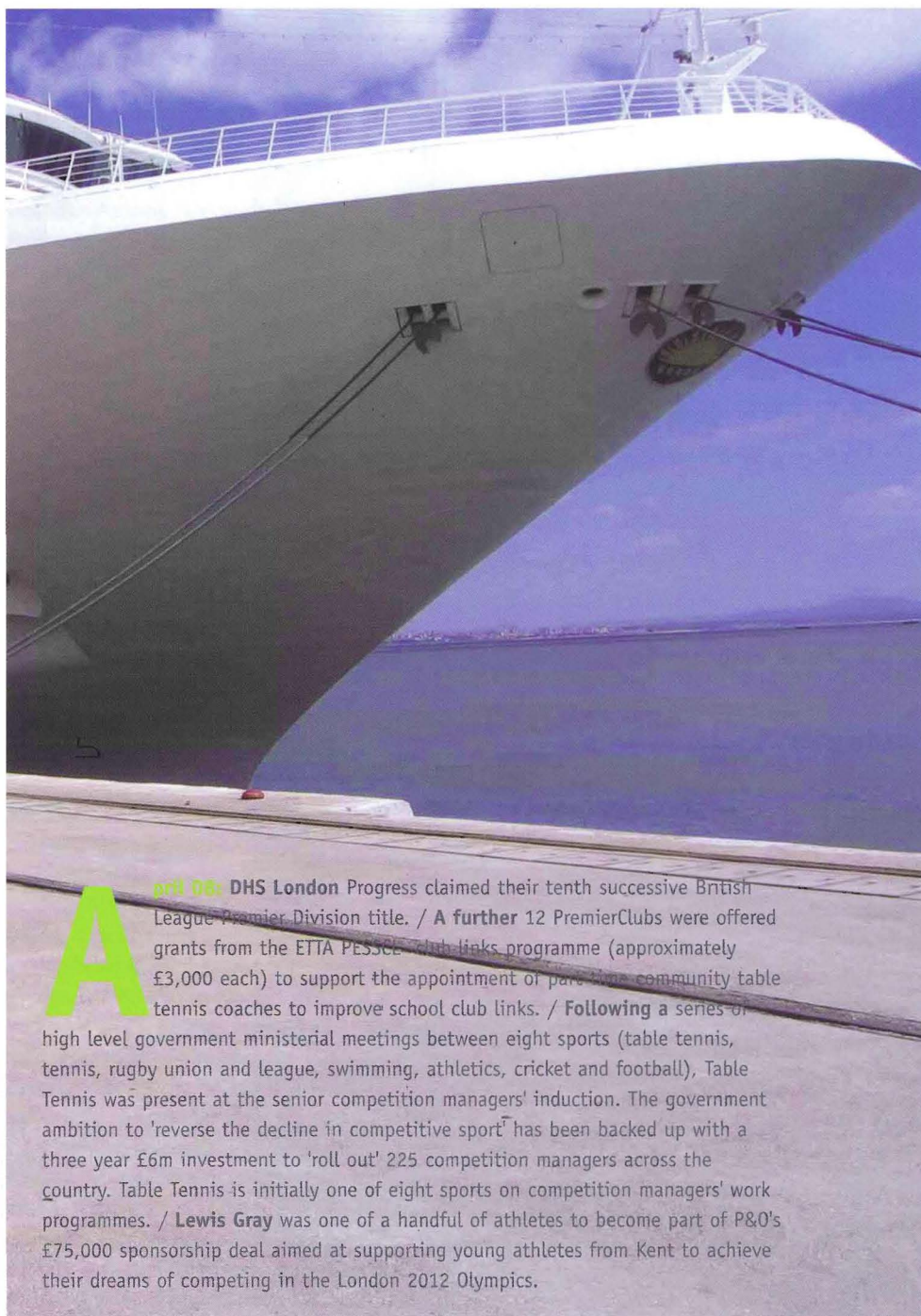
**F**ebruary 08: **Tin-Tin Ho** and Zak Zilesnick helped Blue Peter presenter Gethin Jones brush up on his TT skills live on air. After a demonstration and a bit of tuition, the young duo challenged Gethin to a game of multi-ball.

**The England** women's team of Kelly Sibley, Joanna Parker and Emma Vickers were the stars at the World Team Championships going undefeated to claim the division two title, along with promotion to the top flight. **Table Tennis** returned to the Royal Albert Hall for the first time in over three decades. A brilliant showcase was rounded off by a master class display by the passionate pocket rocket from Greece, Kalinikos Kreanga, as he claimed the Dunlop Masters title. The event had over 5,000 spectators in attendance and was covered live by Sky Sports.

**M**arch 08: **After receiving** a phone call from Arsenal Football Club who told us how keen a player Robin Van Persie was, a training session was set up for him with Darius Knight and Matthew Syed at the ETTA PremierClub, DHS London Progress. As well as being filmed for our YouTube site, a double page article on Robin's day also appeared in the match day programme for the Arsenal v Aston Villa fixture that had an attendance of 60,097 people. / **The BTTF** joined forces with Sainsbury's as part of the British Olympic Association's (BOA) FTSE100 initiative, which was set up to help achieve the BOA's aspirational goal of fourth place for Team GB in the London 2012 Olympics medal table. / **The Senior** National Championships returned to Ponds Forge International Sports Centre where Kelly Sibley was the top performer of the event, reaching four finals and taking home three titles, U21, women's and women's doubles (with Joanna Parker). / **The ETTA** achieved its 2007/8 whole sport plan target of 90 accredited CLUBMARK clubs.



“ England hosted the Europe Youth Top 10 at the EIS in Sheffield and secured two bronze medals thanks to Paul Drinkhall and Gavin Evans ”



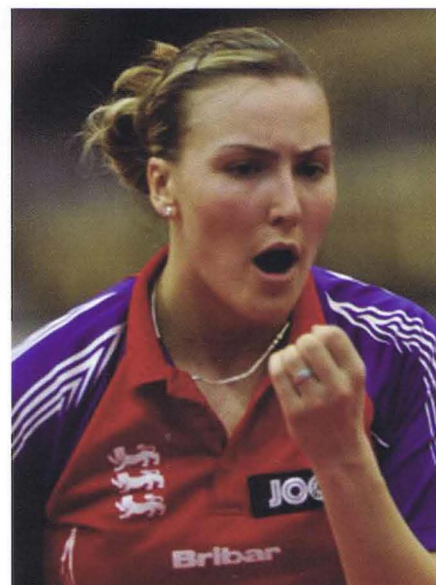
**A**pril 06: DHS London Progress claimed their tenth successive British League Premier Division title. / A further 12 Premier Clubs were offered grants from the ETTA PESSCL club links programme (approximately £3,000 each) to support the appointment of part-time community table tennis coaches to improve school club links. / Following a series of high level government ministerial meetings between eight sports (table tennis, tennis, rugby union and league, swimming, athletics, cricket and football), Table Tennis was present at the senior competition managers' induction. The government ambition to 'reverse the decline in competitive sport' has been backed up with a three year £6m investment to 'roll out' 225 competition managers across the country. Table Tennis is initially one of eight sports on competition managers' work programmes. / Lewis Gray was one of a handful of athletes to become part of P&O's £75,000 sponsorship deal aimed at supporting young athletes from Kent to achieve their dreams of competing in the London 2012 Olympics.

**M**ay 08: DHS London Progress won the prestigious title of 'Sports Club of the Year' presented by Sports Minister Gerry Sutcliffe MP and Rugby World Cup winner Jason Leonard at the CCPR Awards Dinner.

Kelly Sibley managed to secure a second reserve spot for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games following a gruelling competition in Budapest at the World Qualification play-off.

Emily Bates and Chris Doran won the Junior Masters. Bates also managed to succeed in the Cadet Masters with Daniel Lowe victorious in the boys' event.

An ITTF Executive Board meeting took place in London with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG). The meeting included a visit to the ExCeL, the arena where Table Tennis will be staged at the London Olympics. The ITTF Executive Committee, which included the ITTF President Adham Sharara, also visited the first address of Ivor Montagu, one of the most influential characters in table tennis history, and the man who was instrumental in the creation of the ETTA and the ITTF.

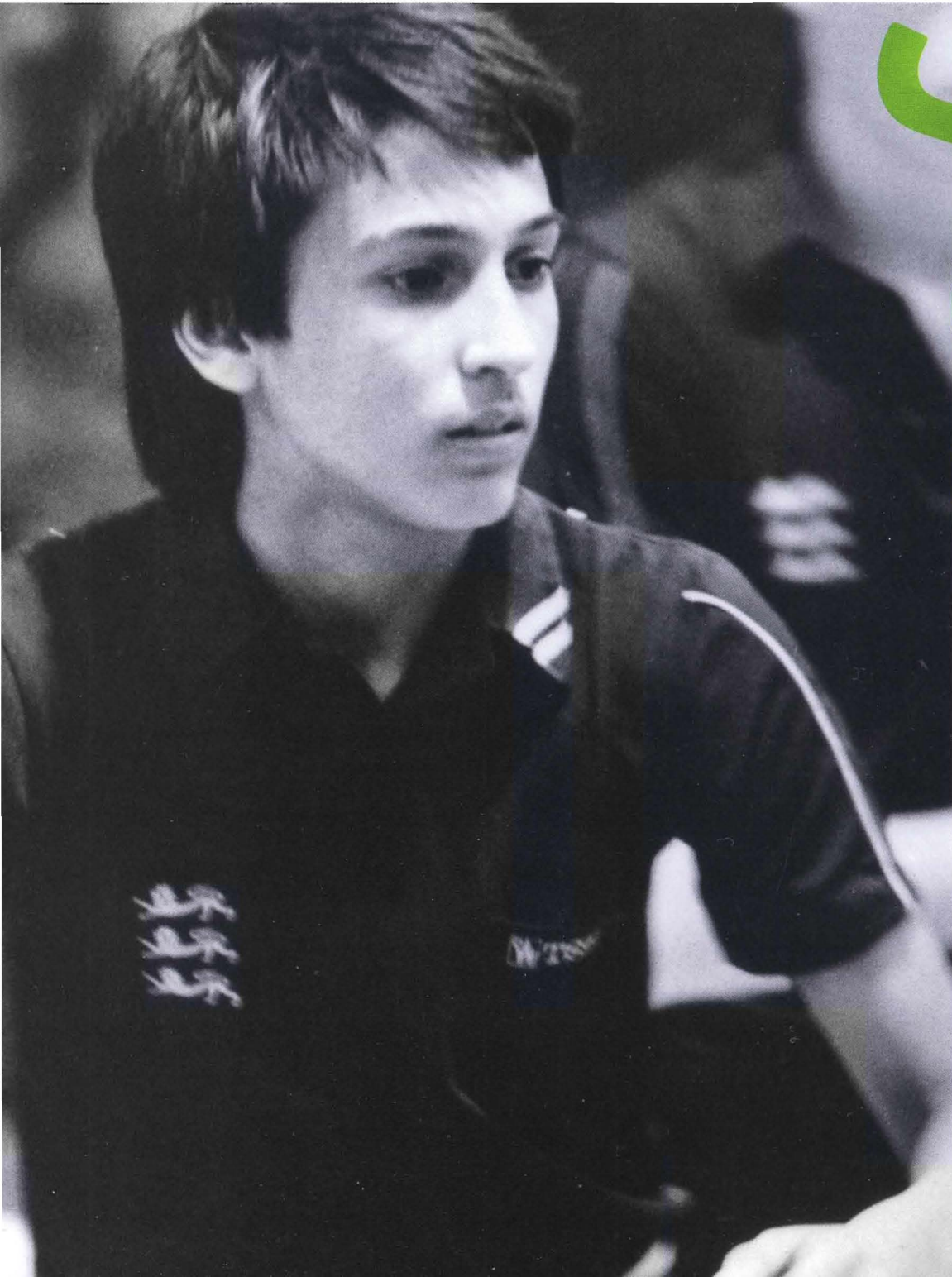




# the other

Andrew Syed's insight on how he and his brother [Matthew] reached the pinnacle of English table tennis

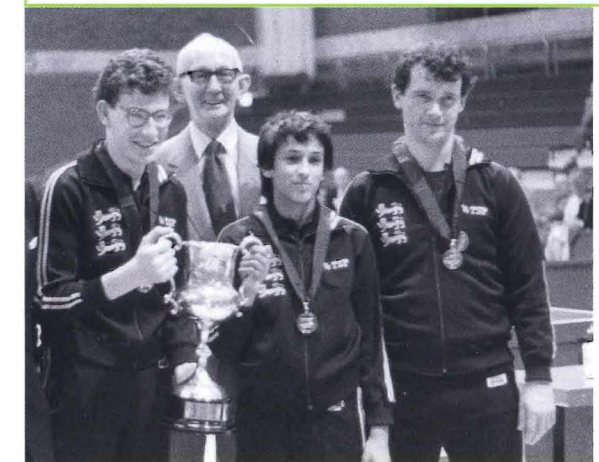
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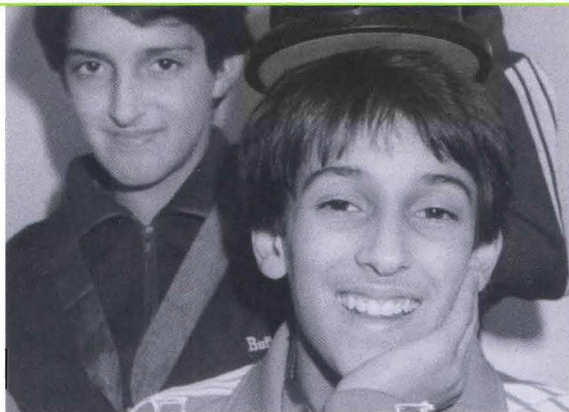
**B**oth Matthew and I loved sport and our parents arranged and supported our participation in many of them. We reached the county squad in other racket sports (badminton and tennis), did judo and played football for our local team. I now believe it is a really good idea for kids to be given the opportunity to try all sorts of sports which can help them decide which they both enjoy and are good at. We both started playing table tennis at primary school having been introduced to the sport by Peter Charters who was not only my primary school teacher but also Chairman of the England Selectors. We both improved quickly with bats bought by our parents and practiced at after school sessions. At the age of 10, I won my first tournament at my primary school. During one school playtime, Peter called me over and asked if we could bring my parents along to see him. He told them that, in his judgment, if I chose to concentrate on table tennis, he predicted I had the potential to become national champion. Soon after both Matthew and I made the decision to concentrate solely on table tennis. I received one to one coaching with Peter around three times a week at the Omega club near our home and was soon playing in the Reading local league. As I was faster on the table than Matthew, Peter suggested he become a defender which Matthew decided to become. My game could be described as attacking, close to the table, with a strong backhand counter attack but lacking in power as my build was slight. Matthew and I competed in the Reading Closed under 11 event and drew each other in the second round. I was certain that I would beat him but was distraught when I lost 21-18 in the third. However, this ensured I never took him lightly again and the following 19 times we played each other I was victorious. When I was 13, I managed to get 100% in the Reading League Division 1 much to the dismay of some of the older, more experienced players. After several months, we began to compete in tournaments and started winning which resulted in, by the age of 14, I had fulfilled Pete's prediction and become National Under 14 champion. Matthew followed in my footsteps becoming also the best player for his age. Our commitment to table tennis grew and we were now playing six times a week around two hours a day. This put a strain on our school work, often having weeks off to attend England training camps. Mostly, the school approved but were not too pleased when we frequently arrived late for school on a Monday morning after arriving in the early hours after a competition which could be anywhere in the country. We both loved competing and practicing (I even practiced once on Christmas Day). Pete always tried to get us to practice with players, if possible, that were better than us. I was selected for the European Youth Championships in Malmo, Sweden, in 1983 and attended a one of the many training camps held in Lilleshall. We were expected to train for around four hours a day together with three mile runs but with Donald Parker's encouragement had time to play cricket on the Astro turf. I earned the nickname 'Big Syd' and Matthew 'Little Syd' - nicknames that have endured in some table tennis circles to this very day. I remember Alan Cooke in particular putting everything into his training, shouting out 'work' every so often showing his extraordinary determination. I regard Alan, alongside Zoran Primorac and Jan Michael Saive, to be the hardest fighters in the world. At England training camps some of the squad members

included Des Douglas, Nicky Mason, Skylet Andrew, Graham Sandley, Phil Bradbury and Jimmy Stokes. Skylet had an incredible high toss serve, strong forehand loop but no backhand. Off the table he was an amazing extrovert and is now an agent for some of the top footballers in the country. Carl Prean was unusual in both character and technique. He had an extraordinary knowledge of cricket and often entertained us with his near perfect impressions of cricket commentators, Richie Benaud and Jim Laker. The England boys' team for the European Youth Championships comprised Carl Prean, Alan Cooke, Nicky Mason, Jimmy Stokes and myself. We all felt a tremendous sense of camaraderie. I look back at this time with immense pleasure. The junior boys' final was between the awkward, yet extremely effective, Carl Prean and Jan Ove Waldner who went on to become the best player of all time. This was a match of very contrasting styles with Prean becoming increasingly exasperated and tired as he could find no way to penetrate Waldner's total dominance and Waldner won convincingly. In the cadet event, Jimmy Stokes and I beat Yugoslavia to finish fifth. In the process, I beat Zoran Primorac who later was to become World Cup champion. It was also memorable as I had a teenage romance with a blond Swede, Louisa Hallner, who the team nicknamed Bubbles. After the tournament I reached no 10 in the European cadet rankings. 1984 (when I was 15) was a successful year for me. I represented England A team with Carl Prean in the England Junior Open. Carl came down to Reading to practice the previous week at the Omega club to prepare for this tournament. In a highly charged final at Portsmouth we beat Korea A in the final (Yu Nam Kyu who later became Olympic champion was in the team). Some of the Koreans were penholders and we were coached to play hard to the forehand. The same season I was part of the England junior squad in the European Youth Championships in

**"However, this ensured I never took him lightly again and the following 19 times we played each other I was victorious"**



**“He went on to become England senior no 1 for 10 years, 3 times Commonwealth champion and competed in two Olympics”**



Linz, Austria, together with Carl Prean, Chris Bartram and Jimmy Stokes. In an exciting match against Czechoslovakia, we won 5-2 which put us through to the semi-final and a guaranteed medal. We received a bronze as we lost to Russia in the semi-final 5-3 despite me beating Efimov in two straight games. I remember in the singles playing my arch rival Francesco Manneschi of Italy. This turned out to be the longest match of my career with the match going to expedite in the third game. Although I won, it left me exhausted and I had nothing left for the next round which started almost immediately.

That year I also became England National Under 17 champion, won the Cotswold Select, Yorkshire Select and Cleveland Select, and therefore amassed the most points in the Beneficial Trust Grand Prix together with Sue Collier for the girls. The reward for this was the chance to train with the Korean national team in Korea. I was used to training by this time but the Koreans pushed this to a new level. I remember the incredible heat and gruelling training schedules, e.g. getting up at 7am and running round the capital, Seoul, as well as skipping, press-ups and very tough table tennis exercises. I remember training with Yu Nam Kyu, who later became Olympic men's champion, and Yang Young Ya who was at the time the world's no 2 woman player, and Hyun Jung Hwa who became World champion when she beat the greatest player of all time, Deng Ya Ping. I have a vivid memory of Hyun. At dinner time, she would always get the coaches' food and say grace before eating. Like many of the team, she was a committed Christian and years later she and her husband became missionaries. Around five years ago, I went to a church meeting in London where Yang Young Ya was speaking and we were delighted to renew our acquaintance with each other.

At the age of 17, which turned out to be my last year of competitive table tennis, Matthew and I travelled to Birmingham to train with the great Desmond Douglas. We stayed with him and his partner, Margie. On the table he was outstanding with incredible reactions. Only when I was playing my absolute best could I stay with him.

In my final year I won the Middlesex Men's Open beating Nicky Mason in the final. This victory placed me at England senior no 6 after which my season was plagued with various injuries which eventually put me out of the game.

Matthew had a good cadet and junior career, winning the cadets twice and juniors once and getting a silver medal in the European Cadet Championships. He went on to become four times England champion, twice beating Alan Cooke. In the 1998 England Championship, it looked as though Carl had an easy draw through to the final and, given Carl's record against defence, I was reluctant to attend but Matthew insisted that I support and coach him. Carl drew Des in the quarters and had been unbeaten against him for many years so Matthew had little hope in this tournament. However, Des amazingly beat Carl deuce in the fourth and Matthew went on to beat Perry in the semi-final. Des beat Terry Young in his semi which set up an exhilarating final between Matthew and Des. Denis Neale and I were on the bench and I encouraged Matthew to attack with his forehand topspin whenever Des pushed long or drop shotted long, and this was decisive in a 3-2 victory. At the end of the fifth game at 15-15, Matthew twiddled with his pimples both forehand and backhand with heavy backspin. The ageing Des progressively began to tire and this, coupled with Matthew's ability under pressure, helped him to victory. Matthew kindly dedicated his victory to me.

For Matthew to maintain his high standard he needed to compete for teams in the national leagues of France, Sweden and Belgium. He went on to become England senior no 1 for 10 years, three times Commonwealth champion and competed in two Olympics. One Commonwealth Games where he almost did not compete was in India due to standing as a Labour candidate against John Redwood in the Wokingham constituency but due to foot and mouth disease postponing the election, was able to. He played against the Indian no 1, Baboor, in a dream final which was shown live on Indian national television and was watched by the Indian Prime Minister. The match went to 28-26 in the fifth game and had the Indian crowd on their feet. These victories secured Matthew's status as one of the best English players ever and one of the greatest defensive players in world table tennis history. Back to me, unfortunately I had to pull out of competitive table tennis due to a shoulder injury which was followed by ME. The treatment, such as it was at that time, was to rest and I did so for four years. As you can imagine, this was a tough time for me but my Christian faith was and still is a great source of strength. Although I am still unable to play due to a painful shoulder, I am able to coach. I coach the Reading Resource team, which is a mental health charity at the Warehouse (a local church) and also children from local schools. My main objective in coaching table tennis at Reading Resource is to aid recovery, and the children's coaching is coupled with Christian ministry with guest speakers sharing their faith. I am the coach of Daniel Moses whom I started off a few years ago and do one to one coaching sessions at the Warehouse. In a recent tournament (the East Reading Festival), although he lost to my brother, Matthew, in the final I was pleased to see his continued improvement. Other notable youngsters I coach are Andrew Phiri and Elliot Clark.

The decision I made all those years ago to go for table tennis I do not regret. Throughout my life, table tennis has given me great enjoyment both as a player and now a coach, and I hope will continue to do so for many years to come.

# Parker

**It was back in 1999, at the age of just 12, that Joanna Parker's first career became settled. She had started playing table tennis at the age of seven and was clearly blessed with a rare gift.**

However, there was little real expectation when she attended a training camp for emerging young players in the Surrey area. "I didn't really think anything of it," she said. "I didn't think there was any chance of being selected for anything. But then a letter came through the door saying I had been chosen for the national squad in Nottingham. It was just 'oh my god' and I was screaming and running around the house. "My mum looked at me and said 'are you really going to go?' She didn't think I would want to move away from home. But I said 'of course I am going to go' - I thought it would be a constant training camp with my friends.

"It was great - I was living with my friends and I would even forget to ring home. My mum has been brilliant - she supports me and really wanted me to do whatever I wanted to do - but I didn't have time to miss being at home. I was going to school, playing table tennis and then doing my homework."

Parker thrived at Nottingham. She achieved both on the table and in the classroom, winning national Under 12, 14 and 18 titles, as well as gaining an impressive set of GCSE results.

Her defensive, away-from-the-table approach was unusual, but highly effective as competitors from England and around the world struggled to adapt to her style.

from 9.30am until 12.30pm, followed by physical training and lunch and then further practice between 4pm and 7.30pm.

It is a schedule that has contributed to encouraging results this season. Parker only narrowly missed qualification for the Beijing Olympics, failing to progress through her group on points count back. However, victories against the likes of Spain's Zhu Fang and Slovakia's Barbora Balazova have helped improve her ranking by 100 places in the past six months.

Indeed, Parker's most recent position of 175 is her highest-ever and augurs well for her chances of successfully qualifying for the 2012 London Olympics.

"When I started, I was taught attacking and defensive strokes," said Parker, the British number one. "I just found that I liked being away from the table. Some defenders have attacking as their base, but my attack is my weakest shot. It is something I have to improve because, even as a defender, you have to be able to attack to really progress."

Parker is following in a rich history of British table tennis defenders. Led by the former European champion Jill Hammersley-Parker, the likes of Matthew Syed, Chen Xinhua and Lisa Lomas have also all made their mark for England in international competition.



**"In Europe, we can choose to do sport. If we have a bad time, we can sulk for a bit and debate whether or not we want to continue."**

However, in 2003 funding was cut and the Nottingham centre was rather suddenly closed. At the time, Parker was regarded among the brightest young talents in Europe. Among her victories were in the Portuguese and German Opens, which included a win over the European number one Iveta Vácenovska.

The impact, though, of the closure of the Nottingham centre was noticeable. Parker returned to Surrey and then, from the age of 17, spent two years playing club table tennis in Berlin.

Her progress slowed somewhat, but has accelerated again over the past year since the opening of the national centre in Sheffield.

"I like the set-up, I like the regime - it seems to work for me," she said. A usual day begins with three hours of play

Given the unique requirements and tactics of defensive players, it is perhaps unfortunate that none of those predecessors are now actively involved in day to day coaching at Sheffield.

Alan Cooke, the former national and Commonwealth champion, however, is well equipped to offer a real insight into the demands of modern international competition. "We have worked out a good way of working and we look at all the best defenders," said Parker.

Having spent much time in Asia, particularly China and Korea this year, Parker has also looked to the Far East, who provide for further inspiration. "It is always quite interesting - Asia is very different," she said. "Each club has a unique way of doing things, you can get some good ideas. It is the national sport, like football here. Most people want to play

table tennis, you can earn money from it and it is a way out of poverty. There is so much poverty in China and table tennis can be a way of supporting families. They do it more for survival. In Europe, it is more often a choice and a hobby.

"In Europe, we can choose to do sport. If we have a bad time, we can sulk for a bit and debate whether or not we want to continue. For the Chinese, there is often little else except being labourers.

"A lot of them finish at a young age - they are often burnt out by the time they are 30. At the age of 10, they can be playing eight hours a day because there is no requirement to complete formal education."

As well as the stability of a regular training base, Parker also attributes her recent improvement to enrolling on a weekly

A-Level class in human biology that has provided an outlet from the all-consuming demands of professional sport.

"It is mostly mature students who all have different reasons for being there," she said. "It has helped my table tennis to have another interest. It is good to do something outside of table tennis to give my brain a workout. I'm a lot happier to think I'm getting somewhere with my education. One A-level is enough to push me without overloading and I find it so interesting.

"If you have qualifications and education behind you, there are more choices. I've no thoughts of stopping table tennis now, but I wouldn't want to be in a situation where I keep playing just because I thought there was nothing else I could do."

# Greater London Championships

**13 year-old Zak Zilesnick, England's no.1 Under 13 player, set a record at this year's GLC Closed Championships, played at the London Progress Table Tennis Club that surely can't be beaten.**



Zak Zilesnick

## RESULTS AND PLACINGS

**U18 Boys** - Zak Zilesnick bt. Daniel Basterfield 11-7, 11-8, 8-11, 9-11, 11-7.

**U15 Boys** - Zak Zilesnick bt. Guy Ben-Aroya 11-9, 13-11, 8-11, 4-11, 11-8.

**U13 Boys** Zak Zilesnick bt. Igor Morais 11-6, 12-10, 11-6.

**U18 Boys' Doubles** Zak Zilesnick/Reece Tan bt. Dritan Sadiku/Damilola Thomas 9-11, 11-8, 3-11, 12-10.

**U18 Girls** Sushmita Limbu bt. Fei Fei Pei 7-11, 9-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-7.

**U15 Girls** Charleigh Kirby bt. Sushmita Limbu 11-6, 11-3, 13-11.

**U13 Girls** Charleigh Kirby bt. Lucy Lou 11-9, 11-5, 11-4.

**U18 Girls' Doubles** Charleigh Kirby/Laura Higham bt. Dipa Tamang/Sushmita Limbu 11-8, 11-7, 13-11.

**Men** Jiang Zhi Tao bt. Jason Sugrue 11-9, 11-9, 14-12.

**Women** Tong Fei Ming bt. Egle Admolyte 11-6, 11-5, 9-11, 12-10.

**Open Doubles** Jiang Zhi Tao/Jason Sugrue bt. Egle Admolyte/Ashley Stokes 11-2, 11-4, 11-1.

**Banded Singles** Rafael Marom bt. Zayd Mauthoor 9-11, 14-12, 12-10, 11-7.

**Veteran Singles** Abdul Wuraola bt. Steve Kerns 11-3, 11-8, 11-5

**H**e won all four junior events: U18, U15 and U13 singles, as well as the junior boys' doubles' title. He was pushed on numerous occasions, but each time Zak came under intense pressure he came out on top. What's more and perhaps what is most important - Zak manages to play the same brand of free-flowing and aesthetically pleasing Table Tennis that English junior international Liam Pitchford is renowned for.

### The Zilesnick show

The final was fast and furious from the off and although a very determined Daniel Basterfield fought back bravely from 2-0 down, it was Zilesnick who made the better start in the fifth game. Zak took the title 11-7, 11-8, 8-11, 9-11, 11-7.

Zak had to come through three titanic cliff-hangers before he was crowned Under 15 boys singles champion. Igor Morais took the first two games in their second round encounter before Zak reasserted himself for the win, whilst Reece Tan looked to be on the way to reaching the final as he led Zak 7-4 in the deciding set of their semi-final. Was Zak finished? No way! Zak managed to haul his way back into contention and shaded the most compelling match of the day 6-11, 11-9, 11-7, 8-11, 13-11. It was fitting that the final should also be well contested and this time the hard-hitting Guy Ben Aroya fought back from 2-0 down, only to miss out. Not surprisingly Zak had fewer problems capturing the boys' U13 singles title winning 3-0 against Igor Morais in the final.

Zak Zilesnick and Reece Tan, the top seeds, always looked the most likely winners of the U18 boys' doubles,

especially after the second seeds Daniel Basterfield and Sullivan Morais withdrew. They eventually claimed the title in a well contested final against Dritan Sadiku and Damilola Thomas 3-1.

### Dominant Kirby

12 year-old Charleigh Kirby, ranked no. 5 in England at Under 13 Girls, was the star of the girls' events by winning three titles, making her Saturday's second most successful player.

Charleigh caused her biggest stir in the U15 singles final, hitting superbly on the forehand she powered her way past the combination bat expertise of the top seed and England no. 14 Sushmita Limbu.

There was further success in the U18 girls' doubles where Charleigh Kirby and Laura Higham excelled to get the better of Dipa Tamang and Sushmita Limbu in the final. It wasn't all gloom for Sushmita Limbu as she captured the U18 singles title.

### Senior results a touch predictable

Second seed Jiang Zhi Tao, unbeaten all season for the all conquering DHS London Progress, carried on where he had left off and became the 2008 GLC Men's Singles Champion, beating top seed and club-mate Jason Sugrue 11-9, 11-9, 14-12, in a well contested final. Understandably, there were few people prepared to bet against former World Team Champion and English Open Women's Singles Winner Tong Fei Ming capturing the Ladies Singles' title, and she showed her power and ran out as winner.

There was further success for Jiang Zhi Tao and Jason Sugrue as they took the Open Doubles and as anticipated, England no. 1 veteran Abdul Wuraola captured the Veteran Singles' title.



Hannah Hicks

## BUTTERFLY GRAND PRIX ROUND-UP

Another fantastic season on the Butterfly Grand Prix Circuit has come to a close and with £13,200 prize money to be handed out the competition was fierce right to the end. Many of the usual suspects crept to the top of the leader board; however, no one could stop Scotland's Gavin Rungay from claiming the Men's Singles title for the second year in succession and with it a cheque for £1,650. Mike Marsden will be able to hold his head up high at the Tees Sport head office as the Marketing Manager landed a superb second place. There were also notable performances from younger players

including overall third for Damien Nicholls and sixth for David McBeath. National Championships semi-finalist, Dale Barham, concluded his season in a respectable fifth spot.

The Women's Singles proved tight, as last year's champion, Egle Adomelyte, from DHS London Progress, was narrowly beaten to the top position by the talented Xu Shuying. Third came Liu Meihan and fourth was Stephanie Donnelly. Perhaps most pleasing was the continued progress of the young English players, particularly Rachel Jamison, Hannah Hicks, Caroline Hallows and Karina Le Fevre who finished in 7-10th positions respectively.

## BUTTERFLY GRAND PRIX CHAMPIONS:

- Men's Singles: Gavin Rungay
- Women's Singles: Xu Shuying
- Men's Band 1: Niall Cameron
- Women's Band 1: Stephanie Donnelly
- Men's Band 2: Emran Hussain
- Women's Band 2: Gosia Muda
- Men's Band 3: Ben Larcombe
- Women's Band 3: Chloe Thomas
- Men's Band 4: Milan Dragojlovic
- Men's Band 5: John McBeath
- Men's Band 6: Michael Hahn
- U21 Men: Damien Nicholls
- U21 Women: Hannah Hicks
- Veteran Men: Darren McVitie
- Veteran Women: Kate Alken
- Men's Restricted: Steve Denny
- Women's Restricted: Gillian Edwards

## CADET MASTERS

The Cadet Masters recently took place at Westfield TTC in the Weavers Leisure Centre, Wellingborough. The star of the show was Emily Bates, a player who has had a remarkable season. Danny Lowe also performed exceptionally well, outgunning the in form Liam Pitchford.

**Girls** - The girls' category was extremely close, with only five points separating the top seven. Although shared on points with Karina Le Fevre, the eventual winner was Emily Bates, winning on count back.

1. Emily Bates (Li) 25 points Gold
2. Karina Le Fevre (Cv) 25 points Silver
3. Ayonija Sundararajan (Bk) 23 points Bronze
4. Martha Travis (Co) 22 points
5. Lucy Davidson (Dy) 22 points

**Boys** - It was a good weekend for the boys from Derbyshire: Danny Lowe took the boys' title, winning every match to gain maximum points, with Liam Pitchford second, having only lost his game against Danny, and Sean Cullen taking the final step of the podium.

1. Danny Lowe (Dy) 26 points Gold
2. Liam Pitchford (Dy) 25 points Silver
3. Sean Cullen (Dy) 23 points Bronze
4. Alistair Smith (Co) 22 points
5. Lewis Gray (K) 21 points



Emily Bates

## NATIONAL JUNIOR TRIALS BY MIKE PAYNE

Following their own trials in December, each of the regions nominated three boys and girls to play in the trials at Under 11, 13 and 15 held at the Moorways Sports Centre, Derby. Play was in four groups of eight, with two going through to the play-offs. The objective was to find the players of tomorrow. There was a lot of talent on display, especially at Under 11, and many of the matches deserved a larger audience. At this age the matches are played with total commitment with everyone keen to get on and play.

- Results:** U11 Girls - Tin-Tin Ho bt. Esther Hoskin 11-4, 11-6, 11-7
- U11 Boys** - Hilkiyah Adebajo bt. Miles Chan 9-11, 5-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-7
- U13 Boys** - Jared Patel bt. Ross Wilson 10-12, 11-8, 11-6, 11-7
- U13 Girls** - Bethany March bt. Hannah Hoskins 11-5, 11-6, 10-12, 13-11
- U15 Girls** - Sophie Neil bt. Vicky Smith 9-11, 11-7, 11-6, 9-11, 11-9
- U15 Boys** - Lewis Gray bt. Jonathan Evans 11-7, 11-9, 11-9

# Junior Masters Cippenham TTC

**A new and improved format where all 14 of England's top Junior Boys and Girls competed in two separate competitions.** By Geoff Ware

**T**his year's event had a new and improved format where all 14 of England's top junior boys and girls competed in two separate competitions over the whole weekend, in a round robin type tournament (all play all). Second in status only to the Junior National Championships, this is the one they all want to win, and most definitely is the toughest.

### Young stars Tin-Tin Ho and Emily Bates

Right from the off 10 year old Tin-Tin Ho put warm favourite Emma Vickers under pressure, taking her all the way to five ends. This set the tone for the tournament with disappointing early defeats for many highly ranked players. The Cadet Masters Champion Emily Bates was heading to the top of the class as joint leader with Vickers. Highlights of a superb first day's play in the girls' event were tiny Tin-Tin Ho's outstanding win over top Cadet Karina Le Fevre, and Mary Fuller pulling off a shock yet well deserved win over Emma Vickers.

On day two the girls' competition was soon thrown wide open when the leader Bates faced Ho. The diminutive figure of Ho, only just tall enough to see over the table, displayed lightning reactions both in attack and counter attack giving Bates hardly any time to react. With many eyes looking to this match, it was Ho that caused the biggest early upset by taking the match 3-2, to notch up her best career win so far. Emma Vickers then recorded good wins over Rachel Farquhar, Hannah Hicks, Le Fevre and Caroline Hallows, putting herself firmly in a winning position. Meanwhile Bates recovered to gain victories over Hallows and Hayley Potts to level all square with Vickers, and create a penultimate showdown for the title.

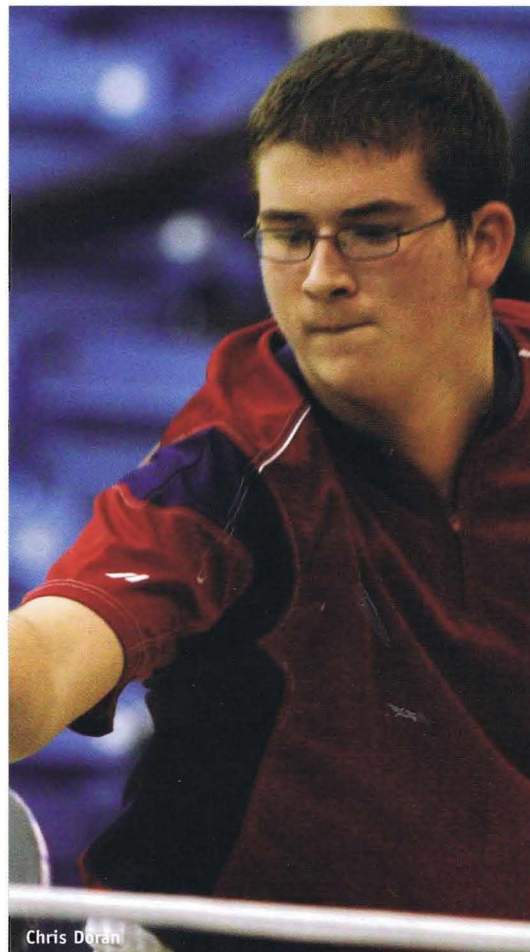
Fuller had a phenomenal second day winning all her six matches to ensure a bronze. The showdown match, however, was

between Bates and Vickers to decide the title. A win for Vickers would clinch it, but if Bates could win she could take the title on count back. Bates was soon 2-1 down and the Masters looked firmly in the hands of Vickers. However Bates had other ideas finally winning 9-11, 11-8, 9-11, 11-7, 11-9. With one more round to play Vickers narrowly fought off the challenge of Jamieson, and Bates outpointed Jordyn Layfield..so by virtue of Bates beating Vickers and both having lost two matches, the 2008 Junior Masters gold medal went to Bates.

### Doran delivers

The junior boys' competition also had many surprises in store. Chris Doran set the hall alight on the first day remaining unbeaten with five end wins over Alim Hirji, Garth Kinlocke and Sean Cullen, and outpointing Billy Deville, Richard Andrews, David McBeath and Richard Marshall, to lead the field on a maximum 14 points. Damien Nicholls and Matt Ware fought their way back into contention winning the rest of their six matches, both recovering after their earlier defeats from Danny Lowe, to put them in joint second place on 13 points.

Day two proved to be a thriller that went right to the wire. Unfortunately for Ware, his shot at the title went quickly following a defeat at the hands of Will Maybanks, leaving a top slot tussle between Doran and Nicholls. This match was a classic, it had everything; drama, excitement and the trademark long topspin rallies, treating the audience to some great table tennis. Could the expected title be slipping away from Doran, as Nicholls eventually got his head in front running out a 12-10, 7-11, 8-11, 16-14, 14-12 winner? Would the title now go Damien's way? With Doran winning his last match against Lowe 3-1, could Ware be the fly in the ointment for Nicholls and pull off a win and hand the title to Doran?



Chris Doran

### THE CRUNCH WARE V NICHOLLS

Ware was soon in his stride and took the first. Nicholls came back quickly to level the match. Ware then found another gear to take the next two 11-7, and hand the title to the relieved and exceptionally nervous onlooker, Doran.

#### Junior Boys

1. Chris Doran (Np)	23 points	Gold
2. Damien Nicholls (Sp)	22 points	Silver
3. Matt Ware (Ha)	21 points	Bronze

#### Junior Girls

1. Emily Bates (Li)	24 points	Gold
2. Emma Vickers (Dy)	24 points	Silver
3. Mary Fuller (Y)	23 points	Bronze

# a tribute...

## ALAN BEAMES BY KEITH JACKSON

In December 1993, after Bill Bradley's health problems prohibited him from continuing in his role, Alan was asked to step in to help the Sussex County Committee. In 1994 he was elected as Sussex County Secretary and continued to hold this post until 2005. Alan was extremely efficient and effective in this role, always giving a great deal of thought prior to making decisions. A keen listener, he was always willing to hear and evaluate the opinions of others. Perhaps it was his background as a lawyer, or maybe his sense of fair play that made him rather a stickler for ensuring that county rules and regulations were upheld and applied consistently. He ensured that people at all levels were treated fairly and with integrity, and gained the respect of players and officials across the county.

Alan was a great team player, sharing his knowledge and expertise across the committee, and providing valuable guidance when needed. In addition he organised the Seaman and Nicholls Cup competitions for many years and was also a qualified county umpire.

Alan was a relatively quiet man. He was not the type to sing his own praises, but rather the type that seamlessly made things happen.

## MIKE HANLEY BY RICHARD SCRUTON

Mike Hanley, who has died after a long illness aged 68 years, was a long serving club secretary, league secretary and chairman, former regional chairman, a past member of the ETTA tournaments committee and a life member of the Yorkshire Association.

He will be remembered for his kindness and willingness to help people, whether player, parent, coach or umpire.

In 1980, at a competition at York University, he tapped me on the shoulder and said he thought we ought to work together. So began a long friendship and 15 years of close cooperation organising open and closed tournaments, including junior selects and English junior opens at Bridlington.

He was a born organiser and he was particularly adept at problem solving and seeing the potential of a venue. His work planning accommodation requirements and hospitality arrangements was exemplary and he taught himself to schedule a competition and plan the field of play. During the 1990s he organised national disabled competitions for DSE, and his last participation at a major event was his contribution to the transport team at the 1997 World Championships in Manchester.

Mike loved Bridlington and when table tennis returns to the Spa Royal Hall, following a full facility refurbishment, we should remember him for his major contribution to so many past events there. Mike had strong connections with Scotland and all things Scottish. He was at home walking in the glens

and isles, knew more about whisky malts than most Yorkshiremen, and we walked the courses at St Andrews, Muirfield and Carnoustie during Open golf championships. His funeral at Selby Abbey was attended by many of his club and county colleagues

## LILIAN RYMILL BY PETER WALES

Lilian Edith Rymill passed away peacefully in Southlands Hospital, Shoreham by Sea, aged 89 years, after a long illness. Her funeral service was held at the Emmanuel United Reform Church in Worthing before a large congregation of her family, many representatives of the Worthing Table Tennis fraternity, and her many friends and former colleagues at Worthing Borough Council.

It was in the world of table tennis that Lilian will be most remembered.

Lilian was one of the founder members of the Worthing & District Table Tennis Association, and was elected, and continued to be, after serving in many official capacities, a Life Member of the Association until her death.

During her active participation in table tennis, Lilian also served in the capacity of General Secretary, and later as Treasurer, of the Sussex County Table Tennis Association, following which she was elected as a Vice-President.

Lilian was also the prime motivator in the formation of one of the founder clubs of the Worthing Association, now known as Goring Table Tennis Club competing in league competitions, and had been, until her failing health prevented her, the secretary and organiser of the club teams, and which continues to be one of the largest of the clubs in the League with five teams currently participating in the various divisions.

Lilian was not only involved at club, league, and county level, but also at international level, when, for the English Table Tennis Association, she was involved in the administration of the English Open Championships, often held at the Brighton Dome and Corn Exchange, and also she was involved with the World Championships when this event was held at Wembley. For her achievements at all levels of Table Tennis, Lilian was honoured to be presented in 1984 with the ETTA Merit Award for services to the sport.

Lilian was also honoured in 2001 with the presentation of the "Albert Saunders" award by the Worthing Borough Sports Council for her services to sport.

Lilian, together with Bill Goldfinch, also an officer in Worthing Borough Council at the time, was instrumental in obtaining the use for many years of the Worthing Assembly Hall, which was an excellent playing venue for tournaments, for the staging of the annual Sussex Junior Open event and of the annual Worthing Closed event. Lilian will be sadly missed by all.

"Alan was a relatively quiet man. He was not the type to sing his own praises, but rather the type that seamlessly made things happen.

"Mike loved Bridlington and when table tennis returns to the Spa Royal Hall, following a full facility refurbishment, we should remember him for his major contribution to so many past events there. "

" It was in the world of table tennis that Lilian will be most remembered"

# County Notes

## Cheshire by Alan Blears

**British League:** Congratulations to Halton's second team on finishing top of a hard-fought Division 3 North with ten wins. Their first team club mates in Div.1 North had a tough season, finishing level on points with Chesterfield 1st, but avoiding the bottom spot by virtue of a superior games difference.

**Human Yo-Yo:** Stockport's Caroline Hallows has had a yo-yo of a season. The highest point was probably her win in the women's singles at the Blackpool Grand Prix, while in the English Nationals she reached the

semi-finals of the women's doubles and mixed doubles, partnered by Hannah Hicks and Danny Reed respectively.

**Schools Individual Finals:** Caroline had another semi-final spot - by no means her first in this competition - in the U19 girls, where she lost to long time friend and rival Emma Vickers. With Cheshire players competing in four age groups and from three educational areas, it was impossible to keep track of them all, apart from Caroline, of those that I know of Daniel Wearden in the U11 boys was one who had a very good day. In the tough world of U16 boys Chris



Caroline Hallows

**Of the team's prospects, team manager Duncan Crawford told Table Tennis News: "Division One will be a lot tougher."**

**Despite the decline in the number of players in recent years, Barrow is still a strong base for the sport.**

Pattison didn't appear, while Chris Hatton (Merseyside) and Jordan Potts (Greater Manchester) had difficult draws. Jordan had a lesson from no.1 seed Garth Kinlocke of the British Academy, but had an agonising near miss against Yorkshire's highly rated Edward Famberly.

## Junior/Cadet County

**Championships:** Pride of place goes to the cadets, who finished as runners-up in Div. 1A. Chris Hatton topped the bill, winning all his 12 sets, but this was a real team effort as can be seen from the other results: Steve Nicholls 9 from 12, Luke Joseph 8 from 12, Marcus McNulty 10 from 12, Sarah Weatherby 13 from 16, Natalie Dodd 7 from 8 and Janay Gibson 6 from 8. The junior first team suffered from players being on holiday, finishing fourth in Div. 1A, despite the girls, Caroline, Maitreyi Shivkumar and Rachel Baker, winning 24 of their 28 sets. The second team's boys struggled in Div. 2A, all making their first appearance at this level, but the performance of Annie Hudson and Corrina Bebbington was described as "exceptional" by junior secretary Paul Ingham.

Paul is now retiring from his post, so on behalf of all the county juniors I would like to express our gratitude for all his hard work.

**Bye-bye:** "Now is the hour when we must say goodbye" are the opening words of a well known song of yesteryear - which rather dates me, I think - and tells you that I am also retiring. It has been an enjoyable and at times challenging experience being your correspondent, but after eight years I feel it is time for someone else



to take over the reins.

I must thank Martine Potts for her help in e-mailing this dinosaur's report to the editor.

Pending the appointment of a new correspondent if you have any queries or information please contact the county secretary, Helena Dennett, on 01606 783796.

Adios, mis amigos!

### Cumbria by Gordon Brown

Former England international Dennis Neale has agreed to join the playing squad of Barrow as they prepare to meet the challenge of the British League top flight in the new season, after lifting the Division Two North championship last term.

Neale has played in the Commonwealth Games and was once in the world top 20. He is expected to be the only addition to last season's squad of Jonathan Crawford of Barrow and Bristol Table Tennis Academy, Steve Dixon of Kendal, Steve Lyons of Manchester (who is a foot specialist for the England and Manchester United soccer squads), Scott Crawford of Barrow (who was only 15 at the time his town lifted the title) and Tristran Swann of Barrow, but now living in Manchester.

Of the team's prospects, team manager Duncan Crawford told Table Tennis News: "Division One will be a lot tougher." Despite the decline in the number of players in recent years, Barrow is still a strong base for the sport. Scott Crawford beat Millom's Neil Smith in the men's singles of the town championship, whilst Dowdales lost only one end all season to take the division one league title. Furness Cricket Club had a 5-1 victory over Dowdales in the final of the Tom Dixon Cup, which attracted mainly the younger players.

Cumbria had several qualifiers in the England Schools TTA individual finals in Doncaster, with 10-year-old Emily Bolton, of Askam, reaching the under 11 girls' quarter-finals.

Sorry to have to end on a sad note by announcing the death of Millom's John Reed, who was in his 70s and organised and coached successful teams in the town for many years. He was instrumental in arranging Millom's first England international, against France, in the 1970s. One of his former pupils, Dicon Gray, is now the Development Manager of the ETTA.

### Derbyshire by Neil Houghton

Back in England now - just so long as TT is an indoor game I can almost put up with the cold, although after an Australian autumn it seems chilly enough inside. First visit since return was to sunny Doncaster for the National Schools' Individuals; well it was sunny at last, but complete with the usual cool wind going in the back way via the fish lake. There were quite a few young players relaxing out there between matches, although it is also a good place for losing players to go while carping about any bad games!!

Watched a few local players doing a good job, including Ronan Kelly and Isobel Ashley in Under 11s, with Isobel Hampson and Daniel Burton (Andy's son and part of the keen Burton dynasty!) in U13s. Lucy Davidson played well to get to the final of the Under 16s, disposing of no. 1 seed Mary Fuller, although losing 12-14 in the fifth in the final to no. 2. Unfortunately Danny Lowe was injured and missed his top seeded go at Under 16s. U19 girls found Emma Vickers (congratulations on winning the U19s) playing for a certain county next door, as she now goes to college there, leaving Pride of Cornwall/current local resident Martha Travis to perform very well as a cadet in U19s to represent Derbyshire! Liam Pitchford played on good form to win the U19s!

Liam, Sean and Danny recently came back from the Guernsey Cadet International with three golds and a silver between them and Martha with a team gold. Well done! All's well that ends well now that our Derbyshire juniors did well for England and overall the team stayed up in the Junior Premier Division for next season, when we would hope to have a much better time if they are all available with no similar clashes.

The Chesterfield Championships were held recently with long-time keen player Mick Padley doing a good job organizing, with the usual good support from local league players and some Derbyshire stars. This included reigning champion Allan Fullwood having recovered from the injury that kept him out of the last county weekend, who was now back in form to retain the Men's Singles, albeit tight in the fifth from keen player Shaun Bibby. The Women's Singles winner was Meri Isherwood, beating the also ever-keen Melissa Slaney. Meri also won the Women's Doubles with Isobel Ashley, beating Melissa Slaney and Siobhan Kelly, while the Men's Doubles was won by Steve Young and Shaun Bibby v Andrew Henry and Steve Mason. Meri Isherwood completed her hat-trick with Steve Young beating Allan Fullwood and Siobahn Kelly in the mixed. Other results as follows:

**Vets** Over 50s and over 40s went to Geoff Gill who plays a good game well below his age - I didn't realise he was this old to be honest, but thinking about it he has been a keen presence in Derbyshire for just a while! Runners-up were Stuart Morris and Shaun Bibby.

**Under 21s** Allan Fulwood again with r/u Daniel Lawman. Tom Booth took a good Under 18 win over Oliver Hampson.

**Under 15 and Under 18 Girls** saw Frances Baker doing the double with Isobel Ashley r/u in both.

Ronan Kelly beat Oliver Hampson in the U15s and Peter **Baker in U13 Boys**. Isobel Ashley beat Jayden Budworth in U13 Girls.

Some of the above Chesterfield youngsters were also in action the following weekend in the Midlands Junior National League, held at Uxbridge Burton. I had heard that the Springwell based Colin Deaton team were unlucky in heading down from Division Two, whilst the Speedwell team

won that division. Players involved in this success were Daniel Burton, Peter Baker and Shaun Williams with Frances Baker. The above mentioned Isobel Ashley was also a member of this team, although not playing for them in the second weekend. It seems that the Derby Junior Four Star comments were edited out last time to save space, but worth mentioning again as it is very pleasing to report that the 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 Cadet Girls! The Derbyshire juniors in action also included good play from Abbie Millwain, Mark Naylor and Ben Goodwin. The latest junior event was Cheltenham with some more good results for local players, including a report that Abi Millwain was runner-up in one event and Sean Cullen won the Cadet Boys' event; keep up the good work both of you and all the other young Derbyshire players doing well!

There is also a seemingly informed rumour around that Liam Pitchford is due for some big honour from an ETTA direction, so looking forward to details and likely confirmation of this next time!

#### **Devon by John Smith**

Both Woolwell & Ilfracombe TTC's ran very successful 24 Hour marathon fund-raising events over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend. The line-up in the open tournament incorporated within the Woolwell event would have graced any county competition, with Paul Whiting victorious from Chris Smith, while Mike Short pipped Marketa Myskova for third place. Despite the Royal Dockyard in Plymouth changing hands from DML to Babcock Marine, Woolwell TTC's has fortunately retained its sponsorship deal with the new owners, but will no longer include the DML prefix. Two of the ladies who helped win Devon the County Championship title this season starred at the

Wolverhampton Grand Prix. Lisa Radford won the Under 21 title, whilst Sally Smith followed up her victory in the Band 1 event at London, by reaching the semi-final of the women's competition.

The eighth Plymouth Primary Schools Championships were held recently with Ollie Buddell and Jodie Kirk taking the individual titles from Jack Evans and Olivia Ridholls respectively. St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School won the team event for the seventh time, represented by Sam Cripps, Jack Evans and James Arnott. Devon were well represented in the National Schools Individual Championships. Chris Smith and Ollie Buddell reached the quarter-finals of the boys' under19 and under11 events respectively. Vicky Smith disappointingly lost in the first knock-out round of the under 13s to eventual finalist Evangeline Collier, but made up for it the following day in the Regional Squad Championships. Representing the South West she was undefeated in the under 13 age group, beating national numbers 2 and 4 Tin-Tin Ho and Jessica Dawson along the way.

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

The Durham County junior side travelled to the second weekend of fixtures in Division 1A of the county championships, hoping to emulate the county's senior first team in achieving a return to the top tier of English table tennis, the hallowed ground of the Premier Division. Lying in second place after the first weekend Durham were relying on other teams if they were to take the top spot in the division, as they had lost to leaders South Yorkshire in round 2.

Fate appeared to be smiling on the team, made up of Mark Simpson, Anthony and Graeme Barella, Sarah Robinson and Eszter Soos, as South Yorkshire dropped vital points in being held to draws by both Cleveland and Suffolk. Durham meanwhile had a tremendous day, defeating the two teams that South Yorkshire couldn't,

Cleveland and Suffolk, both by the score line of 6-4, and also dispatching Essex 2nds and Staffordshire 7-3.

This meant that Durham and South Yorkshire were tied at the top of the table on 12 points and a tense wait ensued before South Yorkshire were declared champions by way of a superior sets difference. So unfortunately the juniors couldn't quite repeat the feat of their senior counterparts and another season in Division 1A beckons.

After this disappointment, the county's attention turned to the veterans' team who were fighting to avoid relegation from Division 2A of their county championships. The team were bottom of the division after the first weekend with just a solitary point and with two teams set to fall through the trapdoor, it promised to be a tough weekend.

A 3-7 defeat to Norfolk 1sts certainly didn't help matters and when Durham also went down 4-6 against Yorkshire 3rds their relegation to the fourth tier of county table tennis was confirmed. A 7-3 victory in their remaining fixture against Nottinghamshire showed the fighting spirit that the team has in abundance, but it was sadly too little too late as Durham finished one point behind third bottom Norfolk 2nds, a team they had lost to earlier in the season.

So ultimately not quite the successful end to the season that we in Durham were hoping for. However, both teams will be back next season eager for the challenge and up for the fight. Indeed, as Thomas Edison once remarked 'I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work'.

#### **Essex by Steve Kerns**

Dave Jones became the 2008 recipient of the Corti Woodcock Award, the county's foremost award for service to the sport which was presented at the Essex County Association's Annual General Meeting in May. Dave has served on the Colchester Committee for 40 years and has played in the Colchester League for 50. Dave took on

**He reached the singles final without dropping a game, where he met four times winner Richard Elliott. A close contest ensued but after Elliott had salvaged the third end, Doran moved up a gear to retain the title. Late withdrawals cleared the way for Doran and John Fuller to reach the doubles final.**

the role of Colchester League Assistant Secretary in 1977, and was the League's Tournament Chairman between 1981 and 2004. Dave became League Vice-Chairman in 1981, a position he held until 1991 when he became the General Secretary, a role he still holds 17 years later. Amidst all this hard work, something else stands out, and that is the fact that Dave's main sport is tennis!

Neil Brierley, synonymous with everything good that takes place in Essex table tennis was made a County Life Member at the same meeting. One of the driving forces behind the very successful BATTs Table Tennis Club, the current County Veterans Match Secretary, a county veteran player, the Vice-Chairman of the Harlow League, a former Harlow veterans singles and Harlow men singles champion and one of the organisers of the prestigious Harlow Super League, Neil's name is well known far outside of the boundaries of Essex table tennis. Long may his hard work continue!

A strong Ilford side of Matt Spero, Didier Ngoma and Keith Lesser are this year's Essex Men's Inter-League Champions after remaining undefeated when the day's play took place in May at BATTs. Ilford looked to be heading for defeat when they trailed 4-2 against Braintree after Paul Davison had beaten both Lesser and Ngoma and Andy Doshier had beaten Matt Spero. However, Ilford hit back strongly with Spero getting the better of Davison 3-2. Ilford did well to shade the match 6-4 and by winning their other matches against Southend, Clacton and Harlow comfortably, they became Champions.

A Braintree side of Bradley Hudgell, Andy McEwan, Philip Lawson and Stevie Pell (who have all played for the County junior teams) are the 2008 Junior Inter-League Champions, after they won all of their matches which included an impressive 7-3 victory over reigning Champions Colchester (Greg Green, Michael Shore, Holly Stubbings and Andrew Harvey).

#### **Hertfordshire by Ann Fereday**

**Junior & Cadet Friendly Match:** Hertfordshire staged a home match at Barnet Table Tennis Centre on May 17th against Norfolk. Each county fielded a junior and cadet side consisting of promising rather than their top ranked players.

First the Herts juniors played Norfolk juniors. While Norfolk was strong and the games keenly contested, there were some excellent performances from the Herts team, especially Adam Parker and Max Tomblin, resulting in an 8-2 win.

Next the Herts cadets played the Norfolk cadets. All the team played at their best and got a convincing 9-1 victory. For their second match the Herts juniors had a clean sweep against the Norfolk cadets and won 10-0.

The Herts cadets' second match proved harder when they were faced with the Norfolk juniors. They were close to a draw when one player had to be withdrawn, resulting in a 4-5 loss.

**Summary** Herts Juniors bt. Norfolk Juniors 8-2 Herts Juniors bt. Norfolk Cadets 10-0 Herts Cadets bt. Norfolk Cadets 9-1 Norfolk Juniors bt. Herts Cadets 4-5

The complete Herts junior and cadet teams were: Adam Parker, Max Tomblin, Helen Ford, Tom Baines, Ross MacNiven, Isaac Beevor, Ross Southgate, Jack Blackburn and Charlie Baines.

Adam, Max and Ross MacNiven won all their matches.

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

When the Kettering Closed Tournament was staged at Weavers Table Tennis Centre, Chris Doran took time off from his international and national commitments to defend his men's singles and doubles titles.

He reached the singles final without dropping a game, where he met four times winner Richard Elliott. A close contest ensued but after Elliott had salvaged the third end, Doran moved up a gear to retain the title.

Late withdrawals cleared the way for Doran and John Fuller to reach the doubles final where previous winners David Grundy and Andy LeButt were beaten in straight games.

Charlotte Binley, making her debut in this event, reached the three main finals beating holder Helen Watts in four ends. She joined Steve Silk to take the mixed doubles, with Watts and her brother Martin on the losing side. Binley missed out on the treble when she and Muriel Cox went down to Watts and Brigitta Palinkas in straight games.

6 of the top 13 players on Thornton's Sports Ranking List were in contention for the veteran singles. The finalists were Silk, who had narrowly accounted for Ken Philipson, and David Grundy, whose victims included Mark Nannery and Andy LeButt. Silk retained the title in a closely fought fifth end.

In the doubles Grundy, partnered by LeButt, gained his revenge by pulling back a two game deficit against Silk and Philipson, with the latter not to be denied when he beat town colleague Fuller in a five end Over 50s final.

Jordan Dainty dominated the junior events beating Dan Smalley in the singles and partnering Ryan Harrison to get the better of Smalley and Sam Wildman in the doubles. However, his best win came in the Under 30 event when he accounted for last year's winner Lee Bunker, who also

reached the Hard Bat final before going down to master technician Grundy.

Alex Aston won the Over 30/Under 40 singles, whilst Nathan Thompson edged out Chris Marshall in the Under 16 event. Other junior winners were Rachel Thompson, Sam Mabey, Gina Steadman and Jamie Burgess.

The Weavers Centre completed its hat-trick when the Northampton Closed followed those of Wellingborough and Kettering. However, it was Charlotte Binley who made the headlines when she became the first player to take all four ladies singles - Wellingborough, Kettering, Northampton and Northants - in the same season.

The beaten finalist was Maggie Edwards, who making a return to the event produced an excellent performance to oust Jordan Wood at the penultimate stage, but Wood gained some consolation when she and Sarah Hollis took the doubles with Edwards and Maloney taking second place.

Richard Elliott again took centre stage with a traditional treble. He took his fourth singles in a row, but was hard pressed in the doubles when he and Jamie Chamberlain looked certain to bow out in the semi-final to Michael Edwards and Ameya Phatak, before scraping through 11-9 in the fifth. The mixed event was another tense affair with Elliott and Binley facing Elliott's brother David, partnered by Hollis, but after a pulsating encounter the Elliott/Binley duo edged through. John Alsop dominated the veteran events, beating Jamie Chamberlain in the Over 40s and combining with Alan Shouler to take the corresponding doubles. At Over 50 level, Alsop proved too strong for Gerald Henson, but it all went topsy turvy in the Over 50 doubles when Turvey pair were downed by Brian Wooding and Dave Ewen, who the lost the final to Edwards and Henson.

Alsop also proved master of the hard bat when he beat holder Ewen in the final, while mystery doubles went to Hollis and Robert Griffin.

## It was good to see a strong representation of youngsters who arrived to collect medals for their efforts in the junior league, led by the likes of Laura Robinson and Luke Tattersall.

Griffin also did well at junior level winning the Under 15 singles against Joe Burrows to retain the trophy, before following up with the corresponding doubles. His partner in the event was Sam Mabey, who at 10 years old proved to be the best doubles exponent on view when he took the Under 13 event in tandem with Burrows, and then made sure of the Under 18 crown when he and Nathan Thompson accounted for Binley and Wood.

In a reversal of last year's final Binley confirmed her current supremacy over Wood at Under 18 level, but Wood made no mistake against Lauren Armstrong at Under 15 level.

Four boys each won one a singles title, with Sam Mabey beating Miles Chan at the lowest age group, Chan coming through to take the Under 13 event against Aaron Ark, and Ryan Harrison needing all five games to beat Nathan Thompson in the Under 18s after Thompson had taken the fourth 19-17.

### Oxfordshire by Karl Bushell

**Inter-League Competition:** The annual inter-league tournament took place at Moreton on Sunday 11 May with both the juniors and seniors competing on the same day. In the junior event, Didcot were worthy winners, but they were made to work hard by Oxford in a competitive match that Didcot edged 4-3. Joe Cheong was undefeated for Didcot and received good support from Nick Redding and James Goldsby-West. In the senior event Oxford continued their domination and their team of Karl Bushell, Greg Boone and Dawn Pearce proved too strong for their opponents. Banbury secured second place with wins over Didcot and a Rest of Oxfordshire team.

### Midland League success for

**veterans:** Oxford's veterans' midland league team won division 3 and secured promotion by winning all six matches in their division. During the season they only conceded eight matches. Excellent performances were achieved by Neil Hurford 17/18, Glen Freeman 15/15 and Nigel Taylor 10/15.

The Oxford junior team also had a good season, finishing second behind Nuneaton.

Ross Henderson won the trophy for most wins in the division, with 14 wins from 15 matches. He was well supported by Chris Smith and Jake East.

The senior team had a disappointing season losing many tight matches.

**Oxford Closed Tournament:** This year's event had a very international flavour with several new faces competing. There was an early shock in the men's singles when Roel Dullens of Holland beat Andrew Flint, the number two seed.

Harry Yeates of the Forum was in tremendous form sweeping aside many good players and winning an excellent semi-final against Roel.

In the final Harry met the defending champion Karl Bushell and won the first two matches 11-8, 11-8. Karl then changed tactics and won the next three matches 11-3, 11-4, 11-7 to win the trophy for the twelfth time.

In the ladies event Janet Brown was again victorious, but was made to work hard in the semi-final by Aki Ben-Ezra. In the final she was up against the youth of Laurel Christer and used her experience to win 11-3, 11-8, 11-7.

The veterans' singles saw Karl Bushell retain his title with a win over John Barclay, and there were wins in the

men's doubles for Glen Freeman and his partner Paul Borrowdale and in the mixed doubles for Janet Brown and Bill Mason.

New Premises in Kidlington - We are delighted as a county to report that work has commenced in Kidlington on a new table tennis centre. With support from the ETTA and Sport England we should have an excellent venue to develop the sport in the county.

Excellent press coverage has been obtained with a front page newspaper article and coverage on ITV local news.

The building should be completed by the end of year, so the club at Kidlington Forum are looking forward to 2009 with much enthusiasm.

#### South Yorkshire by Rob Loxley

The "end of term" Sheffield League presentation night was held last month at the Shiregreen Working Men's Club, the setting for the memorable male strip show in the film "The Full Monty". No such shenanigans on 16th May, when everyone remained (thankfully) clothed as the awards were presented by League Chairman John Whidborne; the buffet served up and the lady entertainer belted out a range of popular songs to close the proceedings!

It was good to see a strong representation of youngsters who arrived to collect medals for their efforts in the junior league, led by the likes of Laura Robinson and Luke Tattersall.

The Vulcan and Piranha clubs both walked off with two divisional trophies each, and Stocksbridge Rugby wrote themselves into the record books by equalling the record number of 10 top flight championships set by Albion Corinthians way back in the sixties. The Stocksbridge side comprised Stephen Horsfield, Matt Kenny, Trevor Williams, Richard Shirt and Martin Stenton. Don Valley A, represented by Bill Grant, Simon Pugh, Liam Carson and Jack Grant, pushed Stocksbridge all the way and took the runners-up shield. Shaun Marples (Crookes TTC) took the top division's leading scorer's prize with a performance of 62/63.

Stephen Horsfield, who took out Matt Kenny in the final, won the annual closed tournament for the fifth time. This performance leaves Stephen one short of the all time record jointly held by David Rayner and Clive Guest. Following a round robin, Laura Robinson became the youngest ever ladies' singles champion at the tender age of thirteen! The "special" award for the most promising junior was presented to Vulcan's Sam Walker, and the award for the most improved "youth" was given to Mark Johnson, whose notable wins came against Simon Pugh, Steve Crosby and Andrew Horsfield.

The honour of "club secretary of the year" was bestowed upon Wisewood TTC stalwart Graham Lyon and I'm proud to say that the "league service" award was presented for the second time to the author.

The Sheffield summer league continues to be a popular

competition, with 30 teams competing and divided into four divisions. Scorpions and Vulcan currently head the premier division. Vulcan E, led by Steve Parkinson and Phil Beresford, and Vulcan G, featuring Dave Wild and Gordon Davies, currently top divisions one and two respectively, and Abbeydale lead division three with a squad of Chris Leviston, John Howlett and Ken Chung.

Just in: Our congratulations to Jack Grant of the Don Valley TTC and the Sheffield Table Tennis Club, who has just been awarded the "player of the year" for the senior British league division 2 North.

#### Sussex by Graham Carter

Brighton's Wesley Bush-Harris lifted the Seaman Cup for the first time.

The full-time ETTA regional development officer beat surprise finalist Gary Wilson (Lancing) 3-1 in the final at the Six Villages Sports Centre in Westergate.

Earlier, Bush-Harris put out a former champion Peter Bartram (Lancing), who is recovering from a knee operation, and in the final gained revenge for a thrilling 3-2 defeat by Wilson during the group stage.

Bush-Harris took advantage of the absence of former champion Ritchie Venner, who was competing in the World Quiz Championships in Chesterfield, and reigning champion Adrian Moore to capture the invitation event, which is contested by the top eight players in the county. In the semi-final he overcame the player who had impressed on his Sussex debut this season, Andrej Lasota (Chichester) 3-1.

Wilson, who only returned to table tennis after a three-year break this season, had put out Brighton's rising star Harry McCarney, who had eliminated last year's finalist Koray Ozcan (Eastbourne) and Michael Robinson (Worthing). Sussex Senior Match Secretary Terry Dean said: "It is very encouraging to see the new players breaking through and Sussex has so many quality players to choose from, the future looks bright."

Hastings attacker Rose Rainton retained the Nicholls Cup when she beat Teresa Bennett (Eastbourne) 3-0 in the final. In the semis, Rose cruised past Sally Hughes (Worthing) 3-0, while Bennett defeated Hastings veteran Sheila King 3-0. Stephen Denman (Brighton) added the Bradley Cup to his Sussex Junior Championship title when he beat defending champion Stephen Eckford (Brighton) 3-2, while Sally Hughes took the girls' event (Rymill Cup), overcoming Haywards Heath's Emma Torkington.

Sussex champion Ritchie Venner has successfully defended his National Veterans title. The Hastings star and England no.2 won the English over 40s crown for the second successive year with a 3-2 victory against Kent's Joe Kennedy in the final at Gloucestershire.

Venner combined with Sussex team-mate Adrian Moore to win the over 40s doubles, beating another Sussex team-mate Nigel Eckersley (Uckfield) and Somerset's Steve Hall in



Stephen Denny

the fifth game.

Sussex leagues are planning major changes for next season. The Crawley & Horsham League is to vote at its forthcoming AGM on changing its structure for its top division from three-man teams to four-man, playing all matches on two tables and with all teams playing at one venue, Holy Trinity School, the home of the Crawley Community Club. If the proposal gets through it is hoped the league will be able to invite teams to enter from neighbouring leagues to keep the standard high.

The Brighton League wants to form a Super-League by merging its top division with nearby Worthing. The plan, put together by Sussex Veterans Secretary Tony Catt, was accepted at its AGM. However, the idea suffered a setback when it was turned down by the Worthing League itself.

#### **Warwickshire by Caroline Williams**

Congratulations are due to the Warwickshire cadets who were runners-up in the Premier Division of the County Championships, the highest position ever achieved by the county's cadets. Middlesex were clear leaders, winning all their matches, but going into the final round of matches any one of three counties could have finished second. Warwickshire, South Yorkshire and Sussex were all in with a realistic chance, and it was only in the very last set of the weekend that Matthew Outhwaite of Warwickshire scored a thrilling five game victory over South Yorkshire's Scott Hollowood, thus giving Warwickshire a vital point and the crucial runners-up spot. This superb effort by our young team, Jack Williamson and Sanikar Karandikar (Birmingham), Jack Randle and Matthew Outhwaite (Rugby) and

Charlotte Spencer (Leamington), should ensure that the future of table tennis in Warwickshire is in safe hands.

Not to be outdone, the senior 1st team won Division 2C, and will be promoted next season to Division 1A. In a really great team effort the squad produced consistent results to be undefeated in all their matches, which were against Bedfordshire, Suffolk 1st, Cambridgeshire, Warwickshire 2nd, Suffolk 2nd and Northamptonshire. The team was composed of Ian Ferguson (9/12), Mark Jackson (10/12), Mike Browne (7/12), Rachel Pilgrim (9/12) and Helen Turner (9/12). Ian, Mark and Rachel all played in the Leamington League this season. Captain Ian says that "It will be tough next year but I think we have the quality to stay up. This season the girls played exceptionally well as did Mark."

Our other county teams did not fare so well. The Over 60s came third in Division 1A, the veterans fifth in 3A, Senior 2nd fifth in 2C and the juniors finished at the bottom of their Division 1A and are now demoted to Junior 2C.

#### **Yorkshire by Barry Snowden**

##### **Denny retains Yorkshire Closed**

**Men's Singles:** Stephen Denny, Mary Fuller, Richard Lightowler and Rebecca George were all double winners in this season's Yorkshire Closed Championships held at Halifax Table Tennis Centre.

Bradford player Denny retained the men's singles title he won last season with a comfortable final victory over Heckmondwyke veteran Lightowler 11-7 11-6 11-2.

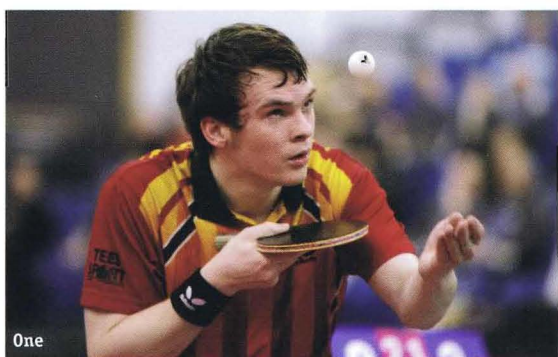
Denny also picked up the mixed doubles title with Mary Fuller when they beat the Hull pairing of Clinton and Zoe Fisher in a three game final, which also proved to be Fuller's second title. She had earlier won the women's singles' title with a final victory over Leeds University student Alkistis Olympiou who comes from Greece. Lightowler had picked up the men's

veterans' title with a thrilling 11-9 10-12 12-13 11-8 11-9 final victory against fellow Yorkshire first teamer Tim Dyson of Huddersfield. He then took his second title when he partnered Simon Pugh to a men's doubles final victory over reigning champions Denny and Pudsey player Chris Parker 5-11, 11-5, 13-11, 11-7. The junior boys' event was won by James Berry of Halifax who eased to the title without dropping a game, beating Daniel Adams of Leeds 11-8 11-6 11-2 in the final. This was a fitting way for Berry to bow out of the junior ranks as he went one better than last year when he lost in the final of this event to Ryedale's Edward Fambely. Since that defeat Berry has played on six occasions for Yorkshire juniors and was recently voted the most improved young player in the Halifax League.

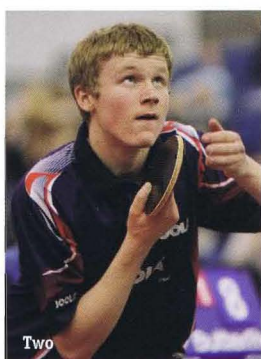
The cadets was won by James Atkins of Leeds, and provided the most entertaining final as he just beat James Mason of Halifax with both players having already met earlier in the day in the junior boys' quarter-final, in which Mason just edged the verdict in a five game thriller.

If either player had any nerves they did not show it, as Atkins opened with an 11-5 win, but the match was soon level as Mason took the second 11-5 only for Atkins to restore his lead with another 11-6 victory. Then Mason returned the complement with an 11-9 victory to set up a deciding game. Atkins started the better in the final game and quickly opened a 3-0 lead only for Mason to take the next six points to make it 6-3. Atkins once again took three points on the trot to level it. Despite Mason taking the next point to move to within a set (10-9) it was the Leeds player who took the next decisive point and with it the title.

Helmsley Table Tennis Club's James Mayne concluded his fantastic season with a county title by winning the under 13 crown. The girls' singles was won by Rebecca George of Scarborough



One



Two



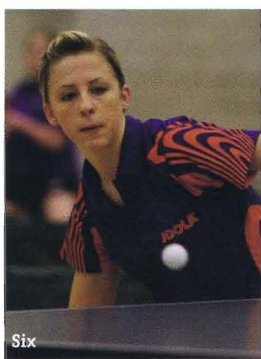
Three



Four



Five



Six



Seven

**One:** Paul Drinkhall, No 1 Senior Man and Junior Boy **Two:** Gavin Evans, No 1 Cadet Boy **Three:** Zak Zilesnick, No 1 Under 13 Boy **Four:** Abdul Wuroola, No 1 Veteran Man **Five:** Joanna Parker, No 1 Senior Woman **Six:** Emma Vickers, No 1 Junior Girl **Seven:** Emily Bates No 1 Cadet Girl and Under 13 Girl

## Player Rankings 2007/2008

### TOP 25 SENIOR MEN

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

### TOP 25 SENIOR WOMEN

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

### TOP 5 JUNIOR BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	DRINKHALL, Paul (CV.)
2.	KNIGHT, Darius (SY.)
3.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
4.	PITCHFORD, Liam (DY.)
5.	DORAN, Christopher (NP.)

### TOP 5 CADET BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
2.	PITCHFORD, Liam (DY.)
3.	LOWE, Daniel (DY.)
4.	CULLEN, Sean (DY.)
5.	GRAY, Lewis (K.)

### TOP 5 UNDER 13 BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	ZILESニック, Zak (MI.)
2.	WALKER, Sam (NG.)
3.	ADEBANJO, Azarel (E.)
4.	PATEL, Jared (E.)
5.	MORAIS, Igor (MI.)

### TOP 5 VETERAN MEN

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

### TOP 5 JUNIOR GIRLS

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

### TOP 5 CADET GIRLS

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

### 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.	COLLIER, Sue (CH.)
3.	HARPER, Sandra (BD.)
4.	MUDGE, Kim (K) (SY.)
5.	ADAMS, Janet (Y.)



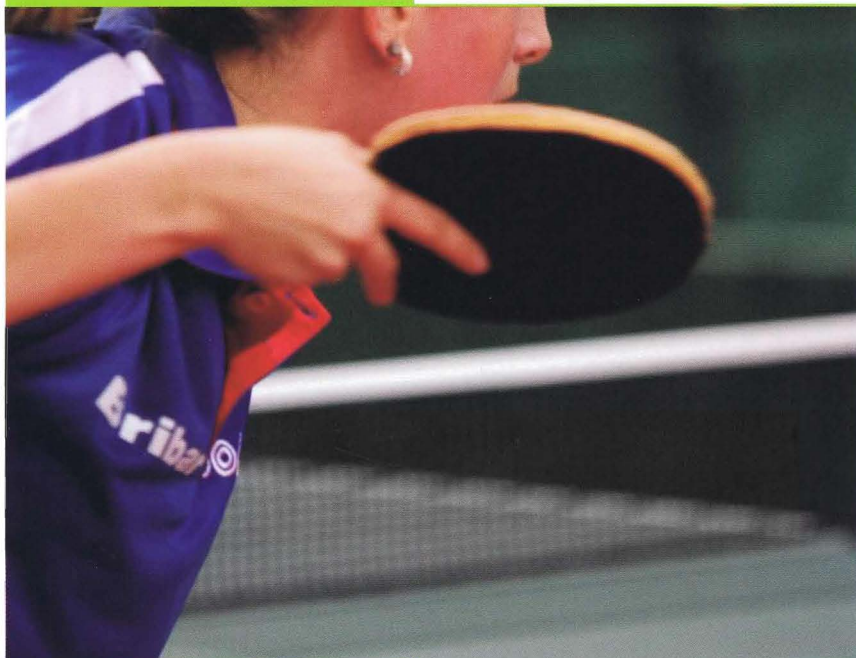
For the full list of player rankings go to our website

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



# Dates for your diary

Table Tennis events for August/September 2008



## 2008/2009 COPY DATES

October Issue  
 Copy Deadline: 1st September 08  
 Advertising Deadline: 1st September 08

### Saturday 16th Aug

Senior: City Of Liverpool Open BGP

### Sunday 17th Aug

Senior: City Of Liverpool Open BGP

### Saturday 6th Sep

Senior: Cardiff Satellite Grand Prix  
 Veteran: VETTS N. Eastern Masters

### Sunday 7th Sep

Senior: Cardiff Satellite Grand Prix  
 Veteran: VETTS N. Eastern Masters

### Saturday 13th Sep

Senior: British League Premier

### Sunday 14th Sep

Senior: British League Premier

### Saturday 20th Sep

Junior: Chesham High School 2 Star  
 Senior: British League

### Sunday 21st Sep

Senior: British League Premier

### Friday 26-28th Sep

Other: Men's World Cup, Liege

### Saturday 27th Sep

Junior: Chandlers 1 Star  
 Senior: Women's British League

### Sunday 28th Sep

Junior: Stiga Blackpool 1 Star  
 Senior: Women's British League

### 3 Day + events

**Wednesday 13th-23rd August**

Olympic Games, Beijing

**Thursday 28th-31st August**

UK School Games

**Friday 12th-14th September**

VETTS Six Nations, Scotland

**Friday 19th-21st September**

Women's World Cup Six Nations, Scotland

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

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