

WARREN SPRING TABLE TENNIS CLUB NEWSLETTER

This is our last newsletter for this season. We will go to print again in late August / early September.

Club AGM

A reminder to everyone that our AGM this year is taking place on Tuesday 10th May at the Plume of Feathers pub in Little Wymondley commencing at 8.00pm. An agenda and minutes of last year's meeting should be with you all.

Annual Dinner 2011

Our dinner this year is on Saturday 7th May at our usual venue the Green Man, Stanford. Those that indicated their wish to attend should by now have received menus from Bill. If you have not received anything then please get in touch with him straight away.

Final Team Positions

Congratulations to our A team on finishing runners-up in the Premier Division, and to our J team on finishing runners-up in division three. Other placings; Warriors and B team fifth and sixth respectively in the Premier division, Division One saw the D team finish third, C team seventh, F team ninth and E team tenth. In division two, the G team led the way in fourth place whilst the H team unfortunately finished bottom. Other positions in division three saw the K team in fourth and the L team eleventh.

Club Hot Shots

Premier; Arron Beckett 81.5%, Tom Carr 75.0%, Issac Beevor 73.9%

Division One; Anthony Howarth 94.3%, Erol Hasan 84.6%, Rob Worrell 77.5%, Derek Thom 72.0%

Division Two; Biao Wang 94.0%

Division Three; Alan Harding 77.4%, Ray Rapacchi 75.7%, Robert Chapman 71.8%, David Cunningham 69.1%

Match Round-up

Warren Spring F – 7; Rob Worrell, Matt Hellon, Pooja Sharma

Bedwell D – 3; Tim Steward, Derick Lopez, Graham Vincent

This was an important clash between two teams sitting near the foot of the table. At the end it was our F team who triumphed with a great win ensuring division one status again next season. Captain Rob Worrell led the way with a maximum not dropping a set all evening. His performance was closely matched by young Pooja Sharma who scored impressive victories over both Tim Steward and Derick Lopez. This was followed up by Matt gaining a well deserved win over Tim, and Rob and Matt excelling in the doubles, their fourth win in a row.

Warren Spring J – 5; Nigel Gibson-Birch, Ray Rapacchi, David Cunningham

Bedwell J – 5; Richard Good, Ethan Walsh, Amanda Barnes

As our K team had beaten Christchurch (the team challenging our J team for runners-up spot) earlier in the week, the pressure was off and our side could enjoy the match knowing that they had secured second place. Team captain Nigel takes up the story.

At Christmas we were lying second but aware that maintaining that position was by no means guaranteed. With 5 games to go we were neck and neck with Christchurch.

Robert our team statistician, most improved player and unfortunately not playing in this match, had reviewed the remaining games and predicted that we could finish the season one point ahead of our rivals. As it turned out we had some better than predicted results and our rivals one absolute shocker. With Christchurch playing our K team we were looking to our club mates for a good result and they duly obliged.

Bedwell fielded a mixed team, with wonder kid Ethan Walsh, the youngest of the Walsh clan at 8 years old, taking all three games. Dave, Ray and I all easily beat Bedwell's weakest player and we took the doubles also in three sets. At 5-4 down we needed the last game to secure the draw, and Dave pulled it off comfortably beating Richard Good in 3 sets.

With 14 wins 2 draws and only 4 defeats this has been our most successful season. The mixture of youthful enthusiasm and veteran calm has been an enjoyable and rewarding mix.

Warren Spring K – 6; Richard Powell, Doug Livingstone, Barney Ross-Smith

Christchurch - 4; Trevor Lambe, Vic Wallinger, David Joyce

Coming into this crucial last match of the season, both teams had secured 11 wins but Christchurch were 16 games ahead with all three players recording higher percentage wins than any of the WS players, two of whom were in their first competitive season of table tennis. The importance of the game saw WS K's two other team members turn up to support, and what a game they witnessed.

The first game set the tone for the whole match, a close 5 setter that saw Trevor come back twice from a game down before Doug's greater aggression saw him win the fifth game 11-8. Barney then took on Dave and his forehand loops and consistent use of both the edge of the table and the net cord saw him take the first two games but could not keep Dave from winning the last three and the game. Richard then beat Vic again close (12-10 in the fourth) to open up a 2-1 lead.

Then possibly the crucial, and certainly the tightest match of the night as Barney took on Trevor. Barney lost the first two games incredibly closely, 16-14 and 17-15. Having lost 5 straight games Christchurch might have expected to see the youngster's head drop but the second half of the season has seen a new maturity and greater steel in Barney's play. With some sterling coaching from Steve 'Yoda' King, Barney turned it around again, with two games won relatively easily to set up the decider. Good serving and mixing aggression with patient approach work saw Barney hold his nerve to win 14-12.

The match continued to swing one way and another with neither side opening up a real lead. The doubles brought together two unbeaten pairings, Richard and Doug (3 from 3) against Vic and David

(6 from 6). The more experienced pairing seemed in total control, winning the first two games comfortably, but after a significant tactical adjustment of hitting the ball over the net and onto the table, Richard and Doug stormed the last three games to ensure WS would at least secure a draw. The final game saw Doug take on David and once again was played out to a fifth set with Doug's greater aggression seeing him just nick it and the match 6-4.

It must be admitted that WS had a significant number of let cords and edges but that shouldn't distract from a great win against a team third in the division and continued a strong run from WS K that has seen them move strongly up the table from December and hopefully a fourth placed finish. It also ensured that Christchurch couldn't catch WS J in second place.

Thanks to Doug for this report.

North Herts Junior Closed Tournament

This year's tournament took place on the evening of 11th April at the Hitchin Table Tennis Centre. Although many youngsters were missing (due to the run up to Easter and subsequent holiday's) the standard of play was still very good. Apart from the club's more established players taking part i.e. Isaac Beevor, Robert Chapman and Pooja Sharma, a few of our more up and coming player's also entered. After some two hours play on nine tables the semi-finals and girls final had arrived.

Results affecting the club's junior members whose names are shown first:

Boy's U/12 Final: Evan Walker lost to Ethan Walsh 6-11, 4-11, 7-11.

Boy's U/15 Semi-Final: Evan Walker again lost to Ethan Walsh.

U/18 Mixed Semi-Final: Pooja Sharma lost to Luke Walsh

Isaac Beevor beat Ryan Barton

THE FINAL; Isaac Beevor lost to Luke Walsh 11-13, 11-9, 8-11, 7-11. A tremendous battle and one in which Isaac should have taken a two set lead which would have put real pressure upon Luke. But it was not to be and Isaac had to settle for runners up the same result as in the U/15 boy's event last year.

Girl's U/18 Final: Pooja Sharma lost to Natasha Walsh 6-11, 5-11, 6-11

In many ways the ease in which Natasha beat Pooja was quite surprising. In last year's final Pooja had come so close to beating her and it was only Natasha's vast tournament experience which pulled her through. This year, Natasha had not been playing well whilst Pooja had made tremendous strides through the season. My only observation, Natasha had changed to pimped rubber so more work against this type of surface is required from our young lady during the close season.

And finally congratulations

To Gabriela who is expecting her first baby. This is really wonderful news, but it does mean that the premier division will be a little quieter for the 2011/12 season at least.

Roger Bowler