

WARREN SPRING TABLE TENNIS CLUB NEWSLETTER

February Edition

League Round-Up

Premier Division – Our A and B teams are in prime position to take two of the three top spots and could yet catch leaders Bedwell A. This is especially true if Captain Arron Beckett plays in all of A's remaining fixtures. Arron is having a great season and has been more than ably backed up by the rest of the team namely Charlie Baines, Alan Shelford and Stephen Sale.

Division One – The two top places look set to go to Bedwell E and Graveley Dragons A in that order. Our four teams in this division lay throughout mid-table but team availability has hampered our D and F teams in particular.

Division Two – In this division our G team leads the way and should take top spot. Led by the veteran Bill Price who has seen it all over the years, and with young Bruce Yao having a marvellous season and Charlie Shephard winning some important games this should see them through. The H team are clear of relegation but the J and K teams need to find a bit more in the tank if they do not want to join the already doomed Royston F in division three.

Division Three – Here, it would appear that Cornerstone A and Broadway F will be the promoted teams with our L and M squads occupying berths three and four, however in what order remains unclear. Our young players have risen well to the challenge of local league table tennis (always tough at first) and it would not surprise me if one or two are playing division two next season.

North Herts Cup Finals

Willmott Cup Final – Premier Division - Warren A-2, Bedwell A -5

The match started with the two captains agreeing to play at least 6 matches to make the evening more worthwhile. The first match played between Arron Beckett and Luke Walsh was touch and go, with Arron taking an early lead by winning the first two sets 14-12, and 11 - 7. Unfortunately, it was not to be as Luke found another gear and won the next three games. Charlie then took on Stuart and, whilst it ended up being a three straight game, the actual points yo-yoed throughout and Charlie was unlucky not to take at least a game. Steve played well to take a game off Jimmy, with some exceptionally good rallies with both players playing very well off the table, demonstrating a great spin game. Jimmy saw it through by beating Steve, 3 games to 1. So far

3 nil to Bedwell A. Arron then took on Jimmy as the match was played out of order, with Jimmy yet again winning 3 -1, the last game being very comfortable. Hopes for Warren Spring were resurrected when Steve beat Stuart 3 -2 in a very, very close game with the scores fluctuating between the players. Charlie then came up against Luke and won, in an enthralling match. Luke's game against Charlie's game was an interesting one with Charlie's blocking against Luke being excellent and seeing him through to a memorable win 3-2 in games, Coming back from being 2 -1 down again showed Charlie's determination to win. The last game between Arron and Stuart alternated in points and games for the whole match, with Stuart ultimately being victorious, bringing the match to an end with a 5 -2 win to Bedwell A.

Thanks to A team captain Arron Beckett for this report

Henderson Cup Final – Division Three - Warren M -5, Warren L-1

Our fledgling M team with a combined age of just 33 years took on our more vastly experienced team (do not worry guys your ages are a secret and will not be revealed by me) in this final for division three teams. Experience however did not prove a barrier as the youngsters opened up a 3-0 lead with



Danny Emery, James Hamblett and Samuel Dermont getting the better of Nigel Gibson-Birch, Dave Cunningham and Tim Huxtable. The L team did pull one back as Tim raised his game to beat Danny, before James took the team over the finishing line with a win over Dave. This was a good result for the boy's and showed that the future of the club is in good hands.

**Back row, Warren L, L-R; Dave Cunningham, Tim Huxtable, Nigel Gibson-Birch
Front row, Warren M L-R; James Hamblett, Danny Emery, Sam Dermont**

National Junior League

The second weekend of the NJL took place before Christmas at the Ellenborough club in North London and produced varying degrees of success for our teams. In division one, our A team went down 9-0 in their first match to a strong Graham Spicer side from Surrey. There were further defeats against BATTI 6-3 and Fusion I 6-3 before the final match of the round where we gained an impressive 7-2 win over Ellenborough A. Our strongest player on

the day was once again Charlie Shephard who finished with 57.1% overall closely followed by Bruce Yao on 50.0%.

Our B team in division two proved to be the most successful with three wins from four. Their first encounter was against Fusion 3 who were ultimately blown away 9-0. We then lost to Fusion 2 by a score of 6-3 before coming back strongly to beat Chelmsford 6-3 and finally Ellenborough B 6-3. Fine play throughout earned Victor Ramirez Rioja an 86.7 average followed by Samuel Dermont 61.1% and Oliver Dorn 50.0%.

Our C team struggled on the day and failed to get a win on the board. Only Maddie Whitley has been able to find some form in this competition winning four from seventeen overall.

National Cadet League

The second weekend of the NCL saw promotion and relegation kick into place at the three quarter stage of the day's event. Our A team just managed to avoid relegation to division two largely due to a fighting 5-4 win over St. Albans A made possible by a fine maximum from Bruce Yao. Unfortunately, this was not the case for either our B or C teams as both succumbed to relegation and now faced the prospect of playing in Divisions three and four respectively.

So, and with a new day dawning it was down to business when the third weekend kicked off at the end of January. This is always a busy period as teams have to play four matches on the day although the number of individual games are reduced from nine to six per match. The break in hostilities during December had done little for our A squad who knew life was going to be tough on the resumption. And so it proved as severe damage was inflicted by Oxford Crusaders B who came through 6-0 in the first match with only James Hamblett managing to take a leg. We did slightly better against Cippenham A managing a game courtesy of Bruce in a 5-1 defeat, but normal service was resumed when Crusaders A again inflicted a 6-0 whitewash. (Have that club got something against us I hear you ask!!). We did however manage to salvage some degree of pride in the final match up with a 4-2 loss to Ashford A with both Bruce and James taking nail biting wins 7-11, 8-11, 12-10, 11-8, 11-6, and 11-8, 11-8, 5-11, 13-11 over the opposition.

Meanwhile, it was all smiles from our B and C teams who having been relegated now found more freedom to play their shots and a less intensive atmosphere. The B side went through the day in winning fashion bringing up score lines of 6-0 over both Ashford C and D, and 5-1 against Oxford and St.

Albans B. Congratulations to Victor Ramirez Rioja and Matthew Ronayne both undefeated on the day.

The performance of our B team was being matched by the C squad as they too gave a heroic display turning in four wins from four matches. There were many "gutsy" displays with George Thorn's 13-11, 6-11, 11-5, 4-11, 11-6 over Nikoli Hinterreither and Maddie Whitley's 11-9, 11-6, 10-12, 12-14, 11-6 against Thomas Williams both coming to mind. Perhaps the biggest round of applause should go to Isabelle Lacorte the only member of the team to finish with a 100% record which included a win over the dangerous Siyuan Li (Chiltern B) his only loss of the day.

The last fixture of the season takes place on 29th March when final promotion and relegation places will be decided.

A final word of praise here for Maddie Whitley whose play throughout the day was by far her best ever in a Warren Spring shirt.

Club Shirts

It has been suggested that the club may wish to consider the purchase of more club shirts since those last brought were in 2009 to coincide with our Golden Anniversary. If we were to go ahead, it could be in readiness for next season, or we could wait until 2019 our Diamond Anniversary year. The cost of the shirts would need to be borne by individual members whilst the club would commit to the cost of logos. Your views / comments would be much appreciated.

To parents of juniors participating in the NJL/NCL, this is an altogether different matter from the shirts worn by your children for these events and for which you already pay.

Club Tournament

The closing date for entries is Wednesday 1st March. Anyone still wishing to play, but who have not yet sent me their entry should do so on or before this date.