

# WARREN SPRING TABLE TENNIS CLUB NEWSLETTER

## *April Edition*

Hi Folks, well here we are, another season practically over. You may think that this is where I wind down and do a bit of relaxing, but no such luck, there is now the small matter of the club A.G.M. and next season's teams to organise. This however, is the last newsletter until August, and I hope that you have all enjoyed reading them (those that bother that is).

### **Annual Closed Club Tournament**

Thirty Five members came together to take part in our 2012 tournament which arguably was one of the best ever. I am pleased to report that there were no withdrawals this year which from an organisational viewpoint was great news.

A very early start saw the day kick off with the division two / three singles where sixteen hopefuls bid to take the title. With all group matches only being best of three sets everyone had to be quick off the mark but top seeds Dante Lacorte (last year's winner) and the much improved Robert Chapman came through relatively unscathed, whilst group four witnessed the biggest upset as Peter Fabian who had been playing really well recently went down in three legs to Barney Ross-Smith 11-9, 10-12, 11-8. On to the quarter Finals where everything reverted to the normal five sets and there was another shock in store as Dante was taken out by Steve King 7-11, 11-7, 9-11, 12-10, 11-6. At this stage in the competition we said goodbye to the young giant killer Barney as he lost out to Kevin Yao in a nail biting match 11-9, 12-10, 7-11, 10-12, 11-9. The number three seed Ken Savill had previously lost to Kevin in his group and so had the misfortune of facing an in form Robert in the quarters where his 2012 challenge ended. In the final game in this section another vastly improved junior Yu Ning Tzeng found the No 4 seed Tony Wilson too experienced a customer and went down in straight sets. The semi finals gave us two intriguing battles; Kevin (who was now becoming a punters favourite to make the final) met Steve, whilst Robert had to battle the very awkward Tony. In the first match up, Steve, totally galvanised after defeating Dante came from 1-2 sets down to take out Kevin 9-11, 11-8, 6-11, 11-7, 11-5 and prove all the punters wrong. The other table witnessed a game full of commitment as Robert overcame Tony 11-4, 6-11, 11-5, 11-9 in a match a little tougher than the score line might suggest. As the final took shape, it was hard to fathom whether Steve's heroics all day had finally taken their toll (back down to the fitness centre Steve) or whether Robert's game was just too good, but a score line of 11-9, 11-3, 11-5 reflected Robert's dominance in this match.

In the competition for division one player's, the question on everyone's lips was could Erol Hasan be the first player in the club's history to



Robert (right) & Steve with their trophies

make it three winning finals in a row. A look at the entry list showed some of the divisions finest and would have told Erol it was going to be tough, but Erol is a man who quietly soaks up pressure and still fancied his chances.

The first group of five kicked off and with Erol winning it fairly comfortably, (his one loss being to one of our juniors Matt Hellon) it was down to a three man tie to decide second place on count back. With calculators working overtime it was Mark Redford who finally came through. Calculators were not needed for the second group of five as Biao Wang stormed through only dropping two sets on the way, one to Paul Waterman the other to young Pooja Sharma. With Grant Whitfield securing second place we had our semi finalists.

In the first of these, Erol took on Grant and came through by a score of 11-9, 10-12, 11-7, 11-7, and so the history book was still open, Erol was once again in the final. In the second semi, Biao and Mark played an enthralling match with Biao just scraping home 10-12, 11-9, 13-11, 11-7.

With both men starting slowly, the final took a little time to get going but once it did the spectators were treated to some fierce hitting from Biao and some stern retrieving from Erol. This match could have gone either way and Erol was certainly not going to give up his twice won title without a fight, but eventually it was Biao's hitting which proved to be decisive and he took this year's honours by a score of 7-11, 14-12, 12-10, 11-7.



Biao Wang with Chairman Bill Price

Twenty Six members contested the open event which saw the introduction of some of our top premier division players. Almost all of the groups went according to the seeded plan with only group eight causing a major surprise and again it was one of our juniors, James Abrams taking the scalp of the eighth seed Bill Price 3-11, 12-10, 11-7. Into the last 16 and once again there was a major shock in store as Biao Wang accounted for the No 6 seed Paul Walker by a score of 11-5, 11-7, 6-11, 11-7. Other matches in this round did see some interesting outcomes. James continued his

winning ways again against the formbook by beating Pooja Sharma 8-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-7, young Matt Hellon took advantage of a slight slip by the No 4 seed John McCance before the much higher ranked player came through 11-5, 9-11, 11-3, 11-4, and Adrian Holmes (seeded 7) dropped a leg in defeating Grant Whitfield.

On to the quarter finals which brought together the remaining seeded players plus Biao and James who were there by virtue of some very good performances. Top seed Arron Beckett was quick to dispose of Adrian Holmes (complete rest is needed Adrian prior to this tournament. Getting up during the night before to help feed the new baby is strictly not allowed), whilst the No 2 seed Simon Proffitt brought James' good run to an end. John McCance saw off Biao but had to work for

his victory, and Isaac and Marek played a storming match during which Marek served off the table twice while on deuce to help Isaac win the contest 11-9, 8-11, 13-11, 12-10.

So, the semi finals and all the top four were safely through. This stage of the tournament brought Arron (last year's winner) to face Isaac and Simon to face John. Things kicked off with Arron and Isaac. Both players had a victory each to their name in the league so this match could have gone either way. Arron drew first blood by narrowly taking the first set, but Isaac then proceeded to dominate sets two and three with some great attacking strokes. In set four, both players settled and played really well before Isaac raised his game at the end to run out the winner by a score of 9-11, 11-5, 11-6, 12-10. The second semi final saw, in my opinion the best match of the day as both Simon and John strained every sinew to get the upper hand in a game that had everything. Fine attacking play (some of Simon's top spin play is a joy to watch), great blocking and at times resolute defending. The final score at the end of a memorable match 9-11, 11-5, 11-6, 9-11, 11-6 to Simon.



Simon Proffitt receiving his award

There had been 47 games played in the Open to reach this stage in the competition and now Simon faced Isaac in the final. Again the scores were one all in the league so it was a case of who played the better on the day. This time it was Isaac getting away to a terrific start winning the opening leg 11-7. Simon came back determined not to be drawn too far back from the table and showing his great attacking flare once more took the next two legs 11-8, 11-5. The fourth leg went first one way and then the other as both players strove to gain the upper hand. Simon was tiring, could Isaac come back. One final last effort saw Simon make it over the line although he did confide to me later that if

it had gone to a fifth, there was absolutely nothing left in the tank.

With a final score of 7-11, 11-8, 11-5, 14-12, Simon Proffitt became the open club champion for 2012.



The 2012 tournament ended on a sweet note as the club unashamedly pandered to Arron Beckett's love of Liquorice Allsorts (not a lot of people know that) by honouring him with "a special gift". Sharing in the joke if not the goodies is John McCance.

### **National Junior League**

The last weekend of the National Junior League Southern Zone was played at Cippenham on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. The day saw the North Herts team relegated to division two where the opposition proved just as competitive. The team were without the services of their No 1, Ryan Barton (Bedwell) for the final encounter and so it became an all Warren Spring club affair as members Robert Chapman, James Abrams and Yu Ning Tzeng – thrown into the fray as a replacement for Ryan – took on the task ahead of them.

In spite of taking a real battering in division one, confidence was high although once again the team showed their real dislike of early morning matches going down 0-6 to Reading B in the first contest. After that hiccup the team pulled themselves together to record wins of 4-2 against both Southampton B, and Chiltern & District B along with two fighting 3-3 draws against Horsham and Kidlington.

The team owed a huge debt of gratitude to Yu Ning who has had very little experience of competing at this level but who went on to gain three valuable victories two of them at crucial stages. When playing in the final game against Chiltern he won to earn the team a 4-2 victory but perhaps even more importantly again in the final game against Horsham he produced a fine five set win to earn the team a 3-3 draw. In the latter game he had to change tactics completely and play a game completely alien to him in order to have any chance of winning but this he managed to do showing how much he has matured as a player over these last months.

Meanwhile Robert finally broke the spell that had seen him lose his previous five games in this competition all in the fifth set; by taking a 17-15 final set victory against Alan Dawson (Southampton) Oh Boy was he a relieved young man!!

The best match for James in terms of results came against Chiltern where he won both his games setting up the situation which was exploited so well by Yu Ning.

Results of the last weekend's play by average;

Robert – PL 10, W6, L4, 60.0%

James - PL 10, W5, L5, 50.0%

Yu Ning – PL10, W3, L7, 30.0%

### **Seasons Hot Shots**

As you can see, the club dominated the premier and division one singles averages.

Premier; A team: Simon Proffitt - 85.0%, Arron Beckett – 80.7%, C team: Isaac Beevor – 78.9%, A team: Tom Carr – 74.3%, John McCance – 73.3%

Division One; D team: Bill Price – 86.7%, F team: Rob Worrell – 82.8%, G team: Grant Whitfield – 80.9%, E team: Erol Hasan – 75.9%, Biao Wang – 71.8%

Division Two; Unfortunately, no one managed 70% or above

Division Three; K team: Dante Lacorte – 87.5%, N team: Peter Fabian – 77.1%, L team: Tony Wilson – 73.3%

### **Honours**

Many congratulations to our A team – runners-up in the premier division; Our G team runners-up in division one and playing premier next season; Our C team – Runners-Up in the Willmott Cup, and our K team – winners of the Henderson Cup

Congratulations to Isaac Beevor on winning the U/18 event at the recently held NHTTA Junior Tournament. Isaac beat the odds-on favourite Luke Walsh in four sets to secure the title.

### **Urgently Needed**

The club urgently needs a division one and a division three player. If any of you know of someone fitting those standards and available to play then please let either Bill or myself know.

### **Player Profile**

#### **Angela Smith – Warren Spring A**

Some years ago whilst here in Britain covering the Middlesex Open, American Sports journalist Carl Danner once wrote of Angela that she quote “draws a crowd better than any player I have seen in some time”. Now members have the opportunity to read Angela’s profile. *Ed*

Angela Smith (or you may remember me as Angela Mitchell !!!)

I was born at home in Edmonton, North London in 1960, and have an older brother Mark, whom some of you may know and who now coaches at St.Neots. I basically started playing table tennis because my dad, who was a keen tennis and table-tennis player, had arranged for Mark to have some lessons and when I saw him play I thought I could do better and wanted to have a go. I have never beaten him yet!

I now live in Flamstead, Herts with my 3 ‘boys’ – Elliot 23, and 18 year old twins Tom and Jack – who are all avid footballers but haven’t taken to ping.

As far as I can remember .....I was 9 when I started playing and Mark and I both had Alan ‘Digger’ Lamprell as our first coach, having lessons in a small room above ‘Painter’s Bakers Shop’ in Enfield. Needless to say, neither of us became defenders, of course!

I attended my first England training camp when I was 10 and earned my first England ‘cap’ when I was 12 for the Junior Team (I played in the girl’s double against Wales!). I represented England in 4 Junior European Championships and have over 130 County Caps for Middlesex. My highest national rankings were as No. 1 in the Junior Girls (1977) and No. 5 in the Ladies. I represented the North Middlesex League in many inter-league competitions helping them to win both Bromfield Trophies

and the ladies Rose Bowl on a few occasions. I was honoured to be a part of the all conquering Ellenborough Ladies Team and along with team mates Helen Williams and Lesley Tyler won UK titles and played in several European Cup Matches. As a team in these matches we scored wins against clubs from amongst others Switzerland, Hungary and France where I appeared playing on French TV as the match was being televised. One of my greatest achievements was with this team when in the early eighties we reached the European Cup Semi Final before being beaten by the eventual winners from Hungary.

My '5 minutes of fame' claim would be appearing on the children's television show 'Magpie' in the late 70's – and for those who can remember it – I do have a 'Magpie Badge'!!!! I also spent a week playing exhibition matches at Pontins Holiday camps with Chester Barnes – what an experience playing against his frying pan 'chip shots'.

I had the privilege of playing mixed doubles once with the England No 1 Desmond Douglas and he came away unscathed. However, two of my other partners didn't have such pleasurable experiences with me.....

Playing with the late Andy Barden in a tournament at Folkestone I managed to 'walk into his bat' as he did a forehand loop return of service. He hit me on the head and knocked me out!!! Try to imagine how that could possibly have happened!!!

Unperturbed, I played with Martin Shuttle in the Scottish Open one year and trying to get out of his way (and failing miserably) he swung to do a forehand going out wide and hit me on the backside, snapping his blade being left holding only the handle. I did win the Ladies' Singles that year so a bitter sweet tournament for me.

Some of you may have noticed that Arron, Simon, Tom and John never let me play the doubles in league matches!!!

A little piece of useless information:-

When we were young, players from the Ormesby Club used to stay at our house when they came down for local tournaments. At that time we were decorating and one wall in the hallway was covered in their signatures which would have included Dennis Neale, Nicky Jarvis, Jimmy Walker, etc. That particular wall was covered over with wood cladding – the people who bought the house when my parents moved out won't have had a clue who or what they are..... Unless they are ping fans!!!