

# **WARREN SPRING TABLE TENNIS CLUB NEWSLETTER**

## **North Herts Cup Finals Night**

If these matches involving two of our teams had gone on much longer, we would have seen the dawn come up over the HBS.

The McClaughlin final between our E team and the division one leaders Bedwell D went to the wire with Bedwell just scraping over the line winning 5-4. There was never more than one game separating the two sides and at 4-4 Warren's Dante Lacorte stepped up to face Steve Sullivan. Unfortunately for us, Dante had real problems dealing with Steve's pimped rubber and his returns were set up nicely for the resulting inevitable smash. Earlier captain Rob Worrell had kept his team in the hunt delivering a great performance winning a maximum which involved a fine five sets victory over the dangerous and awkward Olatoye Adegbulugbe. Also playing well for the opposition was Steve Dance back from a couple of years away from the sport. Our other win on the night came from Erol Hasan (amazing since I was giving him some coaching tips) with a typical battling performance getting the better of Steve Sullivan in the fifth and final leg.

Whilst our E team were engaged in a tough struggle of their own, on the adjacent table our G team were also experiencing a marathon in the McClaughlin Inter Cup against Graveley Dragons A. Team captain David Kells got us off to the perfect start with a close fought win over former Warren player Richard Pettengell. This was just a sign of things to come as each match-up resulted in a gruelling contest. None more so than when Alan Dorn took on G D's Arto Viravorian. Although Alan played it tactically well he gradually ran out of steam against the machine like Viravorian finally losing in another close five setter. Congratulations must go to Warren's John Cox who managed to take out both Pettengell and the classy Kevin Nobes but to no avail as we conceded defeat by 5 games to 3 almost on the stroke of midnight.

The Henderson Cup final for division three was played at Wymondley and saw our J and M teams' battle to take the trophy. Thankfully the match did not last nearly as long as those above. With J dominant throughout, the match closed when a winning score of 5-0 had been reached. With an extremely good squad to pick from J team captain Jim Keirl had chosen Kevin Yao, Chris Denman and himself to lead the charge on this particular night, leaving such talented players as Bruce Yao, Charlotte Marsden and John Le Warne "on the bench". For their part the M team also had their strongest squad out in Dave Cunningham, Toby Snoxell and Captain Nigel Gibson-Birch but they failed to make an impression. With Kevin beating both Dave and Toby in straight sets, Jim accounting for Nigel in four and Toby in three and Chris always in control against Toby it was perhaps an easier ride than they would have expected.

## **National Junior League**

Our NJL team of Ewan Fewell, Carrick Livingstone, Charlie Shephard and Amit Shah found it tough going on the final weekend of competition. They should however, be congratulated on their performances throughout the NJL season managing two promotions after starting life in division four. They finally ended their challenge in last but one place in division two, playing five, drawing two and losing three.

Our opening match was against Ashford A who had just been relegated from division one and so it was not altogether surprising to see our lads succumb to a 0-6 whitewash. However the team picked themselves up to earn draws against both Kingfisher and Chiltern. On the day there were some really close matches and the much higher standard of division two brought out the best in our players. This was especially so of Carrick who enjoyed the extra pace that his opponents gave. Ewan's game got better as the day went on although he did see his 100% record disappear. Some fine backhand driving saw Amit take a couple whilst Charlie spent much of the time with his back against the wall (nothing new there then – Ed.) defending with his pimples and often bamboozling his opponents.

Individual averages from the last session were;

Charlie – 50% from six matches, Ewan and Carrick – 37.5% from eight matches and Amit – 25% from eight matches.

*Many thanks to David Kells for this contribution.*

## **National Cadet League**

### **'A' team secure 2<sup>nd</sup> place**

A fantastic last weekend from our A team of Bruce Yao, Charlotte Marsden and George Whitley (which saw coach John Giles almost speechless-and that takes some doing) took them from midway in the table to securing runners-up spot by one game. Playing in the Southern Zone – division two, the transformation was made possible due to an unbeaten Sunday which saw the team win two matches and draw three more.

We got off to a winning start by beating Oxford 5-1 which included maximums from both Bruce and Charlotte and a fine straight sets victory for George 14-12, 11-8, 13-11 over Jack Smith. Next up a dangerous Kingfisher side which included one of the best young players in the division Felix Thomis who inflicted Bruce's first defeat of the day winning 7-11, 11-8, 5-11, 11-4, 11-8. Luckily, Charlotte then played a blinder against Katie Shephard inflicting a straight sets defeat on the young England ranked cadet to restore the balance. Further wins from the team meant we had the draw our play deserved.

Our new opposition were then Chiltern who themselves were harbouring thoughts of promotion, but these were quickly dashed by another fine performance from our youngsters as they secured another good 3-3 draw.

Then, the key match of the day. We needed to up our game even further against league leaders Cippenham to be in with any chance of success. First blood to us as Bruce put in a really strong performance to beat Reeshan Hamal. Cippenham quickly levelled as the unbeaten Shae Thakkar swept past Charlotte in straight sets. A fine performance from George meant that we had our noses in front again but back to level pegging as Thakkar saw off Bruce 11-6, 11-4, 11-4. Cippenham went ahead 3-2 as George fell to Hamal. The situation looked desperate as Charlotte took on yet another England ranked girl Carys Evans. Everyone held their breath, and Coach John was beginning to perspire. Was this to be the end of our challenge? The tension was palpable as Charlotte spurred on by the team, their families and coaches produced arguably her best and most ruthless performance of the NCL season as she blew Carys away 11-5, 11-3, 11-3. Tears and tantrums from the young Cippenham player but we had gotten a fine result.

We turned to David Marsden our man with a head for statistics (Grant Whitfield was unavailable) to work out our chances of success. Easy – to gain second place we had to beat Dacorum 6-0 in the final match of the day. With further support from our B team whose day had finished, it was a case of cometh the hour, cometh the team as we surged to a 5-0 lead. The word was out and a large crowd had now gathered. It was all down to George the least experienced player in the squad. By this time there were no fingernails left in the Warren Spring camp, but George did us proud coming through playing to instruction, producing telling shots when needed and showing composure you would not expect for someone of his age.

We now wait to see if Table Tennis England will promote our team to division one next season.



**Our Triumphant Team**

**L-R- Charlotte, George and Bruce**

## 2015 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF PING PONG

This event saw England's 31 year old Andrew Baggaley claim his first PartyPoker World Championship of Ping Pong in a nail biting final that was amazing as well as downright crazy at times, but the brilliance of it and the entertainment value exceeded all my expectations and judging by the excited 1000 plus crowd, theirs as well. I with some other club mates arrived on Sunday 25th in good time to be seated in the TV Arena, ready to watch the quarter finals , commencing with last year's winner Maxim Shmyrev of Russia who was hoping to pick up his fourth consecutive title. His hopes were dashed when he came up against Baggaley in the semi finals, seemingly losing pace and concentration causing him to fade in the decider. Previously in the quarter final Baggaley having lost the first set to fellow Brit Andrew Rushton, went on to comfortably take the next two sets by producing some inch perfect angled forehand attacking shots to which there was no reply. Germany's Alexander Flemming dropped the first set to Gavin Rungay in the last eight, but the popular Scot was unable to prevent the focused Flemming from taking the last two sets despite some incredible marathon rallies, that produced many a gasp from the crowd. The same thing happened when Flemming came up against the Lubomir Pistej in the semi finals, beating the Slovakian 2-1 to place him in the final. So the bold Brit took on the Leipzig lad in what turned out to be an incredible final. The crowd hyped up by the electric atmosphere, were up on their feet clapping most of the time after each point was played. To thunderous cheers, Baggaley won the first two sets 15-13, 15-10, but Flemming stepped up a gear and won the next two 12-5, 15-10. The start of the final set was met with foot stomping supporters of ' Baggalites ' plus even louder roars and cheers from a delirious crowd. It became a question of whose stamina was likely to hold out after some truly astonishing defence and attacking rallies that seemed almost impossible to produce from a sandpaper bat!!! In the latter part of the final set, Baggaley was able to pull something out of the tank to win 15-12. At this point the saying 'raise the roof' was most appropriate, as the noise from the appreciative crowd was deafening!! This was my first visit and I hope there will be many more to come in the future as I found the whole experience most enjoyable, especially with regard to the female umpire who's somewhat delayed 'let' calls almost left the players to sort it out between themselves, although I noticed that after donning a pair of official looking specs, she appeared to be more 'focused' and spotted the 'lets' fractionally quicker.

*Many thanks to Elaine Hanworth for this write-up*

### **Picture Puzzle**

I have delved into the archives and have come up with a "blast from the past".



Can anyone name the delightful young lady in pigtails third from the right? Answers on a postcard please, no prizes for guessing the correct one.

### **Latest England Rankings**

Congratulations to the following young club members who have improved their England ranking over the past month. Keep working and training hard, and even better things will follow.

Charlotte Marsden – Cadet Girls Ranking; now England No 49- a rise of 21 places

Bruce Yao – U/13 Boys Ranking; now England No 63 – a rise of 9 places

Ilyssa Lacorte – U/13 Girls Ranking; now England No 54 – a rise of 3 places.

We are very proud of you.

### **A.G.M.**

The club will hold its 2015 AGM on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June. Further details plus last year's Minutes and Agenda will follow. If anyone has an item they would like to raise at the meeting then please make me aware before Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Annual Club Tournament**

A special edition of the newsletter with a write up of all the happenings on our tournament weekend will follow soon.