

WARREN SPRING CLUB TOURNAMENT 2017

Juniors take control at this year's club tournament

Bruce Yao takes three titles making club history.

The club's junior element took all but one of the eight trophies on offer as they eclipsed their older and more experienced rivals. Bruce was in tremendous form taking the division one, two and handicap titles.

Division One – all of the seeds except for Charlotte Marsden made it out of their groups and into the quarter finals. Charlotte was unlucky to come up against both Bruce and an in-form Alan Dorn in her group but never gave up and went down fighting. The first quarter final match saw Bruce take on and finally overcome group two runner-up Stuart Marquis 11-6, 11-8, 7-11, 11-6 in an enthralling contest. Next up saw an inspired Dante Lacorte, (Bill Price's group conqueror) whose game has really come on since he switched to pimped rubber gaining a somewhat unexpected victory over the champion of two years ago Mark Redford by a score of 11-6, 13-11, 10-12, 11-7. Next came Charlie Shephard whose defensive style held no problems for Alan who came through 11-5, 11-8, 11-9. The last quarter final saw group two winner Ilyssa Lacorte take on the many times super veteran Bill and both philosophies were "you go back from the table at your peril". The game was finely balanced at one leg all before Bill was forced to retire with a knee problem.

And so, the semi finals and it was Dante vs Bruce and Ilyssa vs Alan. The first question was could Dante sustain the sort of form that he had been showing through the day. Sadly the answer was no, as Bruce came through relatively untroubled 11-5, 11-3, 11-8. The second question was could his young daughter go one better than dad. It seemed unlikely as Alan opened up a one leg lead, but then a change of tactics saw Ilyssa top spinning her opponents returns and then flat hitting to apply pressure to Alan's backhand a strategy which saw her into the final with an 10-12, 11-4, 11-8, 11-2 win. The final itself turned out to be somewhat of a dramatic affair as the rigours of the day began to take their toll on Bruce. You had to feel sorry for both players as fatigue and other related factors meant that Bruce had to keep stopping in between points which in turn disrupted Ilyssa's game. This made for a somewhat "scrappy" final but one in which Bruce eventually prevailed 11-6, 5-11, 11-9, 11-9.



Bruce Yao Division 1 winner and Ilyssa Lacorte Division 1 Runner-Up

Division Two – Thirteen players contested the division two event with all seeds eventually making it through to the group stages but not before some real close calls. Second seed James Hamblett needed five legs to beat both Arshbir Singh and Steve King, whilst Thomas Ronayne almost slipped up against Sam Dermont before finally making it over the line 12-10 in the fifth. Add to this the drama on the adjacent table where Charlie Shephard had a close call against Danny Emery before progressing 13-11, 11-6, 7-11, 17-15. The quarters saw Bruce Yao (seeded one) go through in easy fashion over group runner up Steve, whilst Charlie had to endure another monumental battle before winning the last leg comfortably against Samuel 11-8, 7-11, 12-10, 12-14, 11-1. It was at this stage that Thomas' division two journey ended. Stuart Marquis putting paid to the fourth seeds hopes this year with a five set win. The round was completed when two of the club's youngest members met; with James seeded two overcoming Victor Ramirez Rioja to make up for his disappointment of losing to him earlier in the day.

In the semis, Bruce who had yet to drop a set continued in the same vein beating Charlie in straight sets whilst James had to work harder to defeat Stuart in four. So, seeds one and two came together and both played their part in a truly great final. The match ebbed and flowed and the spectators were treated to a feast of good table tennis. After a gruelling contest it was Bruce who eventually took the title with a 11-7, 8-11, 11-8, 11-9 win.



James Hamblett Runner-up in both the Division 2 & 3 events

Division Three – this event saw a bumper entry of nineteen competitors. The group games went according to plan with only Victor Ramirez Rioja managing to topple a seed in new club member Michael Roberts. The quarters brought together No 1 seed James Hamblett and Michael with James going through to the semis in comfortable fashion. The next contest proved to be the game of the round as No 3 seed Tim Huxtable lost a marathon battle to young Alex Smith 11-9, 5-11, 8-11, 12-10, 11-8. Danny Emery proved far too good for Samuel Dermont and finally Victor progressing to the semis at the expense of Arshbir Singh after a good struggle 7-11, 11-7, 11-5, 13-11. The final four saw James take on Alex and Danny take on Victor. The first match went to form as James saw off his talented opponent in straight sets, but it was Victor who provided the shock result beating his more experienced opponent also in straight sets. The final itself proved to be a



classic and without doubt the best div 3 final thus staged. From the start, James the “nailed on” favourite knew he had a match on his hands as Victor (who had clearly not read the script) surged ahead to take the first leg 11-7. To a man the large audience thought it only time before the unseeded player cracked. This notion proved groundless however as Victor kept up the pressure with relentless driving and retrieving to take the second. Into the third and still James could find no answer though he too fought tooth and nail for every point. His efforts however proved futile as Victor took the third and the match by a score of 11-7, 12-10, 12-10 to become champion of division three.

Victor Ramirez-Rioja Winner of the Division 3 event

Handicap – Bruce Yao made club history as he added the handicap title to those of division one and two. This event as you would expect (if yours truly had managed the handicaps correctly) saw some really close three setters. Notable amongst these were Mark Redford's narrow victory over Vesty Gerova 21-16, 15-21, 21-20 and Ilyssa Lacorte just getting the better of Meth Wijeyekoon 21-20, 19-21, 21-18. In the last 16, George Thorn saw off James Hamblett 21-20, 21-20 and the quarters saw Steve King just edging out John Cox 21-20, 17-21, 21-20 in what was certainly the longest match of the event if not the day. The final brought together Bruce and Steve (yes, he was still on his feet-just) where no quarter was asked or given as Bruce finally triumphed 18-21, 21-18, 21-18.



Winner of Handicap event Bruce Yao pictured with Chairman Bill Price



Handicap Runner-up Steve King

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part in this year's tournament making it a great weekend of entertaining table tennis which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.