

Week Commencing 17th February 2003

In Leamington League Division A it was a crunch match personally for two players. Leaders Free Church E had a tight result against contenders St. Georges C with personal averages at stake for one player on each side. Church's Paul Nason had only lost once all season - in the previous match against Saints' Richard Grover and so needed to win to put the two of them on an equal footing. In the event he again lost to Richard who kept his 100% record by winning his two for Saints but Saints lost the match 3-2. Paul Nason and Keith Knott took one each and the doubles to keep Church E well in front of the division.

In a Church local derby the F side of father and son Peter and Jonathan Mason rolled over the G's 5-0. But the G team bounced back to wallop struggling Standard Photographic 4-1 for only G's second victory this season led by Robins Hirons with his two singles and the doubles with partner Greville Owen who added one single. Paul Marsh held onto one for Standard's reply. Standard Photographic had even less luck in their next match going down in straight sets to the Eathorpe C twosome of Richard Freeman and Charles Wragg 5-0. Standard Photographic B have won a match this season - and that was back in November but the card never arrived - one of the few to be genuinely 'lost in the post'. Brendon Leahy took his two and the doubles with Paul Marsh to give Photographic the match 3-2. Peter and Jonathan Mason both took one for opponents Free Church F.

In Division B St. Georges D had an excellent victory over Free Church J 4-1 with Ryan Fenwick taking his two, Phil Morby one and the doubles between them. Ricky Fell held one at deuce for Church.

In Division 3 of the main 3-aside league Ashorne beat Standard Photographic A 8-2 and RNA E defeated AP Sports C with the same score-line. In the Ashorne match, Simon Chalker and Steve Bolton took trebles for Ashorne, Chris Bowles one and the doubles with Simon Chalker. Brendan Leahy and Ashley Smith both clung to one for Standard's reply. For the RNA E result crewmates Steve Proctor and Wilf Harris took three each and Ken Hassall a brace whilst AP's Ros Freeman held a single and the doubles with sister Charlotte.

In Division 2 RNA C scuppered their D clubmates 9-1. Graham Heath and Andy Davies took singles and doubles for the C crew and skipper Dot Macfarlane added a brace. Robin Fox-Strangways fought hard to cling onto one 12/10 in the fifth to give the naval D side some pride though the D's lost two other matches on deuce!

Whitnash B washed against RNA B and came out 7-3 in front. Paul Riman and Dennis Woodhead took maximums in singles and doubles to give 'Nash B the win. Duncan Hall, Richard Smith and Richard Miles all took one for naval B. Closer for Free Church B against Eathorpe A before the last game doubles went to the pairing of Emma Churchley and Tom Brocklehurst to give Church the 6-4 edge. Tom Brocklehurst had already taken his three singles, colleagues Ian Rourke and Emma Churchley chipping in with one each. Father and son Colin and Matthew Cooper both took braces for Eathorpe.

Colebridge A proved their alphabetical placing in Division 1 by walloping their B side 9-1 with Waseem Shahzad and John Chandler taking singles and doubles and Graham Hoskin a brace for the A's. Michael Rinnhofer pulled out all the stops for the B's to win one 13/11, 10/12, 11/9, 10/12, 21/19.

St. George's A had a tighter tussle with AP Sports A before the Saints finished 6-4 in front. Earl Sweeney, Martyn Todd and Bert Banks all took braces for Saints' success but none could halt AP's Ron Vose in singles and the doubles with Andrew Meredith.

January Tournament

At the Lillington Free Church Tournament held at Sydenham, Leamington Spa, in January there was new names in the frame for the Senior trophies. Gary Webb beat off Matthew Squires in the main event whilst Peter Lowry triumphed over D Hall in the consolation. In the Under 17 competition Sam Clarke from Banbury eclipsed Daniel Whitfield in the main final whilst Daniel Rowan from Coventry defeated Rhys Martindale in the consolation final.

The Under 14 champion was Sasha Grokhotov with Chris Baldwin runner-up. Scott Danter won the consolation event, T Hall the losing finalist. In the Under 12's J McKeever had the edge on Alan Caffrey for the main final with Christian Miller the consolation winner, Joe McGiven second.

The afternoon graded competitions saw Alan Hewitt from Nuneaton succeeding in the Grade A final against Simon Nolan. The consolation was won by Peter Lowry, his second trophy of the day, with Derek Thompson from Nuneaton runner-up. The Grade B saw Sasha Grokhotov picking up yet another winner's cup having defeated Leamington's Eddie Stafford in the last match. The consolation honours went to Adam Griffin with Daniel Shurrock second. The Grade C event was taken by Chris Baldwin who beat Richard Grover from Kenilworth in the final. Scott Hewitt defeated D Howard in the consolation final. Alan Caffrey won the Improvers, T Hall his last opponent with consolation honours going to S Jameson over G Nicholls. The Beginners champion was Minesh Morjaria with young Charlotte Caffrey the runner-up. Christian Miller again won a consolation final, this time against G Vasey.

The next Lillington Free Church tournament will be on Saturday 22 February at Sydenham, Leamington Spa. Please contact Hugh Matthews if you are interested in playing.

ETTA Chairman election

The Executive Committee of the Leamington League heard reports on recent meetings held in the area by the rival candidates for election as Chairman of the English Table Tennis Association. Alan Ransome, the current chairman, has been in post for the last 12 years and is being challenged by Alex Murdoch, who is Chairman of the Vetts Association.

The Executive decided that it favoured Alan Ransome but as ballot papers will not be sent out until after its meeting in February it decided to invite members' comments before making a final decision. The posts of Deputy Chairman and Treasurer are also up for election. Each candidate has put up running mates for these posts. In theory it is possible to elect candidates from different 'teams' but it is generally accepted that it is better to choose one entire 'team' or the other as they are likely to work together better with each other. It follows that if Leamington votes for Alan Ransome it will also vote for the existing Deputy Chairman Tony Chatwin and Treasurer Barry Granger.

The reasons the Leamington Executive decided to support Alan Ransome are:-

1. Although Alex Murdoch is very personable we think he lacks Alan Ransome's skills and experience.
2. Both candidates said that a win for Alex Murdoch would mean that the present Management Committee and sub-committee chairmen (who are all unpaid volunteers) would be replaced. Whilst we have some criticisms of the ETTA these are not serious enough to justify the loss of so many

volunteers. Although Alex Murdoch thinks he could find suitable replacements we believe that it would be a considerable time before his team built up the experience of the present one.

3. We expect to have to compete against other sports for a diminishing amount of lottery money. On his past record we believe Alan Ransome is likely to be more adept at this crucial role. If we fail either subs will have to increase or activities will have to be cut back.

4. Alex Murdoch set out quite well some of the things he thought should be changed in ETTA but he did not really explain how this could be achieved in practice.

5. Alan Ransome put forward a strategic plan for the future of the sport whereas Alex Murdoch concentrated on a few particular points. One good thing about this, the first contested election for chairman for 8 years, is that the two candidates have been going round the country listening and taking notes of members' views on how the sport should be run in the future.

Following on from Leamington's decision for the election for ETTA chairmanship Warwickshire Table Tennis Association has also decided to support the current chairman Alan Ransome against the challenger Alex Murdoch. Their reasons were very similar to those of Leamington. They certainly have criticisms of the way ETTA has been run under Alan but they do not think that Alex has sufficient skills and experience to replace him. Birmingham are expected to decide who to support shortly. Coventry have unfortunately not appointed a League Representative Member to vote for them and so can not take part in this year's election.