

Week Commencing 30th December 2002

Nuneaton Bucks Polythene have been fizzing their way into contention in Division 1 with three wins in three matches just prior to Christmas. They now lie in third place at this half-way stage of the competition, only 8 points behind the leaders. First they crushed County Council B 10-0 though the match perhaps was not as easy as the score suggests (with one game won at 20/18) for Alan Hewitt, Matthew Hobday and Arun Jogi. Then they nipped in front of champions County Council A 6-4. Alan Hewitt and Mick Allsopp took two each for Bucks, Dave Grundy one and crucially Hewitt and Grundy took the doubles. Mark Jackson held two for Council, Phil Paine and Clive Irwin one each. Bucks picked up another 6-4 over Colebridge A with two each and the doubles from Alan Hewitt and Matthew Hobday plus a critical single by Sohail Caratella. Waseem Shahzad took his three for Colebridge plus Graham Hoskin added one.

Colebridge A had previously defeated Wellesbourne 7-3 led by Waseem Shahzad in singles and the doubles with Graham Hoskin, who contributed a single and John Chandler took a brace. Andy Cockerill kept two for Wellesbourne, Pete Dunnnett a single. The Colebridge B trio of Michael Rinnhofer, Neil Wheatley and John Taylor rolled over Flavels 10-0.

County Council B gained their first win since promotion to this division in September by squeezing past AP Sports A 6-4. Doug Lowe and Reg Warnes took two each, Derek Harwood one and then Derek Harwood combined with Reg Warnes to take the doubles and the match. AP had had to play two reserves - who did well for the club. Gerald Taylor took two and Eddy Stafford one as did regular player Andrew Meredith.

The run-up to Christmas proved beneficial for both RNA A and RNA C in Division 2. The two naval sides amassed five victories between them. And in fact both teams beat Marconi A - and by the same 6-4 score. First Tony Thomas and Ken Southwell gained two each for the A team whilst Marconi's Richard Jardim and Nuri Gunde took one each. Dennis Mockford also gained two for Marconi before retiring injured in his third game which led to the naval crew gaining walkovers for that last singles and the doubles and hence 6-4 success. Then four days later the C side of Dot Macfarlane, Andy Davies and Graham Heath took three, two, one respectively whilst Marconi's Nuri Gunduz held onto two, Roy Joiner one and the doubles between them.

RNA A also beat Eathorpe A by the larger margin of 8-2. Tony Thomas took his three and the doubles with Ken Southwell who picked up a brace. Ian Stevens worked hard to take a brace, and was unlucky enough to lose his third 13/11 in the fifth. Matthew Cooper took both points for 'Thorpe. RNA C squeezed past their B side colleagues in a seaside derby 6-4 with braces and the doubles from Graham Heath and Andy Davies plus a crucial single from Daryl Burgess. Duncan Hall and Tony Bennett both kept two for the B's. RNA C did one better against Free Church C picking up a 7-3 victory. Andy Davies, Dot Macfarlane and Graham Heath gained three, two, one respectively for the navy and the two men took the doubles whilst Church's Stuart Mills kept two, Chris Mulligan one.

Not so good for RNA D. They lost two matches 9-1. First they went down to St. Georges B. Pete Bennett and Alf Chapman took hat-tricks, Tracey Fletcher a brace and Alf Chapman and Tracey Fletcher added the doubles for the Saints. Richard Lancucki held onto one point for the D crew. Then Eathorpe A won the battle, Matthew and Colin Cooper taking three each, Chris Atkins two and Chris Atkins successfully partnering Matthew Cooper for the doubles and their second win of the season. Steve Shaw kept the one point for RNA D.

AP Sports B, however, found Eathorpe A to their taste and picked up their first win in the division 8-2 in a marathon match lasting till 10.45pm with five 5-setters and 14 deuces. Eddy Stafford and Gerald

Taylor took three each for AP and the doubles 11/8, 11/13, 11/6, 10/12, 11/6. Tony Williams also gained one for AP, Chris Atkins and Matthew Cooper one each for Eathorpe.

A close call for the Free Church D who had to win the doubles to avoid defeat. Ron Stanbridge, D's captain led with a fine treble and Mike Skidmore chipped in with a single for the match against FISSC A in Division 3. Mark Kingham and Brian Marston gave the Farmers two each and John Hunt a useful one. However Ron Stanbridge and Mike Skidmore took the doubles for Church to make the final score 5-5.

Ashorne had a clear victory over Eathorpe B 8-2, Simon Chalker taking singles and doubles, his partner Chris Bowles and Steve Bolton adding braces to put Ashorne into the runner-up spot at this point of the season. Calvin Woodings and Michael Rossington both kept one for Eathorpe.

Two good results are keeping Eathorpe C in contention in Division A. First they saw off Free Church G 4-1 and then they picked up the same score against Standard Photographic B. Eric Smith took his two for 'Thorpe, Richard Freeman one and the doubles between them in the Church match where Robin Hirons held onto one in reply. Eric Smith was lucky to take one for Eathorpe, only winning 14/12 in the fifth, with Brendon Leahy holding onto one for Photographic. However the lack of a second player for Photographic gave three more points to Eathorpe.

FISSC A also gained a 4-1 victory, Free Church F their opponents. John Hunt taking two for the Farmers, Mark Kingham one and the doubles together. David Whittaker kept one for Church.

Two good results for Free Church I in Division B. First they edged out Eathorpe D 3-2 and then they rolled over Free Church J 5-0. Against Eathorpe Luke Hobbins took two, Joseph Cox one for Church whilst Jim French retained one and the doubles with reserve Pauline Parkes for 'Thorpe. In the Church derby Luke Hobbins and Joseph Cox were the duo with the winning experience for the I's, keeping Luke on 100% for the season so far.

Just ahead of Free Church I is Free Church H. They saw off Eathorpe F 5-0, Ben McNally and Adam Cooper taking the singles, Chris Blowey partnering Ben McNally for the doubles. A fine brace from Nicola Rossington plus one from Katie Hawker gave Eathorpe E the 3-2 win over Free Church K, in a high standard match belying their position in the division and league. Sam Smith kept one single and the doubles with brother Thomas for Church K.

Last of the first round matches for the team handicapped Southwell Trophy was played with a combined squad from first division champions County Council A teaming up with third division Council C to successfully fight off a challenge from second division Free Church B. Council started on scratch and Church on +8 in the fight to 41. Council's A captain Phil Paine took all his three, Tony Ford, who normally plays in Div 3, a brace and the pair together took the doubles to give them the match 6-3. Tom Brocklehurst took two for Church, Emma Churchley one.

On the last Sunday of the year, Leamington played both Coventry sides in the Midland Junior League at the Phoenix club Coventry, resulting in 7-3 and 8-2 wins. Against the Coventry B team Leamington won 8-2, Matthew Cooper taking his three and the doubles with Edward Freeman, who added a brace as did Richard Grover. Rachel Pilgrim took the 2 points for Coventry B. Leamington did almost as well against the Coventry A team and won 7-3. Matthew Cooper again took the maximum plus the doubles. This time he was partnered by Richard Grover who added a single and there was also an Edward Freeman brace. Paul Nicholls held 2 and Robert Pilgrim 1 for Coventry A.

Warwickshire Closed

The Warwickshire Closed Championships will be staged this Sunday 5 January at St. Nicholas Park Leisure Centre, Warwick from 9am till 5pm. All spectators welcome.

ETTA Chairman elections

Two candidates are up for election to the ETTA chairmanship in March. They will be holding meetings in the area to which anyone will be welcome. The future of English table tennis may differ substantially depending on which candidate is elected so it will be well worth hearing what they have got to say.

Alex Murdoch will be speaking at the Studley Road Social Club, Redditch at 8pm on Thursday 9 January. Studley Road is in the Lodge Park District of Redditch and can be reached from the Warwick Highway.

Alan Ransome will be speaking at the Marconi Club, Binley Road, Coventry at 7.45pm on Thursday 16 January.