

Week Commencing 17th January 2005

The new Spring competition starts this week with new faces in each division following promotion and relegation. The three-way tie between RNA C, Marconi and St. Georges D in Division 2 could not be resolved for second place as the rules only allow for one play-off match when three matches would be needed with only one week between seasons to sort it out. So all three will receive runners-up trophies. Normally the top two teams would go up to balance the two, Riverhouse Henley A and RNA A, coming down from div 1, but by chance there is a vacancy in div 1 so three will go up this time, the division winners and two of the runners-ups. As a result RNA C and Marconi will join div 2 winners Flavels in division 1 for the spring competition whilst the third team involved, St. Georges D, volunteered to stay in div 2. At the bottom of div 2 RNA D and Ashorne will drop down and will be replaced by div 3 winners BGN B and second placed team RNA B. There is no relegation from div 3 but the teams will be joined by two new Free Church sides, Church D and Church Z. Division A still have a problem as one unplayed match between Free Church E and St. Georges E had left the runners-up position uncertain between Church E and Eathorpe C. As there is no promotion from div A of the two-aside league, the committee decided that the teams should try to resolve the position by playing the missing match in the next few weeks. Meanwhile St. Georges E and LCP Packers drop from div A to div B whilst Free Church I and Eathorpe F move up following their excellent successes in the autumn. As well the 2-aside divisions are joined by 4 new teams, Rugby, Free Church L and M and Eathorpe I. We wish all the newcomers a successful season.

The second round of the individually handicapped Coronation Cup was held over the last two weeks, where a maximum of nine singles are played up to 61 points between teams of three from any division of the league. Second division Eathorpe A saw off third division County Council C 5-1 with Allan Stockham, probably capitalizing on a low Spa ratings after his league absence, taking his three for Eathorpe, Matthew Cooper and Chris Atkins one each whilst Tony Ford held onto one for Council. Eathorpe E/F had a straight 5-0 win over div B club-mates Eathorpe G/H, led by braces from Matthew Jackson and Katie Hawker and one from Michael Fay, despite a plucky display from the 11 and 12 year olds in the G/H team. Third division Standard Photographic ran over division A's Eathorpe C/D 5-1 with Brendan Leahy picking up his three and Geoff Taylor two. Sophie Niepceron kept one for Eathorpe. Two-aside teams Free Church H/I also won at 5-1, third division Eathorpe B their unlucky opponents. Anita Whitehouse and Tom Hunt gave Church two each and Tom Crellin one while Calvin Woodings held one in reply. In an all Free Church cup derby F/K defeated E/G 5-2 with Steve Richards romping over his three and Sam Smith two. Ron Stanbridge took both points for E/G.

The Warwickshire Closed Championships were held last week at St. Nicholas Park, Warwick and saw an all Spa Mens Singles final between Ian Packford from St. Georges and Jon Williams from Whitnash. Ian Ferguson may be the Birmingham No 1 and unbeaten in the city's Premier Division in 2004/05, which made him the top seed in three events but he was still beaten in the semi-final of the men's singles, in the men's doubles final and in the mixed doubles final. Ferguson had looked in fine form in the early rounds of the singles, which included an excellent win in four sets over big hitting Mark Jackson (Leamington), but fell to Ian Packford (Leamington) in the last four, in a match that went the distance. Jon Williams (Leamington) beat Birmingham's Mike Browne in the other semi, before losing to Packford in the final 11-7, 11-6, 11-5. Ferguson and Andy Hare were beaten by the Leamington pairing of Earl Sweeney and Packford in the men's doubles 11-3 in the fifth and Ferguson and Kay Nason lost out to Browne and Helen Turner (Birmingham) in the mixed. England cadet Rachel Pilgrim (Nuneaton) upset the seedings in the Ladies singles by beating Jane Dickens (Leamington) in the final. Navinder Matharu (Colebridge) deserved the junior boys title after beating England Academy squad member Chris Burgess in the last four and Birmingham and Warwickshire No 1 Paul Leck 11-8 in the fifth in an exciting final. Leck gained some consolation in the cadet boys

event, beating teammate Alan Caffrey at the last stage. Andy Lebutt (Colebridge) took the veteran singles title, Mike Bishop from Leamington was the runner-up, while John Ludford (Birmingham) had a magnificent win over Phil Paine (Leamington) in the over 50's final at 11/9 in the fifth.

Rest of the results can be found on the Leamington website