

VIBERT VICTORIOUS AT FINALS NIGHT

Brian Vibert crowned his season's homecoming to the New Milton Table Tennis Club by winning the Scratch Singles Final against last year's winner Steve Hemmings. Vibert had already helped his A team to win promotion to the premier league with an impressive playing average of 81% in Div 1.

The Club's annual tournaments have been taking place over the last five weeks and culminated in the Finals Night at Mudeford Wood Community Centre where Bob Fagan successfully defended his Vets title and Simon Daish won the Handicap Singles.

Before the finals got under way on the night however, there was the matter of three semi-finals that had been carried over from previous weeks, and 15-year-old Teddy Linsley bagged both of his. First up was the Under 40s (Handicap) semi where Linsley, on a start of 24, had to give a point to 14-year-old Simon Daish who started off on 25. Both youngsters played good attacking table tennis but Linsley shaded it over two ends 31-29, 31-28.

Linsley had only just managed to gather breath when it was time to face Simon's 8 year old brother Matthew in the semi of the Juniors scratch event. Matthew attacked adventurously and took Linsley to deuce in both ends, but Linsley emerged victorious at 14-12, 12-10.

The last of the semis was the Handicap match between club secretary Bev Scott-Johns (+19) and Simon Daish (+25) who was playing for the second time that evening. Simon used his advantage maturely and saw Scott-Johns off in two straight ends 31-27, 31-25.

Simon then faced Gerard Redman in the Handicap final and Redman, playing off +19, gave the youngster a bit more trouble. Simon took the first end 31-26, but Redman restored parity in the second at 31-29 to set up a thrilling finale. Redman caught up at 25-all for the change of ends, but Simon reassumed command and came out a worthy winner at 31-28.

The Vets (Over 40s) Handicap final saw Bob Fagan (+15) defend his title against John Parkhouse (+21), who had seen off Shaun Newcomb in his semi-final last week. Fagan drew first blood by 31-27, but Parkhouse hit well to take the second end 31-28. However, Fagan kept his opponent a lot quieter in the third and final end and caught up 23-all at the change around and took the match 31-27.

The Handicap Doubles final saw Shaun Newcomb & Terry Jenvey off a combined handicap of +12 do battle against brother and sister combo Simon & Fern Daish who started with +24. Newcomb, who was defending his share of the title that he won with Malcolm Floyd last year, combined well again with the tenacious Jenvey and the pairing quickly overhauled the 12 point deficit in two ends to take the match 32-30 and 31-29.

The evening climaxed with the Scratch Singles final when Steve Hemmings aspired to defend his title against his Div 1 teammate Brian Vibert. Hemmings took the first end 11-8 and narrowly won the second at deuce by 12-10, but Vibert was gradually gaining momentum. This came to the fore when Vibert took the next two ends fairly comfortably 11-3 and 11-4 to restore parity. The decider saw some spectacular table tennis which was worthy of an exhibition bout, with Vibert's forehand attack being answered by masterful defending by Hemmings. However, Vibert finally pulled away at the end to win 11-8 and wrest the title from his worthy opponent.