

Onwards And Upwards For New Milton Table Tennis Club

New Milton Table Tennis Club held their combined AGM and Presentation Evening at Mudeford Wood Community Centre last week. There was also the matter of the Under 40 (Handicap) semi-finals and final to be got out of the way before the officiating as well as the Junior final. Max Doohan beat Andrew Daish in two straight sets in their semi to meet James Lewis who had done likewise to Andrew's younger brother Simon. In the Under 40 final, Doohan playing off +20, took the first end off Lewis (+15) but Lewis recovered to take the next two 31-28, 31-29 for the title. Doohan's time came again however as he successfully defended his Junior title against Simon Daish.

The Club's tournaments completed for another year, it was time for the AGM. Secretary Bev Scott-Johns reported on a very busy and challenging season, what with entering two more teams into the league (now eight teams), helping in the continuing campaign to save Mudeford Wood Community Centre from closure, the Arnewood School coaching venture and the Club's ongoing application to join the prestigious Premier ClubMark programme. The Club also saw an increase in its membership, mainly due to more juniors joining up, which is most encouraging. In fact 13 out of the 49 registered players were juniors.

He reported that the eight teams had mixed fortunes in the Bournemouth and District league. The E team captained by James Lewis won Div 3, the second year running that the title was won by a New Milton team. The D, F and H teams finished the season in strong mid-table positions, but unfortunately the A team (Premier) and the C team (Div 2) ended up in the relegation zones and the G team finished bottom of Div 5. The B team who were promoted from Div 2 last season finished up a comfortable third from bottom in Div 1 so live to fight another day. The A team are looking to strengthen, so they may be allowed upon appeal to remain in the Premier next season. This would leave the Club represented across all six divisions.

Scott-Johns paid tribute once again to Shaun Newcomb, the Club's (and indeed the League's) only wheelchair player who has had another remarkable year. Shaun has continued to play in all four National Disability Grand Prix events over the last year, medalling at all tournaments and maintaining his GB No 1 ranking position in the men's wheelchair classes. As well as being Vice Chairman of the British Table Tennis Association for People with Disabilities (BDTTAD), Shaun is now also Chairman of the Selection Panel, the body who selects the GB squad for all international tournaments including the Paralympics in 2012. Shaun, who is a UKCC Level 2 coach, continues to assist the therapists at the Duke of Cornwall Spinal Injuries Unit at Salisbury District Hospital where table tennis is used in the early stages of rehabilitation. Back in October, Shaun was presented to Prince Edward who came to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Unit. A very busy Shaun is also the Club's Development Officer and he has been driving through the Club's application to join the Premier ClubMark programme. Just for good measure, Shaun also won the Club's Handicap Singles and Vets titles in the recent tournaments. This coming October, Shaun will be taking time out from the Bournemouth and Southampton able-bodied leagues and his various duties to fly to Delhi where he will be coaching the woman's wheelchair athletes at the Commonwealth Games.

Other Club members "mentioned in despatches" were Treasurer/Press Officer Malcolm Floyd who won the ETTA Press Officer of the Year Award (2009), Welfare Officer James Lewis, who now also works for the ETTA and received high praise from the league chairman for developing coaching, particularly at Portchester School, and Brian Vibert for setting up the coaching sessions at Arnewood School. Indeed, Vibert was later awarded the Club's Doris Marshall Memorial Plate (Club Person of the Year) in recognition of his efforts with the school on the Club's behalf. At the BDTTA tournaments held back in February, the E team's Gerard Redman won the Div 3 title and Shaun Newcomb and Brian Vibert won the Men's Doubles event.

The Club remains the third largest Club in the league and sees its aspired membership of the Premier ClubMark programme as crucial in its next stages of development. Commitment to the programme was unanimously ratified by the AGM as was the Draft Club Action Plan. The Club has a strong presence on the Bournemouth and District Executive Committee with five members now serving. Malcolm Floyd and James Lewis were unanimously returned as Results Secretary and Coaching Officer respectively at the recent BDTTA AGM and are now joined by the A team's Alan Gordon who is the new Town Match Secretary. Serving alongside them are continuing committee members Bev Scott-Johns and Brian Theaker.

The Club's officers were re-elected unopposed en bloc; Chairman: Bob Fagan, Secretary: Bev Scott-Johns, Treasurer: Malcolm Floyd, Development Officer: Shaun Newcomb and Welfare Officer: James Lewis. Long-standing committee member Kevin Harris had to stand down early in the season because he was working abroad and Junior Representative Alex Everett-Bolter stood down because he is hopefully off to Uni this year. 17-year-old Andrew Daish is the new junior rep who joins re-elected committee members Dave Sutton and Brian Vibert. Chairman Bob Fagan then presented the New Milton Annual Tournament trophies, the worthy recipients being:-

Scratch Singles: Brian Vibert, Runner-up Steve Hemmings

Handicap Singles: Shaun Newcomb, Runner-up Les Smith

Vets (Over 40s): Shaun Newcomb, Runner-up Malcolm Floyd

Under 40s: James Lewis, Runner-up Max Doohan

Juniors: Max Doohan, Runner-up Simon Daish

Doubles: Matthew Daish & Ian Linney, Runners-up Bob Fagan & Malcolm Floyd

Doris Marshall Memorial Plate (Club Person of the Year): Brian Vibert

All in all, the Club can look back on a tremendously rewarding year and looks forward to the new season with confidence as it joins the Premier ClubMark programme. Anybody interested in joining the Club should call Bev Scott-Johns on 01425 619552.