

Mixed Season For Table Tennis Club

The final League Tables show that New Milton Table Tennis Club had a bit of a mixed bag in the Bournemouth and District league this season, with one of their eight teams promoted as champions but with two teams facing life in lower divisions.

The Club's success story came in Div 3 where the E team are promoted to Div 2 as champions, which is the second year running that a New Milton team has won the division. The team benefited from the tremendous form of captain James Lewis (89% of games won) and Gerard Redman (87%) who were playing down in Div 5 last season, ably supported by Peter Eke, Dave Sutton and Lewis Reading. Winning the division crowns a brilliant year for Redman who also won the Div 3 Individual Title in February's tournament.

Also in Div 3, the D team squad of Bev Scott-Johns (captain), Alex Everett-Bolter, Bill Page, Malcolm Elliott and Clive Pitts finished mid-table on 51 points. Once again they were deprived of the services of star player Pitts through injury for most of the season. Pitts only managed four matches this season but was undefeated, which shows what might have been. The team also have to face up to losing the services of teenager Everett-Bolter (62%) next season as he aspires to a University place. The D side won't be sorry to see their club mates move up to the next flight as the E team came out on top in all three of the local derbies.

The A team of Alan Gordon (captain), Steve Hemmings and Brian Vibert finished up on the bottom of the Premier on 27 points, having gained promotion to the top flight last year. It was all very tight in the basement, however, with only 4 points separating Milton from Kinson A who were fourth from bottom on 31 points.

The club's other casualty came in Div 2 as the C team of Terry Jenvey (captain), Roy Hobbs and Mick Barry ended up second from bottom with 34 points. The side, which won Div 3 last season, become known as the league's draw specialists this season as they tied nine of their matches, a feat only equalled by Bournemouth Sports F in Div 1. Although Milton characteristically drew their last match of the season, they lost their three previous matches by 2-8 which ultimately cost them their place in the division.

In Div 1, the B team expected a bit of a struggle having been promoted from Div 2 last season. However the squad of Malcolm Floyd (captain), Paul Bolter, Bob Fagan and Shaun Newcomb finished up a comfortable third from bottom on 41 points, quite some distance from the relegated Bournemouth Sports E (17 points).

In Div 4, the F team were promoted as champions of Div 5 last season, but missed the services of James Lewis and Gerard Redman who leap-frogged up to Div 3 this season. However, the team finished in a very creditable mid-table position on 50 points. Teenager Max Doohan was a revelation as he achieved a playing average of 63%, and there were some good performances from captain Les Smith and fellow regular John Parkhouse. Illness and injury deprived the team of the services of veteran Brian Theaker, Ian Linney and Angela Farmer, but the team were bolstered by promising new signing Luke Dewey for the latter part of the season.

Div 5 saw the G and H teams vying for supremacy but the H team came out on top by winning two of the three local derbies and ending up higher in the table. The H team finished up mid-table on 51 points and peering down on their club mates who unfortunately finished bottom with 26 points. Both sides heavily featured a number of new signings and league debuts, especially in the H team where the Daish boys (Andrew, Matthew, Peter & Simon) joined ranks with sister Fern, along with fellow maiden voyagers Danny Williams, Mike Craddock and Robert Saunders. Saunders and Williams particularly impressed with playing averages of 61% and 62% respectively, and were only just pipped by the homecoming queen Sandy Fagan who achieved 63%. Veteran Richard Barrett was also persuaded to dust his racket down and came up with 43%. Teenager Teddy Linsley had another excellent season and was able to match his last season's average of 78%.

Greater things are expected of the G team next season as a number of their players are showing good form. Teenager Josh Harris managed at least a game from most matches and new signing Sam Watkins finished on a high with a brace from his last match. Up and coming youngsters David Plumb and Peter Scott should continue to improve, as should Rhys Jessop as he recovers from an operation, but the team will lose Paul Douglas to Uni. Paul's dad Malcolm Douglas (captain) came up with 46% from his maiden season, but was pipped by pal Keith Kensley with a debut 50%.

The Club has picked up several good signings this season but are always on the lookout for new players from novices to experienced players. The Club is the third largest in the league and are currently pursuing the prestigious Premier Clubmark status to enable it to progress further. Any readers interested in playing competitively or just for fun should contact club secretary Bev Scott-Johns on 01425 619552.