

## **Doubles Delight for Daish and Linney**

**Sandwiched in between the Handicap Singles and the Scratch Singles events, the New Milton Table Tennis Club held their Handicap Doubles tournament last week down at Mudeford Wood Community Centre.**

This event is really just a bit of fun before the annual tournaments get serious again with the Scratch Singles the following week. The doubles is a handicap competition, best of three up to 31, with the pairings drawn out of the hat on the night. The player's handicaps are then averaged to give a handicap for the pairing. With sixteen players taking part this year, the eight pairings were drawn into two groups of four.

Shaun Newcomb has won the event for the past two years with different partners and he was looking to extend that run with this year's drawn partner, teenager Rhys Jessop. On a combined handicap of +19, they beat Steve Hemmings & Andrew Daish (+14) and Simon Daish & Roy Hobbs (+18) but lost to eventual group winners Mike Craddock & Malcolm Douglas (+25) who won all of their games. This meant that Newcomb & Jessop had to be content to go through to the semi-finals as runners-up but with Newcomb still with a keen eye on that title.

The other group of four saw Malcolm Floyd combine with Div 1 teammate Bob Fagan to dominate their group by winning all of their games. On a combined handicap of +14 they got off to a bit of a dodgy start by losing the first end to Matthew Daish & Ian Linney (+21), but got their collective act together to take the next two ends. Floyd & Fagan then went on to see off John Parkhouse & Peter Daish (+22) and Bev Scott-Johns & Brian Theaker (+20) in two straight sets. Matthew Daish and Linney's defeat against Floyd & Fagan proved to be their only loss so they went through to the semi-finals as runners-up.

The first of the semis saw Floyd & Fagan face their Div 1 teammate Newcomb in harness with Jessop. Floyd & Fagan scraped the first by 32-30 but won the second more emphatically by 31-25 to dash Newcomb's hopes of the triple and go through to the final. The other semi between Daish & Linney and Craddock & Douglas saw Daish & Linney lose the first end by 28-31, but they took the next two by 31-29 to go through to meet Floyd & Fagan in the final.

Floyd and Fagan playing off +14 will have their work cut out against the combined force of Daish & Linney who have a +21 start. Nine-year-old Daish's attack is improving all the time and Linney is returning to form and fitness after a long lay-off due to injury so their +21 start looks quite formidable. Daish & Linney will also take hope from the fact that they took the first leg against Floyd & Fagan in the group stage. Should be a cracking match!

The club's Finals Night takes place at Mudeford Wood Community Centre on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July and all spectators are welcome. If any readers are interested in coming to the finals or would just like some more information about the club, they should contact secretary Bev Scott-Johns on 01425 619552.