

Les Not Mis As He Goes Through To Table Tennis Semis

The New Milton Table Tennis Club Annual Tournaments resumed last week with the Handicap Singles Event. This is usually the most popular of the club's tournaments and so it would seem again this year as twenty players again took part.

The twenty players were drawn into four groups of five which guaranteed at least four games for everyone. The handicapping means that everybody has an even chance of winning, and indeed Div 5 teenager Simon Daish was defending his last year's title. At the other end of the age spectrum, veteran Les Smith (Div 4) turned it on in this year's event to book his place in the semi-finals.

Simon Daish playing off +22 was drawn into a group with his last year's losing finalist Gerard Redman (+16), Keith Kensley (+22), and Simon's younger brothers Peter (+26) and Matthew (+23). Redman won all four of his matches, including getting his revenge over Simon to go through as group winner, and Simon lost just the one to go through as runner-up.

Club treasurer/press officer Malcolm Floyd (+13) restored some pride after getting knocked out in the group stage last year. He was drawn in a group with John Parkhouse (+19), Malcolm Douglas (+24), Rhys Jessop (+26) and Les Smith (+21) and won all four of his matches to go through as winner. Smith has certainly upped his game since the handicaps were published at the back end of last year and he only dropped one game to take runner-up position.

Although club chairman Bob Fagan (+15) won his group decisively by beating all in the lists; Roy Hobbs (+15), Ian Linney (+19), Robert Saunders (+21) and Mike Craddock (+26), runner-up had to be determined on sets won/lost as Saunders and Hobbs won two games each. Saunders justified his trip all the way from Abingdon by pipping Hobbs by the narrowest margin of just one set to go through as runner-up.

The final group saw club development officer Shaun Newcomb (+13) do battle with club secretary Bev Scott-Johns (+17), Terry Jenvey (+12), Andrew Daish (+24) and Lucy Craddock (+27). Newcomb, the club's only wheelchair player emulated the other group winners by winning all four of his matches and Jenvey only lost the one to emerge as runner-up.

And so it was on to the quarterfinals with the winners and runners up of each group going through. Les Smith (+21) continued to impress as he saw off Bob Fagan (+15) despite dropping the first end. Terry Jenvey (+12) put paid to last year's runner-up Gerard Redman (+16), again after dropping the first end. Malcolm Floyd (+13) had his work cut out against Robert Saunders (+21), but scraped to victory over two deuce sets by 34-32, 32-30. Finally, Simon Daish's (+22) title defence was snuffed out by Shaun Newcomb (+13) who won in two straight sets.

It was too late to play the semi-finals on the night, leaving Les Smith to contemplate Terry Jenvey, and Malcolm Floyd to pit his wits against Div 1 teammate Shaun Newcomb. Floyd has two bites at the cherry against his pal as he also has to face Newcomb in the final of the Vets Over 40s (Handicap). Floyd and Newcomb both have the same handicap so they will play off scratch in what promises to be two keenly contested spectacles as it is usually nip and tuck between them.

Next up is the Handicap Doubles event. This is open to both sexes with the pairs drawn on the night, so it can make for some interesting combinations and matches. After that, on Monday 21st June is the Scratch Singles event followed two weeks later by the Club Finals Night on 5th July. These all take place at the Mudeford Wood Community Centre and all spectators are welcome. If you would like any further information about the club, please contact secretary Bev Scott-Johns on 01425 619552.