

Max Eyes Two Table Tennis Titles

The New Milton Table Tennis Club Annual Tournaments got underway with the Juniors and Under 40s events followed by the Vets Over 40s event a week later. Teenage star Max Doohan was defending his Junior title and staking his claim for the under 40s title having lost out in last year's final.

First up was the Juniors (scratch) event with the eight entrants being split into two groups of four. 16-year-old Max Doohan was defending his title and saw off the Daish brothers Andrew (16), Simon (14) and Matthew (9) in two straight sets to go through as group winner. Simon overcame his siblings in straight sets to go through as runner-up.

The second group saw Peter Daish (11) separated from his brothers and he beat Mike and Lucy Craddock to emerge as runner-up. Rhys Jessop beat all three to go through as winner of his group.

Jessop's winning run came to an end as he lost to Simon Daish 11-13, 7-11 in their semi-final. Doohan saw off Peter Daish fairly comfortably at 11-5, 11-4 to stake his place in the final against Simon Daish which is to be played later.

And so it was on to the Under 40s (Handicap) where the eight youngsters were joined by the not so young James Lewis. Lewis is one of the club's most improved players, but playing off his handicap of +15 up to 31, he had his work cut out against improvers Mike Craddock (+26), Rhys Jessop (+26) and Andrew Daish (+24) in the first group. Daish beat everybody to win the group and Lewis dropped just the one to go through as runner-up.

The other group comprised five players; Peter Daish (+26), Matthew Daish (+23), Lucy Craddock (+27), Simon Daish (+22) and Max Doohan (+20), so they got their money's worth from four games each. Simon and Max both won three of their games (Simon beat Max but lost to brother Peter) but Simon lost fewer sets so went through as winner, with Max runner-up.

It was getting late so it was decided to put off the semi-finals until later. Simon Daish will play James Lewis and Max Doohan will face Andrew Daish. Doohan lost in last year's final against Teddy Linsley who unfortunately couldn't make this year's tournament, so Doohan will be looking to make amends.

The following week saw ten of the club's older generation competing in the Vets Over 40s (Handicap) event. This made it nice and simple for organiser and competitor Bev Scott-Johns as they were split into two groups of five. The first group comprised last year's Vets runner-up John Parkhouse playing off +19, Bev Scott-Johns (+17), Sam Watkins (+26), Gerard Redman (+16) and Malcolm Floyd (+13). Scott-Johns got off to a good start by beating Parkhouse in the first singles, but that was his lot and Parkhouse eventually went home empty handed. Watkins impressed by beating those two but lost to Redman and Floyd. Floyd dominated the group to win all his four games, Redman being the only player in the group to take an end off him. Floyd went through to the semis as group winner and Redman, who only lost to Floyd, went through as runner-up.

The other group of five comprised Ian Linney (+19) making a welcome return from a long absence through injury, Shaun Newcomb (+13), Terry Jenvey (+12), Keith Kensley (+22) and last year's Vets winner Bob Fagan (+15). Linney did well to stay the course over his four matches but got no reward for his efforts. Jenvey added Kensley to Linney's scalp but lost to Newcomb and Fagan. The last match of the group saw Newcomb slug it out with fellow Div 1 teammate Fagan to decide who went through as winner as they had both won all three of their matches. Newcomb took the first end but Fagan took the second at deuce by 33-31 to set up a thrilling decider, which Newcomb won 31-25.

The semi-finals saw Floyd (+13) face his Div 1 teammate Fagan (+15) who was defending his title. Floyd was out for revenge as Fagan had knocked him out in their semi in last year's tournament. Floyd drew first blood by 31-26 but Fagan took the second 31-28, only for Floyd to take the third 31-27 to go through to the final.

The other semi-final took place between Newcomb (+13) and the ever-improving Redman (+16), which looked a tough call for Newcomb. However, Newcomb won in two straight sets (31-27, 31-26) to face his Div 1 teammate Floyd in the final.

The Club Finals Night will take place at Mudeford Wood Community Centre on Monday 5th July and all spectators are welcome. Any readers interested in joining a progressive and friendly club should contact Club Secretary Bev Scott-Johns on 01425 619552.