

New Milton E Team Reclaim Top Spot

New Milton Table Tennis Club won three out of their eight league matches last week, including an 8-2 victory by their E team which restores them to the top of Div 3. The club even took comfort from their four defeats which were all 3-7 scorelines so they salvaged a point from each. Their other result was a 5-5 draw away from home.

The E team of James Lewis, Gerard Redman and Peter Eke climbed back to the summit of Div 3 with a maximum points 8-2 home victory over Bournemouth Sports K. However, Captain Lewis' five-week winning run came to an end as he fell victim to Bourne's rising starlet Magda Charkot who also beat Eke. Redman showed his team mates how it's done by beating Charkot in three straight ends to land his eleventh hat-trick of the campaign. After the match, the captain paid tribute to Eke for his tenacity in his win over Bourne's Bob Johnson. It was level pegging at 2-2 after their previous three games had gone to deuce and Eke stuck to his task to take the fifth by a mind-boggling 20-18. Previous leaders Merton F dropped a point in a 7-3 win over Nimrod B allowing Milton to leapfrog to the top with a one-point lead.

The D team didn't fare so well in Div 3 as they lost for the third time to third-placed Merton E, this time at home in a 3-7 defeat. It looked pretty bleak for Milton after the seventh game as they trailed Merton by 1-6, with Bill Page coming up with Milton's solitary win. However, captain Bev Scott-Johns battled well to beat Dave Chapman over five ends and then Malcolm Elliott took John Dodwell in five ends to give their side the point.

Up in the Premier, the A team of Alan Gordon, Steve Hemmings and Brian Vibert turned the tables on Merton A with a 6-4 home win having lost by the same scoreline on their two previous encounters. Hemmings and Vibert bagged a couple and captain Gordon chipped in with the one win. The doubles were needed for victory and the precious extra point, but Hemmings and Vibert got off to a shaky start by losing the first two ends. However, they nicked the third end 14-12 and went on to win the next two to claim the victory. These vital three points bring basement boys Milton up to 21 points and within touching distance of Kinson A (22 points) who had a bye this week.

Div 1 saw the B team of Shaun Newcomb, Malcolm Floyd and Bob Fagan battle really hard to take a point off Merton C in a 3-7 away defeat. Captain Floyd and Newcomb both beat Merton's Barry Kenward in three straight ends, but once again the trio fell victim to rising young stars Patrick Hurley and Matthew King. Floyd got the closest to Hurley as once again he went 2-1 up but Hurley came back to steal the fourth by 13-11 to set up a thrilling decider. It went all the way to deuce and Floyd had two match points but Hurley eventually took it by 19-17. The doubles were needed for the point and Newcomb and Floyd were relieved to run out 3-1 winners after some anxious moments.

In Div 2, the C team of Terry Jenvey, Mick Barry and Roy Hobbs held Broadstone B to a 5-5 draw for the second time this season in their own backyard. Captain Jenvey led from the front with an excellent brace and Hobbs equalled his captain's second brace in two weeks. Once again, the doubles proved decisive as the duo battled hard to win out over five ends.

Div 4 saw the F team of John Parkhouse, Les Smith and stand-in Danny Williams do the treble over bottom-dwellers Winton YMCA B, this time by 7-3 down at the Winton YMCA. Milton found it fun down at the YMCA as the trio bagged a brace each and captain Smith and Parkhouse took the doubles over five ends.

In Div 5, the G team of Sam Watkins, Malcolm Douglas and Josh Harris did very well to take a point off second placed Breamore Batniks in a 3-7 home defeat. Watkins got off to a flying start as he took the first two ends off Batnik Dennis White, but despite playing probably his best tennis so far this season, Watkins lost the next three ends. It was left to teenager Harris to get the ball rolling with a win over Peter White and the other two followed suit by beating him to clinch the point.

Again in Div 5, the H team of Teddy Linsley, Robert Saunders and Sandy Fagan also did very well to take a point off runaway leaders Bournemouth Sports R in a 3-7 defeat down at Chapel Gate. Teenager Linsley played out of his skin to bag a brace including a sensational win over Bourne's David Roberts who had only dropped one game this season and also recently won the Div 5 Individual Title. A scalp indeed – well done Teddy! Sandy Fagan chipped in with the one win to help her side to come away with the point.