

New Milton Table Tennis Teams Into Cup Semi-Finals

Both New Milton Table Tennis teams entered into the Times and Directory Handicap Cup competition won their quarter-final matches last week to book their places in the semi-finals.

The Times and Directory Handicap competition provides an interesting diversion from the League competition in that it enables teams from differing divisions to compete against each other, although in New Milton's case both teams faced their divisional rivals. As well as the handicapping, the games are "31 up", best of 3 and with no doubles.

The A team of Steve Hemmings, Terry Jenvey and Alan Gordon were drawn at home against their Div 1 rivals Lynwood A, which looked a tough prospect as Milton had already lost 2-8 against the table-toppers in the Bournemouth and District league. However, they overturned the formbook by taking the match by the sixth game with a comprehensive 5-1 victory to go through to the semis. The close handicapping reflected the joint Div 1 status with Hemmings (+5), Jenvey (+12) and captain Gordon (+6) facing Lynwood's Kenny Smith (+6), Dave Crossley (+7) and Alan Smith (+12). Jenvey used his differential wisely to upset Wood's Crossley, but went on to lose against Kenny Smith in the fourth game of the evening to give the visitors a glimmer of hope at 3-1. This was quickly extinguished when Hemmings and Gordon went on to beat Alan Smith and Crossley respectively in two straight ends each to emerge unbeaten.

The B team of Shaun Newcomb, Bob Fagan and Malcolm Floyd looked on paper to have had the easier of the draws as they faced Div 2 rivals Bournemouth Sports J who they hammered 10-0 in their last league match before Christmas. However, Milton arrived at Bournemouth to discover that only Dave Law remained from the original Bourne trio with Varden Ede and Tony Phillips replacing Greg McLaughlin and Maher Michel. Milton went 2-0 up when Newcomb (+12) and Fagan (+15) beat Ede (+14) and Phillips (+14) respectively. Paradoxically, captain Floyd (+14) lost to Law (+13) despite an earlier league victory in straight ends and Newcomb lost to Phillips to level the score at 2-2. Floyd re-established the lead by beating Ede and then Fagan repeated his league victory over Law to make it 4-2 in favour of Milton. There were still some twists and turns to come however as Floyd lost out to Phillips despite taking the first end, but Newcomb came to the rescue by repeating his league win over Law to seal victory at 5-3.

Milton eagerly await the draw to see whether or not both sides have to face each other in the semi-finals. In the meantime, the Bournemouth and District Table Tennis league recommenced Week Commencing 5th January. New Milton, with six teams entered, is the third biggest club in the league and is represented across all six divisions apart from the Premier. The Club is looking to increase the number of teams in the league next season and welcomes new members from experienced players to novices. Anyone interested in playing in the league or just for fun can contact Club Secretary Bev Scott-Johns on 01425 619552.