

So Nearly Double Gold for Bournemouth

Sunday 15th June 2008, will be a day long to be remembered in the history books of the Bournemouth Table Tennis Association. For on this day at the Draycott and Long Eaton Table Tennis Centre in Derby, four of the Association's top players took Gold and Silver medals respectively at the English Table Tennis Association's League Finals of the JM Rose Bowl (for ladies) and Willmott Cup (for men).

Hannah Hicks and Joy Whitehorn created history by winning the Rose Bowl with a fantastic display of top class table tennis, to fight off the challenges of teams from Guildford, Hastings, Bracknell and then outplaying Leicester in the final to take home gold medals for Bournemouth.

It was Hannah who inspired a great triumph as she remained unbeaten throughout the day, and in the final match saw off Leicester's top player Karen Smith (ex England number 1) in a dramatic final leg.

In the opposite playing hall Mark Butler and Matt Ware were also blazing a trail to the final of the Willmott Cup. The dynamic duo had fought off determined challenges from Aldershot, Potteries, Ilford and then coming up against top seeds Nottingham in a tense and nail biting final.

Mark Butler in the first match went close against Adam Frost but lost in straight sets, so it was up to Matt Ware to level the match score against England ranked 29, Shaun Marples, and in no uncertain fashion won his match 11-4, 11-9, 11-9.

The doubles would prove to be a deciding factor and although Mark and Matt had their chances, the Nottingham duo proved to be strong and won three games to one. With the match score now at 1-2, it was up to Matt, to level the match, and once again was in top form getting the better of Adam Frost 11-8, 9-11, 11-5, 15-13, to make the final evenly poised at 2 matches all.

So it was all down to Mark Butler to conjure up a result against a player ranked 75 places higher in the ETTA senior rankings, a tough call!

Mark started off brilliantly, and was so close to going two games to love up, however Marples managed to get his head in front and closed out the match 3 sets to 1, and the Nottingham side took the Gold Medals.

Matt, unbeaten on the day and Mark who played magnificently throughout the long day's play had to settle for the Silver medals.

A truly memorable day for the Bournemouth Table Tennis Association.