

Clean Sweep for BATTTS



The victorious BATTTS team at Ormesby: Adam Nutland, Jack Bennett, Johan Hagberg and Peter Cleminson Photo John Upham

On the weekend of 13th and 14th February our top team travelled to Teesside for the final part of their campaign to keep BATTTS in the Premier Division next season.

There was a lot more than pride at stake here. The British League has announced a fundamental change in the Premier Division match format starting next season which will have far-reaching and very exciting consequences for the sport in this country.

As our team began their four matches they knew that it was essential for us to stay in the Premier Division next season to be part of the future developments.

In the previous round of matches at Cardiff in January, **Adam Nutland** had almost single-handedly secured our safety by his phenomenal sequence of wins, when he demolished three top ten ranked opponents including a straight sets win over **Chris Doran**.

But now, the clubs placed below us would be turning out their strongest players in an effort to avoid relegation. They were all capable of causing an upset.

It looked like only a win in our first match, against Kingfisher, would guarantee our final position. Kingfisher had previously been weakened by the absence, through injury, of their leading player **Tom Maynard**. Ranked at 14 in England, Tom

was back to fitness and would clearly be a danger.

The team rose magnificently to the challenge. There was a nervous start by our number 1 player **Johan Hagberg**, who dropped the first two sets against England number 35 Liam Mctiernan. But after that, things got better and better. Johan eventually overcame Mctiernan, and Adam then played superbly to power past Tom Maynard in a five set thriller. After an expected win by **Jack Bennett**, it was time for **Peter Cleminson** to make his debut for BATTTS in the Premier Division. His

opponent, **Marcus Giles**, was unlikely to be a push over – being ranked 43 places higher than Peter. Pushing was definitely not on Peter’s agenda – he blasted his way through every point giving Giles no chance of developing long rallies, and took the match comfortably without dropping a set. Not satisfied with the draw, our team continued in the same vein and won the final four singles. Most of the matches were close, but the team was on fire. The 8-0 final result ended any lingering doubts – BATTTS were now secure in the knowledge that we would be staying at the top flight next season.

There was still plenty of tough and exciting play during the rest of the weekend, and after gaining a further point by drawing the match with London Academy our team finished the season in a very respectable fourth place.

Special mention here for Jack Bennett who has made wonderful progress during the past year, and has effectively achieved the transition to the much stronger level of play in the Premier Division, winning an impressive 10 singles mainly against higher ranked opposition.

We can now start looking forward to the new season. If you are not on our mailing list contact us at the email address below to receive updates.



Adam celebrates after beating Chris Doran at Cardiff

Photo John Upham

Trailblazing League: Two Seasons in One!

When we launched the **BATTS Junior Open League** last year we could not have predicted how phenomenally successful it would be, attracting more than 50 young players from a wide area.

Our first "season" is still under way, and the final round will be on Saturday 19th March, when we shall have our prizegiving.

The new league has been so popular we decided to begin a second season in April!

The format is very flexible. Players enter as individuals, so no problem if someone misses a week. Matches take place on Saturday afternoons. None of the outdated late night sessions offered by most traditional local leagues, where participants spend the whole evening playing three singles. In our format competitors normally play five matches during the afternoon and we are still finished by 4pm.

The league has attracted young players with a very wide ability range. The

Parent Power

The future of BATTS as a Talent Development Centre depends not just on the skills and commitment of the players and coaches but equally on the support of parents.

Early in January we finally got round to doing something we'd talked about for years: holding a meeting with the parents of our young players. This was an opportunity for them to quiz the coaches and get to know each other.

We all felt this was a useful meeting, helped along by some delicious home made cakes baked by Jo Brierley!

The meeting was very well attended, with 22 parents and five coaches attending. We covered a wide range of topics. The parents were interested to hear about how we structure our coaching sessions, why we have established various competitions, and what we see as the important goals for the future of our club.

One very useful outcome was that Tina Campbell and Andy Walker have joined Neil to form an external tournament sub-committee. They will look at the forward calendar of tournaments around the country and organise transport for our players who would like to take part. BATTS will contribute towards the cost of having one of our senior coaches in the party.

divisional structure means that everyone has the possibility of getting promoted and we shall be awarding prizes for progress as well as the overall winners at the end of the season.

The flexible arrangements also mean that players are not always competing against the same opponents in each round.

After four rounds of matches in the first season (with still two rounds to play) the clear leader in the U15 section is **Fraser Donnelly** of Ellenborough. With his consistently powerful play, he has led the top division from the start.

The U12 section is a very tight competition that may go right to the wire. **Oliver Gray** and **Kamran Bastani** have both won 80%, but they are closely followed by **Diesel Harvey** on 78%.

The second season starts on 30th April and runs through to 16th July. Places are filling fast - see our website for forms and further information:

batts.org.uk/content/batts-junior-open-league

We feel it is essential for ambitious players to also take part in competitions at other clubs.

Contact Neil, Tina or Andy if you would like to register your interest in hearing about the future programme.

We shall be aiming to have more meetings with parents - perhaps three or four times a year.



Fraser Donnelly - leading the U15 section

Snippets

Don't miss the **National Championships** coming up soon. The finals on Sunday 20th March are being televised live on ITV 4 from 3pm - 6pm. See the Table Tennis England website for more information.

Neil reports that our **LED lighting** could be saving BATTS around £6,000 a year in electricity costs - wow!

Please remember to keep passing on used blades and sheets of rubber in reasonable condition as they are very useful in making up reconditioned rackets for our beginners - leave in the office for Graham's attention.

Junior Umpires in Training



Our recent appeal for **Junior Umpires** produced these five keen youngsters who were given their initial theoretical training sessions by Neil. Our photo shows Leo, Declan, Matthew, Cody and Jake discussing the rules about serving. Their next step is to get some practice in umpiring - fortunately we have plenty of opportunities for that coming up very soon.

If any others (either seniors or juniors) would like to become qualified umpires please let us know - we can always use more!

Cadet Super Series: A Winning Formula

Trying to find a tournament format that suits everyone must be an almost impossible task. But we think we are getting there! Our latest Cadet Super Series on 30th January attracted an entry of **48 players** from a very wide area. We were delighted to welcome players from Hampshire, Sussex, Dorset, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Surrey, Middlesex and many parts of Essex, Herts and London.

As a result of the larger entry we decided to increase the prize fund by 46% and award **ten prizes totalling £315**. In the end we felt that everyone had plenty of matches with not too much waiting around. Plus, there was a good balance of matches - nobody had an easy ride.

The winner of the main event was **Kai Major** (Dorset) who just edged past **Joe Walker** in a closely fought final. Joe was disappointed to lose, but had been suffering from a heavy cold and was unable to train during the week before. We were delighted to have BATTs players in the Band 1 final, with **Diesel Harvey** overcoming **Toby Moring** in another close match.

It was also great to see how our own players fared against the strong contingent of visitors. We had three quarter finalists in the main draw and three semi finalists in the Band 1.

Some of our newer players were getting their first taste of a one star tournament, and we were very happy with their performances.

Don't miss out on our next events: Junior Super Series on **Sunday 3rd April** and Cadet Super Series on **Sunday 8th May**.

All the photos below were by Andrew Webb and there are many more on his website:

www.sprocketphotography.com



There was time for some light relief in between the serious matches



Joe Walker - Main Event finalist



Diesel Harvey - Band One winner



Harry Argent - first tournament



Toby Moring - Band One finalist in his first One Star

Congratulations

Plenty of successes for BATTs players in tournaments around the country.

Joe Walker seems to find a tournament most weeks but he doesn't neglect the all-important training during the week. Joe's latest successes include reaching the final of the Band 2 Junior event and semi-final of the Band 1 Cadet at the Blackpool 4 Star, the semi-final of the Darlington 2 Star, runner up in Band 1 of the East Midlands 4 Star, winning the Cadet events at the Burton Uxbridge 2 Star and the Fusion 2 Star, as well as reaching the finals of the Junior events at both those tournaments. Joe has now risen to 19 in the Cadet national ranking.

Ethan Walsh won the East Midlands 4 Star and played in the Czech Open in February.

Alana Mansfield won the U13 event at the Blackpool 2 Star and the U11 Essex Schools Individual Championship.

Callum Boyce won the U11 Boys category in the Essex School Individual Championships.



Callum Boyce - Essex U11 Champion



Kamran Virdee

Photo Ben Flaum

We had another batch of promotions in our coaching squads recently. **Joe Chappell** has been promoted to the B Squad and **Toby Moring** and **Kamran Virdee** have been promoted to the A Squad.

There are several other promotions pending and the coaches are always keeping a close eye on the young players who are keen to put in the work needed to progress.



Congratulations to **Peter and Serena Cleminson** on the birth of Jonah, their third child on 8th December. We look forward to seeing Jonah's debut at BATTs!

We were delighted that two friends of BATTs appeared in the New Year Honours list. **Jack Petchey** received a knighthood in recognition for his vast contribution to sport over many years.

Ronnie O'Sullivan received an OBE for his services to snooker. Ronnie is no stranger to BATTs, and he last looked in when we hosted the Senior British League matches recently. On that occasion he met **Leon Thomson**, the amazing magician who was entertaining our spectators in between matches.

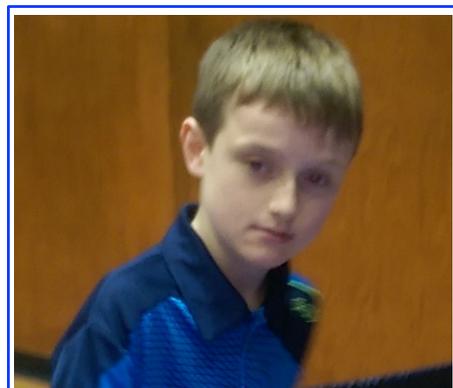
Leon will be appearing at the Bull Theatre, Barnet on 21st April and you can book tickets via their website: www.thebulltheatre.com



Sir Jack Petchey



Ronnie O'Sullivan OBE and Leon Thomson



Declan Garner has maintained his remarkable attendance record at coaching sessions. His unbroken sequence is at 93!