

Premier Team Bounces Back

It has been a fortnight of contrasting fortunes for BATTs in the Senior British League Premier Division. After defeat at the hands of Ormesby, our team bounced back brilliantly to win their next match against Halton 8 - 0!

BATTs was buzzing with excitement as we got closer to the start time of the Ormesby match. Many of our junior players had arrived early to support the team and to play in a fun tournament. They were then joined by other family and club members who were keen to see how our head coach (Peter Cleminson) and former head coach (Adam Nutland) would fare against the top class international team from Teesside.

Our team put up a spirited performance. Adam and Peter both came desperately close to winning

one of their singles, and Ethan Walsh fought all the way too. But in the end it was Helshan who achieved BATTs' only win during the afternoon. He played brilliantly against the steady Polish player Filip Szymanski, winning in five sets. The deciding set was a real cliff-hanger with some spectacular play.

Although we lost the match 7 - 1 we were happy that our team had put up a brave struggle. We had a respectable crowd of 70 and Leon the Amazing Magician was a very popular guest, delighting the spectators during pauses in play.

Helshan clearly benefited from the tough matches, because a few days later he went on to record a spectacular win against Liam Pitchford, the England number 2, in a tournament in Sweden.

The Halton match on 25th February saw the return of Jack Bennett and Steve Beerling, replacing Helshan and Ethan. We expected a win against the bottom team and we were even more confident when one of the players in our visiting team had to pull out at short notice.

Jack Bennett had the toughest challenge, when he faced the Yorkshireman Richard Lightowler who was ranked only two places below Jack in the national rankings. But Jack held on to win in five sets. The remaining matches went to form and the result was a splendid 8 - 0 victory for BATTs. It is now all about the coveted third place. At the time of writing we are just one point ahead of Fusion. The next matches will be crucial, and with the support of all our senior and junior club members we must stand a great chance.

We can be sure of some more superb table tennis in the remaining matches. The next home match is on Saturday 11th March against Drumchapel.

Can BATTs emulate Leon's magic and topple the leading team? As usual, BATTs will be open from 1pm and the BATTs Bear will be taking challenges from all-comers before the match starts at 2pm.

Following the Drumchapel match, we then finish the season in April:

Saturday 8th April BATTs v Cardiff

Saturday 15th April Fusion v BATTs (NB the start time of this away match v Fusion is 7pm)

Saturday 29th April BATTs v North Ayrshire.

Meanwhile, our second team still have a great chance of securing promotion to the Championship Division next season. They are currently in joint top position with Portsmouth with a single weekend of matches to be played.

Action photos on this page by Roger Hance.



Declan Mastering Multiball



Keep that forehand going Nico!

He has only just celebrated his 14th birthday but Declan Garner is rapidly becoming an expert multiballer, appearing regularly in our beginner and B Squad sessions.

Although he is still too young to gain formal coaching qualifications Declan is showing tremendous promise, and superb commitment and patience with our young players.

Always ready to help out with anything that needs doing, Declan is supporting BATTs in many other ways as well as multiball. He has a great understanding of IT matters which has been very useful and is just as willing to play his part in the seemingly endless tasks involved in setting up the playing hall and putting the stuff away at the end of competitions etc. He has also shown great patience in helping our newer players as they get to grips with playing/scoring in competitions.

As far as the multiball is concerned, he has made huge strides in mastering the techniques that many more experienced coaches find challenging.

HARLOW LEAGUE

Ding Dong Battle

Two of our BATTs teams have become involved in a very tight three-horse race for the Harlow League Premier title this season. With only a few matches left to play it is a close call between the Gibbons, the Baboons and Allnutts. The Gibbons have so far used 8 different players, with **Paul Martindill** as the most consistently successful on 79%.

The Baboons, captained by **Calvin Harvey**, have been boosted by a welcome return from retirement by **Matthew Taylor** - still far too young to retire. At the midway stage Matthew was unbeaten and had picked up very useful victories against experienced players.

In Division 1 our most successful players are the Loris's **Kevin West** (81%) and the Mandrill's **Kim Cheung** (77%).

In Division 2, **Garry Hudson** of the Howler Monkeys is on 78% and **Alan Bull** not far behind on 74%.

BATTs Junior Open League



In February we reached the final Saturday afternoon of another very successful season in the BATTs Junior Open League. This informal league attracts entrants from a wide area around Harlow, and anyone can take part, whatever their club or school base.

At the end of play we awarded prizes based on consistency, progress and persistence throughout the season, and not forgetting good sporting behaviour.

There was plenty of the latter, and it was great to see the group getting on so well together, despite some very hard-fought matches.

The Junior Open League serves a number of purposes. It gives new players their first taste of competition, improves a chance to play against better players, and for the more experienced it's an opportunity to play competitively without the additional pressures of ranking points at stake.

The Open League will take a break now until the autumn, and in its place we have another new competition for juniors - the BATTs Junior Pairs.

This will also take place on Saturday afternoons at BATTs. At the start of each session (there is a series of four this time) we shall put the players in

pairs, and they will play singles and doubles matches against two of the other pairs during the afternoon. The pairings can change from week to week, depending on who is there each time.

See the BATTs website for more information about BATTs Junior Pairs: batts.org.uk/content/batts-junior-pairs-competition

Thanks to everyone who has helped us establish the Junior Open League - especially Neil, Declan, Helen, Alan and of course Sharon who has kept the players and parents well supplied with excellent food and home made cakes. Photo: Jason Flaum

Super Series: Double Win for Jaycee



Since the last edition of BATTs News we have had two more very successful Super Series tournaments and we have been delighted with the response: not just the large number of entries but also the favourable comments we have received from players, coaches and parents about the way we run these events.

Our generosity with prize money is clearly attracting a very strong entry each time, which is exactly what we were hoping for. It is giving our own players plenty of tough challenges but we are pleased that so many of them are participating, and continuing to achieve some excellent results.

Jaycee Chan (see above) is one of our players who has really begun to fulfil his promise this year, emerging as the winner of the main event in our Cadet Super Series in January, and only three weeks later winning the Band 2 in the Junior Super Series. Although Jaycee still plays for Ellenborough in team competitions - the photo shows him playing in the recent Junior British League matches - we think we have a fair claim to refer to him as "ours" given that he (and Jasmine) have attended more than 200 training sessions at

BATTs during the past three years. Personally I think Ming deserves a medal for his driving, but it's great to see how Jaycee has progressed during the past few months.

In our Cadet Super Series on 22nd January Jaycee had a string of very tight matches against strong opposition. He showed superb determination all the way and eventually overcame **Charlie Cunningham (Ashford)** in the final. It was a double triumph for BATTs at this event because **Benjamin Sivathanu** (see below), playing at the top of his form, won the Band 2 event, beating **Scarlett Anders (Barnet)** in the final. This was a great achievement for Ben, and his first tournament win.



There were some other creditable performances by BATTs players in the Cadet Super Series, and another prize winner was **Roshan Patel** (see below), who reached the semi final of Band 2.



On 12th February it was the turn of the Juniors, and we had another full entry of 48 players in our Junior Super Series. Even more pleasing for us was the standard of the competitors. The top 12 seeded players each had more than 900

ranking points, so we knew we could expect another great day of top quality play. And we were not disappointed.

There were a few shocks along the way. In particular, our own **Ethan Walsh** going out to **George Coulson (Ellenborough)** in the last 16. Earlier on, George had given notice of being a danger when he came very close to toppling the number 4 seed, **Eren Gozcu (Greenhouse)**, in his group.

In the end it was **Ben Foster (Kent)** who took the first prize of £200, beating **Omar Khassal (London Academy)** in the final.

Jaycee Chan, buoyed by his success a few weeks earlier, showed that he was not going to be satisfied with his win in



Omar Khassal and Ben Foster

the Cadet event. This time, as well as stronger opposition, he had a shoulder injury to contend with. Bravely persisting while in obvious pain, he beat **Daniel Hearne-Potton (Cams)** in the final of the Band 2.

We are now looking forward to our **Senior Super Series on Sunday 12th March**. The prize fund of £1100 is sure to attract another strong entry so come along in the afternoon to see the top players fighting for a share of the winnings.

Then, on **Sunday 9th April**, we have our very first **Under 13 Super Series**. This is certain to be over-subscribed so please don't delay if you are a parent or coach of potential entrants. We have a strict limit of 48 entries each time because this ensures that everyone gets plenty of play with not too much waiting around.

Entry for all our Super Series events can now be done entirely online via our website, where you can also see the full tournament details and a downloadable form if you prefer to use that.

Southern Master



Peter Radford is no stranger to tournament success - he has been winning them since the early 1960s! In February Peter made a triumphant return from injury to sweep to victory in the O60 singles at the VETTS Southern Masters at Crawley. On the way he beat his old friend and adversary Brian Hill in the semi-final, but the tables were turned when he lost to Brian in the O70 singles.

Peter and Brian then paired up to win the O70s doubles.

Photo: Mike Rhodes

National Junior League



Our first team at the National Junior League secured runner up place in the first division during the final round of matches held at Ellenborough TTC on 25th February. Congratulations to **Jaz Harvey, Finley Cameron-Prior** and **Samuel Flaum**, and also others who represented BATTs in earlier rounds.

Breaking Records

Our attendance at the coaching sessions on Wednesday 18th January was 44, two more than our previous highest number on a Wednesday since we became a Talent Development Centre. We have now notched up more than 12,000 attendances in the past three years.

County Champions from Boys High



Four of our juniors, all from Bishops Stortford Boys High became the Hertfordshire County Schools Under 16 Champions in December, competing against 11 other schools at Watford. The team was **Finley Cameron-Prior, Charlie Read, Alex Howard** and **Kamran Virdee**. They progressed to the zonal finals in London where they went out to a London school. Table tennis is extensively played at BSBH, which happily gives us a constant supply of keen players joining our training squads.

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COMING UP @ BATTs

SATURDAY 11 MARCH

Senior British League Premier Division
BATTs v Drumchapel

BATTs opens 1pm - match starts 2pm

SUNDAY 12 MARCH

Senior Super Series 2 Star

SATURDAY/SUNDAY 18/19 MARCH

Senior British League - Championship Division. Excellent matches to watch over the whole weekend.

SATURDAY 8 APRIL

Senior British League Premier Division
BATTs v Cardiff

BATTs opens 1pm - match starts 2pm

SUNDAY 9 APRIL

Under 13 Super Series 1 Star

SATURDAY 22 APRIL

BATTs Junior Pairs - new competition!

SATURDAY 29 APRIL

Senior British League Premier Division
BATTs v North Ayrshire

BATTs opens 1pm - match starts 2pm

SUNDAY 7 MAY

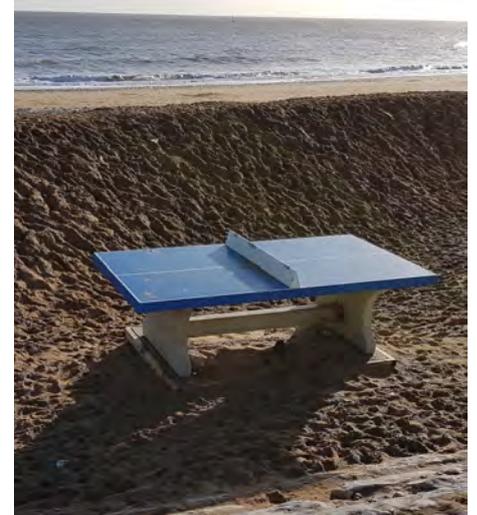
Cadet Super Series 2 Star

SATURDAY 13 MAY

BATTs Junior Pairs

Spotted in Ramsgate

Those ping tables are springing up everywhere. Noticed this one while on a recent weekend break in Ramsgate. But what happens if you are playing when the tide comes in?



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