

CROWBOROUGH TABLE TENNIS CLUB

NEWSLETTER No. 4 – MARCH 2008

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Issue No.4 already –it doesn't seem possible!

As always any comments, contributions and ideas for articles are welcome and should be sent to the Editor. If email is a better way for you to receive this Newsletter, then please let me know.

This edition's "Player Profile" features long-standing club member Bill Abbott. Thanks Bill.

WEALDEN LEAGUE

The second half of the season is well underway now and here is an update on how our teams are fairing.

The 'A' team has maintained its position at the top of the table with victories in all games since the last newsletter and now has 317 points.

The crunch second-half match was against Ridgewood 'A' who are currently second in the table, and who earlier in the season inflicted the only defeat on the "A" team. This time the result was reversed and the team won by 24-17. This was a tremendous match, with 5 of the games going to 5 sets. Going into the last 2 games, the score stood at 18-17, but the last 2 were both won 3-0, which resulted in the final 24-17 scoreline. This result gives the team a cushion of 15 points over the rest, based on the same number of matches played.

The team is suffering a bit with injuries - John Neal with his foot, and Mick

Derbyshire with his back, but they are hoping to hold it together long enough to see out the rest of the season with a full strength team.

The "B" side has won six of its 13 matches, has 228 points and is currently mid-table. Individually Chris Buck leads the way with 14 wins from 24 games, whilst Mike Stringer has a 50% average from his 36 games.

The "C Team continues to put in some good performances and is in 9th place with 157 points from 11 matches.

There is no doubt that this season is much more competitive than previous years, and the League title is still very much to play for, with 3 or 4 teams still in contention.

WEALDEN LEAGUE TOURNAMENT

This took place over three Wednesday evenings in January at Broad Oak Village Hall. We had six entrants, which was good – Mick Derbyshire, John Neal, Tim Mann, Bob Fordham, John Wilson and John Sidey – and we had some success!

Mick reached three finals, winning the Veterans event with a 3-1 victory over Michael Williams (Ridgewood). In the Handicap, Martin Kellaway (0) proved too strong for Mick (2) and ran out a 3-0 winner, whilst the Doubles final produced a much closer match. Here, Mick teamed with Chris Flynn (Broad Oak) lost by 3-1 to John Sidey playing with Michael Williams. The Doubles produced a lot of

tight matches and on the way to the final, John Sidey/Michael Williams beat Martin Kellaway/Ron Geesin 2-1, (11-9 in the third).

John W met John N in the Veterans Q/Fs winning a close game by 2-1 (Vets and Doubles were played best of 3) before losing 2-0 to Michael Williams in the S/F (by 13-11 in the first game).

John N got to the S/F of the Open where he was beaten by eventual winner, Martin Kellaway. In previous rounds, he had good wins over John Sidey (3-2) and Tom Rice (3-0) (Ridgewood).

Tim beat Nick Rayment in the Open, before losing to beaten finalist Tom Baxter (Herstmonceux), and in the Handicap lost to Pam Winter (Herstmonceux).

Unfortunately, Bob only played on the first week.

The Tournament, which ran smoothly over the three weeks, was successfully organised by Mike Gadd of Broad Oak.

CLUB NIGHTS

Club Nights continue to be well supported and are held every Friday from 8pm-10pm at the Scout & Guide HQ in Jarvis Brook. Adverts appear in the Courier and in the Crowborough Directory.

"50" CLUB

The 2008 "50" Club will begin in April and application forms are enclosed with this Newsletter. We trust that existing members will re-apply and hope that those of you who haven't previously taken part will feel able to this year. Please return

your form, together with your cheque by end March latest. Thanks.

PLAYER PROFILE

BILL ABBOTT

[How and when did you start playing?](#)

Quite late really, aged about 16, at a rather superior youth club where the music being played on wind-up gramophones (large shellac 78rpm records, with a brutal looking steel needle, which produced a hissing crackly sound) would more likely be Schubert or Dvorak than the then current popular tunes. I don't recall what it was like being an absolute beginner but am not implying that I arrived on the scene from nowhere as a blazing young prodigy. So I learnt my craft, with occasional friendly matches against other youth clubs. The Friends Meeting House, part of a Quaker establishment, had a comfortably fitted out basement room and table tennis was rather neglected during the Proms season, when those of us so inclined lounged on the sofas and armchairs listening to, perhaps, Hiawatha's Wedding Feast or The Death of Minnehaha on the radio.

[What leagues have you played in?](#)

I began league playing after I moved from Muswell Hill in London, to Caterham in Surrey, where I played in the Croydon and District League - very strong with the first division packed with county standard players. I played in Division Five, and so far as I can recall, did not let my team mates down on too many occasions! On moving to Crowborough, I played in the Tunbridge Wells League. The 70s and 80s were the heydays for our Club with 11 teams playing in the seven divisions of the league. I myself now play just as a reserve in the Wealden League and, of course, help to keep things going at the Friday Club Nights.

Interests outside TT?

My artwork is, of course, all-consuming, but I am passionate about serious music, and besotted with that great English game of cricket! Years ago I was a frequent spectator at a Catholic College cricket ground where their Old Boys matches were played. One Sunday, I was asked to make up the numbers and was pencilled in at No. 11, and we batted first, declaring at 240 odd for four wickets. The visitors wickets fell quickly to 120 for 7, but then a big partnership developed. In desperation, the captain asked me if I bowled! And so began my first, and only, over of leg breaks. Three 4's from the first three balls and I could see the agony on the captain's face! I then took a wicket with each of the next three balls – a hat trick, and the match was won! – totally bizarre!!

Any TT "honours"?

Our cosy little home grown annual tournament has been the only scene of any "triumphs", principally the "Veterans" event which, in the early 80s, I won for three consecutive years. The winners were awarded not a cup but a walking stick, with part of an antler as a handle, the winner's names engraved on metal plates. (This was made by Mick Chewter, our Club President – Ed.)

Your worst moment in TT?

As in Mick Derbyshire's case (see Newsletter No. 3) it's connected with pain. I suffered severe cramp and was reduced to a painful hobble whilst playing in the Handicap Singles Final of the Club Tournament, which was then played at the Rugby Club. I lost the match in a thoroughly miserable and humiliating manner.

Incidentally, that Hospitals venue that Mick mentioned was notorious for its slippery floor and I myself fell a couple of times during matches there.

Anything else of interest?

Yes, it's the game as it is now, up to 11, with two serves. For me, something has gone from the sport. The prolonged form was more physical, with the chance to work up a good sweat, and the goal of 11 points lacks the tension of the more distant 21. Of course long rallies can still occur in this shortened form – ask Chris Buck! I recall a league match many years ago against the Fire Service in the Tunbridge Wells League, in which my team mate and very good friend Peter MacDonald, began one of his games with a prolonged rally. I sensed something special was in the offing, so began to count the shots played – the rally ended after almost 300 shots!!! Sadly Peter died in 2002, but his wife Hazel still attends, when she can, the Friday club nights.

CLUB TOURNAMENT

The Tournament will be held on the same format as last year, over three Monday evenings – April 28, May 12 and May 19.

Entry forms are also enclosed with this Newsletter, a little early but it helps us save on postage.

Social and newer members are especially welcome to take part and the handicap events are particularly suitable as they should, in theory at least, give everyone an equal chance. Get your entry in!

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