

2014 EDINBURGH CHAMPIONSHIPS REPORT

On Sunday 7th December 2014 the Annual Edinburgh League Championships were again hosted by Penicuik as Ladywood welcomed over 60 competitors to play over 180 matches throughout the day. The host Club were well represented with competitors in all but one of the events run on the day.

In the main Open singles event, Greig McDonell reached the semi final stage where he lost in 4 tight ends to the eventual winner, John Hannah from Edinburgh Sports Club (ESC). The Club's other representative, Colin Green, failed to make it out of his opening group. John defeated Brian Hunter from West Lothian in the final.

The Band 1 singles event saw Iain Johnstone and Clive Liddiard represent the Club. Clive found it tough going as he lost all his initial group matches whereas Iain had an excellent morning, winning his initial group. In the semi final, Iain then defeated Ricahrd Tallaron form the Murrayfield Club securing a place in the final against another Murrayfield player, Stuart Wilson. The pair had met earlier in the season in the League when Iain had come out victorious and history repeated itself as Iain became the first winner for the Club with an excellent victory in four ends.

The Band 2 singles saw Abby Wighton and dad James take part. James just missed out on a place in the semi finals whereas Abby proceeded to the semi final stage where she met JP Smith form the Corstorphine Club. JP was the higher seeded player but at 2 ends a piece Abby hit top form as she won the 5th end 11-4 to secure her place in the final where she met another Corstorphine player, Jeff Clark. Jeff proved too strong winning in 4 ends but an excellent runners-up medal for Abby.

Penicuik's only representative in the Band 3 singles was Gavin Hunter who played well, as the lowest ranked player, to win his initial group. A win from 2 ends down against Robert Inder from Edinburgh International in the final round of group matches was good enough to secure a runners-up medal for Gavin.

The Band 4 singles saw Penicuik's youngsters enter the Competition with Louis MacLeod, Luke Hennessey and Millie Bennett all in action. Luke stood out as he secured his place in the final group. The crucial match was between Luke and Adam Hawthorn and at 2 ends all the match was in the balance. Luke held his nerve and won the final end 11-5 to become Penicuik's 2nd winner of the day.

In the over 40s open singles event there was fierce competition played out over 4 groups. Greig McDonell, Colin Green and Clive Liddiard represented the Club. Greig and Colin compete in the Over 40s Scottish National Events held throughout the year and both were hopeful of making good progress. Clive unfortunately didn't win either of his group games but both Greig and Colin secured their passage to the semi final stage where Greig met the 2013 Open Singles Champion, Stan Stoodley from the Murrayfield Club. A surprisingly straightforward 3-0 win for Greig secured his

place in the final. The attention then turned to Colin's semi final against Brian Hunter from West Lothian. Brian had already won a runners-up medal in the Open Singles event earlier in the day and so was in good form. The match, which attracted a large crowd, saw Colin comfortably win the first two ends 11-5, 11-6. Brian is known as a very tough competitor and so it proved as he won the next two ends 11-6, 11-9 to tie the match at 2-2. The final end saw some more excellent play from both players but an all Penicuik final was thwarted as Brian won the decider 11-6. The final saw Greig win the first two ends comfortably 11-4, 11-6 before Brian won the 3rd 11-7. Thoughts of another comeback for Brian were ended in the fourth end as Greig ran out an 11-7 winner and became Penicuik's 3rd winner of the day.

The Band 1 Over 40s event saw more success for the Club. Rachel Petrie and James Wighton were both in action. In her opening group, Rachel was up against some much higher ranked players and failed to make it out of her group. A different story for James, however, as he comfortably won his opening group which put him into a final group of 3. When James defeated the top ranked player in that final group it looked as if another Penicuik winner would be announced but against the lowest ranked player, Robert Inder, things became difficult. From 2-0 up, Robert won the next two ends 12-10, 12-10 to force a decider. A nervous and tight deciding end went down to the wire but James held his nerve with an 11-9 victory to ensure that he became the Club's fourth winner of the day.

The only Event without Penicuik representation was the 18-40 Open singles which was won by Murrayfield's Charlie Ellis who defeated West Lothian's Lukasz Kaska into second place.

The Band 1 18-40 singles saw Gavin Hunter turn out in his second event of the day and he just missed out on a medal as he finished 3rd in his final group. The event was won by North Merchiston's, Anna Porsch who beat Mohammed Ahmed from Edinburgh University into 2nd place.

The Under 18 singles saw the Edinburgh Open Singles Champion, John Hannah, play in his second event of the day and, as anticipated, he had no difficulty in winning the event. That left a battle for second place and arguably the performance of the day came from 15 year old Abby Wighton who defeated the higher ranked Callum Stephen before playing against the favourite for 2nd place, Faye Leggett (currently Scotland's No 1 ranked Under 15 girl). After losing the first end 11-5, Abby played some excellent table tennis to win the next 3 ends 11-7, 11-8, 11-9 for a surprise victory which secured a runners-up medal for Abby in a very difficult category.

The Under 15 singles saw four of the Club's youngsters in action with Millie Bennett and Louis McLeod both reaching the semi-final stage. Unfortunately, neither of them were able to progress to the final which was won by James Forrest of Murrayfield who defeated Fife's Hannah Robb.

In the Under 13 singles, Luke Hennessey and Louis Myatt competed in a final group of 5 competitors. Louis, who was playing in a higher age category than his normal, found it tough going (but his day wasn't yet over) as he finished 5th. The winner of the event was Jake Somerville who was undefeated and the battle for second place came down to a straight fight between Luke and Adam Hawthorn from the Murrayfield Club. Having beaten Adam in 5 tight ends to win the Band 4 singles earlier in the day, Luke went one better as he defeated Adam in four ends to secure a runners-up medal in the Under 13 category.

The final event of the day was the Under 11 singles and there was more good news for the Club. Max Hennessey, Luke's younger brother did well to win two matches as he finished in 4th place. Louis Myatt, having had a difficult time in the under 13 category, shone in the younger age group, his good play seeing him end the event with 5 wins and no defeats, as he became Penicuik's fifth and final winner of the day.

An excellent day's table tennis with over 180 matches played and great success for the club. Of the 26 medals up for grabs, Penicuik won 9 (5 winners and 4 runners-up), Murrayfield won 6, West Lothian won 4, Edinburgh Sports Club and Corstorphine both won 2, whilst North Merchiston, Edinburgh University and Fife all won 1 medal. The haul of 9 medals made Penicuik the most successful Club of the 2014 Edinburgh Championships - Well done to all who took part.

For a full list of the medal winners follow the link <http://t.co/98dDRMypsZ>