

# PTTC President's End of Season Report

## May 2017

So another season over for the Club – In the League it turned out to be a wise decision just to enter 7 teams given that even Team 7 with 8 players available couldn't fulfill some fixtures! The Club sponsorship deal with Saltire Roofing continued into its second year and hopefully their ongoing support will enable the Club to continue to grow.

Saturday morning coaching sessions, after a bit of a lull midway through the season, suddenly became really busy again in about February with a number of new youngsters coming along. Most Saturdays see Tom needing 7 or 8 tables with both beginners and experienced players in attendance. Having now bought his “place in the sun”, the Saturday sessions are going to need supported by other senior players. Whilst I have covered for Tom during his various foreign holidays this year (oh to be retired) this is an early plea for more help for next season. As I have said many times, it takes huge dedication and commitment to keep the Coaching sessions going so a massive amount of credit and gratitude is due to Tom for all his hard work.

### *Our League Performances*

Team 1 had a strange year in the Premier Division. Although it didn't feel like it, a fifth placed finish with 25 points is the best return for the Team over the past few years - 22 points in 2013/14, 21 in 2014/15 and 24 in 2015/16 – I have to say I'm not convinced that there has been an improvement in performance for Team 1 – it seems more likely that there has been a drop in standard in the Premier League over the last few years!! What is for certain, however, is that I have managed to reclaim the title of Penicuik's number 1 (had I ever lost it??) having finished with 63.5% in the individual averages, a whole 0.2% better than Colin!! Stuart also played his part although as a

trio we only actually played together in 11 of our 22 matches! Thanks to Abby and Iain for standing in and helping us pick up some valuable points!

Into Division 1 and Team 2 of Clive, Brian and Iain were up against it in what looked like an extremely tough Division. 6 wins and 3 draws was enough for a 7<sup>th</sup> place finish, 3 points clear of relegation trouble. Huge credit due to Iain who won 49 out of 57 matches backing up his performance from season 2015/16 when he won 49 out of 60 matches. Surely a candidate for our player of the season award?

Team 3 had an extremely poor 2015/16 season which saw them relegated from Division 1. They turned that around to bounce straight back up after an excellent season which saw them lose only once in 22 matches. 17 wins and 4 draws helped them to runners-up spot in the Division behind a strong Haddington side. Individually, 75% for Gary, 71% for Abby and 65% for James were excellent returns for all three players. Another crack at Division 1 awaits if this trio remain together next season, although I'm told that the first controversy of the AGM is likely to be when Abby announces that the only way she's going to carry on playing is if she's in a different team from her Dad!

Team 4's Division 2 season looked promising but an injury for Tony was the start of a downward spiral which left the side battling to avoid relegation. With two weeks of the season left it looked as if they would have to defeat Team 3 to survive but fortunately a win against Murrayfield in the penultimate week of action coupled with a defeat for West Lothian meant they just survived, finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> from bottom and two points clear of relegation. Mr Scrabble Man finished with a very respectable 65% and as Team Captain is due credit for keeping the team together and managing to fulfil virtually all the fixtures. Imagine how good he could be if his feet were actually capable of moving!

Now there's not many fairy-tale stories in table tennis, but Team 5's great escape is one of them. At Xmas they feared relegation. By the beginning of March they were odds on certainties to drop out of Division 3 – a total of only 4 points on the board with 5 matches to go. But then..... At the same time as third bottom ESC couldn't buy a win, Team 5, buoyed by the addition of Vikas and Rudolph, went on an unbeaten streak in their last 5 matches picking up 4 wins and a draw! Remarkably they secured their Division 3 status with a week to spare resulting in the Photo of the season being published!! (see end of Report)

And finally, into Division 4. Just briefly though because as everyone knows by the time I get to Division 4 I tend to lose interest! That's such an unfair criticism which this season has seen firmly put to bed by the amount of coverage given to Team 6. Now talk about fairy tales.... With two matches of the season left Team 6 sat in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Division. Fairy-tale part 1 was completed as bottom of the table Team 7 (George, Louis and Lewis) remarkably won 6-4 against a top of the table team which sat 21 points ahead of them! When Haddington 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> bottom of the Division then defeated University in the penultimate week of action, the door was left open for Team 6 who duly marched through it by winning their last two matches to take the title. Individually 77% for Craig, 69% for Sean and 45% for both Stuart and Millie.

Nearly there. Is anyone still reading. I know George will be so I'll carry on. Team 7 have had an interesting season. A 7-3 win in the first match of the season showed promise. There then followed, however, 14 consecutive defeats which will no doubt have had an impact on the confidence of the Team. But whatever had gone before their season will be remembered for that fantastic win against Edinburgh University which paved the way for Team 6 to win the Division. It's difficult being part of a big pool of players and I'm sure that if a consistent team was put out week after week their results would have been much better. Individually, Louis McLeod finished with 56% which puts him 3<sup>rd</sup> in the list of Division 4 players for the season (and I know he can do better than that). Next year will be his year!

### *Away from the League*

There were a number of good performances at tournaments throughout the season with some terrific achievements to recognise – Well done to Louis, Louis and Sonny who combined over two weekends at Haddington to win the Junior League Division A Title.

At the Inter-League, Abby partnered Gillian Edwards to win the Womens Title for Edinburgh whilst Greig and Colin combined with ex team mate Martin McKay finishing runners-up in the Veterans event.

At the Edinburgh Schools Championships, Louis McLeod finished runner-up in the under 16 Event whilst Hannah won the Under 10 Event.

In the East Lothian Open, I finished runner-up in the Band 1 Event – can't seem to remember who I lost to in the final whilst Colin won the Open Singles Event.

The Edinburgh Championships saw more success for the Club as Colin became Edinburgh Mens Champion, Abby won the Ladies Singles and Louis Myatt won the Under 13 Event.

The Handicap Cup saw 4 teams entered by the Club this season and well done to Mr Scrabble Man and the two L's – Louis Myatt and Louis McLeod on reaching the semi-final stage, losing out to the eventual winners Murrayfield 1.

Have I missed anything?? Oh yeah our own Xmas Tournament, the most important event of the year was won by..... – no I can't say – I'm far too modest!

### *Most Improved Player of the Season Award*

New for this season our Committee of decision makers is recognising the player who seems to have improved the most.

Firstly recognition to Sonny Taylor and Millie Bennett who if there was an award for most improved junior would be battling that out – sorry though there is no such award Sonny has certainly put in the hours at the Club and his performance at the Junior League pleasantly surprised yours truly – his general standard on Saturday mornings has also been impressive. Millie showed her improvement with an excellent win in our End of Season Handicap Tournament, beating some very experienced players on her way to victory – having been one of her victims I can say first hand how much she has improved this season!

Secondly, if this award was for the highest individual average and the importance of one player to a team, Iain would win hands down – 3<sup>rd</sup> in the individual averages with a cracking 86% and if you include the doubles wins which he contributed he won 60 out of the 88 games that Team 2 won – well done to him on another terrific season. But there's no award for that either Iain!

Thirdly, if there was an award for the “signing of the season in the January transfer window” Vikas would walk away with that prize – Half a season played – 26 wins out of 30 matches in Division 3 matching Iain's 86% and having a terrific impact on Team 5's recovery - but sorry Vikas there's no award for that either!

And so all that's left is to crown our most improved player – in season 2015/16 this individual won 17 out of 51 matches played for a 33% win ratio. A season later and he finishes in the top 5 of the individual averages amassing 35 wins out of 45 games played for a 77% win ratio – Well done to Mr Treasurer, Craig – a well deserved winner and unbelievably his boyish good looks just continue to hide the fact that even

as an over 50 year old, if you put the practice in you can improve just as much as the youngsters!

## The Future

Penicuik 1 have put in a request to the League to play their home matches next season at a different venue to enable Club night to be uninterrupted – a bit like Murrayfield who have a couple of teams who play at Royal High we're going to be playing at school premises – Lauder Primary School! When asked by the League which part of the Edinburgh & Lothians area that was in they were told it was in a similar area as the venue where Fife play!

Much to discuss regarding Team selection for next season – I can already see the fights brewing – I'm not playing with him; If he's in my team I'm not playing; I don't want to play in that Division; Ah brings back such fond memories of the handicap Cup selection process – let's not go there!!



Hope everyone has a good summer.

El Presidente.