

PTTC 2017/18 End of Season Report

So another season over for the Club. Our sponsorship deal with Saltire Roofing continued into its final year and their financial assistance has been a terrific benefit to the Club over the past 3 seasons. Previously we had only ever managed sponsorship of a few hundred pounds per year and had to rely on other grants to help with cost of equipment etc. Their 3 year deal benefited us to the extent of £3000 and the Club are extremely grateful to Saltire for their support. They will leave a big void in terms of financial support.

Saturday morning coaching sessions were altered this year to run from 9am to 12 noon with a dedicated junior session from 9am to 10.30am. With Tom enjoying his retirement, we are really missing the opportunity to get new kids into the Club as he has not been able, as he has done in previous years, to get into the local schools. The result has been that the junior session on a Saturday has seen reduced numbers. A recent Saturday saw a turnout of 6 (which may not sound bad until you realise that 50% of those there were my kids keeping Dad company!). Sad though it is, I think we really need to have a think about the viability of keeping this session going. On the other hand the huge benefit of our time change on a Saturday morning has been the popularity of our Saturday Senior session from 10.30 to 12noon. We are regularly using 8 tables on a Saturday morning and maybe an hour and a half isn't quite long enough!!

As I say every year, it takes a huge amount of commitment to keep the Coaching sessions going – our “coaches” do not seek any financial reward for their efforts (effort being the right word – I'm still amazed I manage to get up on a Saturday morning when the alarm goes off at 7.15am!). On a personal note can I express my gratitude to James & Phil who have been regularly on hand to get the kids session going when I can't get there on time and to Louis for his help as a “feeder”.

Our League Performances

Turning to the League, I think it is fair to say that in terms of finishing positions across the various divisions this has been the worst season in my memory!

Penicuik, since Colin & I joined the Club, have always had a team in the top Division of the League – last season our top team lost the services of Colin, Stuart Gow & Iain

J. Team 1 were therefore always going to struggle, and so it proved. For us to have survived David (good to have him back), Abby & I would have needed two of us to be around the 50-60% mark and that wasn't achieved. In the end, the season was summed up by two 9-1 defeats against Edinburgh International, a side that in the previous twelve encounters we had only lost to once!

Into Division 1 and Team 2 of Clive, Charlie & James. At Xmas they were comfortably in the top half of the Division having secured 10 points. The 2nd half of the season was disastrous – only two points from a possible 22 and in the end they only avoided relegation on game difference! Charlie was our only Division 1 player to win more than he lost - 29 out of 51 for 57%.

Team 3 also found Division 1 hard going. Gary, Krys and Chris were supported by Ian Hislop who joined the Club in the New Year. They were always in the relegation picture. 6 points in the first half of the season was matched in the second half and despite their victory over Team 2, they missed out on game difference finishing 2nd bottom of the Division. Although he could only play a handful of matches for the 3rd Team, Ian Hislop showed his match-play prowess with 10 wins out of his 15 matches played.

Team 4 looked odds on for promotion from Div 3 – they had over 200 years of experience with John Bald, Brian Bailey and 16-year-old Louis McLeod in the team! At the end of the first half of the season they were looking decent bets for a top two finish – 15 points from their first 11 games. An injured hip for Brian and suddenly the wheels came off – their final 11 matches saw not one win – two draws and 9 defeats and suddenly they too finished 3rd bottom of the Division – had there been another couple of weeks of the season relegation was a real possibility.

Who do we find below Team 4 in the 2nd relegation spot - Team 5 of Sean, Craig, Stuart & Millie – promoted last year from Division 4 their stay in Division 3 was short lived. They nearly pulled off a miracle recovery with 3 wins on the bounce to end their season, but the damage had already been done by that point. Sean had the best average of his team just squeezing over the 50% mark.

Thank goodness for Division 4. The only real positives in an otherwise dreadful season were provided by our two Division 4 teams. Team 6 saw Julian, Sonny & Rachel give a good account of themselves with 27 points for a 5th place finish in the Division. By a mile our overall leading average in the Club belonged to Julian who won 51 out of his 63 games played (81%) – well done to him. Credit also to Sonny in his first season (56%) and to Rachel who virtually doubled her average from the 2016/17 season (16% up to 30%).

And finally, to Team 7 - George thought his team would get far more column inches this season given the fact that a certain 10-year-old was included in the team – oh how

wrong he was! George, Kristian, Phil and Hannah showed some great potential for the future – if we count their last match not played as a result of the weather as a draw, their “games for” total is 90 – that was only bettered by Team 6! And the good news for Team 7 is that there is so much more to come from the likes of Kristian and Hannah – their second season in the league, I have no doubt, will show their ongoing hard work pay off – am I biased?? Maybe a little!

Away from the League

The Club entered 4 teams this season in the Handicap Cup and that’s about as much as is worth saying in this report!

There were a number of tournaments throughout the season which saw success for some of our members. Charlie & Louis both finished as runners up in the 1st Edinburgh Banded Event in September – in bands 4 & 7 respectively whilst November saw Hannah win her first “national medal” – runner up in the Scottish Primary School Championship Doubles. Into 2018 and January saw the East Lothian Championships take place at Haddington - well done to George for winning the Band 4 singles.

We have a new Internationalist in our midst – well done to Hannah who represented Scotland at the 6 nations Primary School Championships held in April and she followed that up with a runners-up medal in the Scottish National Championships at Under 13 level.

We held a couple of Club Tournaments - our Xmas Hard-bat Tournament saw me retain my singles crown, but only just over an ever-improving Julian who made up for that loss with a victory with Louis over David and Craig L in the Ballot Doubles Final. And finally, we held our Club Championships in July. I won the Singles Event, Julian the Handicap Singles and he combined with Ian Hislop to win the Ballot Doubles.

Most Improved Player of the Season Award

There are many ways to measure improvement. Averages in the League? Ratings Central? Someone’s performances in practice at the Club? Using Ratings Central, our top 6 improved players this year were Julian, Millie, George, Sonny, Rachel & Sean – all of them had an improvement of more than 50 points. Only 3 others actually improved according to Ratings Central – Krzysztof, Abby & Hannah (all improved by around 40 points). That means the rest of us are getting worse!! Ratings Central – what a load of nonsense! Only one person, however, hit the magical 100-point improvement mark and for that achievement this year’s award goes to..... George!

One final tribute - There was much thought at the beginning of the season as to who to promote to the Premier Division. Despite the difficult season we had, I am convinced that the right decision was made to field Abby in that top side. There is no doubt in my mind that Abby was and remains one of our best attacking players who still has plenty of time and capacity for improvement. I'd like to personally pay tribute to Abby who, despite having had a nightmare season in terms of results, never once wavered from her commitment to the cause. For many of us Abby's results week after week would have had a huge negative impact – Abby however turned out every single week (the only one of us to play in all 22 matches) and gave everything she had, never once getting down or dejected – she enjoyed her TT, played with a smile on her face and even laughed in the right places at her Team Captain's jokes. In a sport where we sometimes bemoan a lack of sportsmanship she always played with a fantastic attitude and is a credit to the Club. And I have no doubt she has improved as a player as a result of the experience. Well done Abby.

The Future

New Sponsorship is needed – if anyone has any ideas or if you have your own business and want to promote it please let us know!

Team selection has been a nightmare for 2018/19 – there are a number of players who are arguably playing at a lower level than they should – hopefully for those individuals and for the Club in general this should mean a successful season and at the end of next year let's hope we are summing up fights for promotion rather than fights against relegation! Good luck to all in the new season ahead and remember, it's only a game!!

El Presidente.

