

BRAINTREE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

Affiliated to Table Tennis England and the Essex County TTA

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NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the new season. I'll start with another reminder that all clubs must register their players with the league before they play, and that every player must be registered with the ETTA (of which more later).

General Secretary

Everyone, not least the league chairman, will be pleased to know we will have a general secretary this year. Many thanks to Martin Wells for offering to step in where others have feared to tread. Martin, as many of you will know, was one of the many graduates from Braintree Youth Centre some years ago and, although he left the game for a long spell, he has since returned to action for Liberal.

Fixtures secretary

Ian Whiteside has retired after 11 years as fixtures secretary and I'm sure everyone will join me in thanking him for doing such an excellent job during that time. He has been replaced by Peter Taylor, a Rayne colleague, and another player who returned to the league recently after a spell away.

It is to Peter that all scorecards should now be sent. Either to 192 Beerchurch Road, Colchester CO2 7QQ, or scanned to taylorp4@btinternet.com.

Management committee

Other than those two posts, the management committee remains the same, with the addition of Dave Parker, who has replaced Steve Ascott. Steve has stood down as his knee problems have not allowed him to play for the last couple of years. Our thanks go to him, particularly for his spell as the league representative on the county committee, a role now taken over by Steve Kerns.

League Composition 2014-15

The league will have 30 teams this season, one up on last year, two up on the year before and the highest since the 2001-02 season. The new team comes from Felsted RBL, who will now have two teams in division three.

Promotion and relegation

Felsted will also have a team in division one after winning division two last year, an excellent achievement by them after only three seasons in the league. Sible Hedingham are relegated after finishing last for the past three seasons. They were saved by a league reorganisation for the past two years but no knight in shining armour came along this year. But few would bet against them going straight back up.

White Lions are promoted to division two with Rayne G going the other way. White Lions will be known this season as Hedingham Lions, now that they no longer play at the pub that gave them their name.

Fixture grid

The fixture grid remains the same as last year, which means a one-week break at Christmas and a cup week over the new year. Any cup games scheduled for that week can be played early if the teams wish to do so, but the fixtures secretary must be informed in advance.

Finding your fixtures

Players can have a look at their team's fixtures on the league website tabletennis365.com/Braintree. Click on Winter 2013-14 on the panel down the left, then Fixtures, then the relevant division to get the opening week's fixtures. On the right are a number of filters. Putting your team in the team filter brings up all the fixtures for the season.

We are grateful once again to Alan McEwan for continuing to run the site.

Martin Bawden award for Service or Achievement

The title of this award is 'for service or achievement' and for most years it is won under the first heading. While those winners have given valuable service to the league, it is nice occasionally to be able to recognise achievement instead and that is what we were able to do this year when it was given to 16-year-old Ashley Butler, of Felsted RBL

Ashley made his debut in div 3 in 2012-13 when he won a modest seven out of 30 singles.

Last season, because no one else was available, he was thrown in at the deep end and required to play in div 2. Where he thrived. He brought off some excellent wins over established and experienced players and had a better average in div 2 than he had in div 3. He also ended up with a division two winners medal.

The award recognised Ashley's considerable improvement over the two years, as well as his endeavour and no little courage.

Table Tennis England

As most of you will know by now the ETTA now has a new name. It has been rebranded as Table Tennis England, with strict instructions not to call it TTE.

TTE, as we must not call it, also has a new address, new chairman and vice-chairman and a new chief executive.

After 10 years in office, Alex Murdoch was defeated in the election for chairman by Andy Siward, who sadly died after only six months in office. Deputy chairman Sandra Deaton took over as chairman and Susie Hughes was elected as deputy chairman. Sara Sutcliffe was appointed as chief executive to take over from Richard Yule, who retired in July 2013, meaning the organisation now has women in each of its three top positions, each of them, I believe, the first woman to hold that office. Congratulations to them for shattering the glass ceiling.

Table Tennis England has moved its headquarters from Hastings to Milton Keynes. It has also appointed a new board of directors, one of whom is former Braintree ladies' singles champion Kelly Skeggs, appointed to the board at the age of 25. Many congratulations to her.

Ivor Montagu Award

Congratulations are also due to Brian Davison, our development officer and Table Tennis England's regional chairman, who was awarded the Ivor Montagu award for services to table tennis.

Obituary

On a sad note, we learned this year of the death of Baden Woods, at 83. Baden played in the league for many years and won the men's doubles three years in a row from 1952 to 1954.

Summer League

Congratulations to Dean Wood and Andy Laws (Tuesday) and Clare Johnson and Victor Chan (Thursday) on winning the summer leagues. Clare and Victor won the league last year as the Tenacious Trio. A change of name to Triple Trouble was similarly inaccurate – they played in all seven matches – but again proved no handicap.

And some extracts from last year's newsletter that are still relevant:

Some gentle nudges from the fixtures secretary

The first is that all matches must be played on the due date. Postponements are only permitted with the ADVANCE permission of the Fixtures Secretary and then only for good reasons. Matches postponed without permission will be awarded to the opposition.

In order to keep the season to a reasonable length, there are fixtures scheduled in the week before Christmas, and the weeks containing Good Friday (3 April) and Easter Monday. I would encourage team captains to look now at any matches which fall on days when it might be difficult to raise a team and decide with the opponents whether it is possible to play those matches during a free week, rather than trying to fit them in at the end of the season.

Result cards are to be with Peter Taylor no later than SEVEN days after the match is played. To clarify this, if a match is played on Tuesday then the card must be with him by the following Tuesday.

And from me:

Refreshments: Team captains are reminded that refreshments must be offered during a match to visiting teams (and your teammates, come to that). This has been in the last couple of newsletters, but it is still sometimes not observed. Whether it is tea, beer or orange squash, players should be offered something during the evening.

Coaching

League coaching will again be held at Notley on Sunday afternoons during the season. The league is once again grateful to Keith Martin for his sterling efforts to help bring new players into the game, and improve those already playing. Thanks also to those players who have helped out at the sessions. More help is needed. Anyone who thinks they can lend a hand in whatever capacity should ring Ian Wallace on 07842 117883.

Diary dates

Quiz night: Saturday 24 January, Rayne Village Hall

Individual tournament: 20-22 February, Black Notley Community Association

AGM: Thursday 21 May, Liberal Club

Child Protection Officer

Should it become necessary, and of course we sincerely hope it won't, the league has a child protection officer. If any junior, or parent of a junior, has any concerns, they should contact Clare Johnson on 0794 165 4434.

Have a good season

Ron Fosker
Chairman