

Isle of Man Table Tennis Association Newsletter

January 2022



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1. Introduction

We are excited to present our IOMTTA Newsletter - the first in several years. The Committee felt that a periodic update on all things table tennis is something that would be of interest to all, and we really hope that you enjoy the contents. We have tried to include a variety of topics that will hopefully be of interest to youngsters and older players alike - and indeed those wishing to get back into table tennis.

Please do share it via email to all players and those you feel would find it of interest. It will also be posted on the IOMTTA 365 website, and our Facebook page, and copies can be printed off by Club Secretaries if required.

We'd love to hear from you as to what you think - do feel free to post comments on Facebook or via email, and suggest any other features you would like to see in future editions.

2. Rules Corner

Serving



Most of us get it right, but any of us can get it wrong - either inadvertently or through a lack of understanding of the current rules. Here's a useful refresher by way of an extract of the key points from the ITTF website:

2.06.01 Service shall start with the ball resting freely on the **open palm** of the server's stationary free hand.

2.06.02 The server shall then project the ball near vertically upwards, without imparting spin, so that it rises at least **16cm (6 inches)** after leaving the palm of the free hand and then falls without touching anything before being struck.

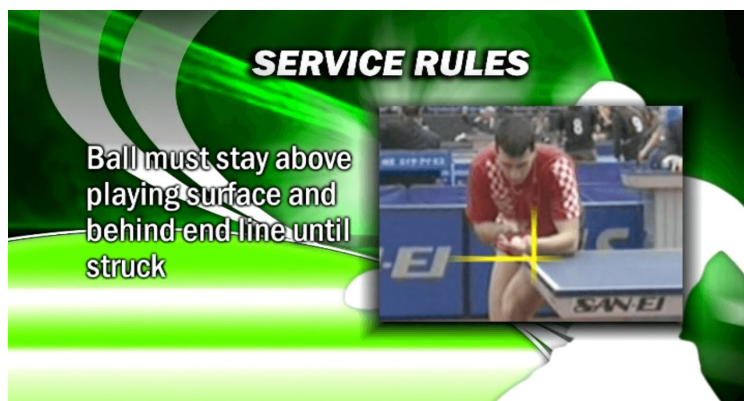
2.06.04 From the start of service until it is struck, the ball shall be **above the level of the playing surface and behind the server's end line**, and it shall not be hidden from the receiver by any part of the body or clothing of the server or his doubles partner; as soon as the ball has been projected, the server's free arm shall be removed from the space between the server's body and the net.

2.06.05 It is the responsibility of the player to serve so that the umpire or the assistant umpire can see that he complies with the requirements for a good service.

2.06.05.01 If the umpire is doubtful of the legality of a service, he or she **may, on the first occasion in a match, declare a let and warn the server.**

2.06.05.02 Any subsequent service of doubtful legality of that player or his doubles partner will result in a point to the receiver.

2.06.05.03 Whenever there is a clear failure to comply with the requirements for a good service, no warning shall be given and the receiver shall score a point.



3. Coaching

Malc Lewis



Youth coaching session November 2021 (Picture: Malcolm Lambert)

The main coaching for our island junior squad takes place on a Friday evening at the NSC and lasts 2 to 2½ hours. There are also drop-in sessions at the NSC before our league matches, Ballakermeen School where existing juniors along with new players have coaching, and in addition Ramsey hold a club night where coaching is provided. The coaches at the NSC are Malc Lewis, John Shooter, Wayne Taylor and Maggie Mulhern with Wayne also running the Ballakermeen drop-in, and Tim Baker running the Ramsey session. In recent weeks Sean Drewry has agreed to run a number of sessions for the Association which is really exciting for our juniors. The squad at present is juniors ranging from 8 to 18.

Make up of sessions

All of the training follows a similar pattern with a mix of drills, skills improvement, serve and return, building points and match play. Typical sessions will take the form of a warm up before starting any table work. The juniors will pair up with each other for the drills and occasionally the coaches will be hitting partners. The session itself will allow players to work on a number of different skills and the key is to only take 1 or 2 skills per session – so typically this could be:

- standard drills to either improvement movement, table position or shot selection – by default the same drills improve consistency and accuracy of shots giving players the opportunity to

control the exercise, therefore improving blocking and control, and the other player to concentrate on the skill itself

- build points for match play - this typically looks at 1 or 2 shots with a view to keeping the ball on the table with a specific shot to gain the initiative in the rally and build the point
- serve and return – developing serves that look the same but have different spin, players recognising that spin and then choosing the best shot to return it
- match play can be in two formats – a normal game to 11 and a game to 11 with conditions. Conditions might be only playing the shot we have worked on correctly for a point or only serving in a particular way – there are numerous others.

Coming up

In the new year we will continue with the weekly sessions and will again look to Sean to provide additional sessions for players as we build to the first off-Island tournament in a while – the Seniors Schools in Glasgow. This could include a coaching weekend. In the past we have used one of 2 UK coaches for this but travel restrictions have meant this has not happened for a while. We will also look to include the adults in future sessions who wish to work on their game. This would not only be the ones who are likely to represent the Island in international competition, but other league players.

Manx Youth Games

Sessions start in mid Jan for this year's games and we are always on the lookout for extra volunteers. We can have up to 45 players attending the Douglas session so this can get very busy. **We have a number of junior players who help us with this and always need more adults. You don't have to commit every week and any help is much appreciated.**

4. Tournaments & Competitions

Maggie Mulhern

Local Tournament Schedule

- Top 12 tournaments: end of January / start of February - exact dates TBA .
- Hard Bat Tournament: half term 23rd February
- Island Championships: end of March / start of April - exact dates TBA

International Tournament Schedule

- Primary Schools - Guernsey 8th - 10th April
- Senior Schools - Scotland 24th - 26th June
- Veterans Home Countries - IOM 8th - 11th September

Your active support and participation in local competitions is strongly encouraged. It's fun to be involved with, it's good for your game, and it helps with the Association's finances - so do please support as many as you can! Also, any volunteers who wish to help with the organisation of tournaments are warmly welcomed - feel free to contact Maggie on 411045.



Pictured: Sean Drewry, Division 1 Divisionals Champion (photo: Malcolm Lambert)

5. Player Profile - Graham McFarlane



Picture: Malcolm Lambert

Press Officer Ken Mitchell recently spoke with local table tennis legend Graham McFarlane - with some probing, and fun questions. Many thanks to Graham for acting as Guinea Pig for a feature that we hope to feature again next time.

Graham - how did you get into table tennis? ‘ I had played table tennis at the Youth Club, and socially at work, but my main sporting activities were football and cricket. I played for the school in both football and cricket. Football - I played for a youth team in the Stockport league (winning a couple of Cup Finalist medals) and had a season with Manchester City's B team. Cricket - I played for Heaton Mersey (Manchester Association) and Stockport (Central League) – which had ex-Test match players in their team. I once played with Frank Worrell and against Gary Sobers amongst others. I was 35 when I was getting knocks playing football which were hanging about too long, and with cricket I became fed up with the number of games which were stopped because of bad weather. I was looking for an alternative sport when I came across a table tennis team (Didsbury Lawn Tennis) who were holding their Annual General Meeting. I intended to play until about 40 and then maybe join a chess club. However their Secretary was 60 years old so I thought maybe I could carry on as well - so here I am still playing at 84 years old! Incidentally in a recent Veterans Tournament in Australia one competitor was over 100!’

What do you most enjoy about the sport? ‘ ‘You can put in as much effort as you feel capable of, and it is a relatively injury free sport’.

What has been your greatest achievement in table tennis so far? ‘ ‘Reaching the final of the Top 12 tournament in (I think) 1999 - losing to Andre Baillie-Searle, having beaten him in the Group stage. I also represented the IOM in the Six Nations Tournaments, which was a great honour’.

What else would you like to achieve in table tennis? ‘ ‘I realise I am past my peak, so I’m happy to still be able to play!’

Top tips? ‘I’d keep them a secret if I had any! Seriously though, always concentrate and never give up, and try to have a game plan and assess where the points are won and lost.’

What equipment do you currently use? ‘ ‘I have always used a Butterfly blade, and Sriver rubbers on both sides. I once gave Mark 5 a try - very fast’.

Outside Interests? ‘Mine are tennis, drawing and painting, gardening, puzzles, juggling, reading, football, as well as a general interest in other topics’

Peas or beans?: ‘Depends on what type, but any coated in chocolate!’.

If you have anyone in your club or team who you’d like to nominate for the next Player Profile, do let Ken know!

6. Funding - Where do our fees go?

Mike Bayley



Fees collected for 2021/22 season totalled £12,090 - our costs were as follows:

- Hall hire £8,500
- Insurance £470
- Affiliation fees £550
- Trophies £700
- Equipment £1,000

Sports Council funding was circa £12,000. We used to fund development, coaching, and off-Island tournaments. This is very changeable at the moment due to Covid but let's hope that changes in 2022. A copy of the latest financial accounts is available via Mike.

The 100 Club currently has 40 participants and is another source of funding for the Association in which we'd like to see greater participation. To get involved, you need to contribute £5 per month via standing order. A draw is made by the committee each month, and you have the chance to win a first prize of £75, a second prize of £25, a 3rd prize of £20, or a 4th prize of £15. To apply, simply email our Treasurer Mike Bayley at mikebayley5@hotmail.com and he will provide the IOMTTA bank details to enable you to set up a standing order via Online Banking, or to provide a signed instruction to your bank.

The Committee would welcome your opinions with regard to any fundraising ideas you may have, how we deal with potential rising costs and fees, and how we can boost attendance at the Presentation Dinner each year.

7. Archive Section

This is a section that we would like to repeat, but we need your help. If you have any old photographs or articles relating to local table tennis, feel free to send them to Ken Mitchell at kdsm09@gmail.com. The article below first appeared on the IOMTTA website in 2015 and was penned by Malcolm Lambert.

With all our investigations into alternative venues I was reminded about Jeff Bubb's 'A History of Table Tennis in the Isle Of Man 1948-1994' which was published back in 1995 when Bubb was chairman of the IOMTTA. It proved to be an interesting read and shown below are some extracts relating to some prominent players and where table tennis used to be played before the move to the NSC.

The first known organised club was formed at the Bay Hotel in Ramsey in December 1947. A match between the Ramsey Club, led by Bernard Swales, and Ramsey Youth Centre was the first to be recorded. The result was 10-0 to the Ramsey Club. Their second match resulted in a 7-3 win over the Marine Section of the RAF. LAC Buckley was the winner for the visitors and the home team included Swales and L Burt.

In that first season the Youth Club, RAF and the Mitre Hotel formed the opposition locally with the Central Hotel in Douglas being the only team outside of Ramsey. Under the captaincy of W Preston Central Hotel was the first team to beat the Ramsey Club by what is reported to have been 'a decisive score'.

At the end of the 1947/48 season the Ramsey Open took place and subsequently this became the Island Championship. It was initially held at the Northern Youth Centre Ramsey. Ronnie Clough beat Arthur Brew 21/16, 21/9 in the final. The Ladies champion was Sheila Kinrade with Ella Radcliffe the runner-up. R Malone won the juniors. Bob Gregory and Sheila Kinrade took the mixed doubles title.

In 1949 the first island Championships were played in the Wesleyan Hall in Ramsey. The winner was John Edwards who was the Scottish number one between 1946 and 1948. He beat Ronnie Clough 21/13, 21/10, 21/15. The Ramsey Courier reported on the final saying, 'Spectators applauded time after time the wonderful defence of the loser (Clough) and indeed his whiplash forehands but the superior match temperament of Edwards led no doubt about the winner.' They subsequently played an exhibition match in Kirk Michael in the old school.

Table tennis teams began to be formed across the island with Tommy Cashin and Leslie Lowe based in Lezayre. Flight Lieutenant Doby installed improved lighting in the team practice room at Jurby air station. Its use was strictly controlled but this only increased the list of airmen hopeful for selection. People in Kirk Michael were offered the chance to try the game and many took the opportunity. Peel Country Club was looked into as another venue with Ken Powell, Norman Gawne and Alan Palmer involved. In Douglas the four best and most used tables were located in Reece's Billiard Saloon.

1951 was an important year as the first island league was formed. By 1968 Ramsey had four teams, Pulrose Youth Club and Westlakes Hotel had two and Rushen YC, Sunnyside Hotel and Howstrake

Golf Club also competed. This was the era of Harold and Maureen Wilcock who dominated taking every possible title for many years.

By 1974 Grand Island won the first division. They were a spin-off from the Ramsey Club and they defeated Ronnie Clough's new team, Wheel Bar, 6-4 in the final match of that season. The up and coming young star for Wheel Bar was Mark Johnson who won both the junior and senior titles two year earlier. Colin Brown, Mel Hoey and Bob Briercliffe represented the Coach and Horses and they each had considerable success over the following decades.

In 1975 Malcolm Kelly, Les Wilson, Dave Faragher and P Collister formed a strong Port Erin team who tried to end the northern teams' domination. Wheel Bar disappeared and the Post Office, Laxey Social Centre and Laxey Travellers appeared. Douglas Bay were the first winners of Division Three with the Civil Service entering four teams in that division.

The new school, QE2, in Peel was utilised for championships from 1979 onwards until the Ballakermeen sports hall was built. Once the slippery floor problems were solved, Ballakermeen was regularly used for major tournaments from 1989 onwards. Local venues were increasingly used to play table tennis. Glen Maye were based in the Methodist Hall and Ronaldsway utilised their social club. Boundary Harriers played in the Memorial Hall while Union Mills and St John's used their clubhouses.

Throughout the 1980's the Education Department invested in new tables which were installed in most schools so these naturally became the base for many clubs. Port Erin continued playing at the Colby Level Hall and Peel were in the Marine Hall on the promenade. Douglas Bay continued at the Civil Defence HQ and Ramsey utilised the Presbyterian church. King William's College with ex Lancaster cricketer Jack Bond were still the team to beat.

By 1994 there were four divisions and over 160 players registered for the 45 teams then playing at a multitude of venues across the island. The NatWest 2001 Island Games was the stimulus to extend the facilities at the National Sport Centre. With the new Secondary Hall providing a purpose built central location it was an obvious move and one that the IOMTTA has not regretted.

In terms of archive material, it's worth mentioning that ex-Island resident and table tennis player Andy Swales is in the final stages of researching a book on Isle of Man table tennis in the 1970s & 1980s. He has asked that we mention this in the hope that some of our older players have some photos from that era that he may not have seen. Many have assisted Andy already.

If you do, please let Ken Mitchell know at kdsm09@gmail.com and he will either forward on or put you in touch with Andy. Archive pictures may also be used in future editions of the Newsletter with your permission. In particular Andy needs a picture of Seamus McNulty who was Island Champion 3 times in the early 1980s.



Pictured: Ramsey Table Tennis Club 1977.

8. Fun Quiz

This is a bit of fun, and hopefully informative at the same time! Entries to Ken Mitchell at kdsm09@gmail.com by 20th February 2022 please. All entries with the correct answers will be drawn from a hat, and the lucky winner will be awarded a £20 Tees Sport voucher at the time of the next Awards Ceremony. Please do have a go, and good luck! ..



1. How many inches (or centimetres) must you throw the ball up (as a minimum) to make a legal serve?
2. What is the size (in millimetres) of the modern table tennis ball?
3. Who was top of the Division 2 player averages as at 31/12/21?
4. What is the name of the Swedish player pictured above, using the latest hexagonal bat technology from Stiga?
5. What is the name of the Island Championship Men's Singles Runner Up in 1949?
6. What is an alternative name for the bat, racket or blade, commonly used in the United States?
7. Who was ITTF World Men's Singles Table Tennis Champion in 1929, who later became Wimbledon Champion as an amateur in 1934, 1935, and 1936?
8. Who was often known as the 'Mozart' of table tennis and was Olympic Men's Singles gold medallist in 1992?
9. Who was Winner of the 2021 Isle of Man Table Tennis Championship Ladies Singles event?
10. How many points were needed to win each game (or set) of table tennis up until September 2001?

Good luck! Those of you who have read this Newsletter carefully will have an advantage with regard to *some* of the above questions!

9. Future Focus

Like most things, table tennis on the Isle of Man has been disrupted over the last couple of years. For several years we were on an upward trend with participation levels increasing, more teams in the league each season and a good inflow of youngsters - each year supported by the Manx Youth Games and regular junior coaching and off-island competitions. Despite the disruption the sport is still in good shape, with a good level of participation, excellent facilities and an active committee with a positive focus on development which augurs well for the future.

Hopefully we can now look forward to the previous pattern returning, and growth resuming, starting with the 2022 Manx Youth Games which commence imminently. Meanwhile, later in the year the Schools and Veterans Six Nations tournaments will provide that essential off-Island competition and motivation for our top players to progress, with Island Games, Senior Six Nations and maybe British League hopefully to follow in 2023.

With opportunities for people to play regularly in Castletown, Douglas and Ramsey, and the NSC being available to us right through the year we are well placed to attract new players of all ages and standards. We also have an opportunity to attract back those who played years ago before other commitments or distractions took over. It is essential that we maintain our focus on the future so that your association continues to both survive and to thrive long into the future. If you have ideas or suggestions that you believe would improve table tennis on the Island, or are prepared to get involved in the Association's activities to help in any way, please speak to the Chair Maggie Mulhern, or any other member of the committee.

Your Committee:

Chairman - Maggie Mulhearn
General Secretary - Julian Briercliffe
League Secretary - Tim Baker
Press officer - Ken Mitchell
Treasurer - Mike Bayley
Head of Performance - Malc Lewis
Kevin Drewry
Wayne Taylor
Adam Teare
Andy McLarney
Darren Shaw

