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**Table tennis notes by Chris Blake**

Darren McVitie capped off an excellent season, which saw his Thompson Insurance A retain the Division One title, by winning the Open Singles and Open Vetts Singles events at the Sunderland & District Table Tennis Associations closed championships.

In the final of the Open Singles McVitie, who was in excellent form, overcame Steve Penman (St Chad’s) in straight sets before going on to defeat defender Jimmy Scope (St Chad’s) to make it a double success.

McVitie was denied a 3rd title when his double’s partner Chris Blake and No. 1 seeds were defeated in the semi-final of the Open Double’s by eventual winners Jimmy Scope and Adam Curran (St Chad’s). The pair played brilliantly throughout and followed this up with another excellent performance in the final to defeat Ryan Richardson (Silksworth IM A) and Steve Penman.

In the Ladies Single’s Eszter Soos (St John’s A) played some great table tennis to beat Amanda Paxton (Redby CA A) to win the title for the first time.

Curran and Soos won the Mixed Double’s event with a fine win over John Williamson (West CA A) and Paxton.

Curran has had an excellent debut season in the 1st Division (helping his team to finish 3rd in the top flight) and capped this off by winning a hat-trick of events by taking the Junior Under 18 Boys event – beating **???** to add to his Open Doubles and Mixed Doubles successes.

**\*\*\*Need to insert a Para re: winners / runners up of the Under 15’s & 13’s events\*\*\***

Dave Cutler (Mortimer CA) won the Consolations Single’s when he defeated **???** to take the title. This has been a great season for Cutler who also helped his team to achieve promotion to Division One and finish Runner’s Up in the league’s Team Handicap Cup.

The Sunderland & District league’s remaining fixtures are now complete – the final outstanding match saw Sacriston St Bede’s A clinch the **Division 2** title from Mortimer CA’s grasp in the 9th set of their final fixture against a stubborn Redby CA side.

Mortimer, who had interested spectator Dave Cutler at the match to observe proceedings, were sitting at the top of the table on 66 points ahead of Sacriston

A superior ‘sets won’ record to Mortimer meant that Sacriston needed nothing less than a 6 – 4 win to claim the 3 points necessary, over a side that had previously beaten them 6-4 and drawn 5-5 in their two encounters earlier in the season.

They eventually got over the line ‘by the skin of their teeth’ thanks to a quite brilliant hat-trick from man of the match Jon Mawson, who must be the most improved player in the Division over the season. The highlight of his hat-trick was a stunning 11-1, 11-4, 11-3 straight games victory over Rob Kerr. Mawson was ably supported by Paul Dale (2) and Kevin Smith (1). Redby’s sets came from Rob Kerr (2) and Dave Thomson (1) who also combined to take the doubles.

Leading 5 - 2 at one stage, Sacriston were stuttering towards victory, but Rob Kerr cranked up the pressure coming from a game down to beat Kevin Smith 7-11, 11-6, 11-7, 13-11, to make it 5-3.

The 9th set was a tense and tactical ‘5 ender’ between Mawson and Redby’s Thomson. Thompson drew first blood, coming from 8-10 down to take the first game 12-10. Mawson bounced back to shade the second game 11-9 and then raced into a 5-1 lead in the third game, but Thompson refused to lie down and staged a remarkable comeback, playing some wonderful attacking strokes to steal the game 12-10 and move into a 2-1 lead.

Just as Sacriston feared the match, and the Division 2 title, was slipping away but Mawson dug deep, and employing some accurate and controlled pushing, sidespin and backspin, took the fourth game 11-4 to force the set into the 5th and deciding end.

Mawson forced his way into an early lead, and clung on with grim determination to win 11 – 7 to ensure victory for Sacriston and help his team secure the Division 2 title.

**\*\*\*Please insert 2 or 3 pictures if possible – i.e., Darren McVitie, Adam Curran and Eszter Soos to all did particular well in the Tournament\*\*\***