

BURNHAM & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

CLOSED TOURNAMENT 2025

Weekend of 22/23 March 2025 at William de Ferrers School, South Woodham Ferrers

Quick Recap on results from Day 1 of the 2025 Tournament.

Junior Singles

Winner Peter Harverson

Runner-up Arthur Shadforth

Peter went unbeaten in the round robin dropping just one set before taking the final.

Junior Doubles

Winner Peter Harverson/Oscar Wyman

Runner-up Arthur Shadforth/Matt Copsey

This was a close 5 setter, with Arthur and Matt taking a 2 leg lead, and then having a match point in the 4th leg but they just couldn't get over the line. (-6,-10,9,10,9)

Fambridge Trophy (Division 3)

Winner Arthur Shadforth

Runner-up Allan Steel

Great result for Arthur and well deserved. Unfortunately Nerves of Steel deserted Allan in the final.

Dan Richardson Trophy (Division 2)

Winner Adi Kamma

Runner-up Andy Seaman

Lots of upsets en route to this final. Adi was playing out of his skin and Andy was racking up the 5 set victories. Adi squeezed past Peter Chastin having faced match point, and then edged his way in a long 5 setter with Denis Balic. Andy had ousted the outside bet Peter Harverson and the tricky Ken Sheard.

Mixed Open Singles (Minus top Men's Singles seeds)

Winner Lee McHugh

Runner-up Sam Lowman

Sam was not happy with his performance in the Final having just come off some hardbat matches, and struggled to find his normal rhythm. However Lee was on fire all day and had already dispatched Eric Green and Sanjay Saptarshi in earlier rounds so was in unbeatable form and a very worthy winner. Sam bested Dan Anderson in his semi, and had beaten George Reeves earlier on. A few unexpected names made it to the quarter-final stages including Peter Harverson, Ken Sheard, Eamonn Hall, and Adi Kamma made the semi-final against Lee. There was almost a shock in the first round proper when the whole hall was cheering on Ella Sach as she took Chris Hancox all the way to deuce in the decider. But it was not to be as the pantomime villain came through.

Over 60s Singles

Winner John Poysden

Runner-up Eric Green

The top 4 seeds made up the semis. John came through comfortably against George Reeves, whilst Eric had a right battle in a long 5 setter with Sanjay Saptarshi. John had played limited games across the day and so was fresher for the Final and he was able to use this to his advantage as he played a game of patience with Eric and waited for the right opportunities to reveal themselves and bang they were away. John also won the 'best turned out player' award for the 5th year on the trot!

Over 70s Singles

Winner Dick Wyman

Runner-up Merv Perriman

Dick was the favourite for this trophy and he took it in style, despite some stoic defence from the Swerv. Dick hit some great smashes through the pimples of all his opponents.

Handicap Singles

Winner Peter Chastin

Runner-up Arthur Shadforth

A long and winding road to the final for these two. Arthur had progressed through the likes of Alan Dadswell, his ping pong frenemy Peter Harverson, Graham Briggs, but saved his best for the semi-final against Lee McChokey. Despite the large handicap Lee had pulled back to 17-17 in the deciding set but somehow Arthur bravely went for his shots and found himself 20-18 with 2 match points. These were squandered and then Lee had match point at 21-20 but Arthur hit the most ridiculous backhand winner that stunned both his opponent and the growing crowd. Buoyed by his own brilliance he took the next 2 points for a remarkable victory. Peter had faced his own battles, including the clock, on his journey with energy sapping wins over the highly handicapped Kath Little and Oscar Wyman and then two excellent deciding set victories over Kim Shead and Dan Anderson in the semi. Peter quite rightly collapsed at the end of his marathon day!

Hard Bat Singles

Winner Eric Green

Runner-up Arron Chandler

A bit of a disjointed event as the rounds were disrupted by play in other competitions. Arron is a hard-hitting no nonsense outright attacker and he was delighted to take the scalps of Sam Lowman, and Lee McHugh on his way to the Final. Eric had to put loyalties aside as he knocked out his Cold Norton teammates Ian Wall and Dan Anderson in the semi-final. The Final itself saw Eric continually retrieve the Chandler attack and wear him down over the short two sets.

Day 2 Action and Results

Another busy day for players and officials alike. A few surprises along the way but largely the seeding committee prevailed. We'll cover the upsets don't you worry!

Men's Singles - Prelim Groups

Groups of 4 with 2 progressing and a good way to judge how the top seeds are feeling about their games. Let's rattle through the groups. In Group 1 Mapledene's Muthinator aka Steve Muth upset the rankings by ousting the usually awesome Sanjay Saptarshi. In Group 2 George Reeves, in much better frame of mind and form than the Saturday put out Matt Stringer (more about him later!). Group 5 provided the biggest shock as we lost one of the dark horses in Lee McHugh with clubmate Dan Patynski banging in the final nail in the travelling coffin. In Group 6 Sam Lowman beat Ian Wall to reverse the seedings but both progressed. Similarly in Group 7 Harry Chivers bettered John Poysden but they both came through ok. The final 'upset' was again a reversal of the seedings when Kieran Skeggs got the better of Gary Young in Group 8. This all resulted in a somewhat unexpected line-up for the Round of 16.

Ladies Singles

The prelim groups largely went to form and rankings resulting in the expected semi-finals where Dawn Baldry was too powerful for Tina Hutchinson, and Sue Body was able to penetrate the stoic defence of Jean Chasmer.

So we have top seeds in the Final on Finals Night: Dawn Baldry V Sue Body.

Plate Competition

An extra competition for the players eliminated in the Singles group rounds. A very random draw - basically allocated as you become available, and often some upset players after a poor showing in the Groups always results in some upmixed results. A couple of good examples would be Allan Steel beating Graham Briggs and Scott Perry seeing off Arron Chandler. However, a bit like the lower European football competitions the players start to take it seriously once they get a bit closer to the Final. At the semi-final stage Dan Anderson fell to the charms of Sanjay Saptarshi, and star of Saturday Adi Kamma couldn't quite get the better of the impressive Matt Stringer. So to the first Final of the Sunday, and with everyone else busy, there was no crowd to intimidate the contenders. It's a shame no-one was really watching as the match was played in great spirit and with some amazing interchanges that took the match to a 5th set. At which point Stringer unravelled himself and dispatched Sanjay 11-3 for a small piece of Burnham history.

Plate Final - Matt Stringer Beat Sanjay Saptarshi (3,-6,7,-9,3)

Ladies Doubles

Dawn Baldry and Shirley Carroll were the standout pairing in this round robin style event, and they lived up to the pre-match hype dropping just one leg along the way in a 3-1 victory over the worthy runners-up Jean Chasmer and Tina Hutchinson. Dawn has won this particular event 7 times previously but that is nothing compared to Shirley's 15 times winning pedigree that stretches back to 1976 - and all whilst representing 4 different clubs.

Ladies Doubles Champions - Dawn Baldry & Shirley Carroll

Veterans Doubles (Over 40s)

No major shocks enroute to the semi-finals that reads like a who's who of Burnham elite. Odds-on favourites and perennial finalists Duncan Taylor and Kevin Read were to face Mapledene's finest George Reeves and Steve Muth, whereas Eric Green and Simon Jacob had a much tougher draw as they faced the surprise package of Allan Steel and Eamonn Hall. Strange as it may seem but Eric and Simon did actually encounter some stiff opposition and their progress wasn't as straightforward as you might have thunk! Duncan and Kevin were taking no prisoners as they booked themselves yet another Final showdown. The Final itself had some fantastic rallies but the seasoned pairing of Duncan and Kevin were just too damn consistent and they won out in straight sets.

Vets Doubles Final - Duncan Taylor & Kevin Read beat Eric Green and Simon Jacob (10,4,5)

Mixed Doubles

Always a great event played in a spirit of comradeship - although Kath Little wasn't a fan of Mr McHugh's snake serves coming out so early in the competition. Top seeds Sue Body and Duncan Taylor faced a tough semi-final against regular league partnership Dawn Baldry and Colin Napper but they came through in one piece. Having used his full quota of snake serves against the befuddled Little, in the second semi McHugh was limited to traditional serving only but helped tremendously by partner in chief Tina Hutchinson together they were able to get the better of Keith Adams and Shirley Carroll to reach the Final.

Finals Night: Duncan Taylor & Sue Body V Lee McHugh & Tina Hutchinson.

Men's Doubles

Steve Maltby was visibly upset when told of his assigned partner for this prestige event. Maltby and Want were the only pairing to be eliminated in the first round courtesy of Tony Bonnici and Peter Harverson and were banished to the umpire's chair for the duration of the competition. We had to wait until the quarter-final stage for an upset when scratch pairing Keith Adams and Matt Stringer fell to George Reeves and the Muthinator. Despite their quarter-final glory Reeves and Muthinator were no match for the fiery favourites Reece Seddon and Liam Squirrell and were quickly dispatched in a haze of plastic (5,10,4). The second semi was a proper wild west duel with gasps and tears aplenty as the young pairing of Harry Chivers and Lee McHugh attempted to grind down 20 years of trust and understanding that exists between Duncan Taylor & Kevin Read. The young whippersnappers went about their business with some aplomb and took a handsome and deserved 2-1 lead but in a crucial 4th leg when the match was in their grasp they snatched at it when patience and a calm approach may have gotten them over the line - and in this instance it didn't as they lost the leg 14-12 and then the old guard took charge of the final set and whisked themselves into another Doubles Final (6,-4,-3,12,4).

Finals Night: Reece Seddon & Liam Squirrell V Duncan Taylor & Kevin Read

Men's Singles (Knockout Stages)

So 15 of the top ranked players and a Polish interloper took to the stage to do battle. Drama, tears of pain and joy, screams and a smattering of excellence awaited the crowds. For all his efforts of reaching the knock-out stages the excellent Dan Patynski was 'rewarded' with the plum tie against 4-time Champion Duncan Taylor. To his credit Patynski said it was an honour to be beaten by Duncan - and that was before the match! No upset in that one - but there was elsewhere in the room. By only coming runner-up in his Group the effortlessly turned out John Poysden had the toughest of draws as he was pitted against top seed and holder Reece Seddon - an early bath, shave and grooming looked likely. But JP is massive everywhere he goes and he fought hard in this one to force Seddon into too many 'unforced' errors that eventually rewarded him with an unexpected but very welcome quarter-final slot. Other notable wins in the Round of 16 saw Keith Adams come through against Ian Wall, Sam Lowman literally edge past Eric Green 11-9 in the 5th after a marathon battle, and number 2 seed Liam Squirrell victorious over the tricky Gary Young. Squirrell was then too consistent for the eager Harry Chivers in a match that many punters thought might prove difficult for Squirrell. Taylor reversed the recent league form and ousted Lowman who was perhaps still reeling from his marathon with Green. Kevin Read progressed through Keith Adams and John Poysden managed to quell the firepower of Kieran Skeggs to reach the last 4.

Finals Night Semi-Final Line-up:

John Poysden V Kevin Read

Duncan Taylor V Liam Squirrell

BURNHAM & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

FINALS NIGHT 2025

Thursday 27th March 2025 at Champions Manor, South Woodham Ferrers

Match 1: Men's Singles Semi-Final 1

Duncan Taylor (Cold Norton) vs. Liam Squirrell (Mapledene)

Without knowing the final line-up this was possibly the most anticipated match-up of Finals Night – youth v ~~old~~ experience, attack v defence, new guard v old guard – take whatever stance you like it was an intriguing start to Finals Night. The opening game was cagey as our two gladiators sized each other up, and with extended rallies came a plethora of nets and edges that interrupted the flow. Squirrell edged the first leg but dominated the second to take a 2-0 lead. At which point Taylor went all Worzel Gummidge on us and screwed on his serious head. No attacking and no unnecessary errors to force Squirrell into retreat and several 'unforced' errors – well they're not really unforced are they, Taylor wears you down and down and down until you have to try and hit an unhittable shot. So Taylor takes the 3rd leg and we are back in business. The 4th leg was a beautiful example of attack v defence with long sustained rallies as Squirrell teased Taylor resisting the temptation to hit every ball that Taylor was deliberately feeding him. A game of chess ensued and Squirrell emerged the master of this sport with an 11-6 game score to take the match and march into the Final.

Liam Squirrell beat Duncan Taylor (10,4,-4,6)

Match 2: Men's Singles Semi-Final 2

Kevin Read (Cold Norton) vs. John Poysden (Fambridge)

Poysden look glorious as he entered the arena for this semi-final. Garbed to the nines in matching outfits with glorious details he was ready for action, Read just lets his table tennis do the talking. This was a 50/50 one before play started, possibly an edge to Read for some. But as soon as play began it was clear that Poysden would look to thwart the Read attack and dominate the play. Read did pick off any Poysden serve that wasn't short enough but that was largely his only real success as Poysden racked up the points and Read was forced into a much higher percentage of errors than normal, even giving away multiple foul serves, often on key points. Poysden progresses to the Final.

John Poysden beat Kevin Read (9,-7,7,7)

Match 3: Mixed Doubles Final

Duncan Taylor (Cold Norton) & Sue Body (Mapledene) vs. Lee McHugh (Woodham) & Tina Hutchinson (Blackwater)

This was a final played in great spirit with all the players enjoying the limelight. Taylor & Body were hot favourites for this one but didn't have it all their own way. With McHugh throwing in some Samurai inspired serves and chopping hard to the Body he was able to garner many points. Hutchinson was fantastic when she opened up and attacked the ball, especially against a Taylor floater – but this didn't happen enough, much to the crowd's disappointment as they loved cheering a winner against a Taylor chop. Taylor was his usual retrieving master and Body was very consistent in returning off both her opponents and this is what swung the match. So the bookies and Seeding Committee were right as Body & Taylor secured the first crown of the evening.

Duncan Taylor & Sue Body beat Lee McHugh & Tina Hutchinson (6,-5,6,9)

Match 4: Veteran Singles Final

Duncan Taylor (Cold Norton) vs. Kevin Read (Cold Norton)

Both players were still intertwined with the brainfog of having lost out in the Men's Semi-finals only a short while before this Final. In the opening leg Read still seemed out of sorts as he could manoeuvre Taylor into a position where he was willing and able to pounce but then his attack, especially on the backhand let him down and handed Taylor several 'got away with that one' points. This pattern continued with Taylor working hard retrieving from near and far and his consistency and indomitable defence took him to a quick 2-0 lead. Read fought back in the 3rd leg and perhaps Taylor's concentration levels dropped for a second, and this meant Read was able to benefit from a few winners that saw him through the leg. By the time we started the 4th leg Taylor had had a word with himself, tightened his belt as was back in business. No resurgence from Read as the resilient Taylor Spirit was back with a vengeance as he pushed and floated his way to retain his Cup.

Duncan Taylor beat Kevin Read (6,6-7,2)

Match 5: Men's Doubles Final

Duncan Taylor & Kevin Read (Cold Norton) vs. Liam Squirrell & Reece Seddon (Mapledene)

This one had an Old Guard v New Guard undertone that could spill over into the spicy category. Seddon was the only player fresh from the benches with the other 3 heavily ensconced in the evening's proceedings. Seddon was a bit ring-rusty in the opening leg as he and Squirrell adjusted to the experienced partnership opposite them. So a quick and winning start from Taylor and Read, and plenty of tactical chat from the youth section going into the crucial 2nd leg. This was much better tactically from Seddon and Squirrell as they took their time in the rallies and forced their opponents out of position or when the time came hit through them. So at 1-1 we now had a proper match to enjoy! The next 2 legs were shared to take us into a winner-takes-all deciding frame. It was tit-for-tat up until 6-6 when between them Taylor and Read hit 3 unforced errors that gave Seddon and Squirrell an unassailable lead, which they didn't waste. That's two on the spin now for this formidable pairing – is there anyone out there to challenge them?

Liam Squirrell & Reece Seddon beat Duncan Taylor & Kevin Read (-5,11,8,-6,7)

Match 6: Ladies' Singles Final

Dawn Baldry (Maldon) vs. Sue Body (Mapledene)

Billed as a slugfest but it didn't turn out that way as our Ladies finalists set too on a push off. This was working out better for Body as Baldry failed to convert her attacking opportunities into winners – sometimes choosing the wrong ones to hit. So Body takes the cagey first leg, and by now some of the nerves must have switched into adrenaline. In the next 2 legs both players were more attacking. Baldry deliberately and Body when the chance arrived, so we had a more open contest. This style of play suited Baldry and she took the next two legs to open up a lead. In the 4th set Body resisted the urge to slap back Baldry's faster serves and kept things tight and slow, and Baldry was culpable of missing several smashes that gave Body the lead in the game. To compound matters finished off the leg with a tremendous forehand winner that whizzed past the Baldry defence. In a nervy final leg both players missed a few early opportunities and this allowed Baldry to switch ends with a tight 5-4 advantage. Points were shared until Body found herself at 7-8 down. But then hit two errors into the net and Baldry finished off the job with a lovely cross court forehand winner to retain her title.

Dawn Baldry beat Sue Body (-8,9,6,-8,7)

Match 7: Men's Singles Final

Liam Squirrell (Mapledene) vs. John Poysden (Fambridge)

Perpetuating the changing of the guards theme we have another clash of ages and styles to boot. Would Poysden, giving up some 45 years of battling, be able to slow down and control the exuberance of Squirrell to allow him to play his game?

The opening leg was over in a flash with a combination of Squirrell winners and Poysden errors. In the second leg it was clear that Poysden was trying to shorten the game and push Squirrel out of position. This was working at times but Squirrell was still able to hit winners even from close to the table and off balance and this somewhat thwarted the Poysden tactics – a closer leg nevertheless. The 3rd leg was much tighter in the earlier stages with Poysden now hitting a few winners to match the Squirrell quota but come the business end from 7-8 down Poysden hit a couple into the net as Squirrell kept his composure and saw out the match for his inaugural Burnham Singles Title. A very worthy winner.

Liam Squirrell beat John Poysden (3,7,8)

Thank Yous and Presentation Evening

A big thank you to everyone that competed or spectated over the course of the Tournament week. But of course we would all like to thank the main organiser Tim Huxtable for a cracking job well done along with his fruity sidekicks Alan Dadswell and Dan Anderson. Also major thanks to Jan Dadswell for her amazing efforts with the refreshments.

And finally a reminder to speak to Dawn Baldry to reserve your spaces at the Presentation Dinner on Fri 16th May @ The Forrester Park Golf & Country Club – Reservations can be made email to dawnbaldry@aol.com. Cost is £38 per adult, £15 for juniors.

Eamonn Hall
Burnham Press Officer
