

New format as table tennis league begins

The Isle of Man Table Tennis League got underway for the season at the NSC with new sponsors in the form of DLP Adapted Bathrooms, new teams and a new format.

To accommodate the increasing number of teams - 28 this year - a new system had to be adopted which sees two phases of matches. One set of fixtures begins at 6.40 and the second at 8.15.

Division One

Champions Copy Shop A made a stuttering start to the campaign, being taken to 6-3 by newly promoted Zurich Spinners who are making their debut in the top division. For Spinners, Nigel Beattie, last season's leading Division Two player, had two excellent wins but Brian Crellin won all his three to see Copy Shop home.

The other promoted team, Travellers A, found the going tough against ABC Arborists who are going to be the main challengers to Copy Shop. Arborists didn't concede a single game all night and I wonder when was the last time an entire team was made up of pen-hold grip players. It was nice to see Chris Dagnall turning out for Travellers and thus rejoining the league after an absence of around eight years.

Elsewhere in the Division, the young Breakaway A team saw off Foxdale A 6-3 while Julian Briercliffe was undefeated as Strathallan took care of Tower A, although Mike Bayley had two good wins for Tower.

Division Two

There are no obvious favourites to win this division and it will be interesting to see who emerge as the front runners. The two Surestrike Ramsey teams, are likely to be in contention and they battled out a 5-5 draw in an early season local derby. This match saw a father and daughter (Tim and Kerenza Baker) playing against each other on one table while brothers Marcus and Calvin Koske did battle alongside them.

Copy Shop B started well against promoted Travellers D but the latter pushed them hard, only losing 7-3 with Juan Moore adapting well to life in the higher division with two wins. However, he found Adam Davies a hard nut to crack and he won all three for Copy Shop.

Tower B came out on top to the tune of 8-2 in their local derby with the C team while Copy Shop C made it a good night in this division for the Copy Shop teams by triumphing against Peel B with Kevin Drewry winning three. This was the longest match of the night in any division as four needed a decider before Copy Shop won 6-4.

Division Three

St. Ninian's made an impressive start to life in the league with an 8-2 win over Copy Shop D and may go right through this division, captain Matt Harvey being their best player with two wins. Zac Walker won both the points for Copy Shop.

Another 8-2 scoreline saw the Copy Shop girls, alias Copy Shop E, coming through against Surestrike Ramsey D. The Ramsey team witnessed Jack Yardley returning to league action after a gap of many years to play alongside two grandchildren. Jack managed to win two matches but had to give second best to Pat Halliwell who was undefeated.

Kerenza Baker won three for Surestrike Ramsey C to help her side defeat Breakaway B 6-4 while Jack Craik also won three for Surestrike Ramsey E in their 6-4 victory over Peel C.

Results

Division One

Breakaway A 6 Foxdale A 3

ABC Arborists 9 Travellers A 0

Strathallan 7 Tower A 2

Copy Shop A 6 Zurich Spinners 3

Division Two

Surestrike Ramsey B 5 Surestrike Ramsey A 5

Travellers D 3 Copy Shop B 7

Tower C 2 Tower B 8

Peel B 4 Copy Shop C 6

Division Three

Copy Shop D 2 St. Ninians 8

Copy Shop E 8 Surestrike Ramsey D 2

Surestrike Ramsey C 6 Breakaway B 4

Peel C 4 Surestrike Ramsey E 6

ENDS