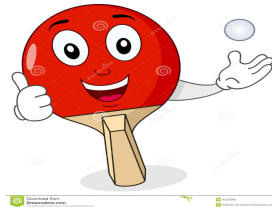


TABLE TENNIS GROUP March 2023

Report by Peter Singer



The table tennis group continues to flourish – or, at least, around eight to ten of us turn up regularly on a Friday afternoon to wave our bats around in pursuit of that pesky little white ball and, in between games, put the world to rights, swap holiday anecdotes and so on. In fact, as previous reporters have noted, our standard of play has been improving and we do, from time to time, manage an exciting rally or two or even a tense and hard-fought game. One member complained last week that some of the victory celebrations were a little too enthusiastic (yells, fist-pumping etc), but to be fair we don't slide along the ground like footballers do (would be a bit painful on the wooden floor!).

By contrast and to see how it really should be played, two of our group headed off on Sunday 26 March to watch the finals day of the England National Championships, which were held in the excellent David Ross Sports Village on the campus of Nottingham University. The action started at 9.30am and, ten matches later, finished around 5.30pm, so it was a tiring day for the spectators as much as the players, although surprisingly the time passed quite quickly and it wasn't at any stage boring. The play was fast and furious and at times very dramatic, with players exchanging forehand and backhand smashes from a couple of yards beyond the table. Tin Tin Ho, from London and studying medicine at Nottingham, won the women's singles, beating Emily Bolton 4-0 and then went on to win the doubles title with Emily Bolton – it's a small world in elite table tennis! Tom Jarvis, from Skegness, retained the men's singles title, afterwards having a long hug with his grandad, his mentor, who had been unable to see Tom's victory last year. The two para finals were equally compelling to watch and Jack Hunter-Spivey retained his title from 2022 in the Class 2-5 (wheelchair) event. On one point, he deployed his trademark shot, in which the ball crossed the net correctly and immediately spun back over his own side of the net, making it virtually unplayable. He beat Simon Heaps, who at 67 was forty years Jack's senior – so there is definitely hope for us all yet.

If you would like to join our group to learn the game, improve your skills or just have a bit of fun, please contact Peter Singer (pandjsinger@btinternet.com 07508 663998). All are welcome, whether you play regularly, have not played for some time or have never played before.

