



Chelmsford & District: Writtle edge cup thriller

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The 2017/18 Chelmsford Table Tennis League season has been concluded. The Division Two Knock-Out Cup final between the all-conquering Writtle Excalibur A (unbeaten in 18 League matches) and OCs A (who had not enjoyed the best of seasons in the League) produced a superb encounter, arguably one of the best finals on record.

It was Writtle Excalibur A who ultimately emerged as 5-4 winners. OCs' Kevin Worthington was on top form and he struck an early blow by beating Ryan Pitt 3-0 (11-7, 11-9, 11-8). Steve Northcott added to this with an even more notable victory. He beat M&G Investments Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League Division Two Singles champion Lee McHugh 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-8).

Writtle Excalibur were in trouble but Richard Storey came to the rescue by defeating League Chairman David Porter narrowly 11-4, 19-17, 11-9 to level the scores at 2-2.

OCs took the middle doubles courtesy of a win for the in-form Worthington and Northcott combination who beat McHugh and Storey 11-9, 11-4, 13-11.

The next two games were "massive" and Writtle showed why they are this year's league champions. Pitt recovered from falling 2-0 behind to beat Porter 3-2 (10-12, 7-11, 11-9, 11-4, 11-8) and Storey – the Writtle star on this occasion defeated Northcott 3-2 (7-11, 11-7, 11-13, 11-5, 13-11) – arguably the most crucial game of the match.

OCs weren't finished and Worthington despatched McHugh over four ends 15-13, 13-11, 2-11, 11-3 to level the scores at 4-4.

The last game was epic and it couldn't have been closer and it was Pitt and Storey who emerged as 3-2 (5-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-4, 12-10) winners against Worthington and Porter to clinch the cup.

Danbury C (Allan Steel, Eamon Hall and Allan Steel) were victorious in the Division Four Cup final defeating OCs A 5-4 but unlike the Division Two Cup final there was little drama in the deciding doubles. Danbury called the shots here with Dave Hancox and Allan Steel beating Bob Francis and Adam Yardley decisively 11-3, 11-5, 11-6.

Nat Ravlic had played his part for OCs and he beat both Eamon Hall 3-1 (10-12, 11-9, 11-9, 11-7) and Hancox 3-1 (11-7, 3-11, 11-9, 11-4). Steel's two wins had a large say in the outcome of the match and he beat both Yardley 3-1 (9-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-7) and Francis 3-1 (11-5, 11-5, 8-11, 14-12).

The League's Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 31 May 2018 at Old Chelmsfordians Association and it was an upbeat message that League Chairman Dave Porter was able to convey. With a large improvement in the numbers of Ladies and Juniors taking part in the League a huge vote of thanks was extended to all those people involved in coaching in and around Chelmsford.

Fittingly the League's Award for Service to the Sport – the Rosebery / Pope & Smith Award was presented to David Gatheral – the driving force behind the Chelmsford League's coaching activities as well as a very busy and enthusiastic coach himself.

League President Norman Smith said how heartening it was to have witnessed "the fantastic Junior participation at the M&G Investments Chelmsford Championships – the best for many a year". He also thanked the meeting for the unprecedented number of nominations received for this Award this season.

The Charlie Wheeler Memorial Award – for the Junior player who has performed best in the Chelmsford Tournament taking into account their results – as opposed to what were people's expectations were – was presented to Daniel Young (Danbury). Daniel had an exceptional weekend with a win in the under 14 singles, as well as runner-up berths in the U16, U18 and U21 singles, under-18 doubles and handicap doubles. He played superbly throughout the two days.

Finally, the Hill Dowsett Junior Award for the Junior player who has scored the highest percentage of wins in League play (having taken part in 80% of his team's matches) was awarded to Adam Yardley (OCs E) who achieved a record of 66% in division four as he helped his team finish in second place.

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