



Be TT: Brand New league a big success

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A new league set up by Newton Abbot TTC with help from Be TT funding has been so successful it is set to become an annual event.

The club tapped into Table Tennis England's Be TT programme, which supports clubs and leagues to provide better experiences to players across the sport, to help fund a new shorter-format league.

The tournament was aimed at beginners and recreational players at the club and there was so much interest that the club had to extend the number of sessions. The tournament also generated coverage in the local media.

Tony Halse, the club's General Secretary, tells the story:

Following the Table Tennis England Conference at Haldon Racecourse and with Table Tennis England wanting to support shorter-format events in both League and club competitions, I decided to apply for a grant to run a summer tournament.

As another local club was running a similar event aimed at the top local players, and with a great number of non-league recreational players at our club, we decided to restrict this new tournament to the weaker league players and non-league players.

Although this prevented many of our players (at least 35) from entering I am sure it helped in getting many more beginners involved.

The initial plan was to run the event on every other Friday night for six sessions, but due to its success we added a Saturday morning tournament to run alongside, which was restricted to just non-league players. Division Four-standard players were accepted on the Friday night.

In total, 28 players signed up for the Friday night sessions and 16 players signed up for Saturday mornings. While not every player was able to turn up for every session, we always had at least five divisions of four players on

each Friday and at least three divisions of four on Saturday mornings. We had seven female players on the Friday nights and four on Saturday mornings.

The Be TT grant enabled us to hire extra space at our venue and supply many prizes which were distributed during the event, including encouragement prizes for such things as enthusiasm, determination, best shot of the session, etc to ensure that most players, particularly the youngsters, received something. These prizes included T-shirts, caps, mugs and medals.

It was a condition of the tournament that all those taking part should at least be Table Tennis England Associate members and many have now gone on to become player members and are entering the local league this coming season.

Table Tennis England's support has been invaluable and much appreciated.

The competition was completed in early August but as it received such good feedback it has been agreed to run it as an annual event in the early summer months. A local sponsor, Albany Florists, agreed to provide a perpetual trophy for the Friday Night overall league winner – The Albany Florists Summer Singles Cup.

The inaugural winner of the Albany Florists Cup was Rowan Bayliss, who just pipped Richard Salt to the title by one point. Just behind them, Rob Ferguson, Andrew Davies and Dylan Bayliss all finished on the same number of points to share third place.

Divisional winners were Eve James (Div 5), Kevin Payne (Div 4), Josh Redfern (Div 3), Derek Stratton (Div 2) and Rob Bayliss (Div 1).

Points were awarded each week as players are promoted or relegated between the divisions, which produced a final league table.

The winner of the Saturday League was Josh Redfern, with David Olver as runner-up.

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