



Chelmsford & District: Tributes to Tony Condon

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Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League legend Tony Condon died peacefully on February 1, aged 87.

A seven times Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League Men's Singles champion (most recently in 1972), he was by all accounts one of the best predominantly defensive players ever to have played in the Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League.

Moving to the area from Yorkshire he became an integral part of the Marconi Club (for whom he worked) who dominated the Chelmsford first division with successive wins from 1945 to 1961. He was also a part of the Rosebery team who won the Chelmsford first division title seven times. He was a founder member of the Rosebery Club along with another leading player – Julien Levett.

Tony Condon was also a member of the Essex Senior first team squad – good going when the players ranked above him were twice former World Singles champion Johnny Leach, 1963 English Champion Bobby Stevens and another Essex legend – Bobby Raybould.

Tony was Harlow Men's Singles champion in 1962 as well as Romford Men's Singles champion in 1959, 1961 and 1962. He was Chelmsford Men's Doubles Champion five times – three times in tandem with Charlie Wheeler (1957, 1958 and 1959) with Julien Levett (in 1966) and with Mark Sweeting in 1972.

Former Chelmsford League Chairman Ian Whiteside said: "My one memory of watching Tony was in a Men's Singles final at the old Hoffmann ballroom when he played Tommy Caldwell – a pretty good player himself. Tony was in total control of the match and it seemed the harder Tommy worked (and he did work hard), the classier Tony looked.

"One point remains in my memory. Tony was well ahead, had got Tommy away from the table returning with heavy top-spin defence. Tony shaped to play yet another drive to Tommy's forehand but instead deliberately – and it was deliberate – played over the ball and then just gently dropped it over the net to win the point."

Twice Chelmsford Men's Singles champion Mark Sweeting recalls that to beat Tony Condon was "a truly

exhausting experience and that he was one of the cleverest players of his time. Very strong mentally."

* The Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League's Knock-Out Cups remain very popular and the fact that divisions two, three, four and five have their own Cup events certainly adds to that popularity.

OCs C (Gareth Joice, Mick Richardson and David Porter) were shock 5-4 winners over high-flying Danbury D in the first round of the division two Knock Out Cup. This victory owed a lot to their prowess in the doubles. They won all three doubles and Mick Richardson and David Porter sealed the victory in the last game with a strangely fluctuating 3-1 (11-13, 11-1, 13-11, 11-3) win over Sam Lowman and Cameron Gray. Danbury's Lowman and Dan Anderson must have been left wondering what had hit them as they won all four of their singles.

OCs C followed this up with a 5-1 win over Hatfield Peverel. Mick Richardson impressed by beating Neil Freeman 3-1 (11-9, 11-7, 4-11, 12-10).

Writtle C (Gary Ward, Dave Calleja and John Parodi) ran out 5-0 winners against Danbury E. John Parodi defeated Gordon Gatheral 3-2 (9-11, 16-14, 3-11, 11-7, 11-7).

Gareth Joice and Mick Richardson (OCs D) were in action again in the division three Knock Out Cup but this time they were on the wrong end of a 5-4 defeat to Danbury H. Allan Steel played his part with a 3-0 (11-7, 12-10, 11-9) win over Richardson and a 3-0 (11-2, 11-8, 13-11) victory over Joice. With the scores poised at 4-4 Steel and Luca Bailey came through in five ends against Richardson and Mick Hayes (5-11, 11-4, 11-8, 8-11, 11-4).

Three matches resulted in 5-0 results. Danbury G ran out 5-0 winners against Chelmsford D. Peter Hance, Nicky Reece Ford and Maurice Hardy carried all before them. Hance played his part with a 3-2 (11-8, 8-11, 11-7, 8-11, 11-2) win over Connor Payne.

Writtle D also won 5-0. Trevor Collin, Dave Carter and Colin Barham gave nothing away against Highwood A. OCs B (Richard Baxter, Richard Upson and David Newman) defeated OCs C. David Newman's 3-2 win over Russell Hall (11-9, 9-11, 10-12, 11-5, 11-2) meant there was no way back for OCs C.

Chelmsford F, Writtle F and OCs A are all through to the second round of the division four Knock Out Cup. OCs A had to battle hard to beat Highwood A 5-3. They trailed 3-2 but fought back to win. David Bishop sealed the victory with a 3-1 (7-11, 11-6, 11-5, 11-9) win over Nicola Phippen having previously defeated Keith Fitz-John 3-0 (11-2, 11-8, 11-9).

Writtle F (David Meah / Brian Steward / Colin Griffiths) beat Highwood B 5-0. Steward had to dig deep to beat Frank Neill in five (7-11, 11-5, 11-6, 8-11, 11-8).

Chelmsford E beat Chelmsford F 5-2. Jon Dyson, Dusan Doszkoty and Martin Hiskey all played their part in this success. Doszkoty won twice. He beat Vinni Kamma 3-2 (11-9, 11-9, 4-11, 11-13, 11-5) and Jason Clark 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-7).

A strong Chelmsford A ran out 8-0 winners against Danbury Demons in the Junior Knock Out Cup. Harry Buckle, James Donald and Vineeth Kamma were all on good form. Donald, one of the stars of the M&G Investments Chelmsford Championships, looks to be one for the future and his impressive showing where he won the Under-14 Singles and reached the final of the Under-16 Singles certainly marks him out as one to watch.

The Handicap Knock Out Cup remains the best supported Cup in the League's programme. It is only the first division teams, often heavily committed to League matches in other leagues, who give it a wide berth.

OCs B – that very busy side of Gareth Joice, Mick Richardson and David Porter again – ran out 5-2 winners over Chelmsford F. Mick Richardson (handicap of 61) beat Adi Kamma (handicap of 49) narrowly 23-21, 22-20 to seal the OCs victory.

Chelmsford G (Ian Austin, Andy Swales and Sarah Austin) ran out 5-1 winners over OCs A. Austin (handicap of 49) beat Dan Berry (handicap of 68) 19-21, 21-13, 21-18 to ensure Chelmsford went through to the next round.

Danbury H (Eamon Hall supported by up and coming Juniors Ben Porter and Sam Mortimer-Ford) were quick-fire 6-0 winners over Highwood B. Porter (handicap of 43) stormed though his two singles – (21-5, 21-9) against

Martin Goddard (handicap of 52) and against Russell Downton (21-6, 21-6) (handicap of 53). He has clearly outgrown his Handicap already.

Reigning first division champions Maldon A faced a strong Rawreth A side in division 1(A) fielding 2019 M&G Investments Chelmsford Men's Doubles champions Liam Squirell and Reece Seddon. Alex Abbott, who missed this year's Championships, was the Maldon leading light and with 12 wins out of 12 Abbott remains undefeated in the second half of the season. Reece Seddon scored fine 3-1 wins over Paul Sayer (11-9, 11-4, 7-11, 11-3) and Trevor Lloyd (5-11, 13-11, 11-8, 11-8) and the Seddon / Liam Squirell doubles pairing – so impressive in the Closed Championships – scored another fine win. This time they beat Lloyd / Abbott 3-2 (6-11, 12-10, 11-5, 11-7). 7-3 to the Champions elect, another strong performance from the leading side in the League.

Danbury B turned in an excellent performance in division 1 (B). Gus Heath and Ian Whiteside starred as they beat Chelmsford B 7-3. Ace defender Ian Whiteside was on dominant form with three convincing wins. He beat Victor Chan (11-6, 11-3, 11-4), Rob Shrimpton (11-3, 3-11, 11-3, 11-3) and Keith Martin (11-4, 11-3, 13-11).

In division two OCs C impressed by beating Maldon C 7-3. Tom Barker was the difference between the two teams. He defeated Dawn Baldry 3-1 (7-11, 11-8, 11-6, 11-9), John Holland 3-1 (15-13, 6-11, 11-6, 11-4) and Ev Lucas 3-0 (14-12, 11-6, 11-5).

Hatfield Peverel D (Keith Flowers, Martin Archie and Nick Duce) gave nothing away against Highwood A in division four. 10-0 to Hatfield Peverel D. It looked as if Highwood were going to get off the mark in the last game when Melanie Bonnett led Keith Flowers 2-0 but Keith fought back strongly to win 3-2 (10-12, 7-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-7).

Second-placed Chelmsford G ran out 9-1 winners against OCs H in division five. Ian Austin and Andy Swales were both undefeated. Stuart Wintle was on target for the losers with a hard-fought 3-2 (11-7, 11-8, 14-16, 8-11, 11-6) win over Sarah Austin.

The leaders Galleywood C won 8-2. Gary Copsey and Aidan Noguchi were both undefeated.

Chelmsford Cougars beat Chelmsford Jaguars 5-0 in division 2A of the CLICK League. James Donald and Harry Chivers were both undefeated although they both had to fight against 2019 M&G Investments Chelmsford Junior Girls' Singles champion Nyree Marsh. Chivers came through in five ends (11-8, 4-11, 13-15, 11-5, 11-8) whilst Donald also required five ends before he pulled away to win 11-6, 12-14, 11-6, 9-11, 11-2.

Chelmsford Pumas (Joachim Mapes and Saul Chivers) beat Chelmsford Tigers 3-2. Good going as Cameron Waite was unbeaten for the Tigers.

CLICK division 2B produced two 3-2 scorelines. Buttsbury Bears led by an undefeated Harry Hutt beat Buttsbury Badgers. The match between Ben Brown and Harry was one of the closest on record with Hutt shading it 3-2 (4-11, 13-11, 11-7, 9-11, 20-18).

Chelmsford Rhinos (Ben Chivers and Dan Wise) edged it against Buttsbury Bulldogs although they both missed out against Max Samuels.

Buttsbury Beavers were 5-0 winners in CLICK division 2 C against Chelmsford Wildcats. George Hagland and Oliver Barrett were both undefeated. The match between Emilie Gilloux and Oliver Barrett was a close one with Oliver shading it 3-1 (11-8, 11-9, 11-13, 12-10).

The Wildcats did better against Chelmsford Eagles, winning 3-2. Emilie Gilloux and Alesha Ellis-Austin both won once to counter the two wins picked up by James Killeen. Buttsbury Beavers shaded it 3-2 against Buttsbury Bats. Leo Beadon won his two singles, beating Zachary Samuels 3-0 (11-2, 11-4, 11-6) and Leo Comer 3-1 (11-6, 11-4, 8-11, 11-4).

M&G Investments Chelmsford League Tournament Organiser Arthur Clark has advised that four items of clothing were left behind on the Chelmsford Tournament weekend and remain unclaimed. Can the owners please contact Arthur Clark urgently.

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