



Paul, Tin-Tin and Andrew were gold stars

Author: **Paul Stimpson**

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An ITTF World Tour winner, a World champion and a European gold medallist . . . the first half of our review of 2019 features some stellar achievements in the English table tennis landscape.

First on to the impressive roll of honour was Andrew Baggaley, who [lifted the World Championship of Ping Pong title](#) for the third time at Alexandra Palace in January.

Next to taste glory was Tin-Tin Ho, who in March became a European champion, combining with Austria's Karoline Mischek to take [women's doubles gold at the European Under-21 Championships](#).

The World Tour win was a historic moment in the career of Paul Drinkhall as he became the [first English player to win two World Tour events](#), coming from 2-0 down to beat Abdel-Kader Salifou in the final of the Serbia Open in May.



Paul Drinkhall on top of the podium in Serbia

There were plenty more achievements and landmarks in the first six months of the year, starting with a personal milestone for a true grandee of the English game as Colin Clemett celebrated his 90th birthday in January.

On the tables, Bournemouth's Sophie Barcsai won a superb bronze medal at the Hungarian Mini-Cadet Open, while the first ever Senior National Championships Qualifying Tournament was held, with 10 men and 10 women qualifying to join the elite at the Nationals 'proper'. England No 2 Maria Tsaptsinos broke into the world's top 200 for the first time.

In February, there was more success in the junior ranks as Denise Payet & Megan Gidney, and James Smith & Ethan Walsh earned doubles bronze medals at the Swedish Junior & Cadet Open.

Table Tennis England's Ping Pong Parlours initiative was shortlisted for a BT Sport Industry Award, while an important step was taken in our governance as the inaugural 12 members of the Members' Advisory Group (MAG) were appointed.

March saw a first Women's Singles title for Maria Tsaptsinos at the PG Mutual National Championships, while Liam Pitchford took his fifth Men's Singles title. Josh Bennett won his first senior title, in the Mixed Doubles, while Ashley Facey-Thompson took the para title.



Maria Tsaptsinos celebrates winning her first Women's Singles Senior National title (picture by Alan Man)

There was more good news for Pitchford immediately after the Nationals when he announced that he would [be joining one of the world's top leagues](#), the Japanese T.League.

More evidence of the positive effects of table tennis was illustrated with the story of Philip Batchelor, who said the sport is a ['miracle' in his fight against Parkinson's Disease](#).

April was a busy month on and off the tables. As our new [youth initiative TT Kidz](#) – aimed at getting young players aged 7-to-11 into the sport – was launched, one of our current star youth players, Ruby Chan, [won a total of four medals](#), two of them gold, at the Ghana Junior & Cadet Open.

Umpire Nico Caltabiano joined the ranks of the world's elite umpires as he [attained Blue Badge status](#), while para world and Commonwealth champion Ross Wilson was [inducted into the English Institute of Sport Sheffield's Hall of Champions](#).

More honours were given out at the [Pride of Table Tennis Awards dinner](#), and Table Tennis England received an award from the ITTF for our [staging of the Team World Cup](#) of 2018.

Receiving that award during the World Championships was Sandra Deaton, who herself was [appointed as Table Tennis England Chairman](#) for a second and final permitted term of office.

Mike Lushington and Thomas Porter proved table tennis is a sport for all, for life as they teamed up for a Hastings & District League match – with an [age difference of 77 years](#) between them.

In May, Liam Pitchford spearheaded his French club Hennebont's [ETTU Cup victory](#). It was the first time the club had won the trophy and a great way for Liam to sign off before joining the Japanese T.League.

At home, Ormesby [lifted the Senior British League Premier Division title](#) as they took the sets they needed against previous champions Urban on the final weekend.

As the season came towards its end in June, England boys won the team gold and the girls' squad took the

silver at the [Cadet 6 Nations in Denmark](#) – where there were also individual silvers for Mari Baldwin and Naphong Boonyaprapa.



The Cadet 6 Nations squad

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