

Children in Need Hardbat GP

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Tables turned back 60 years for charity

It was the brainwave of new Committee member Andrew Sullivan. A selection of hard bats had come into his possession and with them a spark of an idea to raise funds for Children in Need.

Now, Cippenham Table Tennis Club runs a Grand Prix competition for members every Tuesday evening so the format was already tested – how about taking that format, pushing it back six decades to the time before sponge and then sandwich bats made the old simple rubber-faced bat obsolete, have a bit of fun in the process and do our bit for this very worthwhile charity? Revert also to 21-up, a scoring system that many revere but which was eliminated from competitive table tennis ten years ago.

Probably due to a number of league matches taking place the same evening the entry was not great, but ten players took to the tables all wielding modern incarnations of the antique weapon. No-one could predict the outcome of any match and there were some long and close encounters – long, because most players were unsure how to attack effectively with equipment foreign to them.

Former Bucks county player Jon Bradbury gave a cameo appearance, winning his three matches in the first round group before giving up his place in the top group in order to deliver his young son home at a reasonable hour.

It was a tough group that he left with Ricky Hardcastle finding his attacking prowess just in time to recover from 10-5 down in the decider to beat Graham Trimming 21-19. Sue Hayes, having overcome Armando Borges and Malcolm Makarian to make it into the top three, then also took Ricky to another 21-19 in the third result before giving second best to the 21 year old who was playing with a hard bat for the first time.

In Group 2, new member Ashley D'Sa was showing more than a little adeptness placing the ball in all parts of the table with his hard-faced racket, getting the better of organiser Andrew Sullivan and super veteran Terry Boxall whose game many assumed would be more suited to a hard bat.

In the final group Ashley beat Sue but could not find the same form to beat Ricky who emerged as a worth winner.

In total, £60 was raised for Children in Need, helped by Andrew's partner Hannah Meyer who sold home makes cakes to swell the coffers.



by Graham Trimming

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