

# M&G Investments Chelmsford Closed Finals Night Results

**Author:** Russell Moore

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Alex Abbott wins M&G Investments Chelmsford Men's Singles title as well as Veterans Over 40s and Over 50s Crowns

Alex Abbott (Maldon) made history in the M&G Investments sponsored Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League Closed Championships Finals Night played at the Old Chelmsfordians Club on Monday 20 February 2012. He became the first player in league history to win the Mens Singles and Veterans Singles titles in the same year to add to his Over 50s Singles Crown.

Alex's evening began with a five game Men's Singles semi-final victory against Antony Greenwood (Danbury). It was Abbott who made the early running and he won the first game comfortably 11-4. Smooth top-spinner Antony knew that he would have to up the tempo considerably – he needed no reminding and he took the next two games 11-8, 11-8. Alex was in trouble but he kept his composure remarkably well and he took the fourth game 11-8. That was the turning point – Alex romped home 11-3 in the decider.

Stephen Joslin (ECC) won the second men's semi-final with a 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-9) victory over Gary Young (Elmtree Excalibur). Neither player was able to find their very best form but Joslin, a noted big time competitor as well as a twice former Chelmsford Mens Singles Champion always looked the more confident.

Young raced into a 6-1 lead in the third game but after producing some sparkling play he lost the next five points. Joslin needed no second asking and he snatched the game for a 3-0 victory.

Darren Richardson (Chelmsford) became Chelmsford U21 Singles Champion in his first year in the League. James Austin displayed plenty of good touches and fought well to win the second game but in general Darren made fewer mistakes and the longer the game progressed the more likely it looked that he would win. He finished strongly to run out a 3-1 (11-7, 9-11, 11-5, 11-5) winner.

David Cole/Julie Vansertima (Chelmsford) were heavy favourites to win the Mixed Doubles title. Sure enough they claimed the title with a four game victory over Steve Kerns (ECC)/Melanie Bonnett (Elmtree Excalibur) 3-1 (7-11, 11-8, 11-8, 11-7). However, Steve and Melanie will be pleased with their showing. Not only did they win the first end but they were competitive in the second, third and fourth games as well.

Steve Joslin/Mike Andrews (Danbury) retained their Men's Doubles title by beating the unseeded pairing of Antony Greenwood/Mark Mulley in a very hard-fought four game final. There was never much in it at any time and Steve/Mike sealed the match by winning a very close fourth game 12-10 to give themselves a 3-1 (11-9, 8-11, 11-9, 12-10) victory.

The Veterans Singles final saw Alex Abbott capture his first title on a

Chelmsford Final night and he did it with a very hard fought 3-1 (7-11, 13-11, 11-9, 14-12) victory over David Cole. The big talking point came in the third game with Abbott winning 7-2. Cole's bat clipped the table and a very large chunk of rubber flew off it. Cole had to borrow a bat but amazingly he fought back only to lose the game

11-9. The very experienced Cole continued to press and he came very close to taking what was a riveting match to a fifth end.

Julie Vansertima captured the Ladies' Singles title for a remarkable nineteenth time by beating Sue Hickman (OCs) in a four game Ladies Singles final. Sue had impressed in the preliminary stages of the tournament by beating Lin Attridge in the semi-final. She played really well again. Not only did she take the first game but she matched Julie in the second end before Julie surged away to win it. Julie stepped up the pace in the third end, which she won 11-3, but Sue gave a very good account of herself in the fourth end. A relieved Julie eventually ran out a 3-1 (9-11, 11-7, 11-3, 11-8) winner.

The last game of the night – the Men's Singles Final produced rally after rally of smooth top spin and counter-hitting table tennis. Ten to 20 shot rallies were common-place as both players retrieved the ball from away from the table.

Steve Joslin looked to absorb everything that Alex Abbott threw at him and for long periods of the match he did so but in the fifth game Alex got his nose in front at just the right time. Steve led 6-4 and 7-5 but it was Alex who finished the stronger. He edged ahead 9-7 and eventually won 3-2 (9-11, 11-7, 11-8, 7-11, 11-8) after what had been a truly spell-binding match and one of the hardest fought and most evenly matched Men's Singles finals in the league's history.

Steve Kerns

Press & Publicity Officer

Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League

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