

Abbott regains Chelmsford title

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Alex Abbott retains M&G Investments Mens Singles title

Alex Abbott retained his M&G Investments Chelmsford Closed Table Tennis League Mens' Singles title at Old Chelmsfordians Association with a thrilling five-set final victory over second seed Steve Joslin. For good measure he also captured the Mens' Doubles title.

However, he lost his Veterans' Singles crown. That particular title was won by Dave Cole, the player Abbott beat in his Mens' Singles semi-final.

The evening began with the first of the Mens' Singles semi-finals and it was Alex Abbott who was the quicker out of the blocks. He raced into a 2-0 lead before Dave found his feet. He rallied strongly to level the scores at 2-2 but it wasn't enough. Alex upped his game considerably in the fifth end and he powered away to win 3-2 (11-8, 11-7, 7-11, 5-11, 11-5).

Steve Joslin booked his Mens' Singles final appearance by beating the up-and-coming Mike Andrews in four ends. Steve's extra experience counted for a lot and although Mike hit some excellent shots, most notably with a vastly improved very aggressive back-hand topspin, Steve always seemed the more likely winner, eventually winning 3-1 (11-8, 11-5, 10-12, 11-4).

Alex Abbott/Paul Sayer are the M&G Investments 2012-13 Mens' Doubles Champions. After four games which featured numerous long rallies and at times thrilling top-class and widely fluctuating table tennis they eventually powered ahead in the fifth game to beat Paul Davison/Kevin Gowlett 3-2 (4-11, 11-5, 11-8, 7-11, 11-4).

Julie Johnson/Dave Cole did not disappoint in the Mixed Doubles final. Although their opponents Linda Attridge/Steve Kerns pulled back from 10-6 down to level at 10-10 in the second game they weren't able to capitalise on it.

After missing out 14-12 there was no way back for them and Julie/Dave ran out convincing 3-0 (11-4, 14-12, 11-4) winners. This is Julie's twelfth success in this event whilst David has now won it ten times.

The Veterans Singles final was a repeat of last year's final and this time Dave Cole emerged as a four game winner against Alex Abbott. There was never much in it over the four ends and the match turned on a very hard-fought third game.

Dave edged it and, with his forehand becoming increasingly potent, he went onto snatch the fourth end from 8-8 to take an excellent match 3-1 (11-13, 11-9, 16-14, 11-8). This is David's fifth win in this event.

The Under 21 Singles final between Scott Dowsett and Robert Shrimpton was equally close. Scott hit some thunderous shots, which was often what was required to win the points bearing in mind just how well Robert counter-hits.

Finally, in the fifth game Robert was able to put some daylight between himself and his opponent. Robert eventually won 3-2 (10-12, 15-13, 9-11, 11-8, 11-6).

The Ladies Singles final saw Julie Johnson win an incredible twentieth title but not before Dawn Baldry had pushed her all the way. Hitting with confidence and at times real power Dawn produced some truly spectacular shots and Julie was called upon to utilise all of her experience to keep her nose ahead.

Dawn took the first game and was in contention throughout before a relieved Julie finally won 3-1 (7-11, 11-8, 12-10, 13-11).

And so to the main event of the night. Alex Abbott again made a very good start and the first game escaped Steve Joslin's grasp before he could really make his mark. The second game saw Joslin fritter away a sizeable lead and when Abbott sealed victory 11-9 it was clear he would be very hard to beat.

To Joslin's credit he came out fighting and he played really well to take the third and fourth ends. It wasn't quite enough. Alex Abbott produced some absolutely flawless play in the fifth game right when he needed it most. Alex won an excellent match 3-2 (11-6, 11-9, 8-11, 3-11, 11-5).

Steve Kerns

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