

Discussions for the Leicester TT League

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There are still players around in the Leicester Table Tennis League who not only remember, but played in the halcyon days of the mid-1970s when the league had built up to the largest in this country with twenty divisions and 12 teams in each.

As with many other sports and activities those days are long gone and the local league was down to five divisions last season, still the third largest in this country. However, indications that the downward trend had been stopped were there and this has been confirmed with an additional division this coming term, albeit a half division with six teams. But it is a very significant change of direction representing a 10 percent increase.

With Knighton Park able to expand their coaching of juniors so ably overseen by Shirley Pickering because of their new premises allowing ten tables instead of four, and Abbots Road continuing their junior programme, there is no reason to suppose that upward trend in numbers will not continue. The Leicester Development League should also grow this term.

There are two areas still to be visited and improved upon: there is a black hole where people between the ages of 25 and 50 should be. They are out there somewhere, but where? And how can they be enticed back into the table tennis fold? Actually, into all sports for that matter.

The other area woefully short of numbers are females. Back in the seventies Leicestershire had a group of young ladies at or near the top of the England rankings. Now you can easily count all females in the league on two hands and still have fingers left.

Once again, however, this might be changing with signs of increased numbers of the fair sex reporting for duty. Not only that but Angela Bowness who plays in the Leicester League for Knighton Park is taking a team of five ladies to play in the Hinckley league for experience under the appropriate guise of Caterpillar "F". F for female?

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