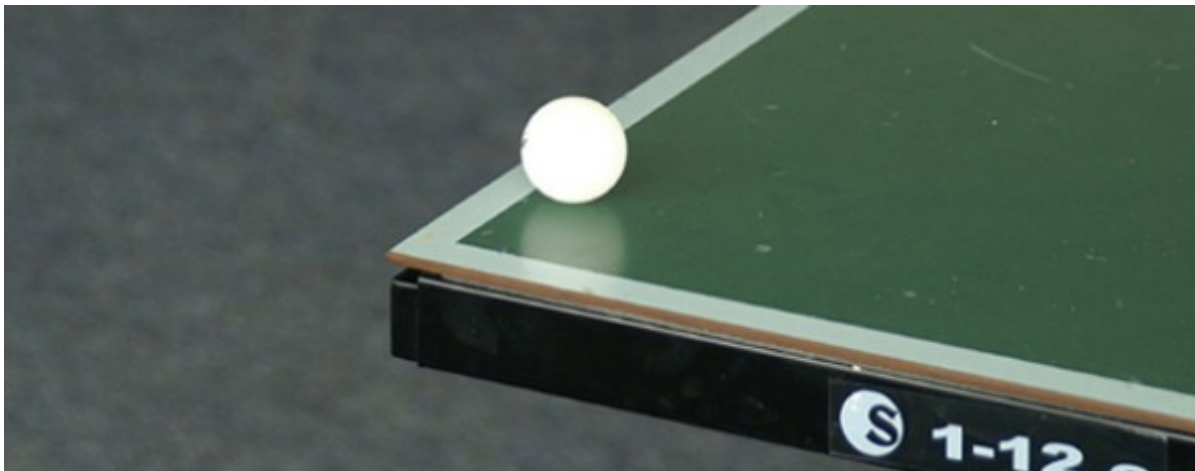


Maldon A out to retain Chelmsford title

Author: [Russell Moore](#)

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Maldon A out to retain their Chelmsford first division title

The 2013 -14 Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League Season kicks off on Monday 23 September 2013 and the League has retained its five main divisions as well as its successful Junior / Introductory (CLICK) division.

Maldon A, last year's first division Champions will be out to retain their title. Their challenge will be headed by last year's M&G Investments Chelmsford Mens Doubles Champions Alex Abbott and Paul Sayer with support from Peter Ballard, Hamish Innes and Paul Stephens. Maldon B could well be their closest challengers, particularly if their best players play regularly. Their challenge will be fronted by 2013 Colchester Mens Singles Champion Keiran Lally with support from County Junior star James Denyer, Ben Warner (who returns after a 14 year absence), Greg Green, John Cleasby, John Monk and John Poysden.

On paper OCs A also look pretty formidable. David Cole, Peter Hayden, Terry Dowsett, Brandon Crouchman and John Andrews are a squad capable of beating anyone on their day. Promoted teams tend to struggle although Danbury B could well be the exception. Chris Buer and Andrew Halling have been retained from last year's division two Champions side and they have added the services of four more top players – Kevin Read, Tony Halling, Keith Phillips and Charles Sweeney. They could well be this year's "dark horses". ECC B finished bottom last year, although their improvement in the second half of the Season was quite startling. With 1998 Chelmsford Mens Singles Champion Rik James playing as well as ever and with support from the improving Simon Webber and Alistair Hill and the experienced Ken James they could well do a lot better this time round.

Three sides stand out in division two. Chelmsford A, led by the reliable and experienced Waseem Qureshi and featuring Julie Johnson, Mike Johnston and Alistair Piper will start as favourites. ECC C will also be there or thereabouts. James Hicks and Reuben Okai have obvious first division potential and team-mates Bryn Thomas and Colin Blore are equally adept at this level. Promoted Elmtree Excalibur B could also be difficult to beat if their best players play most weeks. A team featuring the very hard-hitting Scott Dowsett, canny defender Fred Button, Phil Smith, new signing Lee McHugh, Tony Hallett and Gus Heath will certainly be there or thereabouts.

Division three is hard to call. The standard looks very much on a par with division two this year. Chelmsford C include the talented Father / Son duo Neil and Ryan Gooday with back-up from Dave Parker, Paul Nicol and when he is home from University – last year's M&G Investments Chelmsford Under 21 Champion Robert Shrimpton. OCs B include two players who will be very hard to beat at this level. Steve Northcott and Robbie Burton can trouble most first division players and if team-mates Nat Ravlic, John Watts, Mick Hayes, Roy Moore and Dave Porter can provide adequate support they should do well.

ECC D should also be in with a shout. Their team of Malcolm Storey, Richard Storey, Peter Layzell, Steve Siggs

and Neil Thompson should certainly be competitive. The other side who can never be overlooked at this level are Danbury F. Old-hands in this division and good for the odd startling victory (as well as the unexpected defeat!) expect League Chairman Norman Smith, Nicky Reece-Ford, Herbie Smith and Peter Hance to be close to the top of the table come next April. Promoted Maldon C might not make it a "double-promotion" but their side of Dawn Baldry, Shirley Carrol, Tom Elder and Brian Riedling won't be too far off the pace. This could well be the League's most evenly matched division.

Danbury, the League's biggest Club ought to make their mark in division four. Three of their teams should be in the shake-up for honours. Danbury J (Brian Ellis, Dave Oxley-Goody and Dave Powell), Danbury K (Norman Hayes, Chris Hancox, Mick Robinson and Roger Tiffin) and Danbury L (Alan Dadswell, Terry Hyland, Trevor Palmer and Kevin Willis) should all do well. Expect Chelmsford D (Mark Brown, Jennie Crapnell, Bob Francis, Adam Pitt and Richard Upson) to challenge them.

In division five, three teams have the potential to field very strong line-ups. New team Maldon D will be able to pick from a very large squad of Martin Goodworth, Oliver Gregory, Steve Lucas, Colin Napper, Mervyn Perriman, Ryan Sach, Steve Scholz, Peter Scholz and Ross Wheeler. Hatfield Peverel D are equally strong on paper. Perm any three from Tom Barker, Sue Hickman, Mick Parkhurst, Josh Watts and Peter Windley. Hatfield Peverel D are perhaps the strongest of all. They have a squad of Ron Biggs, Keith Cullen, Gareth Davies, Ray Eldridge, Dave Fiddeman, Paul Mulley, Andy Simmonds, Bryan Speller and Andy Whiley.

The League are delighted to welcome three teams from Buttsbury into the CLICK League. Felsted should also be a force to contend with. OCs / KEGS will look to improve on last year. They will choose from Harry Clark, Danish Dewani, Danial Naqvi, Prateek Puvali, Joel Rowden and Aswin Siam. Black Notley are another side who will look for further improvement on last Season. They will select from William Brazier, Jamie Brooks, Ewan Phillipson, Jake Whiteside and Scott Whiteside.

ECC were the winners of the 2012-3 Veterans Knock-Out Cup Final. In a match held over from last Season their side of Rik James, Steve Kerns and Bryn Thomas beat Danbury A 5-1 in the recently played Final. Steve Whitely, who made such an impressive return to the sport last season was on target for Danbury with a 3-1 win over Bryn Thomas, but he missed out against Steve Kerns, a player he last played 33 years ago.

Steve Kerns, Press Officer, Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League (September 18, 2013)

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