

Leicestershire TTA Rose Johnson Bowl report

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LEICESTERSHIRE TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

ROSE JOHNSON BOWL

Gordon Sanders has organised this County Association Team Handicap for many years for which the first recorded winners were Joseph Johnson. This was somewhat fitting as the Johnson family, a very successful local business family, were also keen table tennis players, donating this and, subsequently, other trophies named after the head man's wife, Rose. To follow would be the Rose Johnson Cup, the major League trophy, and then the Rose Johnson Memorial in the form of a ladies singles which eventually evolved into a handicap competition.

In the semi-finals of the Bowl this season, three of the four teams were from Knighton Park, unsurprising as they always have a very heavy entry from the point of view of numbers. Providing opposition for KP 3rds were Abbots Road who received 76 points over the 16 game all-play-all format.

The games in the first quarter went with the head and revealed little indication of anything but a close outcome at the end of the evening. George McClurkin, Reza Kiani and Shirley Pickering all winning for KP, but not overwhelmingly, and Patrick Cox lost to Fahed Sacoor, leaving the reduction of the deficit a few points behind schedule.

The second quarter proved to be much the same, except that McClurkins's struggle to overcome Sacoor by the narrowest of margins was countered, firstly by Pickering showing great determination and stickability to resist Ross Adams's heavy spin, and Cox beating Tosh Singh convincingly 21-12, after being 7-3 down. Reducing the deficit was still proving elusive.

What the team needed was a big win to kick the momentum up a notch, and in true captain's tradition Pickering produced it, beating Raju Rahul comprehensively 21- 6. She was expected to win, and comfortably, but the nature of the performance was so important. Suitably inspired, Kiani followed with a 21-9 win against Sacoor and the deficit was being blown away.

The next game up was Adams v Cox, an anticipated win for the Abbots Road hosts and a stabilising effect for the rest of the match. Cox battled away against, sometimes, bewildering spin and against the odds with every shot in the book. He finished the game outplaying Adams, and cemented KP's hold on the match who eventually won 326-292.

The other match featured two Knighton Park teams with the Seconds beating the Fifth 317-300, just managing to maintain the lead after starting 65 point to the good.

Star for the Seconds was Simon Aldis who was the only player from his team to finish with a plus score, albeit +2. Nevertheless it was an important performance as the opposition had Karen Smith in their ranks, and she finish with a score of +51.

Karen's nephew, Jack Rogers, did well to beat both Martin Pember and Ashley Palmer, but the winners proved just that bit too strong in depth with Chris Parmar-Saville -4 and Pember -28.

Thanks to Gordon Sanders for additional material.

John Bowness
Publicity Officer.

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