



Teams battle into ELCC finals

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The Zonal Rounds for the ELCC took place in various parts of the country over the weekend of April 8-9. There were some interesting and surprising results and many closely fought matches.

Firstly though I would like to express my thanks to all those Local Leagues who hosted one or more rounds of the competition. Without your support and help the ELCC would not be able to run.

Wilmott Cup (Men)

In Zone 1 the two finalists from last year met. This time the result was reversed and Sheffield came out the winners, so putting the holders, Chester/Ellesmere Port, out of the competition. The competitive rivalry between the two leagues has been long standing in the Wilmott Cup and both teams have taken top honours in the past.

Zone 2 saw the closest run zone of the weekend. Played at Harrogate, who had not entered the competition in recent times, the hosts were the unluckiest team of the day. Scunthorpe, Harrogate and Leeds all had one 3-2 win. On countback Scunthorpe had a 21-18 advantage over Harrogate with a 20-18 game difference. It just goes to show every point and game does matter. Joe Wright for Harrogate remained undefeated throughout the day.

Zone 3 saw Nottingham top the group by virtue of their 3-2 win over Grimsby/Cleethorpes to make it two wins for them, the other win was against Leicester who finished in third position.

Moving south for Zone 4 and another newcomer to the competition, Norwich, showed their strength with wins against Leamington Spa and Cambridge. A second match played at St Neots resulted in Watford finishing in first place, Luton A and Norwich B the other teams in the group. Some tight matches saw five go the full distance and another six go to four. The third fixture to be played at St Neots was another real battle between Central London and Wembley & Harrow. At 2-2, one match left to play, Jamal Dennison v Dariusz Zurowski. It took five ends but Wembley & Harrow finally came away as the winners. An unlucky Luton B side met two teams who were on top form.

Zones 7 and 8 were both played at the Kingfisher Club in Reading, a venue that was very popular with the players last season. The home side had two fairly comfortable wins in Zone 7 against both Bracknell & Wokingham and Luton C to once again reach the finals. The final zone, Zone 8, saw a delighted Bournemouth also become finalists after a close 3-2 win over Guildford and a 4-1 win over Bracknell & Wokingham.

The finals look as if it will be an interesting competition with three of the finals teams having lifted the Wilmott Cup in the last 10 years.

Finalists: Sheffield, Scunthorpe, Nottingham, Norwich A, Watford, Wembley & Harrow, Reading, Bournemouth.

J M Rose Bowl (Ladies)

Entries were low in the J M Rose Bowl and when Sheffield pulled out of Zone 1 it left Warrington and Liverpool as automatic finalists without having to play.

Zone 2 was a four-way competition with three teams qualifying for the finals. Crawley/Horsham were zone winners courtesy of two 3-2 wins against Guildford and Central London, in both cases the doubles proved the crucial match. Central London finished in second place and Guildford in third. Both of these teams also qualify for the finals. The unlucky fourth-placed team were Bracknell & Wokingham.

Leicester (the holders), Cambridge and Hastings all had byes to the finals.

As in the Wilmott Cup, three teams have all held this trophy aloft in the last few years.

Finalists: Warrington, Liverpool, Crawley/Horsham, Central London, Guildford, Leicester, Cambridge, Hastings.

Carter Cup (Junior Boys)

In Zone 1 Keighley and Liverpool both qualified for the finals due to the late withdrawal of both the Darlington teams.

Zone 2 saw Leicester with two 3-2 wins, and Leamington Spa, a 4-1 win and 2-3 loss, both qualify, Nottingham had an under-strength team and finished third.

Last year's winners in Zone 3, Crawley and Horsham, romped away winning all their four matches 5-0. Wembley & Harrow finished in second qualifying position with three wins. Bournemouth, Haywards Heath and Brighton won one apiece, and again some close matches.

In the final zone, Zone 4, there were again five teams competing. Wembley & Harrow B won their four matches 5-0 to finish in pole position and to make it two teams from Wembley & Harrow who qualify for the finals. They will be joined by Watford A from this group who finished in second place following a close 3-2 win over Norwich who finished third. Watford B were fourth and hosts, North Herts, finished in fifth place.

Finalists: Keighley, Liverpool, Leicester, Leamington Spa, Crawley/Horsham, Wembley & Harrow A, Watford A, Wembley & Harrow B.

Bromfield Trophy (Junior Girls)

Many Local Leagues seem to struggle to have enough players to enable them to enter the Bromfield Trophy and this year was no exception. Eight teams entered and eight places were available for the finals so all teams qualified automatically. Darlington A and B teams have, however, withdrawn which leaves six teams to fight it out for the trophy and title.

Last year's winners, Crawley/Horsham, are amongst those competing so we can expect a high quality competition.

Finalists: Cambridge, Guildford, Crawley/Horsham, North Herts, Leamington Spa, Hull.

Congratulations to all the finalists. We will look forward to seeing you at Westfield Table Tennis Club, Wellingborough on Saturday, June 17 for the senior events and Sunday, June 18 for the junior competitions.

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