



RAF duo earn Masters medals

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The RAF Table Tennis Association represented the UK at the World Masters Games in Auckland and returned with two medals.

They came in the women's competitions where the RAFTTA's two players Cpl Kris Sumner and Hayley Cunningham met in the third-fourth play-off. Sumner won to win the bronze medal. The pair also gained a silver medal in the doubles.

RAFTTA had players in the over-30s, 40s and one in the over-50s, but competition was fierce.

Round one saw most of the men losing and therefore playing for the Plate positions but WO Tony Stead and SAC Merv Funston made it through to the quarter-finals with Stead narrowly losing 3-2 in the fifth. Funston also played well against one of the top seeds.

In the team events, the men's A team finished respectable fifth out of 11 teams in the over-30 category. The remaining men's teams played well, with some memorable matches, but struggled to secure wins and ended up ninth and 10th.

The ladies faced similarly tough opposition which contained several national representatives and so failed to secure an overall win.

The event was hosted brilliantly by the Auckland Table Tennis Association and the atmosphere in the tightly packed arena was electrifying.

There was also a great deal of media attention due to legendary New Zealand athlete Sir Peter Snell – a triple Olympic champion on the track in the 1960s – playing in the over-70s' event.

The World Masters Games for older athletes has been held every four years since 1985 and aims to foster friendship and understanding as well as competition.

RAFTTA spokeswoman Sun Hinton said:

“Although we didn’t come away with many medals, the overall match experience was invaluable though and the chance to play such experienced and capable players was fantastic.

“We will certainly be looking at entering teams to the 2021 Games in Japan, but may reconsider whether we enter some teams in the recreational rather than competitive stream!”

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