



Leicester & District: Rogers is club champion

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Knighton Park, the largest table tennis club in Leicestershire and the only one with its own premises catering solely for the sport, held its club finals that produced a new club champion in 15-year-old Jack Rogers, who has improved in leaps and bounds during his three years in the Leicester League, capping a productive period having recently won the National Cadets Consolation Singles.

Earlier in the proceedings there was a dress rehearsal of one of the open semi-finals when Karen Smith faced Division One team-mate, Les Baker, in the final of the Veterans Singles.

Smith, the holder, found herself 2-1 down as Baker looked particularly sharp. Smith won the fourth 11-4 and just managed to keep the momentum going to take the decider 11-9 to retain the trophy.

Meantime there was an intriguing tussle in the final of the Junior Boys which featured 12-year-old Oscar Bentley against a relative newcomer nevertheless on the cusp of becoming a senior in Brajesh Patel who has showed marked improvement in Division Four as his fledgling league career took off. In this final, after a nervous start when he won the first 12-10, Patel gradually upped his game to win three straight against an opponent with many more years as a junior.

Patel also contested the Handicap Singles, this time against an even younger opponent in Edward Brown who is eleven. Brown, receiving 7 up to 21 each time, won the first 21-10, in effect 14-10. But Patel did very well to change his game slightly to get home 24-22, 21-19 in the next two, showing a mature mind. Another young loser in Brown, but again with plenty of time to develop.

All four players seemed a little nervous in the Handicap Doubles final, all four play in Division Three, with Simon Aldis and Steve Bessant, receiving one point, defeating Chris Parmar-Saville and Martin Pember 21-18, 21-15.

Came the repeat of the veteran singles final in the Open Singles semi-final when Les Baker this time sprang from 2-1 down against Karen Smith to take the fourth 11-9 before tip-toeing home 14-12 to progress to the final.

In the other semi-final, a real humdinger and see-saw affair, Jack Rogers finally overcame Reza Kiani 3-2 (10-12,

11-9, 2-11, 11-9, 11-4).

The final provided a surprisingly one-sided tussle with Rogers taking the first two 11-9, 11-7. Baker came out for the third with intent and soon went 4-0 up, only to lose nine points in a row for Rogers to cap a majestic display 11-5 to take what must be the first of many such successes.

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