



Chelmsford & District: Bocking seal second

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Despite being off the pace for much of the season, Bocking have secured second place in the first division of the Chelmsford & District Table Tennis League.

With a mere 27 points covering the teams placed second to eighth, this year has seen the top division become remarkably evenly balanced.

In the last match of the season Bocking turned out the very strong side of Rik James, Sam Hume and David Cole and they made no mistake against a two-player Rawreth side of Mike Hayes and Simon Neale and won 10-0. This enabled them to leapfrog Liberal A and they finished the season with 112 points – seven more than Liberal – although still well short of the 151 points achieved by the runaway champions Maldon A.

The ever reliable David Cole with an 84% record played most for the Bocking team and if Rik James (86%) and Sam Hume (78%) had played more they would have undoubtedly have finished much closer to Maldon A. Expect these two sides to be challenging for honours again next season.

This year's recipient of the Rosebery / Pope & Smith Award for Services to Table Tennis in the Chelmsford League is Matthew Brown who is retiring from the Chelmsford Committee. Matthew joined the Committee as a General Committee member in 2004 and the following season he was appointed Registrations Officer and he held that post until the end of season 2013/14. He took over from Richard Hiskey in season 2012 as Divisional Secretary and he has performed that role with great enthusiasm and efficiency and huge attention to detail until the end of the 2017 season.

Tanishq Kotwal is this year's recipient of the Hill Dowsett Junior Award – the award for the Junior player who having played in 80% of his team's matches has achieved the highest percentage of wins in the league. With a record of 92% Tanishq is a very deserving recipient and he led OCs H to a second-place finish in division five. He should do equally well next year in division four.

The Charlie Wheeler Award winner this year is Sam Hume. This Award is for the Junior player who achieves the

best (and in some cases the most unexpected results) in the M&G Investments Chelmsford Championships and Sam certainly lived up to his billing as Essex No 1 Junior. He won the Junior Boys Singles title after an epic five-set battle in the final against Ryan Gooday, the Junior Doubles (with Connor Payne) and the Under-21 Singles (with another victory over Ryan Gooday) and in the Men's Singles he pushed the eventual champion Ross Saxby closest before losing in the fifth end of a compelling semi-final encounter on Finals Night.

With such a busy schedule Hume also had the slightly dubious distinction of having to play 11 successive rounds of matches on the Saturday such was his involvement in proceedings. Tournament Organiser Arthur Clark spoke glowingly: "To his credit he neither complained nor asked for a rest when many players would have done."

He became the first Junior to reach the Men's Singles semi-final for 13 years. Sam is certainly in good company. Older players will remember the very talented Vytas Rybakas who won the Men's Singles title aged 14, in 2004, whilst other Juniors who have been Men's Singles semi-finalists, going back to 1978, have included Peter Hayden (1982), Steve Tilson (1983 and 1984), Keiran Lally (the winner in 2003), Reagan Nettleingham (1996), Steve Joslin (the 1995 winner) and Terry Dowsett (1978).

Paul Davison – five times Braintree Men's Singles Champion and four times M&G Investments Chelmsford Championships Men's Doubles winner is this year's recipient of the Essex County Table Tennis Association – Corti Woodcock Award – the County Association's premier award for service to Table Tennis.

Paul has been able to combine a very active playing career (which has taken in County, British League and Open Tournament play) with an even bigger undertaking to Coaching at National, Regional, County and Club level – largely with the thriving Earls Colne based NETTS Club in the Braintree League. He started coaching aged 15 and it is perhaps fitting that he should win this award in the 25th year of his coaching activities.

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