



## Leicester & District: Clubs ready for Elbow challenge

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Fifty one years ago I started a summer handicap competition on behalf of the Leicester & District League in conjunction with John Ellis who was the coaching supremo at the time.

I was the “head” coach in that I dealt with tactics and mindsets, while Ellis was very much head of coaching, and very good at the job which was the love of his life.

He taught many young players at the time including Karen Smith who is still going strong having won the J M Rose Bowl last season alongside Lois Peake and came through this season’s finals undefeated from her eight singles in gaining the bronze for Leicester with Shirley Pickering.

Putting our names together back then we decided to name the trophy the ELBOW Tankard, and it is an event still being played for. Mind you, from those heady days when we had 56 entries the numbers taking part now reflect the decline in numbers playing nearly all sports, not just table tennis. Just eight teams have entered this year.

Knighton Park has three teams and then one each from five different clubs. Notably not one of the six individual finalists from last season, when a team from the Park beat one from Abbots Road, are taking part this time.

Group matches, two groups of four, will take place during June and July with the semis and final in August just before the start of next season’s league proper. Each will play the others in the group home and away.

Group A: The Itinerants (Nomads), Abbots All Stars (Abbots Road), Knighton Park The Bus, No Parking (Knighton Park).

Group B: Desford Dynamos, KP Nutters, Electric City (Electricity), Casualties (Syston Casuals).

57 teams contested the Leicester League last term and Peter Wilson, the league’s Chairman, reports around the same this time, perhaps with a bit of luck a little nearer the 60 mark with one or two new clubs applying which is

a very good sign.

There were no changes at the top of the order for the County Association who had their Annual Meeting recently. President: David Green; Chairman: Gordon Sanders; Secretary: Shirley Pickering; Treasurer: Karen Smith.

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