



# LEAMINGTON AND DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

## Annual Report of the Executive Committee 2008/09

Hazel Higgins retired from the Vice Chairmanship during the year and we must start by acknowledging the huge debt we all owe to her. Hazel served on the Committee for just a few months short of 50 years and has also served as General Secretary and Chairman. In particular Hazel was closely involved in the acquisition of our Headquarters, which has been of tremendous benefit to the Association ever since.

This season the Association had seven 12 team format divisions for the first time. There were 72 teams in the first half of the season and 76 teams in the second half making the Association England's third largest league (after Bristol and Sheffield) measured by the number of teams. We had 335 registered players, but it is not possible to compare our player numbers with other leagues as their figures are not available.

We received a complaint from a team that too many of its matches had been postponed by its opponents. We have looked at ways to amend the rules to deal with this and other problems. It is about five years since the rules were revised and next year may be the time for a further routine revision. However most of the problems are practical issues which cannot be remedied by changing the rules. For example if a team does not have enough players on a particular night either the match is postponed or played with short numbers. Neither of these alternatives are ideal.

A small but significant number of matches were unplayed at the end of the season. We would draw attention to the fact that the rules normally require these to be scored as nil-nil.

At the 2008 AGM members asked for a review of the cup competitions in the light of the falling entry and the lack of interest from higher division teams. We came to the conclusion that there were two basic difficulties. Firstly the range of standards in the league is now so wide that a sensible competition between the strongest and weakest teams is not possible. Secondly with an open handicap if the weaker side wins, the match can be over too quickly. We have tried to remedy these issues by having three different cups and by having a sealed handicap. We believe that this was a considerable improvement and would welcome members comments on this experiment.

The 2008 AGM discussed child protection at some length. We have placed some simple advice in the handbook and referred clubs and members to more detailed advice from Coventry Solihull Warwickshire (CSW) Sport. This is on their website and hard copies were also distributed at the Club Secretaries meeting.

Sixty members attended Presentation evening, slightly less than last year but still a good turnout. We believe the format with a quiz rather than a disco is better, but we would welcome comments from members. On the other hand the proposed skittles evening in January combined with presentations for the Autumn competitions had to be cancelled due to lack of support. We would welcome comments as to whether an event of this sort is desirable. With any social event the venue needs to be given numbers in advance but

members delay booking until the last minute. After the problems with the skittles evening we introduced a reduced price for those who booked presentation evening tickets by finals night. This is similar to our policy of offering a reduced price to those who enter the Leamington Championships in good time and is likely to be adopted for all future Association events.

There was a slight reduction in entries to the Leamington Championships. We think this was because the later than usual dates were less convenient for some members. There are so many events now that finding dates which do not clash with any of them is very difficult but we intend to try and have slightly earlier dates if possible. Every event was contested. Jon Hall won the men's singles and Charlotte Spencer became the youngest ever winner of the women's singles apart from Kelly Sibley.

Juniors already pay a reduced entry fee to the Championships. This year we introduced an extra reduction to encourage juniors to enter senior and higher age group events. We also clarified the rules in cases where there are only a small number of entrants in an event and printed these on the entry form. No trophy will be awarded where there is only one entrant; two entrants play a final; three play a group with the top two going into a final; four entrants play two semi finals and a final; and five or more play groups wherever possible.

There was a good attendance at finals night and, as is now traditional, a free buffet was provided financed largely by the raffle. We would like to thank the finals night umpires for their work.

Team shirts with the Leamington logo badge are available in a variety of styles and colours. There is no minimum order number. Team or individual names can be added for a small supplement. The website is available through a link on the Association website.

One complaint of a disciplinary nature was submitted during the year. We asked senior officers of the clubs concerned to discuss the case between them and we are pleased to say that they later reported the matter had been amicably resolved. Although there will be circumstances when disciplinary action is the only way forward we would much prefer such matters to be resolved informally between clubs if at all possible.

ETTA is moving towards establishing an Associate Membership category for those who are involved in table tennis other than as players. We also now welcome those not actually playing in the league into membership for the nominal fee of £1 for adults and 50p for juniors.

Regular table tennis reports have appeared in the local press and the Press Officer Tom Brocklehurst was awarded the Endeavour Trophy in recognition of his excellent work. Up to date results, tables and ratings have continued to appear on the web site. New age based ranking lists have been produced for veterans, cadets and juniors on the web site.

Our President John Earles retires after the AGM after seven years. As is well known John has been a member of our Association since it started in 1946. We would like to put on record our thanks for all his help as President and in many other capacities over the years. We have marked his Presidency with a new trophy named after him. Members will be very pleased to hear that Brian Aston has accepted an invitation to become President after the AGM. Brian too has served table tennis in many capacities and is still very active as a player, club general secretary and joint organiser of the Heart of England Cadet League.

Estyn Williams  
General Secretary