

Welcome along everyone to the start of the 2008 season and the hum once again of a full hall on interclub night in particular. It is particularly pleasing to see the hall full with a number of new faces appearing (and old ones reappearing) throughout all the grades, especially so with players being absent due to shoulder injuries (four!!), overseas trips in excess of a month (five!!) and long standing players such as Ray Shave, Jessica MacAskill, Elaine and Alister Murchland moving out of town.

2008 Executive

Elaine Murchland was also our Treasurer and resigned when moving last September. John Smith has taken over this role. Members of the 2008 Executive appointed at the Annual Meeting are Keith Pyne who looks after property matters, Steve Jenkins, Clive Adamson and me as Chair. Debbie Cooper is once again carrying out secretarial matters and Ron Garrett (and his significant experience) has been co-opted on to the executive. Lindsay Beer our Development Officer also attends meetings.

If you wish to help out or have any ideas about how to improve Table Tennis in the South or comments or suggestions please approach one of us.

New Players from Out of Town

Welcome to Graham Jackson from Nelson and John McFarland from Dunedin into the A and A Reserve grade respectively, I'm sure you will both find us all a friendly yet competitive bunch. Your good results at the start of the season have no doubt strengthened the grades.

Note the updated averages and team placings have been updated by Richard Cavanagh – they are on the notice board near the tournament desk.

Business House Interclub

This year saw an increased number of teams entered with a number of new faces coming into the competition. Congratulations to Environment Southland on winning this competition at their first attempt. Two members of the team Robin Wilson and Malcolm Brown are playing in the Colonials A Reserve team and are making every post a winner so far in that grade too.

Friday Night Kids Club and Tuesday and Friday Morning Social Clubs

These friendly hit occasions have seen good growth in numbers with the social group getting close to filling the hall with doubles players on occasions. The Kids Club has also proved popular up to 20 players attending on occasions. Ron Garrett has also been coaching on Friday evenings before Kids Club, from 6.00pm – 7.00pm for those interested.

Southland Open

This was held at the traditional time of two weeks before Queens Birthday weekend and saw a strong turn out from Otago, particularly in the Men's where Otago players made up the four semi final spots. Wang Qi a top 10 NZ ranked player prevailed in a one sided final over Ben Duffy who has recently returned from Japan. Ben making it to the final in closely fought seven set match with John Fogarty.

Debbie Garrett prevailed easily in the Women's final over traditional foe Joanna Ma from Otago and held up the Southland flag again in the mixed doubles final with Ben Duffy. It was good to see such a strong contingent turn out from Otago. It would likewise be good to see some more local players making the effort to get some experience in our own Open tournament. Hopefully next year will see an increase (particularly with a few less injuries and no long term holiday makers!!)

SBS Sponsorship of the Southland Residentials

The residentials are once again being held in August and it pleasing to announce that SBS have been secured as a sponsor of this event for a period of three years. This should help reduce the cost of entry fees. Males – you should also make the most of the opportunity created through Ron Garrett's absence with his shoulder injury!! Remember there is a second grade open to players in A Res and below and a myriad of age group categories. If you get the opportunity to acknowledge SBS for their sponsorship I'm sure they would appreciate and our sport could benefit further from their assistance.

Two Pieces of Bad News at the National Level

The sport took a double blow recently with the NZ Olympic committee not selecting Table Tennis's sole nomination - the hard working and talented Karen Li to go to the Olympics in Beijing. This bad news was followed up by insufficient sponsorship being obtained for the World Junior champs which were scheduled to be held in North Harbour later in the year.

Southland Otago Match

A contingent of Otago players came down and played the first leg of the traditional Southland Otago match. Otago prevailed by 1 "skinny" match. There is a return match scheduled for Sunday 22 June 2008 and are taking minibuses up to Dunedin. Leaving at 9.30am from Lindisfarne St stadium we will return around 7.30pm with a supper provided in Dunedin before we return home. Please let either myself or Clive Adamson know by Friday 13 June if you are interested in participating.

South Island Teams and South Canterbury Open in Timaru

Held in Timaru at the traditional time of the year (Queen's birthday) these were well attended by the provinces this year with possibly the lowest turnout being from Southland due to unavailability of players. Pat Swale and Ngaire Garrett stepped up from the women's veterans team together with Leanne Ridder to fill the shoes of Debbie Garrett and Cooper who were rumoured to be dinner together somewhere at 3,000 meters in South America on their respective holidays. Steve Jenkins and Pat Swale won the second grade mixed doubles in the South Canterbury Open held on the Sunday.

Property Matters including Car Park Resurfacing

Keith Pyne is obtaining prices for the resurfacing of the car park with a view to removing the potholes and providing an entrance to the stadium that matches the quality of our facility we have inside. Looking around the South Island Invercargill/Southland with our population is very fortunate to have such a facility compared with the other centres.

The dilapidated double fire doors on the north side of the building are also being replaced.

Nationals Draft Timetable

The draft dates are out for the Nationals which are being held in Wellington this year. See the notice board in the lounge area. Some of the key dates are:

- Junior and Veteran teams events 1-3 October (Wed – Fri)
- Junior and Veteran age groups 4-5 October (Sat – Sun)
- Open teams (Men's and Women's) 6-8 October (Mon – Wed)
- Individuals including B,C & D grade 9-11 October (Thu – Sat)

Last year we fielded Men's, Women's, Vet Women's and U15 girl's teams with all teams finishing in the top half of their grades. The Men making the final of the C grade.

We want to field more teams than last year so if you are interested in being considered by the selectors this year please approach either myself or Debbie Garrett. We obtain specific funding grants to reduce the costs somewhat.

Greg Buzzard, Chair