

## Vital Premiership Wins For BATTS



Josh Bennett and Mike O'Driscoll in the crucial doubles against Ormesby

Photo Andrew Webb

**Important wins for BATTS in two key matches have ensured that BATTS remain in close contention with the leaders in the Premier Division of the Senior British League.**

A good crowd of BATTS supporters interrupted their Christmas shopping to come and see the clash with the former title holders Ormesby. The spectators were treated to a thrilling display from the BATTS team. At the start of the match nobody dared predict the outcome, given that Ormesby included two players ranked in the top ten in England. Outstanding performances from **Mike O'Driscoll** and **Josh Bennett** secured a 5 - 2 win for BATTS. They both beat the legendary **Darius Knight**, winner of seven England Closed titles. In the crucial doubles (see above) Mike and Josh combined in a superb four-set win against **Darius Knight** and **Helshan Weerasinghe**. The doubles win gave BATTS the lead in the match for the first time, and will have inspired Josh who then had to face **Darius Knight** in the next singles. The final match score was 5 - 2 to BATTS. The third BATTS player, **Nicholas Bastiao**

from France, could manage only one singles win - against Ormesby's home-grown junior **Tom Rayner** who put in a highly creditable performance.

After the excitement in December the next match was on 19th January, again at home. Our visitors this time were Urban, the reigning SBL champions. For this match we welcomed back **Adam Nutland**, making a rare appearance at this level. Unfortunately Adam was some way off his best form and despite a singles each from **Mike O'Driscoll** and **Jack Bennett**, the match was rather one-sided. Urban's 5 - 2 win maintained their strong challenge to hold onto the title.

The next stage in this dramatic season was an away fixture at Fusion on 8th February. Our overseas signing **Paul Lavergne** had recovered from the injury that prevented him from appearing earlier in the season. Paul powered his way to two singles victories. The experience of **Mike O'Driscoll** proved decisive in the all-important doubles. with the score at 3 - 3, the match rested on the final singles. Mike had a close tussle with **James**



Paul Lavergne, BATTS number one playing at Fusion

Photo Mike Loveder

**Smith**, ranked 3 in the England Under 19 list. Mike was just too strong for James and the result left BATTS in second spot.

But there was still plenty of time for more swings in fortune, and on the 22nd February three more crucial matches were played, not involving BATTS. The results sent us down by three places in the table. Ormesby's 7 - 0 victory against the bottom side North Ayrshire gave them hope of finishing in the top four at the critical half-way stage.

More worryingly for BATTS is the recent form of Archway Peterborough who achieved their fourth consecutive victory lifting them to second place. With the Chinese player **Jiawang Song** unbeaten in 10 singles and **Chris Doran** at number 2 they look formidable opponents for BATTS in our next home match on **Saturday 28th March at 2pm**. Make sure you get to Harlow and catch the action.



# Donald Bros Lead the NCL Charge



James Donald

Photo: Andy Webb

As the National Cadet League reaches its climax both our teams are still in contention for honours.

BATTS 1 is in third place in Division 1, thanks to outstanding play from **James Donald** who has been beaten only once in his 30 matches. Wilson Tram (85%) and Jeremy Davies (71%) have also made substantial contributions.

BATTS 2 is in second place in Division 2, and unlucky not to be top. They were thwarted by the bizarrely inflexible rule that left two of our players tied to the first team and unable to re-appear for BATTS 2. The BATTS campaign is spearheaded by 8 year old **Charlie Donald** who has won 25 out of his 27 singles). There is still a chance the team could finish top after the final round of matches on Sunday 15th March.



Charlie Donald

Photo: Andy Webb

## Isabelle boosts the Wensum Challenge

Wensum TTC (Norwich) were lucky to sign Isabelle Lacorte for their Women's British League team. Isabelle trains regularly at BATTS.

The Wensum team were unbeaten in their ten matches carrying off the Division 5 medals for their efforts. Isabelle finished with 78% wins in her 14 singles matches. She told me she would have liked to play for BATTS but we have not had a womens' or girls' team for a number of years.

It would be great if we could enter a girls' or womens' team in the British League next season.



WBL Division 5 winners: Isobel McGerty, Ella Barnard, Saskia Key, Isabelle Lacorte

Photo: Melvyn Lovegrove

## Ethan Shocks the Pingers

A large and appreciative crowd were at Alexandra Palace on the last weekend of January for the annual battle of the sandpaper bats. The World Championship of Ping Pong, with a prize fund of \$100,000, attracts sandpaper specialists and players who normally use standard rackets.

**Ethan Walsh** delighted the BATTS supporters in the audience by reaching the last 16, his best performance so far, losing to **Maxim Shmyrev (Russia)**. Ethan was very happy to pick up a prize of \$2,000 for his efforts.

The tournament was won for the fourth time by **Andrew Baggaley**.



Ethan's admiring band of autograph hunters

Photo: Andy Webb



# BATTS Tournament Roundup

Two more tournaments in our Super Series attracted a full entry and a great day's table tennis for 48 players each time. Our popular but simple format guarantees a minimum of 6 matches for every player and keeps waiting around to a minimum. Visit the [BATTS website](#) to see what's coming up, and be sure to enter early. They are always full by the closing date. Disappointing that we had no BATTS winners this time but it was nice to see some fine performances by visiting girls to carry off one of the titles in each tournament.



Tianer Yu



Kacper Piwowar



Jenson Davies

Our **Cadet Super Series** on 30th December attracted a very strong entry. **Jakub Piwowar (Torbay)**, England number one at U13 level, became our top seed. **Tianer Yu**, who had arrived in England from China earlier in the year, had previously been a welcome visitor to BATTS, having entered our U13 event in September. We knew she was highly talented but in this tournament Tianer completely upset all predictions, beating three of the top four seeds in successive rounds. **Larry Trumpauskas (Fusion)**, **Jakub Piwowar**, and then **James Hamblett (Urban)** in the final all became victims of Tianer's devastating attack. That wasn't the only surprise. We didn't know what to expect from Jakub's 9 year old brother **Kacper Piwowar**. The diminutive Kacper captivated the spectators with his determination and skill. We had never seen the like of this at BATTS. Kacper defeated **Aarav Shah (Urban)** in the Band 2 final. The winner of Band 3 was **Jenson Davis (Danbury)**, another player with little previous tournament experience but plenty of ambition to win. The most successful BATTS player was **Wilson Tram** who lost to Jenson in the Band 3 semi-final.



Francesco Bonato



Aarav Shah



Emma Ranson

The Band 1 winner of the **Under 13 Super Series** on 2nd February was **Francesco Bonato (Ashford)**. The top two seeds met in the final, and we had high hopes that our own **Ralph Pattison** would carry off the title. But the pressure of being top seed is immense, and on this occasion Francesco came out on top in four sets. **Aarav Shah (Urban)** is gaining a reputation for joining our tournaments at the last minute. This was the second time he managed to secure a place when another player withdrew. Both times he reached the Band 2 final and on this occasion he won the final, beating **Awais Ansar (London Academy)**. In the Band 3 knock out **Emma Ranson (Kingfisher)** gained her first tournament win. Her victim in the final was **Jacob Rose**. We are grateful to **Andy Webb** for taking all the photos shown above. These and many others are downloadable from his website [www.sprocketphotography.com](http://www.sprocketphotography.com)

# BATTS in the New Decade



I have been giving a lot of thought to the future of BATTS and how it might continue to grow and improve in the new decade. We can be proud of the progress made by BATTS in recent years, and I firmly believe there is now a need for "new blood" to take up the challenges of developing BATTS further. In particular I feel that an expanded operating committee will help the club thrive.

One of the reasons for this is that I have also reached a personal new decade, and I have decided that it is time for me to hand over all the administrative and support jobs I do for BATTS. I have no wish to stop coaching completely and I shall remain a licensed coach. But I shall reduce my coaching to just once a week. With support from Neil, our plan is to set up an Operating Committee during the next six months. From September, this group will then take over the areas I have covered (including co-ordinating the coaching, administering the membership database, handling external communications and running competitions).

It is very encouraging that some have stepped up and offered help in various ways, but club members or parents of our coaching squad players are welcome to ask me or Neil if you would like to explore how you can support BATTS.

You are also welcome to ask any questions about these changes.

Graham

## Harlow League Review

BATTS teams, with their distinctive "monkey" names, are well represented in the Harlow League, contributing ten out of the twenty-seven teams in its three divisions.

With two thirds of the season behind them, the Premier Division is presently dominated by the BATTS Ukaris, led by **Kevin West**, with eleven wins and one loss on a hundred points. Next comes a clutch of strong teams all around 65 points, led by the BATTS Sakis, who inflicted that one defeat on the leaders. In a top-of-the-table clash in the week before the Cup watershed, the Ukaris consolidated their hold on the Division by getting revenge on **David Wright's** Sakis, winning 7 – 3, with undefeated **Django Fung** doing the damage for the Sakis.

There are three BATTS teams in Division One with the Lemurs and the

Mandrills within a handful of points off the leaders, Lavers Buzzards. The Howler Monkeys are close behind this threesome, so it's all to play for in the last third of the Season.

In Division Two, the BATTS Silverbacks, captained by **Gary Read**, are the runaway leaders with only one loss in seventeen games – a narrow early Season defeat by **Bruce Richards'** fourth-placed Spider Monkeys, on eleven wins. Further down the table, the Tamarins are fighting to head the lower half of the table, while the Chimpanzees have their work cut out sandwiched between the Lavers Owls and the underperforming all-female Sawbridgeworth Cougars above them, so plenty more twists and turns before the season finishes in May.

Andrew Webb

## COMING UP @ BATTS

**Saturday/Sunday 14/15 March**

SBL National A2 matches

**Friday 20 March**

7pm BATTS Open Singles

**Saturday 21 March**

1pm BATTS Open Singles

**Saturday 28 March**

2pm SBL: BATTS v Archway (see p.1)

**Sunday 29 March**

BATTS Senior Super Series

**Saturday/Sunday 4/5 April**

SBL National A2 matches

**Friday 17 April**

7pm BATTS Open Singles

**Saturday 18 April**

1pm BATTS Open Singles

**Friday 15 May**

7pm BATTS Open Singles

**Saturday 16 May**

1pm BATTS Open Singles

**Sunday 17 May**

BATTS Junior Super Series

## In the Hot Seat



We were delighted that two of our members recently gained their Level 1 umpiring badges in a course at BATTS.

**César Ramirez Rioja** (above) and **Andy Webb** will now be able to help tournaments run more smoothly, see great table tennis from the best seat in the house, or even progress to international tournaments.

I heard from **Dan Bullen** that there is another opportunity coming up to qualify in a course at St Neots TTC (Cambridgeshire) on 4th and 25th July. See the [Table Tennis England](http://TableTennisEngland.org) website for details.

BATTS News is published by BATTS Table Tennis Club, Harlow

Editors: Graham Frankel    [grahamf.batts@gmail.com](mailto:grahamf.batts@gmail.com)    0777 150 6950

Neil Brierley

[brierley2004@btinternet.com](mailto:brierley2004@btinternet.com) 0781 462 3879

[www.batts.org.uk](http://www.batts.org.uk)

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