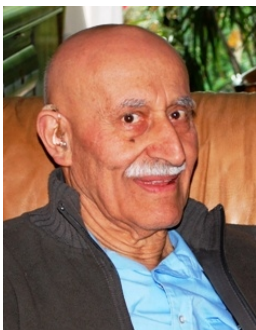


Michael Papantoniou

It is hard to imagine a more cheerful, sociable and popular figure than Michael Papantoniou, who died on 7 April aged 88. Entering a room, it would seem like he was friends with everyone, making quips, chatting generally about one thing or another and making time for all. His shuffling gait, heavy Greek accent and trademark beret added to the image of a charming character. He was a remarkably convivial man who put tremendous energy into all of his interests.



Michael never rose above division four level as a player himself. His style never changed, scrambling the ball back somehow or other, most unconventionally, and throwing in chat and jokes at unlikely moments. Red-faced juniors could never work out how they were beaten by this crazy man. Michael was more than proud of being the oldest active player in the league and indeed he played in the Minor Singles at the Closed Championships just six weeks before he died.

His legacy to the game is immense. His son Costas is ranked in the top ten Veterans in England whilst his four grandsons have all reached that level in junior rankings. Even more, his and his family's support for their efforts on the table has been tremendous. Upon retirement from his restaurant business at age 44, he founded the Apollo club with Ray Raymond, which began in the Willesden League but transferred to the Wembley & Harrow upon the demise of the former League. Apollo, led by Costas, won the national inter-club Wilmott Cup three times running in the 1980s.

In the W&H League, Michael was a member of Kenton from the early 1960s until the 1980s and then played for Apollo at the John Billam Scout Hut in Preston Road, latterly moving to the Harrow Leisure Centre. Michael was elected a Vice-President of the League in 1997.

Away from table tennis, one of Michael's interests was keeping bees and making honey.

He was the longest-serving member of the Middlesex Beekeepers' Association. "I want a garden with a house in it because I want to keep bees," he is reported to have told the estate agent, in typical fashion, when he began looking for a house. He said it was for him, his family and his swarm.

He was also a keen horticulturalist and spent endless happy hours tending a wide variety of plants and scrubs. Even table tennis visitors were always taken on a guided tour, with Michael pointing out and naming his favourites. More often than not, visitors were sent away with a pot of honey, too.

Not content with having a garden which most of us would find daunting, he also maintained a double allotment nearby, where he grew vegetables. For many years, he exhibited at the Brent and Harrow annual shows, winning several awards for excellence.

Michael was born in Cyprus in 1921 and came to England in 1938. He served with the British Army's Medical Corps in the Second World War. He leaves a wife, June, a son Costas, a daughter Marianna and five grandchildren.

The League was also left saddened by the passing of another of its Vice-Presidents, Brian Charman, who died in August. There will be an obituary in the next issue.

Wembley & Harrow Table Tennis League

Enquiries about this Bulletin should be made to:

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Don't forget to visit our website at
www.wembleyharrowtt.f9.co.uk

Wembley & Harrow Table Tennis League

News Bulletin



VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

Autumn 2009

Summer Sunshine for Kenton



The Summer League title was retained by Kenton, although the winners were not the same faces as in 2008. With new handicaps in place, the Kenton first team of Adam Johnson and Raj Nitin could not repeat their success of the previous year, finishing in third place, and it was left to Kenton's second team to take the trophy away.

Led by Bharat Maldé and Milan Shah, both with minus handicaps the Kenton team won 11 out of 14 matches to claim the title by seven points from Eastcote, themselves runners-up for the second year running. Milan was the League's top player, winning 15 out of his 16 singles games.

Second place was taken by Eastcote 1st team. The Summer League brought together players from different divisions under the successful and enjoyable handicap system. The League was once again well organised by Tony Dias.

Welcome to Champions TTC

The Wembley & Harrow League extends a warm welcome to Champions Table Tennis Club, which will be playing matches in Division 4 in the coming season, with a home venue in Neasden. The Honorary Secretary is Bishop Gideon Appoh, and their squad will comprise some adults and juniors being coached by Joseph Mensah of DHS G Progress in Division 1. We wish them every success.



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AGM report

The W&H AGM took place at Lowlands on 16 June. All of the current Management Committee members who were standing were re-elected, and Brian Tysoe has subsequently agreed to take over as Minutes Secretary. There were no nominations for the still-vacant posts of Assistant General Secretary, Development Officer or Coaching Secretary. League Chairman David Hayman stressed the need for volunteers to assist with the running of the League for the long-term benefit of all its players.

Regarding Rule changes, all the proposals were carried. Rule 19 is to be amended so that the players registration sheet includes names, addresses, dates of birth and phone numbers, in accordance with the ETTA requirements for Individual Registration, which is to be brought in before the start of the 2010/11 season. Club secretaries are requested to complete all the details on the 2009/10 player registration form.

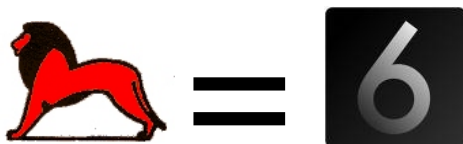
After discussion and amendments suggestions, the amendments to Rule 20 were carried as originally put forward by the Management Committee. In future, in Division 1, during the last four weeks of the season, players wishing to 'play up' for a team in the same division will have to obtain prior approval from the Records Secretary.

Rubbers and Glues

Please note that the League has adopted the international list of allowable rubbers. The full list of rubbers and their eligibility status is available from the equipment pages of the ITTF website at www.ittf.com.

Similarly, and despite the lack of its own testing procedures, the League has adopted ITTF regulations regarding the use of glues. Thus the use of harmful volatile solvents and the practice of glueing up before League matches is not permitted.

These regulations have now been adopted by the ETTA. A full text of the applicable regulations can be found in the handbook.



News from the ETTA that the Wembley & Harrow League is the sixth largest league out of the 250 or so in England. This is rated on number of teams in each League and the top six read as follows:

1. Rother Valley (Yorkshire)
2. Leeds
3. Norwich
4. Birmingham
5. Leamington Spa
6. Wembley & Harrow

Of course, ours is the only one of these to have hosted four World Championships, at Wembley, in 1934, 1938, 1948 and 1954 (there has been one in Birmingham, 1977).

NEWS SHORTS NEWS SHORTS NEWS SHORTS

► English Open 2009

For the first time for eight years, England plays host to a major ITTF event. The English Open takes place from 28 October 1 November in Sheffield and will feature most of the top players in the world. Further details and ticket purchase can be found on the ETTA website www.englishtabletennis.org.uk

► Website Sponsorship

Many thanks to **Table Tennis Direct**, who have agreed to continue their sponsorship of the W&H website for the coming season. TTD is a dedicated business table tennis specialist, are recognised for excellent service, unbeatable experience of products and detailed advice covering every aspect of this thrilling sport. TTD offers a comprehensive range of equipment from all the leading brands.

TTD:
www.tabletennisdirect.com

W&H:
www.wembleyharrowtt.f9.co.uk

► League and Cup

There are 68 clubs competing in the League this season, an increase of two from the same time last year. As a result, there will be five divisions of ten teams and divisions 4 and 6 will have nine teams.

The Committee has taken advantage of the later Easter in 2010 to schedule the two weeks following the end of the season for the semi-finals and finals respectively of the team knockout club competitions. We hope that the teams involved will appreciate the change from having to play the semi-finals during the Closed Championship fortnight.

► Handbook change

Please note that Vagabonds 4th (Div. 3) Home Night is now Tuesday and Vagabonds 8th (Div. 7) Home Night is now Thursday.

► Email address change

If you need to contact Records Secretary George Gibson electronically, make sure that you have the correct e-mail address: evelynandgeorge@talktalk.net

► Harrow Leisure Centre

Here are the latest proposals for development of the Harrow Leisure Centre... but seriously, the Committee is still trying to improve the table tennis facility, and the current Harrow Council representative and Centre management appear to be more approachable and responsive. All the lights have been fixed, new blinds have been put in place on the stairwell glass, the floor has been polished, and we have been promised a new notice board.

