

## TABLE TENNIS CLUB REPORT

Norfolk County Council are the English National Team Champions for 2003!!!!

Team:

Paul Cicchelli

Martin Gray

Steven Annison

Mark Bellamy

The team had a fantastic weekend to win by the narrowest of margins from 'Merrow' of Guildford, 'Siemens' of Nottingham and 'Polish' of Reading. With 6 of the nine opposition players ranked inside the top 135 in England, Norfolk County Council certainly started as the underdogs, on paper the teams from Reading and Guildford with the strongest sides.

First match on saw Merrow beat Polish 5-3 in a very close game and NCC snatch a dramatic win against Nottingham 5-4 with County Council players Martin Gray (ranked 173) and Paul Cicchelli (ranked 125) winning two games each.

	P	W	L	F	A	PTS
Merrow (Guildford)	1	1	0	5	3	1
NCC (Norwich)	1	1	0	5	4	1
Siemens (Nottingham)	2	0	1	4	5	0
Polish (Reading)	2	0	1	3	5	0

Merrow went on to record their second win, beating Nottingham 5-1 whilst County Council faced Reading in another close match in which the Reading number 2 sustained an injury meaning he was unable to continue. The County Council trio secured one win each Martin Gray beating Mark Butler in the fifth set. With the score at 4-3 to Reading the scores were in reality tied at 4-4 because NCC had won the last game by default. In the deciding tie Steven Annison had to play Mark Butler (ranked some 300 places above the County Council number three). Playing some of his best table tennis Steven managed to win two sets to take the match into the final leg before losing 11-7, Reading running out 5-3 winners.

Leaving the table as follows:

	P	W	L	F	A	PTS
Merrow (Guildford)	2	2	0	10	4	2
Polish (Reading)	2	1	1	8	8	1
NCC (Norwich)	2	1	1	8	9	1
Siemens (Nottingham)	2	0	2	5	10	0

With one round of games to play Merrow v NCC and Polish v Nottingham, Merrow, Polish or NCC could still win the trophy depending on the result of the other game. If two teams tie on points the match between those teams

would decide the title - if three teams tie on points it would depend on game difference.

Facing only two players the Nottingham team led by Mark Green (ranked 65 in England) beat Polish 5-2 meaning the game between Merrow and NCC became the decider.

Racing to a 3-1 lead with two wins for Paul Cicchelli and one for Martin Gray, County Council were pegged back to 3-3 Steven Annison letting a 2-0 lead slip against Jason Tendler, losing 11-9 in the fifth. Paul Cicchelli beat Terry Haley 12-10 in the fourth to regain the advantage 4-3 before Mayur Majithia levelled the match against Steven Annison win a 3-0 win.

In the final match of the day the tension could not have been greater as Martin Gray faced Jason Tendler in a winner takes all decider. The advantage was with Jason Tendler having won the only two previous meetings between the players. Starting well with some fierce topspin forehand drives and counter attack backhands Martin took the first leg 11-7 to lead 1-0. The second set went to a tiebreak going to Merrow 12-10. Tendler then seized the advantage to take the third set 11-3 and establish a lead in the fourth. Facing two match points at 10-8 Martin Gray retrieved magnificently to force the game to a tiebreak at 10-10. Saving seven match points Martin finally won the leg 17-15 to draw level at 2-2 to the delight of the crowd.

Martin drew ahead in the final game to lead 8-6 and in the final five points played, to the despair of the Guildford players and supporters, Gray took the match with three forehand topspin drives all clipping the edge of the table to clinch the match 11-8.

	P	W	L	F	A	PTS
NCC (Norwich)	3	2	1	13	13	2
Merrow (Guildford)	2	2	1	14	9	2
Siemens (Nottingham)	2	1	2	10	12	1
Polish (Reading)	2	1	2	13	10	1

An unbelievable end to an amazing season for the County Council side having qualified for the competition as winners of Premier A and both cup competitions in the Norwich League the previous year, a feat never before achieved in the history of the League."

Steven Annison