

President's Report to the Regional AGM 25/10/08

As usual I would like to thank last year's committee. Running the region is not easy and volunteers continue to be in short supply. In particular I would like to thank Bill who as Membership Secretary and Treasurer continues to put in a large amount of work behind the scenes and also Pete as Playing Officer for running regional tournaments a position from which he is now standing down.

2008 was another good year for Northern.

The highlight again was the Northern squad at Brean Sands finishing 4th this year which makes 4 years in a row of being among the top 4 regions in the country.

The challenge squad also did reasonably well finishing in 5th place of the 11 regions taking part.

Congratulations to all 45 Northern players who took part (including 6 playing in the EPA combined squad in division 2) and a special thank you to the squad managers Ruth Borrowdale and Sue Kirby who are an essential part of the squad.

Congratulations to several Northern players who did well in national tournaments ;

- Andy Willis and Jack Barrington went one better than last year and won the EPA Junior Triples (playing with 2 juniors from Kent). They were also selected and played in an international tournament in Germany. They would have played in the Home Nations but Scotland and Wales were unable to field junior teams. On top of that Andy was selected for England in both the European Junior Championships and the North Sea tournament.

At the other end of the age range Sue Kirby and Steve Rice won the EPA Over 50's with a very strong performance throughout the day.

I would like to congratulate the winners of the regional tournaments this year who were
Singles- Steve Meadowcroft

Pairs - Luke Howard & James Hart who won the pairs for the 4th year in a row.

Triples - Don Jackson , Clare Bicknell and Colin Smith

Player of the year - Ted Beetham

I would like to welcome 3 new clubs who have recently joined the region.

Cleveleys PC (near Blackpool) , Skellow Grange WMC PC (near Doncaster) and Great Eccleston PC (near Preston).

There are other potential clubs who could join the region next year and it will be a challenge for the development officers (and everyone else) to encourage and support the new clubs.

We have made progress with most of the negative points I mentioned last year but the 2 still needing improvements are

a) the lack of juniors

b) progress with developing an umpiring structure and a coaching structure (outside our control)

The EPA Congress of Regions in July confirmed a proposal for a 2 tier league structure. I have reservations that this will do anything for Northern players because the Premier League will involve even more travelling and it remains to be seen if the Combined league will prove an attraction.

I have heard suggestions that the minimum number of members for a club should rise from 3 to 6 after the first 12 months of the clubs membership. I don't see any advantages for us in this suggestion but we'll have to see if the suggestion becomes a proposal at the EPA AGM.