

Byng Hall ladies rise through the ranks in the Women's British League

The Bribar Table Tennis Women's British League programme for 2008/09 was completed over the weekend of 24/25 January at the University of West of England in Bristol. The Byng Hall team consisting of Jurate Brazaityte, Gosia Muda and 14-year-old Jasmin Ould had a good start to their season back in October at the Hinckley Leisure Centre, Leicestershire, when they finished the first weekend in joint second place in Division 4. The team captain Jurate Brazaityte knew this weekend was going to be a tough challenge for the team and a good start on Saturday against the current leaders was vital if the team was to stand any chance of promotion next season.

Luck was not on the Byng Hall's side to start with as ladies lost to the current leaders Oldham of Lancashire 2-4, losing 3 out of the 4 games in extremely close sets.

The second match of Saturday was the Sporting bet 2 of Guernsey – this is where the Byng Hall ladies have demonstrated that they are worthy winners of the division – Sporting bet Guernsey 2 were defeated 6-0 with the only two sets being dropped by Jasmin Ould.

This completed the games table of Division 4 with Byng Hall finishing in the third position with 10 points out of the possible 14, 1 point behind De Vere Netts of Essex and 3 points behind Oldham.

Saturday afternoon started the play-offs between the top 4 teams for promotion. This meant that having finished in the third position, Byng Hall ladies had to face the awkward style rivals Oldham again. This time it was a different story as the Byng Hall ladies started off with a 3 confident wins to 0. Unfortunately, this is where their wins stopped as the next 3 games were lost in four extremely close sets each with the overall draw 3-3.

Byng Hall ladies finished Saturday in the third position, 2 points behind De Vere Netts in the 2nd place as they beat Ormesby 2 of Middlesbrough 4-2. As a result, Byng Hall had to beat both De Vere Netts and Ormesby 2 on Sunday to finish 2nd overall and qualify for promotion to Division 3 next season.

Sunday was going to prove crucial if the ladies stood any chance of promotion, as the first game was against De Vere Netts, Byng Hall's competition for the Runners-Up position and promotion. The first game on was our own No. 2, Gosia Muda, against their No.1 Kelly Skeggs – this could well have been the decider, on paper at least, because if Muda beat their number one, Byng Hall ladies had a chance. Gosia made a flying start and before Skeggs could settle into her stride Muda dispensed with her 3-0. Now the pressure was on Byng Hall's No.1, Jurate Brazaityte, and a captain's performance was now needed. A very nervous start by Brazaityte against Netts No.2 Nikki Kennard – both players knew this could be just as important a game as the previous one. Jurate had dispensed with Kennard in the first round 11-4, 11-3, 11-2 so Kennard was well up for revenge this time round. This became a 'swings and roundabouts' game with the first blood going to Kennard but Brazaityte stole the

glory 11-5 in the fifth set. Jurate was then up against De Vere Netts Kelly Skeggs but with the other team's hopes dashed, Brazaityte did not struggle as she won the game 3 sets to 1. Byng Hall's No.3 Jasmin Ould was then to play Nikki Kennard to finish off this crucial match. However, Nikki won the match 3-1, all in close sets, making the final result 5-1 to Byng Hall. This match has earned the Byng Hall ladies the vital 2 points and put them in the second place overall, followed by De Vere Netts in the third place on the games' countback.

Byng Hall was then to meet the Ormesby team. Winning this match would almost certainly confirm a promotional place, provided that Oldham, who were in the leading position at the time, were to at least draw the match against De Vere Netts.

Byng Hall ladies rose to the challenge as they sailed through this young and developing team only dropping one game, with the final score 5 games to 1.

Byng Hall have secured the 2nd overall place in the Women ' s British League Division 4, 3 points behind Oldham and 2 points clear of De Vere Netts as Oldham beat De Vere Netts 4-2 in their final match. The top two places in each division are awarded a promotion to the next division up, which means that Byng Hall ladies will be aiming for the same result in Division 3 next season.

Byng Hall's No.1 Jurate Brazaityte finished the season with the highest individual average of 85 percent, having won 17 out of the 20 matches, alongside Nikki Kennard of De Vere Netts. Gosia Muda finished the season with a 65 percent record having won 11 out of 17 matches, one place above Jasmin Ould with a 58 percent average (11 out of 19 games won).

Byng Hall ladies would welcome sponsorship from the local businesses to enable them to represent the only team from Kent at this premier table tennis event during the 2009/10 season where they will be aiming to win Division 3 and will not stop until they reach the Premier Division.