



# TABLE TENNIS

# Newsletter

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## PINKEWICH, MILLIKAN WIN NATIONAL TITLES

Paul Pinkewich of Sydney and home-town champion Denise Millikan were the winners of the singles titles when the Australian championships were held in Hobart last month.

Pinkewich, who is undoubtedly Australia's "form player" this year, was a firm favourite to win the men's title. Within a space of 10 days in July and August, he had won the Victorian, New South Wales and Queensland Open titles and had beaten all the other top players in Australia.

Runner-up to Pinkewich was the dynamic New Zealand sub-junior Barry Griffiths. Followers of table tennis were not slow to remind each other that an Australian sub-junior, Gary Haberl, had in the previous week been runner-up in the men's singles title at the New Zealand championships. These two players have had some fantastic clashes in the last two seasons, and their rivalry will give new interest to the table tennis scene in both countries.

Denise Millikan has gone from strength to strength since she was selected to represent Australia in last year's world championships. There was no firm favourite for the Australian women's singles title, with four former winners in the field, but it was the third and fourth seeds who fought out the final, with Denise winning comfortably after junior star Pam Whitehouse had given her a struggle in the first two games.

The most notable effort in the early rounds of the men's singles was Igor Klaf's quick dismissal of Steve Cowley, but the action really hotted up in the fourth round when the lanky Glen Tepper extended



Australian champion Denise Millikan celebrates with her coach, John Hannon.



PAUL PINKEWICH

titleholder Bob Tuckett right to the limit. Tepper hit at everything. At the same time it was Haberl v. Griffiths with Griffiths winning 23-21 in the fifth—an incredible match.

Pinkewich probably wouldn't have been too pleased when he saw that he would have to play Laurie Skeate in the quarter-finals. Skeate eliminated Pinkewich in that round last year and he has a good record against the top Australian. He swept through to win the first game 21-8, but Pinkewich gradually took control from that point.

Australian team representatives Neil Ward and Robbie Javor also went out in the quarters in hard matches with Greg Thomas and Rod Carlyle. Co-incidences were continuing—in last year's quarters, the same four players had matched up, but in different pairings, and again it was Thomas and Carlyle the winners. Griffiths went through Tuckett in the other quarter.

As in 1979, Thomas and Carlyle went out in the semi-finals, but they had good reason to be more than satisfied with their play. The final wasn't such a great match, with Pinkewich a bit too tough for the young Kiwi at this stage.

### WOMEN'S SINGLES

Michelle Rey's defeat of 6th seeded Kay Fudge was the only upset of the early women's singles rounds, and the top four seeds duly made



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## AUSTRALIAN TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

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the semis. Mary Le Gassick proved too steady for Ann Middleton in four long games, and Adele Morrow gave Denise Millikan plenty of curry, leading two games to one and going down 21-17 in the fifth.

Titleholder Kerry Thompson wasn't with it at any stage in her semi with Denise, and Pam Whitehouse gradually found the answer to Mary Le Gassick's steady defence.

The final was a hard-hitting affair with the crowd right behind Denise and this could have helped make the difference in the end.

Javor and Vickery retained the men's doubles title without too much trouble, and Javor and Kerry Thompson took the mixed to improve on their losing finals effort of 1979. As someone commented in a recent issue of this Newsletter, Javor is certainly Australia's doubles "king", and his ability to really kill the ball is invaluable.

Ann Middleton and Kerry Thompson were women's doubles winners over Denise Millikan and Kay Fudge. Millikan/Fudge had a comfortable win over several-times-champions Mary Le Gassick and Diane Kilderry, and the other surprise semi-finalists were Western Australians Chris Young and Matty Padley.

Gary Haberl and Pam Whitehouse won the junior events, although Haberl had to survive his usual tussle with Griffiths, and Pam Whitehouse had to battle through New Zealander Kadia Rice, Shelley Munday and Adele Morrow, with the last match being the easiest of the three.

In summary, a good nationals, with one of the features being the number of fine young players who were able to take it right up to the established champions. Another encouraging feature is the approach particularly by the girls, who are concentrating more on aggression, and there are far fewer of the long and dull pushing matches which dominated the girls' events four years ago.

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# Victoria, Victoria, Victoria and Victoria in Team Titles

A clean sweep of the Australian team titles to Victoria—that was the story.

The Victorian women and boys had to battle a bit, but there was never to be any doubt about the strength of their men's and girls' teams.

Paul Pinkewich was unbeaten for N.S.W., dropping games only to Jeff Drew and Rod Carlyle, but he lacked the support necessary to take the title. Laurie Skeate and Neil Ward each beat two of the Victorians, but Bob Tuckett, Robbie Javor and Rod Carlyle were too consistent, with Glen Tepper a good reserve.

The South Australian women's team—winners in 1978 and 1979 after a 20-year winning sequence by Victoria—were weakened by the transfer of Chris Little to New Zealand but they still put up a good fight.

An early surprise loss to Tasmania knocked South Australia back, when Denise Millikan, Loretta Bonham and Christine Derrick played consistently. In fact, the Tasmanian women finished equal second with three wins from five matches, only to be relegated to fourth on a count-back of rubbers.

Victoria marched through Western Australia (Kerry Thompson losing to Chris Young), Queensland (Pam Whitehouse and Susan Isele beating Helen Ainsworth), Tasmania (Adele Morrow losing two) and N.S.W. (Carolyn Bruce, Mabel Neish and Vera Sikora all beating Adele Morrow), before facing up to the titleholders in the last round.

South Australia jumped to leads of 2-0 and 3-1 with Adele Morrow still struggling to find form, but the good play of undefeated Kerry Thompson and two clutch 21-18 in the third game wins by Helen Ainsworth—the second of these in the final match with scores at 4—all—guaranteed the victory.

Kerry Thompson finished with the best record—14 wins and one loss—in contrast to last year when she won the women's singles title after posting a 7-5 win-loss record in the team events. Mary Le Gassick did not play in the team events.

### BOYS' TEAMS

Victoria had the depth in the boys' teams with Robert Rockefeller in fine form, and Warren Park and Karl McKernan giving excellent support. Rockefeller and McKernan lost only to Haberl and Griffiths, and both defeated Fields, Finlay, Mitchell and Campbell in a solid dis-



BOB TUCKETT

(courtesy of Mercury Hobart)

play.

Their toughest match, against New Zealand, came on the second day, and it was a clutch win by McKernan over Peter Jackson that made the difference, although both Park and Rockefeller gave Griffiths a hard tussle.

Victoria's girls had far too much strength for the other teams, with Adele Morrow unbeaten and Shelley Munday losing only to Kadia Rice.

N.S.W.'s Carolyn Bruce fashioned a good record with wins over Nadia Bisiach, Michelle Rey and Kerri Walsh.