

## **Electrifying table tennis at Callies tournament**

It was third time lucky for Dipal Bhana when he captured the coveted mens singles title at the Callie 2017 Open Championships. Bhana was in great form and used his youthful energy and technical skills to overcome his father Rajesh Bhana.

The match was filled with some electrifying and entertaining table tennis seen in a long time in Port Elizabeth. The experienced Bhana senior stretched his son to a tiring five sets but had to eventually succumb to the fit and composed Dipal, losing 9-11, 11-8, 4-11, 13-11, 5-11.

Xiuyan Li, fresh from a successful SA Nationals was in excellent form in the womens singles when she easily beat Eugene Stallenberg 11-5, 11-6 in the semi-finals to clash with Dawne Fortuin from Queenstown in the finals. Li with her pen-hold grip was ever so calm in beating Fortuin 11-7, 11-7.

The mens doubles was tense when the Bhana pair of father and son was stretched to a thrilling three set by the Cape Town pair of Timothy Fitzgibbon and Merlin Brown in the semi-final. The Bhanas remained focused and thrilled the enthusiastic crowd in a tightly fought battle and were the ultimate winners with the score 9-11, 11-9, 12-10.

The Bhanas were too strong for Shaheid Mamoogie and Neil Hendricks in the finals and easily winning the match 11-7, 11-5, 11-1.

Dipal Bhana was once again in the finals of the mixed doubles with partner Chervon Nysschens against Xiuyan Li and Selvan Sammy. The crowd was kept edgy in one of the best matches of the tournament. The clash was breath-taking in the first set, and there-after Li and Sammy kept their composure and entertained the spectators with skilful and aggressive play to be crowned the winners with the score on 15-17, 11-5, 11-8.

The junior boys final was once again an all Queenstown affair. Cohl Simons captured the title for the third successive year by beating Keran Kroutz 11-8, 16-14.

Nitaya McCuur of Queenstown once again reached the final where she clashed against Renisha Jackson also from Queenstown. McCuur annexed the title for the second year running with a score of 11-2, 11-5.

The other results were boys plate event, Thabo Poswa from Queenstown beat Keagan Jantjies from Bertram High School 11-9, 11-5.

Shaandre Malgas of Bertram High School beat Nathacia Alfred of Paterson High School in the girls plate event with the score 11-8, 11-8.

There was some disappointment when some of the local senior players who had entered did not show up. Nevertheless, the success of the tournament out-weighted this.

On the positive side, Joe Carrim the President of the South African Table Tennis Board stated "Callies Table Tennis Club continues to raise the bar and we within the SATTB are extremely appreciative of your continued commitment to develop our Game".

Councillor Siyasanga Sijadu (Portfolio: Sport, Recreation, Arts & Culture) was very impressed to notice that a club could organise an event of such high standards in Port Elizabeth. She was awed to see the big number of juniors playing and also the high calibre of the senior players.

The tournament director, Jay Bhoola was delighted with the success of the tournament and stated that the Club will continue to maintain the high standards or better it going forward. This can only be achieved with the support of the local businesses and the people of Port Elizabeth.

Jay Bhoola

07 August 2017