

National triumphs for Edinburgh ping pong pair

There was a great deal of success for players associated with [Murrayfield Table Tennis Club](#) at the recent Scottish National table tennis Championships.

Faye Leggett was the winner of the women's singles, while Calum Morrison battled past several strong players to take the men's event.

Held at Bell's Sports Centre in Perth, this two-day tournament, run by [Table Tennis Scotland](#), featured a range of senior events on the Saturday and junior events on the Sunday. Saturday in particular brought a great deal of drama and fine table tennis. It was certainly one of the most entertaining national championships of recent years.

Faye Leggett (Edinburgh University) retained the trophy she had won the year before. This time, she defeated Rebecca Plaistow (South Ayrshire) in the final, which she won 4-1. Her strong backhand and consistency was very much to the fore, allowing her to dominate certain portions of the match. In the earlier group stages, she had lost out to Edinburgh University clubmate Holly McNamara (who also represents North Ayrshire and who won the junior girls event the following day) but still made it through into the knock-out stages. In her semi-final, Leggett defeated Alisa Khalid (Drumchapel) 3-0. In hers, Plaistow narrowly defeated Lucy Elliott (runner-up in 2022) of Drumchapel 3-2. Since starting at Edinburgh University, Leggett has played a leading role in the Table

Tennis club there, acting as League Captain and was part of their team which won Division 2 of the Scottish National League this season.



Calum Morrison, Gordon Muir (coach) and Faye Leggett. Photo by Rory Thomson

Morrison's triumph was more unexpected. In the last 16 and last 8 and semi finals, he had to overcome very strong opponents. After defeating Sean Doherty, he had to face his doubles partner Colin Dalgleish. Dalgleish was the champion in 2021 and runner-up in 2022 and was considered a leading contender. Like Morrison, Dalgleish spent his formative years at Murrayfield, where he developed his renowned backhand.

At the semi final stage, Calum Morrison moved to his first senior national final, impressively overcoming fellow-left hander Danny Bajwa (Dumfries) 3-1. Bajwa has been one of the fastest improving players in recent years, with several impressive tournament performances.

In the other semi-final of the men's singles, Martin Johnson of North Ayrshire defeated the local favourite Gavin Rungay. Rungay has been very much the leading male player in the country for almost two decades, winning the men's singles title on a record 16 occasions. For some, the event could be considered a changing of the guard in Scottish table tennis, though undoubtedly, Rungay will be keen to maintain to rebound. Certainly, Johnson's 3-1 win was an impressive one, which he celebrated vigorously.

Prior to the final Johnson would have been considered favourite for the title, given his victory over Rungay and his excellent performances over the last couple of years. These have come on the back of a year training in Germany at Borussia Dusseldorf and the past two years in Peterborough. These impressive performances have included a dominant showing in the Scottish National League, in which he led North

Ayrshire A to the Division 1 title this season. Certainly, Johnson began the stronger, taking a 3-1 lead in the best of 7 set final, and indeed had a match point in the 5th set. Morrison came back well to take the final three sets and claim his first national championship at senior level. Morrison demonstrated his ability to keep his nerve in the key moments, something he has been able to do since he was a very young player. Since leaving Edinburgh, Morrison has studied and trained at Nottingham University, alongside leading players such as England's Tin-Tin Ho. Since graduating he has trained at the Kingfisher club in Reading,

Later in the day, Morrison and Dalglish combined to take the men's doubles title, with a 3-2 win versus the very strong pair of Martin Johnson and Danny Bajwa, who have dominated the event in recent years.



Colin Dalglish. Faye Leggett & Calum Morrison. *Photo by Gordon Muir*

It was a particularly rewarding day for Murrayfield Head Coach Gordon Muir, who has been coaching the two champions since they were very young players. He also coached Leggett and Morrison when he could in their matches on the day, including in both finals, providing tactical advice and encouragement. Table tennis at this level is a physically and mentally taxing sport and a good coach can make a substantial difference.

Muir said: "Faye had a really mature performance in the final, staying calm and composed and playing clever table tennis. Although she had a setback early on in the day she did well to bounce back and take the final. Calum also did fantastically well, his serve and touch were brilliant and his focus, nerve and bravery throughout the matches a deciding difference against his opponents."



Calum Morrison & Faye Leggett as young players. Photo by Gordon Muir.

As the Murrayfield President commented it was, following their [centenary event in 2022](#), 'a great way for the club to begin their second century'. Through their [extensive programme of junior coaching](#), they believe that there are several more in the ranks to follow in the footsteps of Leggett, Morrison and Dalgleish.

For example, the junior events on the Sunday included strong showings from eight players, with the highlights being Borui Chen and Charlie McGowan winning the junior boys doubles and Bohao Chen runner up in the Under-13 boys singles.