

DBA Simultaneous Pairs for Devon Air Ambulance

Report for the 2017-2018 Financial Year

This report is an update to the February interim report and includes the final event in the financial year.

Paragraphs shown in italics are duplicated from the February interim report.

September 2017

8 clubs and 145 pairs entered the Monday event (including 35 pairs at 2 non-affiliated clubs), although Torquay played the wrong hands and could not be included but did make a donation).

Table money was £393, donations were £323 - including £119 from non-affiliated Victoria Park!! - expenses were £112 (EBU Licence fee of £44 included) resulting in a total of £604.20 raised for Devon Air Ambulance. Not the highest total - last year's £728 is the Monday record - but a good second highest.

October 2017

7 clubs and 107 pairs entered the Tuesday event (including 28 pairs at 2 non-affiliated clubs); Tipton St. John club played the wrong hands and could not be included but they did make a substantial donation instead.

Table money was £279, donations were a fantastic £524 (including £169 from Caen, £143 from Tipton St. John and £108 from non-affiliated Exeter Golf & Country Club), expenses were £92 (EBU Licence fee of £35 included) resulting in a total of £711.39 raised for Devon Air Ambulance. This was a new record for the Tuesday event, some £170 better than the previous record.

January 2018

9 clubs and 114 pairs entered (including 47 pairs at 4 non-affiliated clubs), although Plymouth played the wrong hands and Devon Farmers Club had a problem with their board movement so neither could be included; they each made a donation, however.

Table money was £291, donations £287 (including £64 from Devon Farmers and £63 from Newton Poppleford, both non-affiliated clubs), expenses were £112 (EBU Licence fee of £45 included) resulting in a total of £465.71 raised for Devon Air Ambulance. Not the highest total, which was the Wednesday record of £611 last year, but again a good second highest.

March 2018.

Originally scheduled for 1st March, the bad weather forecast for this date caused the event to be postponed until 15th March, arranged with the co-operation of all 10 clubs entered. 158 pairs entered, over half (84 pairs) played at the six non-affiliated clubs that took part.

Table money was £474, donations were an incredible £607.66 (£233 from Budleigh Salterton and £125 from Victoria Park, both non-affiliated clubs). Operating expenses were £169.13 (including the £91 EBU licence fee) resulting in a total of £912.53 being raised for Devon Air Ambulance, the highest figure for one event since the DBA Sim Pairs started.

Events Summary

The total raised this season for Devon Air Ambulance is £2,694 after 4 of the 5 events, within £3 of last season's record-breaking figure at this point.

Across the full financial year (which includes May 2017) 32 different clubs took part in the events – 18 affiliated clubs and 14 non-affiliated. Of the 632 pairs, almost 400 played at affiliated clubs.

The total raised in the financial year was £3,433.77, over £170 better than last year's high. Particular thanks for extra donations go to Victoria Park and Budleigh Salterton clubs, who each donated around £240 during the year, Caen and Exmouth (over £160 each), Tipton St John (over £140 even though they played the wrong hands!), Kingsbridge Estuary U3A and Exeter Golf & Country Club (around £110 each). A further 25 clubs added donations totalling £1,073.

The total raised for DAA since the event was dedicated to this charity in 2009 now stands at **£18,750**.

Organiser's Comments

The high level of EBU Licence fees is still a concern - £275 last season (£252 across the current financial year), most of it being the £1 per pair levy for players at non-affiliated clubs - but this has been taken to the highest level in the EBU without success. There's little scope for expanding the competition in affiliated clubs as nearly all take part anyway (19 last year); any addition to the 13 non-affiliated club entrants loses 1/3 of their table money in EBU fees even before deducting operating expenses, although they are often generous in giving extra donations.

Table money was set at its current level of £1.50 per head back in 2012 but an increase is not being recommended at this time; most clubs and many players add extra donations and this would likely fall if we increased table money, particularly if we were to introduce a higher entry fee for non-affiliated clubs. Last year non-affiliated clubs provided 35% of the pairs playing and 40% of the extra donations and are essential to the success of this competition.

The failure of some clubs to play the correct hands is a concern; in all three cases this season it happened at clubs using dealing machines, and it seems that a likely cause is failure to remove the original pre-dealt set of boards that had been prepared for the night up to 2 months in advance. I will include a reminder in future when sending out the hand files to clubs with dealing machines.

Comments are sometimes raised about the level of operating expenses for this event; these account for around 1/3 of the basic table money – 32.4% in the latest financial year. The breakdown of the £571 expense costs this financial year were:

- EBU fees - £252, which was 44% of the overall figure.
- Printing - £110. The commentaries are densely printed across 4 sides each, and the 1,070 sets produced this year (based on 3 per table) would previously have cost around £150 in photocopying charges. The organiser has acquired a monochrome laser printer and reduced this cost to £90 this year, including paper cost.
- Postage - £87. Mainly for sending out the paperwork packs, including commentaries and (for most clubs) curtain cards.
- Stationery - £47. Paper, card and envelopes.
- Publicity - £25. The cost is for stationery and postage for writing to the secretaries of all current and potential clubs in August to remind them about the new season's events and encourage their participation. It is spread across the four events that fall within both the season and financial year (i.e. excluding May).
- Miscellaneous - £50. When the event was set up in its current format in 2004 the DBA Committee agreed to pay a £10 fee per event to the person writing the commentary (i.e. a cost of £50 per year). Although volunteers were persuaded to do this in the early years it became more and more difficult to keep this going, and the commentaries that were obtained always needed to be reformatted anyway to fit printing requirements. When volunteers became virtually impossible to find, the current organiser took this over and has continued to write the commentaries. This "fee" is actually swallowed up in other minor expenses involved in running the event.

It is difficult to see how any of the above could be reduced any further. There were 42 club sessions prepared in this year's events, so the average expenses came to around £7.25 per club session, excluding EBU licence fees.

Paul Ainsworth. 29/3/2018