

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 10

AS AT 21 JANUARY 2024

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS A	8	5	3	63	17	24	87
CASTAWAYS	8	5	3	55	25	24	79
COMETS B	7	5	2	48	22	18	66
NAT WEST	8	2	2	36	44	24	60
PRO	8	2	3	36	44	24	60
MORPETH A	7	3	1	36	34	21	57
NORDWEST	8	1	0	20	60	24	44
GOOD KARMA	8	1	0	16	64	24	40

Bonus points shown in penultimate column. Ultimate column shows total points from sets won and bonuses

THINGS TO NOTE

- Individual match details can be found on the website at

https://www.tabletennis365.com/LondonBanksAndCivilService/Fixtures/Active_Season_23-24/Division_One

- Check out the photos on the front page of the website under Featured Photos. Is your team there?

COMMENTARY

Week 14

First match of the week is a tricky fixture for Castaways as they take on Morpeth. Castaways won the first half fixture easily but if unbeaten Johnny Yi is playing for Morpeth everything changes. Who walks through the door? To, Alnak and Brown for Morpeth and Castaways breath a sigh of relief! Their team was LeMilliere, Grant and Bispham. To began against Bispham. When they met in the first half it went to five ends which Bispham narrowly won. This time, To was in front after three ends but Bispham managed to win the fourth end 11-7. In the deciding end, To came out on top 11-7, securing a revenge victory for his first half loss. The second set was a mirror image of the first. Adam Alnak was ahead of Norman Grant after three ends only for Norman to win the fourth. Another five-ender! The outcome of the final end was another 11-7 scoreline but this time in Castaways' favour. A good win for Norman! Then LeMilliere came out to face Duncan Brown. Now, Duncan didn't get very far in the corresponding first half set but he managed to pinch the first end 18-16 and so nearly took the second end too, eventually capitulating at 11-13. Duncan came back to win the third end but fell apart from then on losing the final two ends comfortably. 105 points contested in that set, the first time for weeks a set has exceeded 100 points. Castaways were 2-1 up but the score might just as easily have been 3-0 or 0-3. Things were looking good for Morpeth in the next set as Adam Alnak won the first two ends against Bispham, both ending 13-11. But in another change of fortune, Bispham won the third, fourth and fifth ends for a comeback win. 101 points played and the first four sets have each needed five ends to resolve. It's going to be a late night! In a change of rhythm, the next three sets ended three straight. Two wins for LeMilliere – against To and Alnak – plus a comfortable win for Duncan Brown against Grant. That put Castaways 5-2 up. The next contest saw Duncan Brown produce the best performance of the night by beating Bispham in four ends. That was unexpected! Not to be outdone, Norman Grant then pulled off a surprisingly easy win over To and the singles sets finished 6-3 to Castaways. The night concluded with the fifth five-ender of the match in which Bispham and LeMilliere came from two ends to one down to beat Brown and To. A peculiar match where the result came about in unpredictable ways. LeMilliere won all three and Player of the Match. Notwithstanding his 75%+ average, Bispham was relegated to just one win while Duncan Brown top scored for Morpeth with two wins. The key to Castaways' win was winning four of the five sets that went the distance!

PRO and Nat West drew their first half fixture. John Crawford was the star that day winning all three for PRO. In this week's reverse fixture, PRO fielded Crawford, Turner and Persaud (in place of George Buck) while for Nat

West Gareth Jones and Les Samuels were joined by Adam Johnson (in place of Chris Herbert). The likely biggest obstacle to another Crawford maximum was faced in the first set of the evening when he took on Johnson. The formbook says Adam should win this one but the first two ends were shared before Crawford edged home in the third 12-10. The fourth end was mighty close as the players went point for point until deuce was reached. The score reached 12-12 before the winner emerged and that proved to be John Crawford, winning 14-12 in the fourth. Good match and a good win for John. That win tips the likely match outcome towards PRO but that advantage was immediately nullified as Gareth Jones did very well to beat Jai Persaud in set two. The score was a narrow three straight. Crawford returned to the table for set three to take on Les Samuels. Surprisingly this didn't last long as the in-form Crawford triumphed comfortably in a three straight outcome. The next two sets were shared, both three straight, as Johnson beat Persaud and Ronnie Turner beat Jones. Five sets played and 3-2 to PRO. Nat West then levelled at 3-3 thanks to a Les Samuels defeat of Persaud. Looking at the match-ups which are left, Ronnie Turner has to face Johnson and Samuels and I think he'll need to take both of those to ensure a PRO win. That bubble burst immediately in the next set as Adam Johnson brushed Turner aside by a comfortable margin. 4-3 to Nat West and they're now in the driver's seat. PRO pulled it back to 4-4 as Crawford secured his maximum with a win over Jones. Now it all turns on Turner against Samuels. Les promptly wins the first two ends and a sense of déjà vu came over the room because that's exactly how things began the last time they met. On that occasion, Ronnie went on to win the next three ends to steal the victory. Two more ends were played and Ronnie wins both of them! So, we're in the fifth and final end. Is history going to repeat itself?? Astonishingly it was, as Turner comes home 11-6 in the fifth in a carbon copy of their first half encounter. Hard to believe! That puts PRO 5-4 in front with the doubles to come. The pairings are Johnson and Jones against Crawford and Turner. The former pair haven't played together before this season while the latter pair are regulars, winning two-thirds of the doubles they've contested. Must surely be a PRO win. Well, they say it's a funny old game and sure enough Nat West ran away with it – three straight, conceding just 15 points! So, Nat West have salvaged a draw in a good contest between two evenly matched teams! I suspect Nat West left the venue the happier of the two teams!

Next up, it's top against bottom as Comets A face Karma. Now, last week Karma lost 10-0 to Comets' B team so you can't feel optimistic for Karma's chances here. Their team was Michael Miller, Xavier Zhao and reserve Wouter Mayeur. Comets A came with Cain Fagan, Laikram Persaud and Winston Wong. The first set was Wong against Miller. After three ends, Miller was in front – is an upset win coming? In the fourth end, Wong went up a gear and won it 11-3. You might expect Winston to accelerate away in the fifth, but not so, Miller stayed in the set until the very end, finally losing narrowly 11-8. A good effort from Michael but not quite enough. The next three sets all went comfortably to Comets, though Mayeur did manage to take an end off Fagan. In set five, Mayeur repeated that performance, this time taking an end from Wong. Xavier Zhao got in on the act winning the first end against Fagan before losing the next three. 6-0 up, Comets then shut the door on Karma, taking the final four sets with the minimum of fuss. Comets take maximum points! Looking at the scorecard, Karma did manage to take four sets past the third end which I don't think is a bad return from a match against the champions. And, certainly in that Wong versus Miller set, they were definitely in with a chance!

Because of rearranged fixtures, Northwest play Comets B this week, having played them last week too. That time Comets B won 9-1. Could Northwest do any better this time? Both teams changed their composition. For Northwest, Tobias Svensson came in in place of Grace Stair with Albert Francis and Rhyan Nelson. For Northwest, David Adesanya and Arunn Sathasivam were joined by Tai Luu rather than Adil Islam. I don't think those changes will materially affect the likely result. Luu began against Svensson. It looked like one way traffic as Tai cantered through the first two ends. Tobias then pulled one back, taking the third by a narrow margin. But that couldn't stem the tide and Luu rattled off the fourth end to claim the victory. The next set proved to be the best of the night. Sathasivam led Rhyan Nelson by two close ends, both of which could have gone the other way. Rhyan then mounted a comeback, winning the third end and the fourth. The final end was close too but it was Rhyan who pulled off a come-from-behind win 11-6 in the fifth. Good match, long too, spanning 104 points. Comets then pulled off two three-straight wins, Adesanya over Francis and Sathasivam over Svensson. Tai Luu and Albert Francis came to the table and once again Tai got off to a flying start, winning the first two ends. Albert dived with death in the third but managed to escape 12-10. Albert then won the fourth end and this began to look like a repeat of the Nelson / Sathasivam match. But Tai was having none of that and composed himself to ease home 11-6 in the fifth. An unfortunate "near miss" for Albert! By now, the match was running away from Northwest as Comets took a 4-1 lead. Next up, Nelson faced Adesanya. Last week David won this contest in the fifth so a close match was in prospect. Strangely it didn't work out that way. David won the first end but Rhyan then took the next three ends fairly comfortably. Two more wins followed for Comets. Both in four ends - Sathasivam beat Francis and Adesanya beat Svensson. The final singles set involved the two players thus far

unbeaten on the night – Luu against Nelson. Far from being a thriller, this turned out to be an easy win for Luu, three straight with Rhyan having very little chance in any end. Northwest did end on a bright note winning the doubles to make the match score 7-3 to Comets. A better result for Northwest than last week but I still think they’re capable of wining more sets than they’re doing currently. That win cements Comets B’s position in third place, still within touching distance of the top two teams!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY
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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 9 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Yi	MORPETH A	12	12	100.0
Persaud	COMETS A	16	18	88.9
Fang	COMETS B	8	9	88.9
Francis	COMETS A	13	15	86.7
Johnson	NAT WEST	13	15	86.7
Adesanya	COMETS B	15	18	83.3
Luu	COMETS B	10	12	83.3
McKee	CASTAWAYS	7	9	77.8
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	16	21	76.2
C Fagan	COMETS A	15	21	71.4
Crawford	PRO	15	21	71.4
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	17	24	70.8
S Fagan	COMETS A	8	12	66.7
Sathasivam	COMETS B	6	9	66.7
Turner	PRO	14	24	58.3
To	MORPETH A	7	15	46.7
Nelson	NORDWEST	10	24	41.7
Brown	MORPETH A	6	15	40.0
Samuels	NAT WEST	6	15	40.0
Schmidt	GOOD KARMA	6	18	33.3
Alnak	MORPETH A	5	15	33.3
Herbert	NAT WEST	5	15	33.3
Grant	CASTAWAYS	3	9	33.3
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	3	9	33.3
Francis	NORDWEST	7	24	29.2
Persaud	PRO	3	12	25.0
Link	GOOD KARMA	2	9	22.2
Miller	GOOD KARMA	2	15	13.3
Jones	NAT WEST	2	18	11.1
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	1	12	8.3
Stair	NORDWEST	1	18	5.6