

**AS AT 2 FEBRUARY 2025**

	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>P</b>
COMETS A	8	8	0	71	9	24	95
MORPETH A	9	7	1	59	31	27	86
CASTAWAYS	9	5	2	57	33	24	81
NAT WEST	10	5	2	51	49	30	81
PRO	9	1	2	30	57	27	57
COMETS B	8	1	1	27	53	24	51
COMETS C	9	1	1	22	68	27	49
OUTCASTS	6	1	1	20	40	15	35

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\\_24-25/Division\\_One](https://www.tabletennis365.com/LondonBanksAndCivilService/Fixtures/Active_Season_24-25/Division_One)

- Check out the photos on the front page of the website under Featured Photos. Is your team there?
- Want a trip down memory lane? Every weekly bulletin issued since the 2014-15 season can be found on the first page of the website under the “Div Sec Reports” heading

**COMMENTARY****Week 17**

This has not been an easy season for Outcasts as they’ve been struggling to find a consistent team. It’s been nearly two months since they played a match but this week they got their campaign going again with a stiff test against Castaways. Outcasts put out Petko Guimichev, Simon Jameson and Bing Siah. Castaways had Neil LeMilliere and Johnny Bispham plus, for the first time this season, Pete Harris. Pete has been an ever-present mainstay of the Castaways team for decades but injury has meant he’s barely played in the last couple of years. We begin with Guimichev against LeMilliere. History suggests this should be a comfortable win for Neil but, surprise, surprise, it's Petko who's in front after three ends. Neil regained the upper hand in the fourth and it's all down to a fifth end showdown. Neil was struggling against Petko's long pimples and he fell behind as the end progressed, eventually losing 11-6. A good win for Petko and Castaways are unexpectedly 1-0 down. Set two didn't last long as Bispham made light work of Simon Jameson, winning in three. Set three sees the return of Pete Harris, to play Bing Siah. Bing was a last-minute addition to this season's Outcasts' squad. He used to play for Good Karma but in the couple of games he's played for Outcasts he's performed above expectations. Harris has an impressive pedigree so this will be a big challenge for Bing. Bing began, firing on all cylinders, to breeze through the first end 11-4. That continued into the second end with Pete breathing a sigh of relief as he managed to steal the second end by a whisker, 12-10. The third and fourth ends were dominated, first by Pete 11-3 in the third, and then by Bing, 11-7 in the fourth. Could Bing topple the on-paper favourite in the fifth end? As the end progressed, Pete gained an ever-tightening control of the proceedings. When we reached the finish line, he was ahead 11-5. A good contest and pats on the back for Bing's near miss. Castaways then took the score from 3-1 to 5-1 with trouble-free wins for LeMilliere over Jameson and Harris over Guimichev. It was left to Siah to see if he could stop the rot. His opponent was Johnny Bispham. It was quickly clear that this was no foregone conclusion. Neither player could gain the ascendancy and they were locked together at two ends each. Johnny usually wins this contest but Bing is playing above himself. Much to his credit, Bing held his nerve and scores an impressive win 11-6 in the fifth. Well done! It wasn't long until Bing was back on the table following a three-straight win for Harris over Jameson. This time it was LeMilliere he faced. The first two ends are shared. Bing wins the third end 14-12 to go into the lead. The last time they played each other it also went to four ends and

Neil won that end 12-10. This time it was equally close as the score reached 10-10. They swapped points until 13-13 was reached. History had repeated itself in getting to the fourth end but it was not to repeat itself in divining the winner. This time it was Bing who got those vital two next points and a 15-13 victory to complete a highly satisfying evening for him! In the final singles Bispham regained his composure to edge past Guimichev in four. Castaways added the doubles to post a 7-3 win. A good performance from Outcasts and from Bing Siah in particular!

This league hasn't changed much since last season. Why then are Comets A winning the division by a mile, far more dominant than last year. The Comets team hasn't changed much – perhaps a little less Cain Fagan and a little more Winston Wong – nothing significant. Other strong teams – Castaways, Nat West etc – aren't substantially worse than last year. So, how do we get almost three-quarters of the way through the season and Comets have conceded just six sets in seven matches!! Six – less than one per match! This week it is Nat West's turn to have a crack at the champions-elect and they are below strength. No Tony Catt, no Adam Johnson, no Les Samuels. Instead, it's Andrew Muller, Gareth Jones and, a regular who's been missing this season, Chris Herbert. Welcome back Chris! Comets A have Ian Francis, Steve Fagan and Winston Wong. So, what do you think? Doesn't look like a team that can dent Comets' record. A nailed on 10-0 to Comets? First up it's Chris Herbert against Ian Francis. Now we know Chris is no pushover – he beat Cain Fagan last season – but I don't think he's played much table tennis this season and he lost to Ian last time they played. A good start for Chris as he takes the first end 11-7. Emphatic response from Ian and he walks the second end 11-3. The third end goes Chris's way 11-5 but I'm still not confident he'll succeed. The fourth end and I shouldn't be so pessimistic as Chris comes home in front 11-7. A good win, if unexpected. Gareth Jones then faces Steve Fagan. First end and the score goes point for point, past deuce, before Gareth edges it 13-11. Good start! Second end and it's a repeat of the first. Again, we get to 10-10 and Gareth's hanging in there. Can he edge it again? Unfortunately not, as Steve wins it 13-11. Never mind, Gareth's playing OK. The third end and dangers signals for Gareth as Steve's ahead 11-8 and on the brink of a win. It's make or break in the fourth end and Steve's pulling away. We're down to the wire and Gareth can't haul back Steve's lead. It's all over and a win for Steve 11-6 in the fourth. Third set and Winston Wong gets past Andrew Muller three straight – close-ish but Winston's on good form this season. More drama in set four as Jones and Francis both settle quickly into the contest and find themselves at stalemate and two ends each. The first deciding end of the night and who can hold their nerve and clinch the win? It didn't go Gareth's way against Fagan.....but it does this time as Gareth comes home 11-8 in front! Much punching the air from Nat West and, rub your eyes, the score is 2-2! The next set featured Wong against Herbert. It didn't last long as a clinical performance from Winston led to a three straight win for the loss of just 21 points. Andrew Muller then faced Fagan. A very up and down set that reached the deciding end with no clear sign of the winner. Andrew's doing well hanging on here but in the fifth Andrew started to pull away to win the set 11-5. That's a good win! The score is 3-3! That was followed by another dominant performance from Wong, not breaking sweat in beating Jones three straight. Francis had lost both his singles when he took on Muller in the next set. But in another strange twist, Ian took an early stranglehold on the set and went on from strength to strength. The result seemed never in doubt as Ian romped home conceding just 18 points! Comets had gained a 5-3 lead and Fagan made that 6-3 with a comfortable win over Herbert. The doubles became the third set of the night to require all five ends and the Nat West pair – Jones and Muller – put up a brave fight before losing 11-5 in the fifth to Francis and Wong. Returning to where I began, Nat West's 7-3 loss was the most sets Comets have dropped in a single match this season and that was achieved by an under-strength side!?!? Can you explain it – I can't? Another oddity – it was the fourth match this season where all six participants won at least one set. And kudos to Winston Wong for his untroubled maximum – he's in good form this season!

Final match this week sees high-flying Morpeth against Comets B. Morpeth select Jens Marott, Simon Holohan and, after a few weeks' break, Duncan Brown. Comets include Arunn Sathasivam, Greg Gargrupe and Eric Woo. Can Morpeth continue their successful season? First to the table is Sathasivam against Marott. Arunn strikes first with an 11-5 win in the first end. The next two ends were hotly contested but both went to Marott 11-9 and 12-10. That narrow win in the third end for Jens proved to be crucial as he powered on to take the fourth 11-6. First blood to Morpeth. Holohan's opening encounter was against Gargrupe and Simon delivered an imperious display, winning three straight losing just 18 points. Next up is Eric Woo against Duncan Brown. Eric is capable of upset wins but Duncan has been quietly building a strong winning record this season. First end and Eric struggled to keep pace as Duncan took control for an 11-4 victory. The second end was much closer. Eric was not planning to settle for second best and fought tooth and nail to avert a second end loss. The end extended past deuce before Duncan held his nerve to win 14-12. That gave Duncan a buffer going in to the fourth and he duly converted, 11-8, for a good three-straight victory. 3-0 to Morpeth. Can Comets turn the tables? Set four involves

Gargrupe against Marott. They shared the first two ends and things looked pretty even. Marott goes in front, just, after the third end, winning 11-9. It looked like game over in the fourth as Jens had big chances to bring this to a close. Time for Greg to dig deep and he manages to come back from the brink 15-13 to level the set. So, a final end is called for. This is going to be close! You have to feel sorry for whoever loses this. It needed 105 points to find the winner. And that was Jens Marott by 11-9. Bad luck Greg! The drama continued in the next set – Sathasivam against Brown. Brown raced through the first end but Arunn recovered from a slow start to secure the next end 12-10. Brown surges ahead again in the third to regain the lead. In the fourth we reach a do or die moment for Arunn at deuce. This time he couldn't recover the advantage and the set goes to Duncan Brown. Morpeth lead 5-0. Things got worse for Comets in the next set as Holohan eased past Woo in a comfortable three straight contest. Not to be outdone, that was followed by a similarly comfortable three straight win for Duncan Brown over Gargrupe. On paper, Comets had good chances of winning the final two singles sets. At last, Woo got Comets on the scoreboard with a good win over Marott. But Sathasivam could not match him, going down in four to Holohan. With all bar one of the singles sets going to Morpeth, you wouldn't have expected a close doubles match. But Gargrupe and Woo put up a good show against Brown and Holohan, winning the first end, coming so close to winning the second before fading away to lose in four. That made it 9-1 to Morpeth but this was not a one-sided affair. True, only set occupied all five ends but nine ends finished at deuce. It was a match where the outcome didn't really reflect the closeness of the contest.

**RICHARD CAMPBELL**  
**DIVISIONAL SECRETARY**

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**AVERAGES (Qualification:  $\geq 10$  sets played)**

<b>Player</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Sets Won</b>	<b>Sets Played</b>	<b>Average (%)</b>
Persaud	COMETS A	19	20	95.0
Wong	COMETS A	14	15	93.3
Johnson	NAT WEST	15	18	83.3
To	MORPETH A	15	18	83.3
Francis	COMETS A	11	14	78.6
S Fagan	COMETS A	11	15	73.3
Samuels	NAT WEST	11	15	73.3
Sultani	COMETS C	13	18	72.2
Brown	MORPETH A	14	21	66.7
Holohan	MORPETH A	10	15	66.7
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	10	17	58.8
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	14	25	56.0
Adesanya	COMETS B	8	15	53.3
Marott	MORPETH A	8	15	53.3
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	8	17	47.1
Crawford	PRO	11	24	45.8
Woo	COMETS C	6	15	40.0
Islam	COMETS C	7	21	33.3
Turner	PRO	5	18	27.8
Sathasivam	COMETS B	3	12	25.0
Jones	NAT WEST	6	30	20.0
Persaud	PRO	2	12	16.7
Sharma	COMETS C	2	15	13.3