

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 16

AS AT 17 MARCH 2024

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS A	13	8	3	98	32	39	137
CASTAWAYS	14	9	4	94	46	42	136
COMETS B	12	9	3	81	39	33	114
NAT WEST	14	5	4	70	70	42	112
PRO	14	4	3	58	82	42	100
MORPETH A	11	4	2	54	56	33	87
NORDWEST	13	2	0	35	95	39	74
GOOD KARMA	13	1	1	30	100	36	66

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 20

PRO versus Northwest proved to be a highly unusual match. PRO turned out Crawford, Buck and Turner. Northwest knew they would only have two players. The night began with Grace Stair playing her three straight off as she was the only Northwest team member present. That resulted in a 3-0 lead for PRO. Unfortunately, the match stopped there as no one else turned up. Under the rules, a single player does not constitute a team. Rule 39 covers this situation and leaves it to the Committee to decide how the points etc were to be awarded. The Committee decided to let the results of the sets played on the night stand, with all the unplayed sets being awarded to PRO i.e. a 10-0 win for PRO. If this situation arises again, the Committee will take the necessary decisions based on the particular circumstances of that situation.

PRO completed its fixtures with a match against Karma. The PRO team included Crawford and Turner, as usual, but joined by Jai Persaud. Jai is usually a regular for PRO but this season he's only played a handful of matches. Karma's team was Xavier Zhao, Michael Miller and Ben Link. You fancy PRO to win this but it won't be a walkover. John Crawford struck the first blow for PRO, beating Zhao in three ends. Miller then levelled the match with a win in four over Jai Persaud. Crawford returned to the table to face Ben Link. This turned out to be a fairly easy win for John in the first half but not so on this occasion. Link ran away with the first two ends and an upset was on the cards. John fought back to take the third end but then nearly lost it in the fourth, coming back from the brink to win 12-10. They're locked at two ends each! As it came down to the wire in the fifth end neither player could break the deadlock and we reach 10-10 and then 11-11. When the dust settled it was Ben who fell agonisingly short, losing 13-11 after 99 points. Upset avoided! It was one of those quirky sets where Ben lost but scored more points than John overall. The next set saw Zhao take on Persaud. Jai settled quickly into the contest, taking the first end 11-8. Then, another quirk, the next three ends all finished 11-6! The first of these went to Persaud and he's now looking odds-on favourite. But the next two went to Xavier and suddenly it's all square. Good comeback! 19 more points were played and crucially Xavier won 11 of them to post an impressive come-from-behind success. The match is level at 2-2. Set five didn't take long as Ronnie Turner raced through three ends against Michael Miller, winning with ease. Again, Karma levelled the match as Link beat the luckless Persaud in four ends. More quirks in the next set! Ronnie Turner defeated Zhao three straight – and every end finished 11-6 (what is it about that scoreline – ten ends concluded with that score in the match?!). PRO kept up the fast tempo in the set eight as Crawford produced an imperious display to ease past Michael

Miller. 5-3 to PRO! Set nine sees PRO's progress halted as Ben Link breezed through the first end against Turner with a convincing 11-2 scoreline. The boot's on the other foot in the second end as Ronnie retaliates with an 11-5 win. The result is still in the balance in the third end with both players having chances until Turner stole it 11-9 to lead by two ends to one. Having gained the upper hand, Ronnie never looked back and coasted home 11-4 in the fourth. PRO then rounded off a successful night with a win in the doubles to take the score to 7-3 in their favour. Both Crawford and Turner ended unbeaten.

Having lost their last two matches, Comets A need to bounce back against this week's opponents – the potentially dangerous Nat West. Team compositions will be crucial and Comets breathe a sigh of relief when Tony Catt walks in for Nat Wes but no Chris Penrose. That makes Comets' task easier. The Nat West's team is completed by Gareth Jones and Andrew Muller. To face them, Comets put out their strongest threesome: Steve and Cain Fagan plus Laikram Persaud. First up it's Catt against Steve Fagan. First blood to Tony. But Steve has started to get going, winning the next two ends 11-8. Into the fourth end and Tony needs to up his game if he's to win. We're all anticipating a dingdong battle but the end is over in a blink of an eye as Steve dominates the end to win 11-4. That's a perfect start for Comets! The next two sets were quickly over. Both three straight, and both won by Comets. First, Persaud beat Jones and then Cain Fagan beat Muller. Set four sees Jones face Steve Fagan. Another three straight? It quickly became clear this was to be no walkover. In fact, after three ends Gareth is leading! We're waiting for Steve to dominate but it's not happening. Gareth's holding his nerve and Steve's on the ropes at 10-10 in the fourth and facing a do or die moment. This where you want the table tennis Gods to be with you! 10-10, 11-10 and then 12-10 but to who? It was Steve who comes back from the brink to level the set! Psychologically, that's a heavy blow on Gareth. Can he regroup and go again? It's so hard to do and suddenly points are flowing Steve's way. Gareth just can't keep up and the win goes to Steve 11-5 in the fifth. Tough luck Gareth! It's down to Tony Catt to get Nat West on the scoreboard and in his way is Cain Fagan. The first two ends are shared. In the third end Cain takes the lead 11-8. And, that was that, as Cain stayed in front to win the set at 11-5 in the fourth. Good win. Comets are walking this! Another set for Comets comes next as Persaud crushes Muller for the loss of 16 points. It's now 6-0 to Comets! Set seven and let's see how Gareth Jones reacts to that narrow loss to Steve Fagan. This time he faces Cain Fagan. It's not looking good after two ends as Cain wins both. But Gareth comes back in the third with an 11-6 win. Just like the set against Steve, the fourth end reaches 10-10, then, 11-10 and finally 12-10. Has Gareth had another fourth end setback? In a reversal of the fourth end against Steve, this time it's Gareth who hangs in for the win. We're all square. It's the decider. Will Gareth repeat his experience with Steve and fall away as the set progresses? Doesn't look that way as Gareth is still in it at the change of ends. As we move to the conclusion Cain opens a slight gap and Gareth can't respond. It's a win for Cain – 11-8 in the fifth. That's two narrow losses for the unfortunate Gareth. It really was a case of so near yet so far against players way above him in the averages. After that drama, the final three sets were a bit of an anti-climax. Steve Fagan had no problem beating Muller and then Persaud had surprisingly little trouble with Tony Catt, winning three straight. A final win in the doubles makes the score 10-0 to Comets A. On paper this match looked like one way traffic but, dig deeper, and there's plenty to interest. It's rare for Tony Catt to be left winless. Gareth's two valiant efforts coming to nothing. And Cain Fagan equalling Johnny Yi's longest unbeaten streak of the season – 15 straight victories! The last time Nat West lost 10-0 was 5 December 2018 (and Catt and Jones played in that one too)! That emphatic win means there's still a statistical chance Comets B can catch their A team colleagues but, to do so, Comets B need maximum points from their last two fixtures and Comets A need to come a complete cropper against Morpeth. If that scenario doesn't materialise, Comets B will have the unique distinction of not losing a match all season and yet not winning the title!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 16 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Johnson	NAT WEST	19	21	90.5
Fang	COMETS B	15	18	83.3

Adesanya	COMETS B	17	21	81.0
C Fagan	COMETS A	24	30	80.0
Persaud	COMETS A	26	33	78.8
Mullineaux	COMETS B	14	18	77.8
S Fagan	COMETS A	16	21	76.2
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	25	33	75.8
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	28	42	66.7
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	12	18	66.7
Francis	COMETS A	13	21	61.9
Crawford	PRO	22	37	59.5
McKee	CASTAWAYS	10	18	55.6
Herbert	NAT WEST	13	24	54.2
Turner	PRO	18	34	52.9
Nelson	NORDWEST	18	36	50.0
To	MORPETH A	8	18	44.4
Alnak	MORPETH A	10	24	41.7
Brown	MORPETH A	10	24	41.7
Samuels	NAT WEST	7	18	38.9
Schmidt	GOOD KARMA	9	24	37.5
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	6	18	33.3
Francis	NORDWEST	11	36	30.6
Jones	NAT WEST	8	33	24.2
Miller	GOOD KARMA	5	24	20.8
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	3	24	12.5
Stair	NORDWEST	2	30	6.7
Buck	PRO	1	28	3.6