

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 3

AS AT 12 NOVEMBER 2023

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
CASTAWAYS	4	2	2	29	11	12	41
COMETS A	3	3	0	28	2	9	37
MORPETH A	4	2	0	22	18	12	34
COMETS B	3	2	1	20	10	9	29
NAT WEST	3	1	0	13	17	9	22
PRO	3	1	1	11	19	9	20
NORDWEST	3	0	0	4	26	9	13
GOOD KARMA	3	0	0	3	27	9	12

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 4

It's been a tough start for Northwest and it didn't get any easier this week with their visit to Morpeth. Northwest had the usual team – Nelson, Stair and Francis – while Morpeth put out one of their stronger teams – To, Yi and Brown. The first set of the night was arguably the best set as Toan To took on Rhyan Nelson. This set needed all five ends to resolve. Each end was close – never won by more than a three-point margin. The first two ends were shared. The third end went to To by the narrowest of margins - 12-10. Rhyan then fought back to take the fourth end 11-8. The final end went on and on, past deuce and on to 11-11 before the winner emerged. The winner was Toan To after 104 points had been played, the longest five-ender of the season to date. That marked the start of a run of three-straight wins for Morpeth. One of those was Chuang Yi beating Nelson fairly comfortably. Chuang is in good form and only lost one set so far this season but I thought Nelson would push him hard. To then found himself in another battle, against Albert Francis. To was leading after three ends and looking good for the win when, out of the blue, Albert pulled out an 11-2 runaway score in the fourth end. Big momentum shift! The deciding end went point for point until 9-9 when To took the next two points for the win. Bad luck! Another near miss for Albert to add to last week's narrow loss against Steve Fagan. It took until set eight before Northwest opened their account with a three-straight win for Nelson over Duncan Brown. That was as good as it got for Northwest and the night ended with a 9-1 scoreline in favour of Morpeth. Another tough fixture faces Northwest next week with the visit of Castaways.

Second match of the week sees Castaways take on PRO. This is a longstanding rivalry where, over the years, Castaways have had the upper hand. Continuing availability problems for Castaways caused Pete Harris to have to play for the first time in 18 months despite having an injured back. Added to that, LeMilliere had a knee problem leaving Johnny Bispham as Castaways' sole fit player. The PRO opposition was Crawford, Turner and Buck. The opening set seemed to be going PRO's way as Crawford took the first two ends off Bispham. In the third, Bispham came from 1-6 down to steal the end at 12-10. Johnny's revival continued in the fourth which he won 11-5. More drama in the fifth as Johnny comes back from 6-9 down to draw level at deuce, only to lose the next two points. A very close set which proved to be the longest of the night. Next up was LeMilliere against Buck and again Castaways are in trouble as George gets the better of the first three ends. Neil wins the fourth to keep the set alive and finally gets ahead in the fifth to register an unexpectedly narrow victory. The size of the task facing Pete Harris became evident against Crawford, who brushed him aside three straight. Hard to be

competitive after a long break without picking up a bat plus a back problem. Things were going PRO's way and that continued as Turner proved to be too good on the night for LeMilliere, winning in three. Harris then beat Buck and, when Bispham won the first two ends against Turner, it seemed a comeback might be on. That hope was soon dashed as Turner took the third and the fourth to level the set. Johnny got in front in the first half of the deciding end but then it all went Ronnie's way and he came home the victor. That's two fifth-end losses for Bispham. LeMilliere against Crawford started oddly as Neil won the first two ends 16-14, 11-1!! John won the third but Neil came back to take the fourth with ease, securing the win. At the conclusion of the singles, the match score stood at 5-4 to PRO, with Turner having won his three. A good night for Ronnie! I thought PRO looked favourites for the doubles but Castaways were having none of that, winning in a comfortable three straight. A 5-5 outcome, which I suspect PRO were a lot happier with than Castaways.

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Comets B have shown they can put out a strong side and there was more evidence of that when Jamie Mullineaux turned out for Comets' match with Karma. Jamie played a few times for Comets last season and ended with an 80% average. He combined with David Adesanya and Tai Luu while Karma fielded Ben Link Xavier Zhao and Peter Schmidt. With Comets 2-0 up, Peter "no luck" Schmidt came out against Adesanya. David took the first two ends but Peter managed to win the third. Peter was very much in the fourth end and holding his own at 10-10. Now if he can pinch that end who knows how things might go in the fifth. Unfortunately, luck was not in Peter's favour and Adesanya took the next two points to secure the win. History was due to repeat itself in Peter's next set, against Mullineaux. This time the first two ends were shared. The third end is hotly contested and all square at 11-11. Now, if Peter can take this and go 2-1 up, he's in pole position to win the set. Again, luck was against him and Jamie took the next two points, gaining the upper hand to win the fourth end too. In his final set Peter led Tai Luu by two ends to one and this time nothing went wrong as he took the fourth end comfortably. Peter has now played nine sets, 39 out of a possible 45 ends, won one set and lost eight! So near yet so far! Peter's win proved to be Karma's only success but they had another near miss in the doubles. On the basis of the singles, Karma should have no chance in the doubles but it turned out they had every chance of the win before losing 15-13 in the fifth! A runaway 9-1 victory for Comets B but no walkover as six of the ten sets went beyond the third end.

There aren't many teams in this Division that could trouble Comets A but Nat West is one of them. Comets put out a strong team: Cain Fagan, Francis and Persaud. Unfortunately, the prospect of a close encounter goes out the window when there's no Penrose, Catt, Johnson or Samuels in the Nat West team. Instead, we have Chris Herbert plus, for the first time this season, Gareth Jones, and newcomer Jason Mobley. Jason is no stranger to the Comets' players as he goes up against Persaud and the Fagans in the Wandsworth league. We begin with Herbert against Fagan. Chris hasn't had the best of results this season but there's a glimmer of hope here as he beat Fagan towards the end of last season in a five-end thriller. Cain wins the first end but Chris then takes the next two fairly easily. There's a complete reversal in the fourth as Cain runs away with it 11-4. So, it's to be another five-ender between these two. The deciding end was anything but one-sided as it reached 10-10. Who was going to steal the win? It was Chris Herbert, coming home 12-10. Good win. The next two sets were easy wins for Comets: Francis beats Morley and Persaud dominated Jones. Set four and Ian Francis produced a steady performance to ease past Herbert in four. Despite having barely warmed up against Persaud, Gareth Jones then suddenly takes the first two ends against Fagan. But, at that point, things changed dramatically and suddenly Cain was winning rally after rally. In fact, Gareth won just 16 more points as Cain rattled off the third, fourth and fifth ends without difficulty. Another crushing win for Persaud, over Mobley, was followed by Francis taking on Jones. After three ends Jones was ahead again but, just like his previous set, points stopped coming Jones's way and Francis coasted home in five. Persaud completed his trouble-free maximum conceding a total of 32 points all night. I think that might be the fewest ever points conceded in a night's table tennis – I'll need to check if that's an all-time record. In the final singles, Fagan cruised past Morley in four ends. Nat West had gone from 1-0 up to lose 9-1! Comets A look unstoppable.

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

Issued: 12/11/2023

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 4 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Johnson	NAT WEST	6	6	100.0
Persaud	COMETS A	6	6	100.0
Yi	MORPETH A	6	6	100.0
C Fagan	COMETS A	8	9	88.9
Francis	COMETS A	8	9	88.9
Fang	COMETS B	5	6	83.3
McKee	CASTAWAYS	5	6	83.3
Adesanya	COMETS B	7	9	77.8
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	7	9	77.8
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	9	12	75.0
Crawford	PRO	4	6	66.7
Luu	COMETS B	4	6	66.7
To	MORPETH A	5	9	55.6
Alnak	MORPETH A	3	6	50.0
Turner	PRO	4	9	44.4
Brown	MORPETH A	3	9	33.3
Nelson	NORDWEST	3	9	33.3
Persaud	PRO	2	6	33.3
Herbert	NAT WEST	2	9	22.2
Francis	NORDWEST	1	9	11.1
Schmidt	GOOD KARMA	1	9	11.1