

AS AT 25 FEBRUARY 2024

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
CASTAWAYS	13	8	4	88	42	39	127
COMETS A	11	7	3	84	26	33	117
COMETS B	11	8	3	75	35	30	105
NAT WEST	12	4	4	61	59	36	97
MORPETH A	10	4	2	50	50	30	80
PRO	12	2	3	41	79	36	77
NORDWEST	12	2	0	35	85	36	71
GOOD KARMA	11	1	1	26	84	33	59

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 19

Every result counts now. That's how I ended last week's commentary. We begin with a match that could spell the end of Castaway's quest for the title. It's Castaways versus Nat West. Anything less than 10-0 here plus a superhuman performance in next week's match against Comets A means Castaways' slim chance of the title has gone. Team composition is vital. Castaways field LeMilliere, Loveder and McKee. Nat West have Andrew Muller, Les Samuels and, heartsink moment, Chris Penrose. Yes, the Chris Penrose who's lost just once this season! Neil LeMilliere has provided a full account of the match [here](#) so I won't do a blow-by-blow commentary. The match ended in a 5-5 draw. Three wins for Penrose plus one win each for Samuels and Muller. For Castaways, two wins each for Loveder and LeMilliere plus the doubles. Unfortunately, a winless night for Terry McKee. A few observations from me. It could have been worse for Castaways. Four sets needed all five ends and could have gone either way but every one of them went to Castaways. Penrose was untroubled dropping one end all night, ironically to McKee. The Muller / Loveder set reached 100 points. Castaways did lead 4-3 triggering a Nat West charge. And Castaways winning the doubles retains their season-long unbeaten doubles record. So near yet so far!

Next up is Comets B against PRO. So why does this result count? It does because Comets B still have a statistical chance of the title. They have the easiest fixtures remaining and the possibility that Castaways and Comets A will damage each other's chances with a draw next week. So, are Comets B bringing the superstars for this match? It turns out "no" as Comets field the B team's B team: Mullineaux, Bhangoo and Adesanya. That's probably unfair to Comets B as team compositions like this got them into the title race before the superstars turned up. PRO fielded pretty much the same team they've fielded since 1993: Crawford, Buck and Turner. It turned out not to be much of a night for PRO. Mullineaux didn't break sweat in winning three for Comets B. Bhangoo did the same but he was delayed by all his sets needing four ends. Both Crawford and Turner went close against him but not close enough, Bhangoo reversing a loss he suffered to Crawford last season. David Adesanya – remember his average is 80%+ - was impressive against Turner and Buck but met his match in John Crawford. John won the first two ends but dropped the third end only to pinch the fourth end 11-9. Wonder what would have happened had it gone to five!??? A good win for John! The doubles was the closest set of the night. The PRO underdogs were in front after three ends. They got crushed in the fourth end and then

narrowly lost 11-7 in the fifth. So near yet so far! 9-1 to Comets B – might they yet mount a challenge for the title?

Last match of the week is Northwest against Karma. This was Northwest’s only win in the first half so they’re pushing to do the double over Karma. Teams are Nelson, Francis and Stair for Northwest up against Miller, Sanders and Zhao for Karma. Rhyan Nelson began with a three straight win over Miller, though it wasn’t an easy victory, two ends concluding at deuce (they went to five in the first half but with the same outcome). George Sanders then beat Stair, again it was three straight but a little easier in this case. Xavier Zhao began brightly against Albert Francis, winning the first end. That shook Albert into action and he slowly gained a hold over the set winning the next three ends fairly comfortably. Stair against Miller proved to be anything but a straightforward set. Stair takes the first end with ease. And nearly takes the second end, just falling short at 12-10. Grace reversed that exact score in the third end to get her nose in front. Miller takes the fourth end to level and then runs away with the fifth to register a win. A good contest! Two more three-straight wins for Northwest followed, Nelson over Zhao and Francis over Sanders. This is going the same way as the first half match – Northwest are in front 4-2. Karma then pull one back as Zhao gets the better of Grace Stair. The final three sets all went Northwest’s way but not without incident. Francis posted a surprisingly comfortable win over Miller, given this set went the distance in the first half. Then came a really seesaw set as Nelson took the first two ends off Sanders before losing the third. Rhyan has the win in his grasp in the fourth end only to be edged out 16-14. Neither player dominated the final end and the contest was still live right until the final few shots were hit. When the dust settled it was Rhyan who emerged victorious, 11-9 after 103 points. Could easily have gone the other way! The doubles followed a similar path. Karma looked favourites after winning the first two ends but Northwest clawed their way back into it, narrowly winning the third and fourth ends. And, like the previous set, the contest was only resolved by the narrowest of margins, 11-9 to Northwest. Two cruel near-misses for Karma in those last two sets. So near yet so far! Like the first half, Northwest take the honours 7-3.

This week’s fixture of Comets A versus Morpeth was postponed.

So, we’re into the last round of matches plus postponements to catch up on. Is this season’s fight for the title done and dusted or might there be some last-minute twists? Might the result of the Castaways / Comets A clash open the door for Comets B?? Comets A still have to play Castaways, Morpeth and Nat West. If we see Catt, Penrose and Yi in those fixtures things might get tasty!

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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 14 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Yi	MORPETH A	15	15	100.0
Johnson	NAT WEST	16	18	88.9
Fang	COMETS B	15	18	83.3
Persaud	COMETS A	22	27	81.5
Adesanya	COMETS B	17	21	81.0
Mullineaux	COMETS B	12	15	80.0
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	23	30	76.7
C Fagan	COMETS A	18	24	75.0
Francis	COMETS A	13	18	72.2
S Fagan	COMETS A	13	18	72.2
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	27	39	69.2
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	10	15	66.7
McKee	CASTAWAYS	10	18	55.6
Crawford	PRO	18	33	54.5

Nelson	NORDWEST	18	36	50.0
Herbert	NAT WEST	10	21	47.6
Turner	PRO	14	30	46.7
To	MORPETH A	8	18	44.4
Brown	MORPETH A	9	21	42.9
Alnak	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	6	27	22.2
Miller	GOOD KARMA	4	21	19.0
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	2	18	11.1
Stair	NORDWEST	2	27	7.4