

AS AT 2 MARCH 2025

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS A	12	11	1	102	18	36	138
MORPETH A	13	10	2	90	40	39	129
CASTAWAYS	10	5	2	61	39	27	88
NAT WEST	11	5	2	52	58	33	85
PRO	11	2	2	40	67	33	73
COMETS B	10	2	1	35	65	30	65
COMETS C	10	1	1	26	74	30	56
OUTCASTS	9	1	1	21	69	18	39

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

- 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 21**

This week’s feature match involves the two teams at the top of the pecking order. It’s the hotly anticipated top-of-table Comets A against their closest rivals, Morpeth. Comets are too far in front to be caught in the title race but, having lost 9-1 in the first half, Morpeth have some honour to restore. The Comets team comprises Steve Fagan, Ian Francis and Laikram Persaud – identical to the team that contested the first half fixture. Morpeth, on the other hand, are much stronger: Derrick Wang, Simon Holohan and Scottie To. This is going to be a juicy match! The opening contest sees Fagan take on To. In the first half this was a rollercoaster of a set which Steve won in four. This latest set opened in the same way. First end to Scottie 12-10 and second end to Steve 11-9. Third end to Steve but fourth end to Scottie. No one gained the upper hand in the first half of the fifth end. We approach the finishing line and both players are within touching distance! We’re still deadlocked at deuce. The next two points clinched the win as both go to Scottie! A revenge win by the skin of his teeth. 96 points and could hardly have been closer! A great start for Morpeth! Next up it’s Ian Francis against Derrick Wang. Derrick has lost twice all season – first, in a class battle with Tony Catt and, second, in the sea of confusion that is your first ever match against Neil LeMilliere. The first two ends were shared between Francis and Wang. The third end saw Derrick deliver a crushing 11-1 blow on Ian before easing through the fourth end to an 11-8 win. It’s 2-0 to Morpeth and things could not be going better for them. Now comes the big obstacle they have to get past if they’re to win this fixture - Laikram Persaud. His first opponent is Simon Holohan. The first two ends belong to Laikram. There’s a momentary lapse in the third end which Simon takes 11-9 before Laikram comes back to win the fourth end and with it the set. Comets are on the scoreboard! Set four and Morpeth hit their first setback. Having got the better of Fagan, Scottie To is out to do the same against Francis. The contest wasn’t a “never in doubt” affair but looking at the scores Ian succeeded in keeping Scottie at bay for all but a temporary slip in the third end. Ian wins in four and the match score is level! Morpeth need a hero! Could it be Simon Holohan, next up against Fagan? Steve gets the better of the first three ends. He’s on the verge of the win in the fourth end but Simon manages to steal it 13-11! The deciding end was an incredible tussle but Simon fell agonisingly short, pipped at the post 11-7 in the fifth! 106 points played to find the winner – a marathon set! Comets have nullified

Morpeth's great start and now lead 3-2 and look favourites. I think Morpeth's best chance of an upset win comes next with Wang facing Persaud. That soon looked an unlikely prospect as Laikram steams through the first two ends. Derrick turns the tables to win the third but looks on his way to losing the set in the fourth. But somehow he fights back to take the fourth by the skin of his teeth, 12-10. To put this in perspective, Laikram has played 23 sets in this division and no one has yet taken him to a deciding end! The fifth end was for strong men only. No, it didn't go to deuce. No, it wasn't won by the narrowest of margins. The final end concluded at 11-7. And was won by Derrick! A standing ovation from Morpeth! It's 3-3 and they're still in with a chance! That chance receded in the next set as Francis came through a close battle with Holohan – three straight which included two deuce finishes. That makes the next set – Persaud against To – a make or break opportunity for Morpeth. All of To's losses this season have been against Comets A players and his only three straight loss was against Persaud in the first half! Try as he might, Scottie could not stop history repeating itself. Laikram just seems to have the game to beat him. The score reaches 5-3 to Comets meaning they could not lose this match. But Derrick Wang still had his maximum to fight for and he achieved that, downing Steve Fagan in three ends! 5-4 and so to the doubles. It was a great set of table tennis to end a great match. It's one end each when Morpeth steal the third end 14-12. And from there they accelerated away to take the fourth end as well. So, this game finished as a draw. Lots to reflect on but I must single out Derrick Wang for his contribution, beating three of the best players in the Division!

Our second match might bring some clarity to the lower finishing positions in the Division. Thus far, PRO have just managed to stay ahead of Comets B and C and Outcasts. This week PRO take on Comets B. PRO field John Crawford, George Buck and, back from a three-match absence, Ronnie Turner. Comets continue to rotate their players and this week for the B team we see Allamdeep Bhangoo, Adil Islam and Anoop Sharma. This match was played out of order with both teams having a player arriving late. If you want to follow set by set how the match developed John Crawford has produced a report which you'll find on the website. I'll just report player by player. John Crawford had a fairly straightforward night, winning his three sets three-straight. Maximums have been hard to find for PRO this season so a pat on the back for John. John did have one slip, losing the first end to Adil Islam but otherwise it was plain sailing. Ronnie Turner's night was similar. Three straight wins against Sharma and Islam but problems with Allamdeep Bhangoo. Allamdeep won the first end and was 10-7 up in the second. This was a slow start for Ronnie but he has the potential to string together a run of points. Five further points were played and score went from 7-10 down to 12-10 up in Ronnie's favour. Five in a row! After that, Ronnie didn't look back and won the next two ends 8 and 9. That's Ronnie's first maximum of the season. The night was not so straightforward for George Buck. A three straight loss to Islam and a loss in four ends to Bhangoo. Life did not look good after George lost the first two ends against Sharma but suddenly things turned in his favour. George won the third end 11-5 and followed that up with a 11-7 victory in the fourth. That took us to the only five-end singles set in the match. And George managed to keep the momentum going on to take the deciding end 11-8. Well done George! The night ended on a competitive note with the doubles all square after four ends that included two deuce finishes. The deciding end belonged to PRO with an 11-6 scoreline. 100 points played to reach the outcome. The longest set of the night by some margin. An 8-2 win for PRO and daylight is beginning to appear between PRO and the other teams at the bottom

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

Issued: 02/03/2025

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 13 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Persaud	COMETS A	27	29	93.1
Wong	COMETS A	22	24	91.7
Wang	MORPETH A	12	14	85.7
Johnson	NAT WEST	15	18	83.3
To	MORPETH A	21	26	80.8

Francis	COMETS A	20	26	76.9
Samuels	NAT WEST	11	15	73.3
S Fagan	COMETS A	15	21	71.4
Brown	MORPETH A	18	26	69.2
Holohan	MORPETH A	13	21	61.9
Marott	MORPETH A	13	21	61.9
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	14	25	56.0
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	11	20	55.0
Adesanya	COMETS B	8	15	53.3
Crawford	PRO	15	30	50.0
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	9	20	45.0
Guimichev	OUTCASTS	6	15	40.0
Turner	PRO	8	21	38.1
Islam	COMETS C	7	21	33.3
Siah	OUTCASTS	6	18	33.3
Persaud	PRO	3	15	20.0
Jones	NAT WEST	6	33	18.2
Sharma	COMETS C	3	18	16.7
Buck	PRO	2	15	13.3