

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 19

AS AT 1 MARCH 2020

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
MORPETH A	17	14	2	134	36	51	185
CASTAWAYS	17	14	3	129	41	51	180
COMETS	16	13	1	127	33	48	175
NAT WEST	18	11	3	107	73	51	158
EMPLOYMENT	18	10	0	98	82	54	152
MORPETH C	18	6	3	84	96	54	138
GOOD KARMA	17	5	2	76	94	51	127
SPARTA	17	3	2	50	120	51	101
TREASURY B	16	3	1	43	117	48	91
PRO	16	3	0	41	119	48	89
OUTCASTS	16	2	1	41	119	48	89

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
https://www.tabletennis365.com/LondonBanksAndCivilService/Fixtures/Season_2019-2020/Division_One

COMMENTARY

Week 22

First result of the week provides a surprise. Morpeth C faced Employment in what turned out to be a close contest. Matt Robertson opened for Morpeth against Chris McKee. Chris is in front after three ends and has chances to win it before Matt scrapes home 13-11 in the fourth. That end proved to be decisive as Matt went ahead in the fifth and never looked back, winning it 11-6. Fine win for Matt that took 99 points to conclude. In the next set, Paul Baylis beat Adam Alnak three straight. Set four was another marathon. Lew Hodges for Employment took two of the first three ends from Rytis Bulvicius. Like the first set, Lew was on the brink of winning it before Rytis snatched it away from the jaws of defeat with a narrow 14-12 escape. Strangely, the fifth ended with exactly the same score as the first set – 11-6. Who to? Well, it was Rytis who covered himself in glory – this time 101 points involved. I hear Morpeth players muttering about the end of their fifth end jinx! The score proceeded in symmetry: 1-0, 1-1, 2-1, 2-2, 3-2, 3-3 when Morpeth produced a spurt to take the next three sets on the trot. Alnak comfortably beat Hodges, Bulvicius again was a hero defeating McKee in four and Robertson capped it all with a great win over Baylis. Employment then won a hard fought doubles in five ends to make the result 6-4 to Morpeth. This was a good contest in which only two sets ended three straight. Big applause for a great team effort from Morpeth! I must single out Matt Robertson's maximum but all three Morpeth players beat opponents above them in the averages.

Morpeth A were up against Sparta and looking for maximum points. They picked the team to do that: Luk, Ji and Chambers. The first set did not go to plan as Michael Loveder took two of the first three ends off Alex Luk. Was Alex's huge unbeaten run about to come to an end? The fourth end is close but Alex edges it 11-7. Unfortunately Michael could repeat his early form and lost the fifth end 11-7. So, Alex's unbeaten run stays intact but credit to Loveder for making him work hard to do so. That proved to be the only close set and Morpeth reeled off the next nine sets to achieve the desired 10-0. It was Rob Chambers who was awarded Player of the Match but my eye was caught by another clinical maximum from Jane Ji.

The big match of the week was Comets versus Nat West. The outcome would clearly have a bearing on the title destination. A good contest was in prospect when the line-ups were announced: Herbert, Penrose and Catt take on Persaud, Francis and Fung. The first set of the night was over three straight – Laikram Persaud looked just too strong for Chris Hebert. Set two was key as Chris Penrose led Ian Francis two ends to one before Ian took the

fourth and also the fifth by 11-9. Could have gone either way but a great win against the formbook. Tony Catt then lost three straight to Perry Fung. That brought back Penrose to play Persaud. The first two ends were shared, both with one-sided scores. Persaud takes the third to go in front. The fourth end was close but Persaud managed to stay in front to win the set 11-9. In the fifth set, Fung took the first two ends against Chris Herbert but Chris fought back to take the third end narrowly. Was this the beginnings of a comeback? The fourth end looked to be heading for deuce when Perry upped his game to win 11-8. Comets were 5-0 up – a dream start! Nat West then mounted a challenge. First, Tony Catt made light work of Ian Francis, winning three straight. The next set was a real dogfight. It was number one in the averages playing number two: Fung against Penrose. Fung got the better of the first three ends. Penrose fought back to take the fourth end by an emphatic 11-4. The fifth end was neck and neck all the way to the end. It seemingly inevitably reached deuce before Penrose just managed to steal it 12-10. A great match-up and Chris removes Perry's unbeaten run that stretched back a year to 20 February 2019! Next, Persaud looked rock solid against Catt and won over four close ends. Nat West weren't done yet as Herbert lost the first end to Francis but stormed back to take the next three. 6-3 to Comets, which they converted to 7-3 with a surprisingly easy, doubles win. The 7-3 win was exactly the same result as achieved against Castaways. This match became the fourth this season when all six players won at least one set.

That left Castaways with the challenge of taking maximum points from Outcasts to gain ground on Comets. Things started well for Castaways. Reserve Norman Grant won the first set in four ends over Outcasts' Alan Jones. That became 2-0 as Neil Milliere beat Andrew Macalister three straight. Simon Jameson has had some good nights this season but was surely not going to beat Pete Harris. They were on next and to everyone's surprise Simon won the first two ends. Not for the first time this season Pete had to dig deep to get himself out of this hole. He did that successfully in the third end, running away with it 11-3. Simon wasn't done and was in with a shout in the fourth end until the later stages, with Pete coming home 11-8. The fifth end proved just too much for Simon as Pete completely dominated the end to win the set 11-3. A good fight but a disappointing ending for Simon. A relieved Castaways thought they'd dodged a bullet in that set but disaster struck in the next set when Andrew Macalister beat Norman Grant in four. On paper that shouldn't have happened but credit to Andrew for a surprise win. The match continued to go to plan and reached 6-1 when disaster struck again. This time it was Jameson who got the better of Grant, again in four ends. At 7-2 up Castaways were keen to close out the match but Outcasts put up stubborn resistance in the doubles and Castaways found themselves flirting with disaster again. It was two ends all before Castaways found their form and swept to victory 11-3. So, the mission to achieve maximum points had failed in a frustrating night for Castaways.

Finally this week, Karma took on Treasury B. Hard to find much to say about this match. Karma won 9-1 in a one-sided contest. Most of the sets finished three straight but not when Xavier Zhao went up against Treasury's Joe Shavila. This was a real marathon. Joe wins the first two ends, 15-13 and 12-10. Xavier takes the next two ends, both 11-9. The deciding end went on and on before reaching a climax at 14-12 in Joe's favour. Five ends and 116 points – the second longest set of the season. Pity there had to be a loser!

So, Morpeth claim the bragging rights from this week's round of fixtures, putting serious pressure on Comets and Castaways who are now playing catch-up. In the relegation zone, PRO join Outcasts at the bottom with Treasury just two points in front. Perry Fung's loss to Chris Penrose means there is no player in the averages left with a perfect record. Just not qualifying for the averages, having played 15 sets, Alex Luk's unbeaten run has reached an impressive 36 victories. In the week ahead, the highlight is Castaways taking on Morpeth A. You have to fancy Morpeth but by how many? Meanwhile, Comets are hoping that match is drawn and that they take maximum points from Outcasts.

In the relegation zone, neither PRO nor Treasury look favourites to pick up a handful of points from their fixtures. Treasury play Morpeth C while PRO are against Nat West. Hard to call who'll fare better. With just a few matches left to play, it's great we've still got interest at both ends of the table!

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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥18 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Fung	COMETS	28	29	96.6
Harris	CASTAWAYS	40	42	95.2
Persaud	COMETS	30	33	90.9
Bekele	MORPETH A	26	29	89.7
Ji	MORPETH A	31	35	88.6
Penrose	NAT WEST	20	23	87.0
Chambers	MORPETH A	26	31	83.9
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	34	48	70.8
Link	GOOD KARMA	13	18	72.2
Francis	COMETS	21	30	70.0
Herbert	NAT WEST	25	36	69.4
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	20	30	66.7
Catt	NAT WEST	16	24	66.7
Greenberg	GOOD KARMA	13	22	59.1
McKee	EMPLOYMENT	19	33	57.6
Baylis	EMPLOYMENT	23	40	57.5
Muller	NAT WEST	11	20	55.0
Coull	OUTCASTS	13	24	54.2
Robertson	MORPETH C	16	30	53.3
Dight	TREASURY B	11	21	52.4
Evans	SPARTA	14	27	51.9
Alnak	MORPETH C	15	30	50.0
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	12	24	50.0
Crawford	PRO	18	38	47.4
Jermyn	EMPLOYMENT	9	19	47.4
Guimichev	TREASURY B	11	24	45.8
Loveder	SPARTA	11	26	42.3
Jameson	OUTCASTS	12	30	40.0
Nicholls	MORPETH C	12	30	40.0
Shilo	MORPETH C	12	30	40.0
Mak	EMPLOYMENT	10	25	40.0
Bulvicius	MORPETH C	9	24	37.5
Jones	NAT WEST	14	39	35.9
Shore	TREASURY B	6	18	33.3
Tokely	SPARTA	15	48	31.3
Roullier	OUTCASTS	5	24	20.8
Persaud	PRO	6	32	18.8
Buck	PRO	6	33	18.2
Hattrill	SPARTA	5	30	16.7
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	4	25	16.0
Buchanan	PRO	5	32	15.6
Macalister	OUTCASTS	4	30	13.3
Johansson	GOOD KARMA	1	20	5.0
Gittens	TREASURY B	1	24	4.2
Shavila	TREASURY B	1	30	3.3