

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 4

AS AT 19 NOVEMBER 2023

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
CASTAWAYS	5	3	2	36	14	15	51
MORPETH A	5	3	0	28	22	15	43
COMETS A	3	3	0	28	2	9	37
COMETS B	3	2	1	20	10	9	29
NAT WEST	4	1	0	17	23	12	29
PRO	4	1	1	15	25	12	27
GOOD KARMA	4	1	0	9	31	12	21
NORDWEST	4	0	0	7	33	12	19

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

Last week I said I'd check if Laikram Persaud had broken an all-time divisional record when conceding just 32 points in one evening. In fact, he hadn't. That record is 27 points, conceded by Perry Fung, a record that has stood since 2009-10!

Week 5

The Comets A versus Comets B fixture scheduled for this week was postponed.

First result in this week sees Nat West play Morpeth. This should be a good match! Chris Penrose appears for Nat West for the first time this season and is joined by Les Samuels and Gareth Jones. Their opposition comprises Chuang ("John") Yi, Duncan Brown and Adam Alnak. The first set looks tasty - Chris Penrose, who's been around the top of the averages for years, against John Yi, who's been making a name for himself this season. Settle down for a ding-dong battle! Yi begins at top speed and takes the first end 11-5. Plenty of time for Chris to respond. Second end begins and much to my surprise the whole set is over in just 10 more minutes with Yi taking the second and third ends 11-3 and 11-9! That sends shock waves around the room. Chris rarely loses and never loses three straight! I know Yi has only lost one set in all his table tennis so far this season but I've not seen anything to indicate he could pull off a win like that. Things became a little worse for Nat West in the next set as Gareth Jones takes the first end off Duncan Brown before Brown comes back to take the next three and suddenly it's 2-0 to Morpeth. That win might have a big influence on the match outcome! It's down to Les Samuels to stop the rot as he takes on Adam Alnak. Things quickly look a bit brighter for Nat West as Samuels delivers a crisp no-nonsense win to take the set three straight. Yi then brushes Jones aside (though Gareth got more points than Chris did!) and Morpeth are 3-1 up. Nat West stage a mini-comeback with wins for Penrose over Alnak and Samuels over Brown. Alnak then beats Jones to leave the two thus-far unbeaten players to face each other. Yi takes the first end from Samuels. And follows that up by taking the second end too. Is this also going to end three straight? Not if Les can help it and he fights back to take the third. The fourth end reached a moment that was to be vital to the outcome. The score was 9-9. If Les wins this end it's all-square and he must have a fighting chance in the fifth. If John wins it, the set is over. What happened? John took the next two points to remain unbeaten on the night! Another good win! When the doubles was reached, the match score was 5-4 to Morpeth. Could Nat West salvage a draw? It didn't look like it as Morpeth take the first two ends and reach 11-11 in the third. Your mind goes back to that 9-9 point in the Yi / Samuels set. This time, Nat West wins the next two

points and goes on to take the fourth end too. Into the fifth and Nat West storm into a 10-8 lead. They're going to pull it off! But at that point the table tennis Gods turned away from them and the score progressed: 10-9, 10-10, 10-11 and, oh no, 10-12. And Morpeth had triumphed from a losing position! 107 points played – the longest set of the season. 6-4 to Morpeth, thanks mainly to John Yi, and Nat West go home bitterly disappointed at losing their third match on the trot.

Next, Castaways come up against Northwest. Castaways are still struggling for a number three and this week LeMilliere and Bispham were joined by Norman Grant, who's played for Castaways in previous seasons but is coming back to table tennis after a lay-off. Northwest were as usual: Nelson, Stair and Francis. Because of travel difficulties across London the match was played out of order in that Grace Stair played three, then Francis played three and finally Nelson played three. Never known that happen before. So, we start with Grace's three sets. Bispham and LeMilliere managed to beat her three straight but Norman Grant had a much harder task. The first two ends were halved. The third end went to Norman but Grace came back to narrowly win the fourth. It was to be one of those sets that's really close until the final stages and then suddenly it's not close anymore. The final end was one-sided with Grace winning comfortably 11-4. 2-1 to Castaways. By then Albert Francis had appeared to play his three off. His first set was against Johnny Bispham who rattled through three ends in double-quick time. Then came Norman Grant who got the better of the first three ends. The fourth end was close but Albert kept the set alive with a 11-8 victory. Into the deciding end and Albert managed to keep in front to register a 11-7 win. The final contest was against LeMilliere. It's all square after two ends. Albert builds up a big lead in the fourth but LeMilliere puts together a strong run of points to pinch it 12-10. The fourth end proceeded in an equally seesaw fashion with LeMilliere taking a long lead, only for Francis to slowly fight his way back into it. Unfortunately for Albert, he ran out of road and just failed to catch up. Neil managed to stay out in front to gain a narrow victory 11-9. It's 4-2 to Castaways. That left Ryan Nelson to play his three. His first set was against Bispham. This was the closest set of the night and needed all five ends to reach a conclusion. You couldn't pick the winner throughout the first four ends and through most of the fifth. It was only in the last few rallies that Bispham emerged in front, winning 11-8. That warmed Rhyon up nicely and he breezed through Grant three straight. His final singles was against LeMilliere and, after the Bispham contest, you'd expect this to be close. But, strangely, it wasn't, and Neil triumphed fairly easily in four ends. They say table tennis is all a matter of styles! 6-3 to Castaways to which the doubles was added to post a 7-3 outcome. A funny match where you'd have to question in hindsight how much the unusual order of play made a difference.

Which takes us to PRO against Karma. A match that potentially affects the bottom of the table. No great surprises in the team selections: Crawford, Turner and Buck for PRO against Sanders, Link and Schmidt. First up is Crawford against Schmidt. This proves to be very close indeed and no end was won by more than two points. Schmidt takes the first two ends with edge balls but Crawford takes the third. In the fourth, Crawford builds a 9-5 lead. Now Peter is legendary for losing close matches so everyone is already anticipating the fifth end. But something completely unexpected happened. Peter came from 9-6 down to take the next five points to secure the win! That doesn't usually happen! In the next set, George Buck started well against George Sanders but then inexplicably nothing went right and he lost in four. Playing out of order, Crawford then beat Ben Link without too much trouble. Ronnie Turner then stepped up to face Schmidt. Ronnie's in front after three ends. Schmidt fights back to win the fourth. Now, given Peter's record, the odds for a Turner win are hugely in his favour. But, for the second time in the evening, suddenly everything went Peter's way and he won the decider 11-3!! The next two sets were shared: Link beat Buck and Turner beat Sanders. Now, only George Buck stood in the way of a Schmidt maximum. Buck's in front after three ends. Schmidt comes back to win the fourth. No one's sure how the fifth will turn out. They didn't have to wait long for the answer as Schmidt cruised home 11-1 (yes, "one"). The singles' sets finished 6-3 to Karma. And so to the doubles. PRO are in front after three ends. Karma take the fourth and build a winning lead in the final end, leading 10-7. All seemed lost for PRO, but in a night of weird results and unexpected comebacks, PRO won the next five points to seal an incredible victory. A welcome 6-4 match win for Karma. May be a bit unexpected??? We can't end without returning to Peter Schmidt's maximum in another long night for him, playing 14 out of a possible 15 ends. His record to date remains extraordinary: played 12 sets, played 53 out of a possible 60 ends, won four sets and lost eight! He certainly gets his money's worth!!

**RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY**

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 5 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Yi	MORPETH A	9	9	100.0
Johnson	NAT WEST	6	6	100.0
Persaud	COMETS A	6	6	100.0
C Fagan	COMETS A	8	9	88.9
Francis	COMETS A	8	9	88.9
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	10	12	83.3
Fang	COMETS B	5	6	83.3
McKee	CASTAWAYS	5	6	83.3
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	12	15	80.0
Adesanya	COMETS B	7	9	77.8
Luu	COMETS B	4	6	66.7
Crawford	PRO	5	9	55.6
To	MORPETH A	5	9	55.6
Turner	PRO	6	12	50.0
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	3	6	50.0
Alnak	MORPETH A	4	9	44.4
Brown	MORPETH A	4	12	33.3
Nelson	NORDWEST	4	12	33.3
Schmidt	GOOD KARMA	4	12	33.3
Persaud	PRO	2	6	33.3
Samuels	NAT WEST	2	6	33.3
Herbert	NAT WEST	2	9	22.2
Francis	NORDWEST	2	12	16.7
Link	GOOD KARMA	1	6	16.7
Stair	NORDWEST	1	9	11.1