

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 12

AS AT 19 JANUARY 2025

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
MORPETH A	8	6	1	50	30	24	74
COMETS A	6	6	0	54	6	18	72
NAT WEST	8	4	2	39	41	24	63
CASTAWAYS	7	3	2	40	30	18	58
PRO	8	1	2	30	47	24	54
COMETS C	8	1	1	21	59	24	45
COMETS B	6	1	1	26	34	18	44
OUTCASTS	5	1	1	17	33	12	29

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 15

We begin with Comets C against Morpeth. I think Comets C, despite their lowly position in the table, are always capable of a surprise result. Morpeth are having a great season and strong contenders for a second-place finish. Morpeth come with a strong team: Simon Holohan, Scottie To and Jens Marott. Comets C field Hej Sultani, Eric Woo and Adil Islam. The first half fixture finished 10-0 to Morpeth. Looking at the line-ups, I think Morpeth are weaker this time and Comets are stronger than the first half so I expect this encounter to be much closer. This should be interesting. The opening set saw Sultani face Holohan. The first three ends were all close and all finished 11-9, with Sultani just having the advantage, winning two. The fourth end breaks the trend as Holohan draws level with an 11-5 success. Into the deciding end and there really isn't much in it. With no one gaining a big advantage this looks like a deuce finish! In the end it was close but they didn't quite get to deuce, Sultani winning it with another 11-9. 96 points played, the winner taking 47 of those and the loser taking 49! It was that close! Next up, Eric Woo takes on Scottie To. This went to four ends but To proved to be just too strong, carrying on the excellent season he is having. Not much to go on in the next set – Islam against Marott. They've both not played many matches in this division but looking at their records you'd have to fancy Marott for this one. It certainly isn't looking that way after the first two ends – both won by Islam. Is a comeback on the cards? Well, that prospect was quickly dashed as Adil cantered through the third end to win the contest three straight. If Comets are to achieve an upset here that's exactly the sort of set they need to win. It's 2-1 to Comets. The next set is in the same vein and again Comets win it. This time its Eric Woo beating Holohan in four. Morpeth got some ground back in the next set as the impressive Sultani brushed Marott aside three straight. 3-2 to Comets. I thought To would be too good for Islam but Adil was still in it after four ends, having levelled the set with a nail biting 13-11 escape in the fourth. The deciding end saw To raise his game and he ran away with it, 11-3. A good effort from Adil but a near miss. Woo then completed a miserable night for Marott beating him in four to leave Jens winless. It's 4-3 to Comets and an upset is still possible. Set eight and the in-form Adil Islam takes on Simon Holohan. This lasted three ends, including two deuce ends, and the winner was Adil. It's 5-3 to Comets. Can they go on to claim the biggest upset win of the season? The last singles set is the one we've all been waiting

for – who comes out on top when Sultani meets To? Those who sat back expectantly waiting to see five close ends were quickly disappointed. It didn't last long. Who would your money be on in a one-sided contest? The answer was Scottie To, with a devastating performance over three ends. Laikram Persaud is the only other player to beat Hej three straight this season. A very good win for Scottie. Comets are 5-4 up with the doubles left. Morpeth were not done yet and they got the better of the first three long ends by the narrowest of margins 11-13, 12-10, 13-11. Will it be a draw or a super win for Comets? The fourth end concluded at 11-5 but who to? It was Morpeth, who managed to salvage a draw to complete a good night's table tennis. Upset evaded! Commiserations to Comets - a strong team performance that almost pulled it off. I must single out Scottie To's maximum which kept Morpeth in the running! If you ignore the Comets A match – which was a disaster for Morpeth – Scottie is 15 out of 15 this season!

In this week's other match PRO take on Nat West. PRO make a change as Ronnie Turner is out celebrating his birthday so in comes Oliver Pink to join John Crawford and George Buck. The Nat West team has a familiar look to it - Adam Johnson, Les Samuels and Gareth Jones. In the first half this resulted in a 7-3 win for Nat West and I suspect there or thereabouts is where this one will finish up too. As usual, Crawford begins proceedings facing Adam Johnson. Adam is one of the stronger players in this division and he wasted no time dispensing Crawford three straight fairly comfortably. The second set was over equally quickly as Les Samuels overcame George Buck three straight too. Set three was a closer affair. Oliver Pink and Gareth Jones split the first two ends. Gareth is favourite for the third end as the score reaches 10-3. But Oliver stages an extraordinary comeback winning nine points in a row to transform 3-10 to 12-10! That put Oliver in the driver's seat, a position he never relinquished, taking the fourth end 11-8 to complete the victory. Some comeback! The next set progressed in a strangely similar fashion. Crawford takes the first two ends from Jones and is en route to victory at 6-2 up in the third end. Then, Gareth begins a comeback, winning point after point, until he's turned a 2-6 scoreline into a 11-6 victory! Having salvaged the third end can Gareth accelerate on to victory? But John regrouped and went again, taking control of the set and clinching the win 11-6 in the fourth. It was at this point that PRO lost control of the match. Three quick three-straight wins for Nat West. Johnson and Samuels beat Pink, and Jones narrowly beat Buck. The match score had moved from 3-2 to 6-2 in Nat West's favour. That saw Crawford and Samuels take to the stage in the final singles set. The score reached one end apiece. Both ends finished 11-9 and both ends were won by the player who came from behind. John won the first end from 6-9 down and Les won the second end from 5-9 down. It's certainly been a night for comebacks! Locked at one end all, John came out all cylinders firing to edge the next two ends and claim the victory! The doubles looked unpredictable on paper with neither team on good form. PRO have one doubles win in their previous five outings while Nat West have won just three of their seven doubles this season. PRO came racing out of the blocks and won both the first two ends. Was it going to be their night? But the Nat West twosome held their nerve and came back to take the next two ends. A good start to the fifth end was vital and PRO got it, building a 5-1 lead at the change of ends. From then on, Nat West just could not make any inroads into that four-point advantage. PRO breathed a sigh of relief as they came home the winners at 11-7 in the fifth. So, the match concludes in a 6-4 win for Nat West. Who went home the happier? Not much in it but, in bettering their first half result, I suspect PRO might claim a victory on points!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 8 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Persaud	COMETS A	16	17	94.1
Wong	COMETS A	8	9	88.9
Francis	COMETS A	7	8	87.5
To	MORPETH A	15	18	83.3
Johnson	NAT WEST	12	15	80.0
S Fagan	COMETS A	9	12	75.0

Sultani	COMETS C	13	18	72.2
Adesanya	COMETS B	8	12	66.7
Samuels	NAT WEST	8	12	66.7
Sultani	COMETS C	6	9	66.7
Brown	MORPETH A	11	18	61.1
Holohan	MORPETH A	7	12	58.3
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	10	19	52.6
Crawford	PRO	11	21	52.4
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	7	14	50.0
Marott	MORPETH A	6	12	50.0
Nash	CASTAWAYS	4	8	50.0
Islam	COMETS C	6	18	33.3
Woo	COMETS C	4	12	33.3
Coull	OUTCASTS	3	9	33.3
Turner	PRO	5	18	27.8
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	3	11	27.3
Morley	COMETS B	2	9	22.2
Persaud	PRO	2	9	22.2
Pink	PRO	2	9	22.2
Sharma	COMETS C	2	12	16.7
Jones	NAT WEST	3	24	12.5