

AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS A	14	9	3	108	32	42	150
CASTAWAYS	14	9	4	94	46	42	136
COMETS B	13	10	3	91	39	36	127
NAT WEST	14	5	4	70	70	42	112
PRO	14	4	3	58	82	42	100
MORPETH A	13	5	2	61	66	36	97
NORDWEST	14	2	0	35	105	39	74
GOOD KARMA	14	1	1	30	110	36	66

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 20

Nordwest conceded their last match against Morpeth.

Three games left this season and each has interest. First, it's Comets B against Karma. Comets B's chances of snatching the title from their A team have disappeared but a big points haul from their last two matches could propel them into second place, edging out Castaways. Their opponents are Karma for whom it's been a long hard season. Comets come with a strong team – Jamie Mullineaux, David Adesanya and Tai Luu. For Karma, it's Michael Miller and Xavier Zhao – who've been the nucleus of the Karma team this season - plus reserve Aman Kanwar. Mullineaux has been one of Comets most successful players and he starts against Miller. If you look at the averages, this should be a cakewalk for Jamie but, after three ends, he's struggling a bit. The fourth end is key and Jamie mounts a comeback to take the end 11-7. So, into the deciding end, can Jamie maintain progress and clinch the win or will a strong response from Michael get him over the line? As the end progressed it became clear that supporters of the underdog were going to be disappointed as Jamie moved away to win 11-5 in the fifth. Good effort from Michael though! The next set looked another potential mismatch in Comets' favour as Adesanya brings his 80%+ average against reserve Kanwar. The first end is surprisingly close but Kanwar loses it by a whisker 12-10. How will he react – comeback or collapse? It's comeback - with a strong second end to brush David aside 11-6. Third end, and David returns the complement with his own 11-6 win to gain the upper hand. The fourth end proved to be a bridge too far for Aman as his challenge fell away in a 11-4 loss. It's 2-0 to Comets. This pattern of stubborn resistance from Karma against superior opposition continued in set three as Zhao stood all square with Tai Luu after two ends. But then events mirrored the previous set as Luu took full control of the remaining two ends to emerge the winner. Again, the pattern continues into set four as Miller extends Adesanya to four ends but eventually loses. It's 4-0 to Comets but Karma are making a game of it. The next three sets quickly went to Comets – all three straight – Mullineaux and Adesanya beating Zhao and Luu too good for Kanwar. Comets claimed maximum points by winning the remaining three sets but Miller took an end off Luu and Karma so nearly took the doubles to a deciding end, losing 13-11 in the fourth. Comets B on track for that second place finish! The maths is now clear. A 9-1 win or better over Morpeth in their last fixture will be enough! That's a tall order but certainly possible. Could get tense!

Coincidentally, it's Morpeth in action for our second match this week. They take on title-retainers Comets A. Morpeth need to avoid whitewashes in their last two fixtures if they're to escape their lowest ever finish in this division. Their team is Duncan Brown, Chris Alexander and Oleg Blyuss. Comets A include Cain Fagan, Laikram Persaud and Winston Wong. Cain Fagan's the man in form and he fights off a good effort from Duncan Brown to take the first set three straight. Persaud then dominates Chris Alexander in a lightening fast three straight and Comets are cruising. The third set was also three straight as Blyuss lost to Wong but two of those ends were narrow misses, Oleg losing 12-10 twice. That was followed by one of the most interesting sets of the night as power-hitting from Duncan Brown had Persaud on the ropes. First end to Duncan – could this be an upset victory? Second end and Duncan's still going for it but just falling short by 11-7. Third end and time for Laikram to regroup and go again! Suddenly all the hits are coming back and ominously it's 11-4 to Laikram. Into the fourth end and last chance saloon for Duncan. He's holding his own and there's not much between them! As the end reaches its conclusion, Laikram gets in front and holds on for an 11-9 victory. A good contest and bad luck Duncan! In the next three sets Comets put their foot down and wrapped them up three straight – Fagan came out ahead of Blyuss, Wong had a comfortable victory over Alexander, and Persaud resumed normal service conceding just 16 points to Blyuss. The penultimate singles set saw another good performance from Duncan Brown for no reward, losing three ends to Wong narrowly, two of which ended at deuce. Fagan beat Alexander to take us to the doubles, and what a doubles it was! On paper, Morpeth have no chance but suddenly they're in front after three ends. With no margin for error, the Comets pairing clearly decided it was time to become invincible and brushed aside the Morpeth challenge 11-3. Who's your money on for the decider? Given the battering Morpeth took in the fourth end surely Comets must now triumph! Not so, as Morpeth hold set point at 11-10. And again at 12-11! And for a third time at 13-12! But Comets fight back to 13-13 and then go ahead for the first time at 14-13! You've guessed what happens next. Comets win the next point to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat 15-13 in the fifth. Nothing Morpeth can do bar reflecting on what an unfair game table tennis can be! Pats on the back for another stalwart Morpeth effort. So, Comets take all ten points in their final match. Cain Fagan extends his winning streak to 19 straight victories. And Laikram Persaud claims his sixth Player of the Match award, the most in the Division. Comets A go out on a high!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

Issued: 01/04/2024

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 17 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Johnson	NAT WEST	19	21	90.5
Adesanya	COMETS B	20	24	83.3
Fang	COMETS B	15	18	83.3
Luu	COMETS B	15	18	83.3
C Fagan	COMETS A	27	33	81.8
Mullineaux	COMETS B	17	21	81.0
Persaud	COMETS A	29	36	80.6
S Fagan	COMETS A	16	21	76.2
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	25	33	75.8
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	28	42	66.7
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	12	18	66.7
Francis	COMETS A	13	21	61.9
Crawford	PRO	22	37	59.5
McKee	CASTAWAYS	10	18	55.6
Turner	PRO	18	34	52.9
Nelson	NORDWEST	18	36	50.0
Herbert	NAT WEST	10	21	47.6

To	MORPETH A	8	18	44.4
Alnak	MORPETH A	10	24	41.7
Samuels	NAT WEST	7	18	38.9
Schmidt	GOOD KARMA	9	24	37.5
Brown	MORPETH A	10	27	37.0
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	6	18	33.3
Francis	NORDWEST	11	36	30.6
Jones	NAT WEST	8	33	24.2
Miller	GOOD KARMA	5	27	18.5
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	3	27	11.1
Stair	NORDWEST	2	30	6.7
Buck	PRO	1	28	3.6