

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 17

AS AT 23 FEBRUARY 2025

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS A	11	11	0	97	13	33	130
MORPETH A	12	10	1	85	35	36	121
CASTAWAYS	10	5	2	61	39	27	88
NAT WEST	11	5	2	52	58	33	85
PRO	10	1	2	32	65	30	62
COMETS B	9	2	1	33	57	27	60
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 20

Morpeth face Nat West in the first match this week. They won the first half fixture 7-3. You may remember it was the match when Duncan Brown pulled off that exceptional win over Tony Catt. Morpeth field one of their strongest teams: Derrick Wang, Scottie To and Duncan Brown. For the second time this season Nat West only have two players: Gareth Jones and Chris Herbert. Wang faced Jones in the opening encounter. It was a set when Derrick always seemed to be in control and Gareth always seemed to be struggling to catch up. Derrick was victorious three-straight, conceding an average of six points per end. Scottie To's contest with Gareth followed a similar path. Scottie won the first end. Gareth put up stronger resistance in the second end and was unlucky to lose it 13-11. Maximum effort was called for in the third end but, try as he might, Gareth just couldn't get in front. Another three straight loss was the result. In past seasons, Gareth hasn't had much luck against Duncan Brown but things were looking brighter on this occasion. It's all square after the first two ends. Gareth's hanging in there in the third and things go his way as he pinches it 11-9. Into the fourth end and after 18 points both players had won nine. Gareth is two points away from winning the set! But it's Duncan who wins the next two points to level the contest. That's rough luck for Gareth and it proved to be “so near yet so far” in the fifth as Gareth fell agonisingly short, losing 11-8. Just to show how close it was, Duncan won one more point than Gareth over the course of the match. Chris Herbert dominated the first end against Scottie To, posting an impressive 11-3 scoreline. The second end was a real dogfight as the scoreline went past 10-10 and on to 15-13 before the winner was found. The end went Morpeth's way to level the set. That really set the tone for the remainder of the set. The third end went to To 11-9. And when the fourth end reached deuce, you just felt it wasn't going to go Nat West's way. And so it was. A heart breaking 17-15 loss for Chris and with it went the set. Another near miss for Nat West! I don't think Chris has faced Duncan Brown before but I expected a close contest. To my surprise, Duncan was completely dominant, in full control of the set and winning three straight for the loss of 17 points. Chris's contest with Wang began well for Chris as he edged the first end 11-9. There followed two extraordinary ends of table tennis. The first was won by Chris who overwhelmed Derrick 11-1! He needs one more end for a big win! But, inexplicably after that crushing loss, Derrick won the next end 11-2. How can two successive ends finish 1-11 and 11-2?? The fourth end returned to normality as Derrick takes it 11-8. We need a

deciding end. The way these scores are swinging around I have no idea how this end will finish. The end turned out to be one-sided. And the winner was Wang with an 11-4 in the fifth scoreline. The all-time record for the fewest points played in a five-ender stands at 70, happened in 2017. This set came close to it – just 79 points over five ends! With all the singles sets completed Morpeth led 9-0. And so to the doubles where we come across more weirdness! Having lost all the singles sets, Nat West go and win the doubles! And it wasn't even that close! Nat West win in four to make the match score 9-1 but that score wasn't a true reflection of Nat West's efforts. I leave you to think about how that doubles result could come about!

In times past, Castaways versus Comets A was always one of the most important fixtures of the year. Often, it determined who would finish first and who second. Not so this season as Comets A are miles ahead in the table and Castaways may be beaten into third place by Morpeth. In the first half fixture Comets were the emphatic winners 8-2. Could Castaways do any better in the reverse fixture? One positive for Castaways is that they have Pete Harris available for this match. He joined Mike Loveder and Johnny Bispham with Neil LeMilliere absent, struck down with Norovirus. That brought to an end Neil's proud record of playing in every Castaways' match since 21 November 2019!! No Laikram Persaud for Comets. Instead, it's Ian Francis, Winston Wong and Steve Fagan. Bispham begins against Fagan. Steve makes a quickfire start and wins the first two ends in no time. Some hope for Bispham as he dominates the third end with an 11-3 response. But that hope is quickly dashed as Steve pinches the fourth end 11-9 and with it the win. Loveder against Francis is next. The initiative ebbed and flowed with no player in the ascendancy. Four ends are shared. Mike gets in front in the decider but Ian slowly hauls him in and we are at 10-10. The conclusion was reached at 14-12. The winner, by the narrowest of margins, was Mike Loveder after 95 points. More good news for Castaways in the next set as Pete Harris makes light work of the in-form Winston Wong, three straight. Castaways are 2-1 up, a satisfactory start. Loveder against Fagan proved to be a narrow win for Steve. It was three straight but each end was close. Winston Wong took the first two ends off Bispham and looked well on the way to a win. But Johnny staged a comeback to take the third end 11-7. The fourth end could have gone either way but heartbreak for Johnny as Wong stayed strong to win it 11-9. In the next set it was Harris who was in front by two ends to one against Francis but suddenly momentum shifted in Ian's direction. He won the fourth end and then the fifth too. The last three sets have all gone Comets' way. The match score is now 4-2 to Comets. It falls to Loveder to get Castaways back in the game. He faces Winston Wong and there's cause for optimism as Mike won the first encounter. Winston's in front after three ends and Mike's running out of road. The score reaches 10-10 in the fourth but, not for the first time in the match, Comets finish the stronger. Winston comes home 13-11 and the win is his. This pattern of Comets outlasting Castaways repeated in the eighth set. Harris saw a winning lead against Fagan just melt away as Steve took the last three ends comfortably. The final singles set sees winless Johnny Bispham face Ian Francis. The score reached one end all but, just when you're expecting Comets to accelerate away again, it was Bispham who took the next two ends and a consolation win for Castaways. Against the odds, the doubles went Castaways' way to narrow the final score to 6-4 in Comets' favour. That was the most sets Comets have conceded in a match this season and also Comets first doubles loss of the season! A loss for Castaways but not all doom and gloom for them. All six players registered at least one win for the fifth time this season – the most times that's happened in any season since the League began!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 12 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Persaud	COMETS A	25	26	96.2
Wong	COMETS A	22	24	91.7
To	MORPETH A	20	23	87.0
Johnson	NAT WEST	15	18	83.3
Francis	COMETS A	18	23	78.3

S Fagan	COMETS A	14	18	77.8
Sultani	COMETS C	16	21	76.2
Samuels	NAT WEST	11	15	73.3
Holohan	MORPETH A	13	18	72.2
Brown	MORPETH A	18	26	69.2
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
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	9	20	45.0
Crawford	PRO	12	27	44.4
Woo	COMETS C	5	12	41.7
Guimichev	OUTCASTS	6	15	40.0
Islam	COMETS C	7	21	33.3
Siah	OUTCASTS	6	18	33.3
Turner	PRO	5	18	27.8
Coull	OUTCASTS	3	12	25.0
Sathasivam	COMETS B	3	12	25.0
Persaud	PRO	3	15	20.0
Jones	NAT WEST	6	33	18.2
Sharma	COMETS C	3	18	16.7
Buck	PRO	1	12	8.3