

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 2

AS AT 5 NOVEMBER 2023

| | P | W | D | F | A | B | P |
|------------|---|---|---|----|----|---|----|
| CASTAWAYS | 3 | 2 | 1 | 24 | 6 | 9 | 33 |
| COMETS A | 2 | 2 | 0 | 19 | 1 | 6 | 25 |
| MORPETH A | 3 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 17 | 9 | 22 |
| NAT WEST | 2 | 1 | 0 | 12 | 8 | 6 | 18 |
| COMETS B | 2 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 9 | 6 | 17 |
| PRO | 2 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 14 | 6 | 12 |
| NORDWEST | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 17 | 6 | 9 |
| GOOD KARMA | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 6 | 8 |

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 3

We begin with Castaways' challenge to keep up with Comets A. This week they play Karma whose team includes regular, Xavier Zhao, last week's debutant, Peter Schmidt, and the potentially dangerous Jason Killip. Castaways' team is LeMilliere, McKee and Bispham. First up is Killip against Terry McKee. Jason takes the first 11-6 but Terry fights back to take the next two. The fourth end goes Jason's way and we're into a deciding end. Hard to pick a winner! These two last met towards the end of last season when Jason won a marathon set 12-10 in the fifth. Looks like we're heading for a replay of that set! This time the final end was not so close and Jason maintained a lead to win the end 11-6. A good win! LeMilliere then levelled the match score with a win over Zhao to bring up Bispham against Schmidt. This set went the distance but it proved to be one of those sets that swung around violently. An 11-7 opening win for Schmidt was immediately balanced with an 11-2 win for Bispham. The third end finished 11-4 to Bispham but was followed by an 11-6 win for Schmidt. It was Bispham who emerged the winner 11-5 in the fifth. A strange set where neither player seemed able to put together a consistent run of points. In contrast, Bispham against Killip took just three ends but each of which was mighty close. Bispham wins it 12-10, 11-8 and 13-11. Another close set followed. Schmidt was ahead of LeMilliere after three ends but Neil slowly fights his way back into it to win the fourth and fifth ends. Castaways are running away with the match score but one last battle was to come. Predictably it involved Killip against LeMilliere. Neil won the first two ends. Jason won the next two. The head-to-head record says put your money on Jason to win the fifth. But that would have been the wrong bet as Neil coasts home 11-5. Castaways win it 9-1 but some very good table tennis had been played. Not for the first time this season, the outcome didn't reflect the closeness of the contest. A special mention for Peter Schmidt who contested 14 ends but came away with nothing to add to his thirteen ends played last week to also come away empty handed. Table tennis can be a cruel game!

A tall order for Northwest this week as they take on Comets A. Northwest field Rhyan Nelson, Albert Francis and Tobias Svensson. Comets A bring the big guns: Steve Fagan, Cain Fagan and Ian Francis. The match sets off with four three-straight wins for Comets which included Cain Fagan dropping just 16 points to Nelson. That was followed by four surprisingly close contests. Rhyan Nelson got Northwest off the mark with a long five-ender against Ian Francis that he won 11-6 in the decider. Albert Francis then refused to lie down against Steve Fagan in the closest of contests that Steve won 12-10, 12-10, 10-12 and 13-11! Tobias Svensson gave Ian Francis all sorts of difficulty before losing 11-7 in the fifth. And Albert Francis then lost to Cain Fagan from what seemed to

be a winning position, having won the first two ends and got within two points of winning the third before the bubble burst. Those four hotly contested sets – three of which went Comets’ way – really turned the match. Comets win 9-1 but Nordwest go home thinking about what might have been!

Comets B versus Nat West. Who’s your money on? In previous years you’d have to say Nat West but it feels this year might be different. Let’s see the teams. For Comets, we have Adesanya and Fang plus a first outing this season for Tai Luu. For Nat West, it’s Johnson and Herbert and Les Samuels’ first appearance. Predictions? There are some imponderables here. How good is Kevin Fang – might he take three? Chris Herbert’s in a bad run of form – can he break out of it? At the height of his form Les Samuels was an 80% guy but last year he struggled. Which Les Samuels will we see tonight? Whatever the answers to those questions this is going to be close. First up sees Luu take on Herbert. Don’t think these guys have met before. First blood to Luu but it’s close – 13-11. Second blood to Luu, this time by a mile – 11-2. Herbert gets back into it with a win in the third but Luu narrowly keeps his nose in front to win the set 11-9. Next, Adesanya faces Samuels. Les takes an end but David takes three and it’s 2-0 to Comets B. Now comes the big one – Fang against Johnson. It’s one end all and Adam takes the vital third end by a whisker, 12-10. Fang’s not done yet and back he comes to win the fourth. No idea who’s going to win this. That was no clearer at 10-10 in the final end. This is going to be a coin toss. Well, the coin comes down in Adam’s favour – 14-12 in the fifth after exactly 100 points – the longest five-setter of the season so far. The next five sets follow the same pattern – first, Comets win a set, then Nat West do the same etc etc. until, with the score at 5-4, Luu beat Samuels to ensure a match win for Comets B. In that rhythmic sequence, Johnson beat both Luu and Adesanya to end the night unbeaten. A fine maximum. What you probably didn’t know was last time they played Luu beat Johnson three straight!! And Adam lost to Fang a few weeks ago in the Central League! Nat West won the doubles to end the night on a high note but the match was lost – 6-4 to Comets B.

Last match this week is your banker bet – PRO versus Morpeth – a match that over the years PRO have never won. Anything in the team selections to suggest otherwise? No, it’s as usual, Crawford, Persaud and Turner for PRO, and Brown, Alexander and Alnak for Morpeth. Things started unexpectedly well for PRO, going 2-0 up with wins for Crawford over Brown and Persaud over Alexander. The match then goes out of order and Crawford is up against Alnak. In recent seasons, Adam has shaded John in the averages but sets between them are hard fought. There wasn’t much between them this time either as they shared the first four ends. The final end is going to be about who can string together a consistent run of winners and that proved to be Adam, winning 11-8 in the fifth. Ronnie Turner came out for the next set to face Duncan Brown. Again, the first four ends were shared. Duncan raced into a 6-2 lead in the deciding end. Ronnie rallied to take the next six points to go ahead 8-6 and then incredibly Duncan took the last 5 points to win 11-8. Well played Duncan and bad luck Ronnie! The next four sets came and went quickly. Straightforward wins for Turner and Crawford over Alexander, Persaud over Brown (vital win that!), offset by an Alnak win over Persaud. Somehow, PRO found themselves 5-3 up! Alnak then played Turner to keep Morpeth in the match. No head-to-head history to go on here but Adam has yet to lose on the night. And Adam continued that run of form to see Ronnie off in four ends. 5-4 to PRO! So, the match outcome is to be determined by Crawford and Turner against Brown and Alnak. The PRO pairing come out at speed, taking the first two ends. It’s going to be PRO’s night! But whoa! Morpeth take the third end and this set is far from over. So, we’re in the fourth end and who will come out of this victorious? It’s PRO, by 11-7, to secure their first ever win over Morpeth. Quite a night! Six sets went beyond the third end. Morpeth won four of them but they still lost the match!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY
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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 3 sets played)

| Player | Team | Sets Won | Sets Played | Average (%) |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bispham | CASTAWAYS | 6 | 6 | 100.0 |
| C Fagan | COMETS A | 6 | 6 | 100.0 |
| Johnson | NAT WEST | 6 | 6 | 100.0 |

| | | | | |
|------------|------------|---|---|-------|
| Catt | NAT WEST | 3 | 3 | 100.0 |
| Lai-Brown | MORPETH A | 3 | 3 | 100.0 |
| Persaud | COMETS A | 3 | 3 | 100.0 |
| S Fagan | COMETS A | 3 | 3 | 100.0 |
| Yi | MORPETH A | 3 | 3 | 100.0 |
| Fang | COMETS B | 5 | 6 | 83.3 |
| Francis | COMETS A | 5 | 6 | 83.3 |
| McKee | CASTAWAYS | 5 | 6 | 83.3 |
| LeMilliere | CASTAWAYS | 7 | 9 | 77.8 |
| Adesanya | COMETS B | 4 | 6 | 66.7 |
| Crawford | PRO | 2 | 3 | 66.7 |
| Loveder | CASTAWAYS | 2 | 3 | 66.7 |
| Luu | COMETS B | 2 | 3 | 66.7 |
| Alnak | MORPETH A | 3 | 6 | 50.0 |
| Nelson | NORDWEST | 2 | 6 | 33.3 |
| Persaud | PRO | 2 | 6 | 33.3 |
| To | MORPETH A | 2 | 6 | 33.3 |
| Killip | GOOD KARMA | 1 | 3 | 33.3 |
| Nash | CASTAWAYS | 1 | 3 | 33.3 |
| Sanders | GOOD KARMA | 1 | 3 | 33.3 |
| Brown | MORPETH A | 1 | 6 | 16.7 |
| Francis | NORDWEST | 1 | 6 | 16.7 |
| Herbert | NAT WEST | 1 | 6 | 16.7 |
| Turner | PRO | 1 | 6 | 16.7 |