**Table tennis by Chris Blake - www.tabletennis365.com/Sunderland**

The Sunderland & District TT League teams focused their attention on the 2nd round of the Team Handicap Cup.

The cup competition sees players allocated an individual handicap based upon the standard to which they play. This in effect attempts to cancel out any advantage, for example, a Division 1 player may have over a 3rd division player, should their teams be drawn to play against each other.

The matches are the best of 9 sets with each player playing 3 sets, each set being the best of the 3 games played to 21 points, with alternative serves (5 serves).

**2nd Round Team Handicap Cup Results:**

Redby CA A 1 (D2) vs. Sacriston St Bedes C (D3) 5

Redby CA B 3 (D3) vs. Durham CA A (D1) 6

Sacriston St Bedes B 6 (D2) vs. Silksworth IM B (D2) 3

Sacriston St Bedes D 2 (D3) vs. St Chads (D1) 7

Silksworth IM A (D1) 7 vs. Durham CA B (D2) 2

St Gabriels B (D2) 5 vs. St John A 1 (D2) 1

Thompson Ins. A (D1) 5 vs. Mortimer CA (D1) 0

In the match between Redby CA A (lying 2nd off bottom in Division 2) and Sacriston St Bedes C (lying 3rd bottom in Division 3) Redby were required to give between 4 and 8 point start to their opponents in each of the individual sets played.

Reigning Champions Sacriston won the first 5 sets to win the cup tie and progress to the next stage of the competition.

The tie between Redby CA B (currently 2nd in Division 3) and Durham CA A (3rd in Division 1) was quite a close affair which Durham just edged to win 6 – 3 despite having to award their opponents between 3 and 11 points. The score line does not give Redby justice who put up a valiant fight with a number of games going to the wire, i.e., being decided 17, 18, 19 and deuce.

Colin Hunt was awarded man of the match for Durham after winning his sets and he received great support for his teammates Gavin Bestford (2) and Stuart Anderson (1) – Redby’s sets were picked up by Allan Girdwood (2) and Joe Muldowney (1) with Howard Forster desperately unlucky not to pick up a set on the night narrowly losing out in each of his singles sets played

Silksworth IM B performed well against 2nd Division rivals Sacriston St Bedes B despite being able to field two players only in their 2nd round cup tie. This meant that effectively were already 3 – 0 down in sets with the winner being the first team to get to 5. Both teams agreed to play all of the sets with the final result going in the favour of Sacriston 6 – 3.

1st Division side St Chads, currently lying in 2nd place had a really close and entertaining match against 3rd Division side Sacriston St Bedes D. St Chads were required to award between 9 and 13 points to their opponents leaving little margin for error and so it proved to be with 19 out of the 23 games played resulting in a score of 21 – 16 or more.

St Chads player Barry Cuthbertson finished the night unbeaten and was closely supported by Jimmy Scope and Dave Bissett who won 2 sets apiece. Debbie and Nikki Irwin each picked up a set for Sacriston with Terry Chartlon unlucky not to register a set on the night – losing out on each set played by the smallest margins.

Silksworth A (Division 1) progressed through to the quarter-final stages of the competition with a relatively comfortable 7 – 2 win over Division 2 side Durham CA B.

Division 2 rivals St Gabriels B and St Johns A played in an entertaining cup tie with St Gabriels winning the match 5 – 1.

Division 1 leaders Thompson Insurance ensured their name went into the hat when they defeated last years Runners Up Mortimer CA 5 – 0. Andrew Wilkinson, Diane Cartmell and Marc Cotton did the damage for Thompson’s but were forced to work hard for their victory.

There is only one outstanding tie to be played and that is the match between St John B and Sacriston St Bedes A.

The draw for the quarter-final stage of the competition has been made as is as follows:

**Quarter-final Draw of the Team Handicap Cup:**

St John B (D3) **or** Sacriston A (D1) vs. St Gabriels B (D2)

Thompson Ins. A (D1) vs. Durham CA A (D1)

Sacriston St Bedes B vs. St Chads (D1)

Silksworth IM A (D1) vs. Sacriston St Bedes C (D3)

**Matches to be played w/c 25th February 2013**

\*\*\*The Sunderland and District Closed TT Championships are being held at the Sandhill Centre on Sunday 3rd March 2013. Entry forms can be obtained from Dave Bissett with the closing date being Wednesday 20th February 2013\*\*\*

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