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

The race for promotion to **Division 1** is hotting up with Sacriston St Bedes B and North East Bed Centre leading the way.

Sacriston top the league on 28 points having played 8 matches with NEBC currently lying second on 25 points with one match in hand.

With NEBC’s players Dave Pringle (21/21) and Alex Smith (18/18) yet to taste defeat this season and Sacriston’s Chris Grant (21/24) and Tony Taylor (14/15) losing only 4 sets between them it is hard to see how other teams can overcome them despite 2/3rds of the season still remaining.

In this week’s match results Sacriston beat St Gabriels B 7 – 3 to gain a maximum 4 points for their victory but dropped a point to away to Silksworth IM B managing to win only 6 – 4 in a very close match.

Tony Taylor (Sacriston) was man of the match after winning all of his 3 sets. Teammates Chris Grant (2) and Dan Nicholson (1) picked up 3 singles sets between them and also combined to win the doubles set against Alan Bickle and Graham Brown. Bickle was the pick of the bunch for Silksworth winning 2 out of his 3 sets most noteably a fine win over Grant in the first set of the match.

NEBC celebrated a hatrick of wins over Redby CA A (7 – 3), St John TTC A (8 – 2) and Silksworth IM A (8 – 2).

West CA A remain in the hunt for promotion with a fine 7 – 3 win over Durham CA B in a pulsating game which could have quite easily ended in a 5 – 5 draw. West’s Rob Kerr was undefeated in the match and combined with Dave Thompson (2) to win the doubles set – with Linda Spensley picking up a set to ensure maximum points.

Durham’s Stuart Anderson played well throughout picking up 2 sets and Paul Wiggins had a good win over Spensley.

However, spare a thought for Durham’s Billy Upton who was desperately unlucky not to pick up a set having twice losing out 9 – 11 in the final end to Kerr and Spensley respectively and just being edged out by Thomson 8 – 11 in the 4th.

In **Division 3** Redby CA B took advantage of closest rivals St John B’s 4 – 6 defeat to West CA B with a resounding 10 – 0 victory over St John C - a win which saw them leapfrog West to go top of the league.

Redby’s Allan Girdwood was deemed to be man of the match but was well supported by Joe Muldowney (3) and Howard Forster (3).

Alan Whitwham of West CA B turned back the clock to win all of his sets against a trio of St John B players – Jacob Helm, Sean Gleghorn and Robert Renton. Whitwham was closely supported by Tommy Turner (2) and Vic Austin (1) to ensure his team gained 3 points for their 6 – 4 win.

The up and coming players of St John B have given an excellent account of themselves this season and should continue to go from strength to strength as they gain valuable league experience in this closely fought division - where any one of 5 teams have an opportunity of gaining promotion to Division 2.

In the only other match in Division 3 Sacriston St Bedes D had a hard fought 6 – 4 win over local rivals Lanchester CC. Debbie and Nikki Irwin won 2 sets a piece and combined to win the doubles and with Barry Dingwell picking up the other set Sacriston gained 3 points for their 6 – 4 win.

Lanchester’s Callan McCabe was star of the show for the second week running after winning all of his 3 sets. Bob Cook picked up a set to ensure that Lanchester at least gained a point for their efforts.

Bob Russell played well despite failing to register a set –particularly in his match against Sacriston’s Dingwall where he narrowly lost out 12 – 14 in the 2nd and 3rd games respectively.

There was only one match played in **Division 1** this week – Durham CA A’s 10 – 0 victory over Mortimer CA. Durham played a very strong team consisting of John Williamson, Christian Neumann and Robert Reed with the latter being awarded man of the match in his first match of the season.