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

With 2nd placed St Chads out of action this week Thompson Insurance A extended their lead at the top of **Division 1** to 8 points with a comfortable 10 – 0 win over their B team. Marc Cotton, Chris Blake and Allan Thompson were all undefeated for the A team.

The defeat for the B team keeps them near the foot of the table – 2nd of bottom – 1 point behind rivals Sacriston St Bedes A although they do have 2 games in hand.

To Thompson’s B relief Sacriston A were also comprehensively beaten 10 – 0 by in-form Durham CA A. Colin Hunt (3), John Williamson (3) and Christian Neumann (3) did the damage for Durham with the latter also combining to win the doubles set.

The win sees Durham cement their 3rd placed position and move within 5 points of 2nd placed St Chads.

It’s ‘as you were’ at the top of **Division 2** with Sacriston St Bedes B and North East Bed Centre (NEBC) both recording wins over Redby CA A (7 – 3) and Durham CA B (6 – 4), respectively.

In a very entertaining game between Sacriston B and Redby A 7 out of the 10 games were decided in either the 4th or 5th end. Sacriston’s Chris Grant was voted ‘man of the match’ after winning all of his 3 singles sets but was made to work hard to register his wins against Redby’s Frank Booth (11- 7 in the 4th), Malcolm Deneven (also 11 – 7 in the 4th) and Ken Tweedy (11 – 9, 11 – 9 and 11 – 9). Grant was well supported by teammates Tony Taylor and Nigel Coe who chipped in with 2 sets a piece to ensure maximum points for their 7 – 3 victory.

Booth and Deneven picked up a set a piece for Redby with Deneven also combining with Tweedy to narrowly edge the doubles 11 – 3 in the 5th and deciding end against Grant and Taylor.

2nd placed NEBC dropped a valuable point against 3rd bottom Durham CA B. Dave Pringle was ‘man of the match’ winning his 3 singles the closest being 11 – 8 in the 4th against Durham’s Billy Upton. Pringle then combined with Gary Anderson to win doubles set. With Anderson and Tony Watson both winning a set a piece NEBC were awarded 3 points for their win with Durham being awarded 1 point.

Durham’s Paul Wiggins and Upton won 2 sets each and John Foster was particularly unlucky not to register a win particularly against Watson eventually losing out 8 – 11 in the 5th in an excellent encounter which could have easily seen Foster take the set - which would have made the overall match score 5 – 5.

West CA A, who are currently in 3rd place, dropped 4 valuable points against rivals Silksworth IM B – losing out 7 – 3. Silksworth’s Alan Bickle and Bob Sanderson were both undefeated in the match and with Howard Brown winning his match against Linda Spensley (11 – 6 in the 4th) they registered a maximum points for their fine win.

In **Division 3** Redby CA B extended their lead to 5 points over St Gabriels C following a 9 – 1 win over 2nd bottom Sacriston St Bedes B. The match was closer than the score suggests with a number of very close games – most notably Peter Whitfield’s defeat to Allan Girdwood (13 – 15 in the 5th), Erin Harrison’s 10 – 12 (in the 4th) loss to Howard Forster and Colin Pritchard’s 9 – 11 defeat in the 4th to Joe Muldowney.

In the only other match in division 3 Sacriston St Bedes D had a comfortable 9 – 1 win over bottom placed St Johns C to move with 2 points of 3rd placed St John B (with 2 games in hand) and 3 points of 2nd placed St Gabriels C respectively.

Next week sees the 1st round of the Team Handicap Cup. The draw has set up some very interesting ties with a number of 1st, 2nd and 3rd division sides drawn to play against each other.

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