**Table Tennis by Chris Blake – Singles and Team Handicap Cup Special**

St Chads defeated their closest rivals and Division 1 Champions Thompson Insurance A in the semi-final of the Team Handicap Cup in a thrilling encounter to progress through to the final.

In a thrilling encounter the Saints were given the perfect start winning the first 2 sets – firstly, Dave Bissett (+6) came from 20 – 16 down in the first end against Marc Cotton to win 22 – 20 before comfortably taking the 2nd end 21 – 13. Cuthbertson, fresh from his excellent semi-final victory in the Singles Handicap Cup played very well to defeat Thompson’s Diane Cartmell despite giving his opponent a 9 point start – winning the 1st comfortably 21 – 12 but was made to fight all the way in the 2nd narrowly winning 21 – 18.

Thompson’s Andrew Wilkinson pulled one back for the Champions with a fine display of attacking play by defeating Jimmy Scope (+6) eventually winning 21 – 12 and 21 – 14.

Cuthbertson (+9) restored the 2 set lead for the Saints with an excellent win over Cotton 21 – 13, 21 – 14.

Wilkinson made the match score 3 – 2 win a fine win over Bissett (+9). Next up saw Scope play Cartmell (+13) in a very close an entertaining game. Both players played some great table tennis despite the importance of the set with Scope just edging the set 22 – 20, 21 – 18 to put the Saints into a commanding 4 – 2 with the winners being the first team to 5 sets.

Once again Wilkinson gave Thompson’s hope by defeating Cuthbertson (+11) 21 – 16, 21 – 18 to make the match score 4 – 3 to the Saints.

If the Champions were to have any chance of progressing through to the final they had to win the next set – the tie could not have been any closer, Scope (+2) took the first end against Cotton 21 – 11 before Cotton drew level winning 21 – 15 in a powerful attacking display. In the final and deciding end Cotton continued to dominate the game taking a 10 – 9 lead at the half way stage before Scope eventually edged the game 21 – 15 for St Chads and make the match score 5 – 3 to ensure his team progressed through to the final.

The 2nd semi-final was a more straight forward affair with 3rd division St John B progressing to the final with a 5 – 1 win over rivals Sacriston St Bedes C who despite their handicap fought valiantly but were unable to make any foothold in the match after losing the first 3 sets with victories by St John players Sean Gleghorn, Jacob Helm (+3) and Robert Renton (+4) over Dan Hutchinson (+2), Ian McPherson and Colin Hutchinson respectively.

Sacriston’s McPherson gave his team a glimmer of hope with a good win over Gleghorn (+4) eventually winning 21 – 13, 21 – 16. However, the hope was short lived and St John’s won the next 2 sets to win the match 5 – 1 and can now look forward to a final encounter with 1st Division St Chads – the final will take place on Tuesday 23rd April at Silksworth IM Church with a 7pm start.

**In the first match of the semi-final of the Singles Handicap Cup St Chads teammates Barry Cuthbertson and Jimmy Scope were drawn to player each other. Cuthbertson (+8) set out his stall to play steadily and not be drawn into attacking play which would have played to Scope’s defensive strengths – he took the first end comfortably 21 – 9 but was pushed all the way in the 2nd narrowly winning 22 – 20 before winning the 3rd 21 – 10 to progress to the final against Billy Upton (+10) (Durham CA A) who had a great victory over Dave Pringle (North East Bed Centre) coming from 2 – 0 down to win the final 3 games 21 – 17, 21 – 18 and 21 – 18 to set up a mouth-watering final against Cuthbertson which will take place on Friday 26th April at Sandhill View Centre.**

Congratulations to all players and teams for some very exciting ties and entertaining table tennis despite the importance of the games and handicaps being awarded.

**Division 1 Results:**

Durham CA A 10 vs. Thompson Ins. B 0

St Chads 10 vs. Thompson Ins. B 0

**Division 2 Results:**

No results received this week

**Division 3 Results:**

Sacriston St Bedes C 9 vs. St John C 1

Sacriston St Bedes D 9 vs. St John C 1

St John B 8 vs. St John C 2

**\***Lanchester CC 0 vs. Redby CA B 10

**\***St John B 7 vs. Sacriston St Bedes C 3

**\***West CA B vs. St Gabriels C 6

**\*Not reflected in league table**

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