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

It was celebrations all-round in the Sunderland & District table tennis league as Thompson Insurance A and North East Bed Centre were crowned ‘Champions’ of Division One and Two respectively in the same week.

Thompson Insurance A secured the 1st Division title for the 8th successive season following a comfortable 9 – 1 victory over their B team before reinforcing their top spot position with a hard-earned 6 – 4 over 2nd placed Durham CA A.

Congratulations to Andrew Wilkinson, Darren McVitie, Chris Blake, Marc Cotton, Diane Cartmell and player / manager Allan Thompson for an excellent performance throughout which have seen them go undefeated so far this season.

Durham’s narrow defeat ensures the fight for runners-up spot remains wide-open with St Chads, currently lying in 3rd place, looking to capitalise on their two matches in hand and leapfrog Durham into secure 2nd spot.

However, one of the Saints matches in hand is against newly crowned champions Thompson Insurance A, it is highly unlikely that 2nd and 3rd positions will be confirmed before the final week of the season.

NEBC meanwhile secured the Division 2 title with two games remaining following hard-earned wins against Redby CA A (6 – 4) and 3rd placed West CA A (7 – 3). This has been an excellent season for NEBC who have a very strong squad with two of their players Dave Pringle and Alex Smith boasting a 100% record this season. The team is more than capable of giving a very good account of themselves in the top flight.

2nd placed Sacriston St Bedes B are all but promoted following West CA’s earlier defeat and now require just one point from their remaining 3 matches to secure a return to Division 1 at the first time of asking following last year’s relegation.

The race to avoid relegation to the 3rd Division took a new twist when St Gabriels were awarded a ‘walkover’ in their match against Silksworth IM B. With a match in hand over St John A and Durham CA B, it is feasible for St Gabriels to beat the drop.

In Division 3 St Gabriels C can almost taste promotion – they require only one more win from their remaining matches to all but guarantee a move to Division 2.

Meanwhile, a win and draw in their remaining 5 matches should be sufficient for Redby CA B to secure the 2nd promotion spot.

The players of both teams have vast experience and have previously played in higher divisions. Their promotion should make for a very strong 2nd Division next year.

The Sunderland league has seen some excellent performances over the last 2 weeks - none more so than some of the younger players learning their trade. Sacriston’s Dan Nicholson has put in some impressive displays and if he continues in this vain it bodes well for the future. St John players Jacob Helm, Sean Gleghorn and Robert Renton continue to impress and with another season under their belt should see their team pushing for promotion next year. Simon Knopf (Sacriston) is benefiting from the experience he is gaining this season and with continued hard work should have a long future in the sport.

Games have been coming thick and fast as the focus has returned to the domestic fixtures having previously concentrated on the singles and team handicap competitions.

**Division 1Results:**

Sacriston St Bedes A 2 vs. Durham CA A 8

Thompson Ins. A 6 vs. Durham CA A 4

Thompson Ins. B 1 vs. Thompson Ins. A 9

**Division 2 Results:**

NEBC 6 vs. Redby CA A 4

NEBC 7 vs. West CA A 3

Redby CA A 4 vs. Sacriston St Bedes B 6

Redby CA A 8 vs. Durham CA B 2

Sacriston St Bedes B 6 vs. St John A 4

Silksworth IM B 5 vs. West CA A 5

Silksworth IM B 0 vs. St Gabriels B 10 **(walkover)**

**Division 3 Results:**

Lanchester CC 2 vs. Sacriston St Bedes C 8

Sacriston St Bedes C 2 vs. Redby CA B 8

Sacriston St Bedes D 2 vs. St Gabriels C 8

St John B 3 vs. Redby CA B 7

St John C 0 vs. St John B 10

West CA B 3 vs. Sacriston St Bedes D 7

West CA B 8 vs. St John C 2

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