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**Table tennis notes by Chris Blake**

**Division 1**

Current Division One leaders Silksworth IM A maintained their title challenge with an excellent 7 – 3 win over rivals and 2nd placed St Chads.

Silksworth were represented by the Barella brothers (Anthony and Graeme) and Bernie Morris with Keith Weatherby, Jimmy Scope and Adam Curran making up the St Chads team.

First up to the table were Anthony Barella and Jimmy Scope. This was an extremely close set - a theme which was to continue throughout the match. Scope’s tactics were simple, to draw Barella’s forehand and backhand attacking style before bringing in his strong and effective defensive strokes and backhand drives whenever possible in the hope that he could stem the flow of winning shots from Barella.

Barella took the first end relatively easily 11 – 5, however, Scope stormed back with some excellent defensive play to take the 2nd end 11 – 3 and the 3rd by the smallest of margins 11 – 9. This meant that Barella had no margin of error in the respect that he had to win the next 2 games to win the set.

Both these games ebbed and flowed with Scope having opportunities to win each of these before Barella finally drew first blood to Silksworth by edging the final 2 ends 11 – 7 and 11 – 8 respectively.

Keith Weatherby drew St Chads level with a 3 games to 0 win over Bernie Morris.

Graeme Barella restored Silksworth’s lead with a straight sets win over St Chad’s Adam Curran.

Next up saw the match between Scope and Morris – this was an epic match with some excellent table tennis being played by both players. Scope eventually winning the 5th and deciding end 11 – 6 after allowing a 2 games to 0 lead slip – parity was restored once again.

This parity was soon to disappear with Silksworth winning the next 3 sets – Barella brothers combining to take the doubles before winning individual sets over Curran and Weatherby to take a 5 sets to 2 lead, guaranteeing at least a draw from the match.

Curran provided a glimmer of hope with a great win over the experienced Bernie Morris to make the score 5 – 3 with only 2 sets to play.

Hopes of a heroic comeback were soon dispersed when Graeme Barella beat Jimmy Scope in straight sets 11 – 5, 11 – 8 and 13 – 11. Anthony Barella then finally ensured that Silksworth gained maximum points for their victory with a great attacking display over Weatherby to secure a hard fought 7 – 3 win.

Thompson Ins. A remain in 3rd place and continue the pursuit of the Division One title – this will be extremely difficult given the excellent form of the Silksworth team and the long-term injury of their number one player Andrew Wilkinson.

Their ‘B’ team had a 7 – 3 win over rivals Redby CA ‘A’ to move out of the bottom two. Maurice Cheek was man of the match having remained unbeaten throughout the game and combining with Shirley Gelder to win the only doubles set.

Once again, the result doesn’t truly reflect the closeness of the match which saw 7 of the 10 sets played being decided in the 4th or 5th end - Redby were only able to convert 2 which effectively decided the outcome of the match.

**Weeks 11 & 12 results:**

Silksworth IM A 7 vs. St. Chads 3

Thompson Ins. B 7 vs. Redby CA A 3

**Division 2**

St Gabriels B maintained their mid-table position with a good win over close rivals Redby CA.

St Gabriel’s Dave Revell and Redby’s Dave Thomson were voted as joint ‘man of the match’ following their excellent individual performances which saw Revell winning all of his 3 sets and combining with Geoff Young to win the doubles and Thompson win 2 of his 3 sets only losing out to Revell by the smallest of margins in the 5th and deciding end.

This was an extremely close game which was played in a good spirit with both sets of teams playing their part - the outcome of the match was ultimately decided by the smallest of margins and excellent individual performances.

**Week 12 results:**

St. Gabriels B 6 vs. Redby CA 4

**Division 3**

Sacriston St Bedes C had a relatively straight forward 9 – 1 victory over the young St Johns C side.

This year is all about gaining valuable league and match-play experience for St Johns – the young side can take pride in their individual performances and can hopefully continue to improve as the season progresses and can take this in the following season.

Ian McPherson and Lee Maher were unbeaten for St Bedes and combined to win the doubles set. They were well supported by Colin Pritchard who won 2 of his 3 sets – losing to the fast improving Jacob Helm.

**Week 12 results:**

St. John’s C 1 vs. Sacriston St. Bedes C 9