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

In Division 1 of the Sunderland & District TT league St Chads closed the gap on leaders Thompson Insurance A to 9 points following two maximum points wins over Thompson Insurance B (9 – 1) and Mortimer CC (10 – 0).

The lone set was won by Thompsons Lynne Herrington with a fine 3 – 1 win over Barry Cuthbertson.

The wins sees St Chads reinforce the 2nd place position over Durham CC A and Silksworth IM A and also sees their opponents rooted firmly at the bottom of the league although Thompsons have 2 games in hand over 3rd off bottom Sacriston St Bedes A.

In Division 2 St Johns A moved into joint 4th place following a 7 – 3 win over Redby CA A and a 5 – 5 draw against Durham CA B

Redby were forced to concede 2 sets when Amanda Paxton had to retired injured following her doubles match defeat with partner Ken Tweedy at the hands of Istvan Soos and Craig Burton.

There were two excellent sets in the match which are worthy of note - Craig Hilton’s (St Johns) 5 game thriller over Redby’s Frank Booth which saw him come back from 2 games to 0 down to win the final 3 games which included a 14 – 12 in the 5th game - the other being the match between Hilton and Tweedy with this time Hilton just losing out 11 – 6 in the 5th and deciding game.

Tweedy was voted man of the match having played particularly well throughout and remaining unbeaten in the match.

In their second match St Johns A shared the points with 2nd off bottom Durham CA B who put a terrific battle in what was a very close encounter with 6 out of the 10 sets being decided in the 4th or 5th game.

This was a real team effort from both sets of players – Brian Bateman who has just returned following a long lay-off following injury was voted man of the match for winning all of his matches and also won the only doubles set with partner Paul Wiggins who also won a singles set. John Foster played well throughout and can count himself unlucky not to pick up a set on the night.

St Johns sets were picked up by Istvan Soos (2), Craig Burton (2) which included a 12 – 10 victory in the 4th over Wiggins and Craig Hilton (1).

In the only other match in Division 2 second placed Sacriston St Bedes B were beaten for the 2nd week running when they lost out to 3rd placed West CA A 6 – 4.

Robin Kerr did the damage for West winning all of his sets and being awarded man of the match for his efforts. Kerr was well supported by his teammates Dave Thomson (2) and Dave Barber who had close win over Nigel Coe.

Sacriston’s won the only doubles set and with Tony Taylor winning 1 set and Dan Nicholson 2 sets which included excellent wins over Barber and Thomson respectively to ensure they at least picked up 1 point for their troubles and remain firmly in 2nd place with a 12 point gap although West have a game in hand to play.

In Division 3 experienced St Gabriels C are the new leaders following a comfortable 10 – 0 win over bottom placed St John C and hard fought 5 – 5 draw against 3rd placed West CA B.

In an enthralling match Alan Whitwham (West) was undefeated and in doing so was awarded man of the match and he was well supported by Michael Redfearn (1) and Tommy Turner (1) which was an epic match against St Gabriels Ronnie Douglass which he eventually won 12 – 10 in the 5th which effectively helped to secure the draw.

St Gabriels sets were picked up by Sid Gooding (2), Graham Murdon (2) and Douglass / Gooding edging the doubles 11 – 9 in the 4th against Whitwham and Vic Austin.

\*\*\*The Sunderland and District Closed TT Championships are being held at the Sandhill Centre on Sunday 3rd March 2013. Entry forms can be obtained from Dave Bissett with the closing date being Wednesday 20th February 2013\*\*\*

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