

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 14

AS AT 20 FEBRUARY 2022

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS	10	10	0	86	14	30	116
NAT WEST	11	6	2	60	50	33	93
MORPETH A	10	5	1	54	46	30	84
CASTAWAYS	9	6	1	54	36	27	81
PRO	11	1	2	39	68	33	72
GOOD KARMA	9	1	1	25	65	27	52
OUTCASTS	8	1	1	19	61	24	43

Bonus points shown in penultimate column. Ultimate column shows total points from sets won and bonuses

THINGS TO NOTE

Individual match details can be found on the website at:

https://www.tabletennis365.com/LondonBanksAndCivilService/Fixtures/Active_Season_21-22/Division_One

COMMENTARY

Week 18

First result of the week sees Karma go up against Castaways. Can Karma interrupt Castaways' progress up the table? Team selections say "no". Bispham, LeMilliere and Harris for Castaways versus Link, Zhao and Killip. It's that last name that causes a ripple of interest. Jason Killip doesn't play much in this division nowadays but when he does, he wins sets. Jason opens against Johnny Bispham. First two ends are mighty close but both go to Jason: 16-14 and 11-9. That marked a major shift in fortunes as Johnny dominated the next two ends with comfortable wins (I can't get that "win two, lose two" mantra out of my head). Final-end momentum ought to be with Johnny but it's Jason who races out to a big lead. Match point is reached at 10-6 but Johnny makes a last-minute revival, taking the score to 10-9 before losing. The next three sets were won by Castaways fairly easily, just one end won by Karma (Link over Bispham). Fifth set ought to be the set of the night as Killip takes on Pete Harris. Jason leads 2-1 after three ends. Pete wins the fourth and takes it to the deciding end. The contest between these two is always close but Jason has never won. Will this be the moment? The fifth end was hard fought but Pete came out on top 11-8 and Castaways lead the match 4-1. The next three sets went Castaways' way and it was up to Killip to stop the rot, against LeMilliere. Neil tells us he's been playing Jason off and on since around 1994 (which I can't confirm as it pre-dates my computer-held records). Jason has a long string of head-to-head wins and he added one more to that, beating Neil in four. The final score was 8-2 to Castaways. Eight more points in Castaways' quest for a second-place finish.

On paper, Nat West against Morpeth has all the hallmarks of a draw. Seeing the team sheets, I think the balance shifts slightly towards a Nat West victory. No Bekele for Morpeth and Tony Catt appearing for Nat West. The first contest saw Chris Herbert trying to avenge his first half loss to Matt Robertson. It started well for Chris as he took the first end 12-10. Matt comes back to take the second and third ends to go in front. It's all square at the conclusion of the next end. Who's your money on? The winner turned out to be Matt, achieving the double over Chris 11-8 in the fifth – a narrow win and a good start to the match. The next three sets were over quickly, convincing wins for Duncan Brown and Robertson both over Gareth Jones and Tony Catt over Adam Alnak. The next set was Herbert against Alnak. First end to Chris, just, at 11-9. Adam replies with an emphatic second end win 11-4. The next two ends also both ended 11-9 and both went to Adam to give him the win. I didn't expect that and neither did I think Morpeth would be leading 4-1. Next comes a routine win for Catt over Brown. Two years ago, Gareth Jones last faced Adam Alnak and quite a dogfight it was. Adam looked the likely winner but Gareth staged a come-from-behind effort to steal the win. This time the first end went to Adam. Gareth fights back to take the second and third ends. Is this going to be another come-from-behind performance? Into the fourth end and Gareth does it again, coming home 11-7. That was a "must win" set if Nat West are going to mount a challenge. 4-1 had become 4-3 and then 4-4 as Tony Catt completes a rock solid night's table tennis to

defeat Robertson three straight. The final singles set pitted Duncan Brown against Chris Herbert. Duncan sets off at pace, rattling through the first end, dropping just three points. The second end is much closer and it goes Chris's way 11-9. With hindsight, that marked the turning point because Chris kept his nose front for the rest of the set, and claimed the victory in four. Now being 5-4 in front, nothing was going to stop Nat West achieving victory. And so it proved to be as Nat West took the doubles comfortably three straight. This was a strange match. Nat West won 6-4 from 4-1 down. Three sets went to four ends and in each case the player winning the first end lost the next three. And finally, for the first time this season, all six players won at least one set each. Must say, all credit to Nat West for staging that comeback!

PRO are still seeking that elusive first win but realistically it was never going to come this week with Comets as their opponents. That leaves one match left for PRO, with Castaways as the opponents – not looking good. The Comets team was Persaud, Fung and Wong – arguably their strongest threesome. PRO were as usual – Crawford, Buck and Persaud. I'm afraid this turned out to be a bit of a procession with Comets winning set after set. The run of three-straight defeats was only broken by Jai Persaud taking an end off Winston Wong. Even the most ardent PRO supporter would find it hard to claim they were in with a good chance in any end. I'm told the match was played in good spirits which is what really counts. Comets are actually recording even stronger performances in the second half than they did in the first half. A glance at the averages shows their dominance. Fung and Persaud have both gone 14 sets since they were last beaten.

We're coming to the end of the season with just a couple of matches left for most teams. Some good contests remain – Comets, Morpeth and Castaways still have to play each other for the second time. Still time for upsets!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

Issued: 20/02/2022

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥12 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Fung	COMETS	19	20	95.0
Persaud	COMETS	19	20	95.0
Catt	NAT WEST	17	18	94.4
Harris	CASTAWAYS	14	15	93.3
Wong	COMETS	13	15	86.7
Fagan	COMETS	13	16	81.3
Bekele	MORPETH A	17	22	77.3
Francis	COMETS	9	13	69.2
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	16	27	59.3
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	7	12	58.3
Robertson	MORPETH A	10	19	52.6
Herbert	NAT WEST	12	24	50.0
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	6	12	50.0
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	6	12	50.0
Muller	NAT WEST	10	21	47.6
Turner	PRO	12	27	44.4
Crawford	PRO	13	30	43.3
Alnak	MORPETH A	6	14	42.9
Guimichev	OUTCASTS	4	12	33.3
Link	GOOD KARMA	6	21	28.6
Persaud	PRO	4	15	26.7

Jones	NAT WEST	8	33	24.2
Roullier	OUTCASTS	2	12	16.7
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	3	21	14.3