

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 08

AS AT 11 DECEMBER 2021

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS	6	6	0	50	10	18	68
MORPETH A	6	4	1	37	23	18	55
NAT WEST	5	2	2	26	24	15	41
CASTAWAYS	5	2	1	25	25	15	40
PRO	6	0	1	19	41	18	37
GOOD KARMA	4	0	1	12	28	12	24
OUTCASTS	4	1	0	11	29	12	23

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 8

The clash between the top two teams turned out to be an easy win for Comets. You have to conclude they were just too strong for Morpeth. It wasn't an overwhelming defeat, in fact Morpeth won the first set of the night as Matt Robertson beat Steve Fagan in four ends. The first end went to Steve easily but Matt then won the next three, in each case by a narrow margin. For a player whose average is just above 50% Matt certainly pulls out some surprise wins! Realistically, for Morpeth to stand a chance, Bekele had to win three – admittedly a very tall order - but that went out the window in set two as Samson fell to Perry Fung. He started well, winning a close first end but Perry took the next three to ensure the victory. The significance of that result became clear in set three as Adam Alnak exceeded expectations, being all square after four ends with Laikram Persaud. A surprise win in prospect?? Well, they were still locked together at 9-9 but it was Laikram who came out on top, taking the next two points. Good effort by Adam but so near yet so far. That brought Bekele back to the table to face Steve Fagan. Samson looked likely to win it three straight as he took the first two ends and reached deuce in the third end. Just two points needed for the victory! But, not to be, Steve gained his second wind and stole the end 16-14. Was this the beginning of a comeback.? Unfortunately, not for Steve as Samson nosed in front to win it 11-7 in the fourth. At this point the match score was 2-2. Looking back on it, with a bit of luck Morpeth might have been leading 3-1! Who could have predicted that from that point on Morpeth wouldn't win another set? There were glimmers of hope as Alnak took ends off Fung and Fagan, and Robertson also took an end off Fung but in truth there wasn't a set Morpeth might claim they had a good chance of winning. The match score had moved from 2-2 to 8-2 in Comets' favour. Did that outcome flatter Comets? May be a tiny bit but no doubt the stronger team won. One set went to five ends and a further six sets finished in four ends. Of those seven hotly contested sets, Morpeth won just two and that really explains 8-2 scoreline.

Castaways versus PRO. Castaways have Mike Loveder on debut – a table tennis nomad that we last saw representing Sparta – alongside Norman Grant and Neil LeMilliere. PRO field Crawford and Turner but bring in Jai Persaud for just the second time this season. History says this should be 9-1 or 8-2 to Castaways but this is not the usual Castaways team of recent years. I still favour Castaways but not by the usual margin. You can read an extensive account of the match [here](#) which I won't attempt to summarise. The outcome was 6-4 to Castaways so pretty much in line with my prediction. But, reflecting on who won what, it came about in a far from predictable way. First, John Crawford, last match's hero and conqueror of Perry Fung, came out winless?!? This is a rare occurrence – if his teammates are winning sets John can usually always be relied on to contribute too. Only in two matches in the last five seasons has John been winless when his teammates have won sets. Maybe it was the marathon first set loss to LeMilliere 11-9 in the fifth that knocked him off balance. It's tough for anyone to play 98 points only to put two successive serves in the net and thereby lose the set. Neil went on to beat Ronnie Turner

but lost to Jai Persaud (don't I remember him giving Neil trouble in previous years?). Norman Grant was Castaways' star – again, I didn't expect that – winning two. Good performance! For PRO, two good wins for Ronnie Turner to offset the loss to LeMilliere. No player went through the night unbeaten in this unpredictable contest. Castaways were 5-3 up going into the doubles. Remember, Castaways are defending an unbeaten doubles record. Castaways fielded LeMilliere and Grant. A logical choice in the light of the night's performances despite the fact this combination has lost every doubles they have played together in the last two seasons (admittedly not that many). PRO put out the tried and tested pairing of Crawford and Turner but PRO have had a lot of difficulty winning doubles in the last few seasons. So, that's all the facts and statistics, how's this one going to go?? Well, it was close. It went to five. Who won this seesaw contest? It was PRO, denting Castaways' perfect doubles record 11-5 in the deciding end! Did the facts and statistics point to that outcome?? Well, they do say you can prove anything with statistics! That took the match score to 6-4 to Castaways. Interesting and eventful match!

The third match of the week – Outcasts against Karma – had to be postponed.

That brings us to the end of the first half although we have some postponements that might be played before Xmas. Looking at the table, Comets have opened a gap at the top which it will take some heroic performances to overhaul. It's a pity we're down to just seven teams but I must say a notable feature of the first half has been the number of positive comments made to me about the competitiveness of the matches and the excellent spirit in which they've been played. Long may it continue!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥6 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Catt	NAT WEST	6	6	100.0
Persaud	COMETS	11	12	91.7
Fung	COMETS	10	11	90.9
Wong	COMETS	8	9	88.9
Harris	CASTAWAYS	5	6	83.3
Bekele	MORPETH A	12	16	75.0
Francis	COMETS	6	8	75.0
Fagan	COMETS	8	11	72.7
Coull	OUTCASTS	4	6	66.7
Blyuss	MORPETH A	5	8	62.5
Herbert	NAT WEST	5	9	55.6
Robertson	MORPETH A	7	13	53.8
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	7	14	50.0
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	6	12	50.0
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	3	6	50.0
Crawford	PRO	8	18	44.4
Muller	NAT WEST	5	12	41.7
Turner	PRO	7	18	38.9
Grant	CASTAWAYS	2	6	33.3
Guimichev	OUTCASTS	2	6	33.3
Jameson	OUTCASTS	2	6	33.3

Link	GOOD KARMA	2	6	33.3
Persaud	PRO	2	6	33.3
Alnak	MORPETH A	2	8	25.0
Roullier	OUTCASTS	2	9	22.2
Jones	NAT WEST	3	15	20.0
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	1	9	11.1