

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 01

AS AT 23 OCTOBER 2022

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
OUTCASTS	2	1	0	10	10	6	16
COMETS A	1	1	0	9	1	3	12
COMETS B	1	1	0	7	3	3	10
PRO	1	1	0	7	3	3	10
GOOD KARMA	2	0	0	4	16	6	10
CASTAWAYS	1	0	1	5	5	3	8
MORPETH A	1	0	1	5	5	3	8
NAT WEST	1	0	0	3	7	3	6

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_22-23/Division_One

COMMENTARY

Week 1

The first match of the season sees Karma take on Outcasts. Getting a result from Karma is always interesting because I've no idea who will play for them. This time it was Michael Miller, a new name to me, Dan Shoop, who we saw a couple of times last season, and regular Xavier Zhao. Outcasts' team is more predictable: Alan Jones, Simon Jameson and Nabil Chair. Outcasts started well and were soon 4-1 up courtesy of wins for Chair (over Miller and Shoop), Jameson (over Zhao) and Jones (over Shoop). Karma's only early success was a three-straight defeat of Jones by Miller. Michael then contributed a second win, beating Jameson in four. Outcasts stretched their lead to 5-2 before we got to the closest two sets of the night. First up was Zhao against Jones. Xavier was in front after three ends but Alan narrowly managed to take the fourth 11-9. I don't think these two have played each other before so history gives us no pointers to the likely winner. The final end went all the way to deuce before Xavier pinched it 12-10. Good win! The season's first five-ender and 99 points in contention! The final singles set was even closer. Nabil Chair got the better of the first three ends against Miller but couldn't take the next end as Miller won it 12-10. But Michael couldn't capitalise on that and his challenge fell away at 11-5 in the fifth. A 101 points set and the first this season to exceed 100 points. The match ended 7-3 in Outcasts favour with the unbeaten Nabil Chair taking player of the match. A good start for Outcasts. Further success probably depends on how often Chair plays and whether a rather rusty Simon Jameson, who's hardly played in this league in the last few years, gets back to form.

Week 3

For the last few years Comets A have dominated this Division. Their opening fixture was against Karma. Ian Francis, Laikram Persaud and Steve Fagan took on George Sanders, Ben Link and Jason Killip. In keeping with their tradition, no one who played for Karma in their first fixture appeared again in their second fixture. Two immediate points of interest: could Killip trouble the Comets' threesome as he's done that before, and we're about to see a repeat of the Sanders versus Persaud clash which brought George the "best win of the season" award last year. Comets took the first two sets, with Francis beating Saunders in three and Persaud beating Link in four. The next set – Killip against Fagan – proved to be very close indeed. The first end went to Steve but Jason rallied to take the next two. The fourth end looked as if it was going to deuce but Killip squeezed home 11-9 to take the set. First blood to Karma and they're back in the match. Their hopes didn't last long however as the next four sets went to Comets – all three straight. Link lost to Francis and Fagan, Sanders lost to Fagan and Laikram

Persaud crushed Killip for the loss of a miserly 14 points. 5-1 down, Killip faced Ian Francis. Not sure these two have ever played each other before but last season's averages suggest Jason should win narrowly. That prediction was not looking good as Ian won both the first two ends. Jason just edged the third end but couldn't repeat that in the fourth, losing the end and the set 11-8. Fittingly, the night came to a crescendo with Sanders against Persaud. Could George repeat last year's triumph? That question was answered in double quick time as Laikram streaked home in a comfortable three straight win. The doubles also went to Comets, making the match score 9-1. A straightforward clinical win for the champions. Persaud took the Player of the Match award, three wins at an average of 11-6 per end.

The next match saw the first appearance of Comets B in this Division. They faced Outcasts who fielded Jameson, Coull and Roullier. Comets' team was Allam Bhangoo, Greg Gargrupe and Tai Luu. These guys were the nucleus of their all-conquering Division 2 team last season. It will be interesting to see how they fare in this Division. They started well with Bhangoo beating Jameson comfortably in four ends. Bob Coull squared the match with a closeish three straight defeat of Gargrupe. The next four sets were shared – all good contests, none of which were one-sided. The following two sets were the best of the night. The first involved Eddie Roullier and Gargrupe. Gargrupe led after three ends but Roullier took the fourth to level. And so to the fifth end. Last year, Eddie won the “so near yet so far award” for losing the most five-enders over the season. Would history repeat itself? Much to Eddie's relief, the answer was “no” as he took the final end 11-6. Next up, it's Coull against Luu. This is a good test as Bob is no pushover. Bob gets the better of the first three ends and a win is in sight as the fourth end reaches 10-10. Just two more points needed but they both go to Luu and we need a fifth end. This was very close but it was Luu who came out on top. A notable win spanning 94 points. The match score had moved in perfect harmony: 0-1, 1-1, 1-2, 2-2, 2-3, 3-3, to 3-4 in Comets' favour. At that point the harmony was shattered as Comets won all the remaining sets for a 7-3 outcome! A good start for the newcomers in a hard-fought match. Five sets went passed the third end, with two sets going the full distance.

Castaways' opening fixture was against title rivals Morpeth. This match is always close. Castaways turn out the usual LeMilliere and Bispham but at number three they had a name from the past in Phil Wroe who played regularly years ago but not so much lately. Morpeth too had two regulars – Duncan Brown and Adam Alnak – plus a newcomer – Ettore Miuccio. LeMilliere began with four-end win over Alnak. Time to take a look at the newcomer as Miuccio faces Bispham. The first four ends all ended 11-6: two ends going to each player. The final end went point for point until Bispham accelerated away to lead 10-6 and match point. Miuccio clearly wasn't giving up and slowly fought all the way back to deuce. And he didn't stop there. He also won the next two points to score an unlikely win 12-10 in the fifth from 6-10 down! Some comeback and a very good start for the newcomer! Another five-ender followed as Phil Wroe faced Duncan Brown. This was a weird inconsistent set where neither player was dominant. Brown led after three ends but Wroe then levelled the match. With no obvious winner in sight as they began the final end you have to feel this is going to deuce. It all came down to who could put together a string of points and that proved to be Duncan who came home at 11-7 in the fifth. Bispham then beat Alnak to take the match score to 2-2. Set five saw LeMilliere unable to shake off a dogged effort from Duncan Brown who kept going behind and then catching up again. The set reached the deciding end and at 9-9 it seemed Duncan's efforts were to be rewarded. But table tennis can be a cruel game and LeMilliere pinched the next two points and with it the set. Brave effort from Duncan! 97 points contested, 49 won by Duncan and 48 by Neil, shows how close it was. The score moved to 4-3 in Castaways' favour as Miuccio beat Wroe and Bispham beat Brown. Morpeth came back to 4-4 with Alnak defeating Wroe to complete a winless night for Phil. The final singles set saw the night's two unbeaten players face each other: LeMilliere versus Miuccio. The first two ends were shared. The third end could have gone either way but Miuccio took it 13-11 to go in front. Neil comes back in the fourth and it's all square again. Another set where it was hard to pick the winner but Miuccio suddenly found another gear and powered away to a 11-4 victory. Didn't expect that. Miuccio secures his surprise maximum and Morpeth are 5-4 up. After all this drama, a draw was probably the fairest result and so it was, Castaways winning the doubles in three close ends. Four sets went all the way and three more went to four ends. A hard-fought match!

Last season PRO were without a win. That situation looked unlikely to change with an opening fixture against Nat West, to whom they lost twice last year. Team compositions as you might expect: Crawford, Turner and Persaud for PRO and Muller, Jones and Samuels for Nat West. The perhaps unexpected name among those six is Les Samuels – a long time regular for Nat West but who missed the whole of the 2021-22 season. First up was John Crawford against Andrew Muller. Last season they played each other twice and each won one so should be close. A few minutes later it was clear that wasn't going to be as Crawford sat down a three straight winner. The

next set – Persaud against Jones – could go either way. Last time they played Jai won in five. This time Gareth was ahead after three ends. Jai took the fourth end 11-3 and must enter the fifth as favourite. That end too finished 11-3 but this time in Gareth’s favour! Quite a turnabout and an important success for Nat West. Playing out of order as Ronnie Turner was late, Crawford and Les Samuels came to the table. By coincidence, Les’s last appearance was in March 2020 and was also against PRO. On that occasion, John beat Les in four. This time John went one better, coming away a three-straight victor though with some third end drama as Les came from 10-6 down to 10-9 only to lose on a net! Things were going the underdogs’ way but Muller immediately levelled the match at 2-2 with a win over Persaud. Enter Ronnie Turner and despite losing the first end he began with a comfortable win over Muller. In that March 2020 fixture, Persaud had his best win of the season, over Samuels in five close ends. In the next set, history was to repeat itself as once again Jai beat Les in five close ends. Uncannily similar scores in the two contests despite being two years apart! This fixture then threw up another weird coincidence as Ronnie Turner faced Andrew Muller. Last season, no one went to five ends on more occasions than Turner. And nobody had a better success record in five-end sets than Muller. Guess what – their set did indeed go to five ends. So, did Andrew win? No, he did not, Turner took that crucial fifth end after 98 points! Crawford then completed his maximum, with a win over Gareth Jones. That took the match score to 7-2 and PRO had beaten Nat West for the first time since 27 November 2014!! The late hour caused PRO to concede the doubles so the win goes down as 7-3. There were a number of key sets that brought that win about but probably the most significant was Les Samuels emerging winless. A rare event - that last happened in November 2015. Well done PRO!

An interesting and eventful first week. Outcasts might like to take a photo of the resulting league table!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

Issued: 23/10/2022

AVERAGES (Qualification: \geq xxxxxx sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Will be included after a few weeks.				