

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 11

AS AT 23 JANUARY 2022

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS	8	8	0	66	14	24	90
NAT WEST	9	4	2	48	42	27	75
MORPETH A	8	4	1	41	39	24	65
CASTAWAYS	7	4	1	38	32	21	59
PRO	8	1	2	31	46	24	55
GOOD KARMA	6	0	1	17	43	18	35
OUTCASTS	6	1	1	16	44	18	34

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 14

A flurry of matches this week and some interesting outcomes.

First up is Castaways versus Nat West. Pete Harris, Neil LeMilliere and Mike Loveder against Gareth Jones, Tony Catt and Chris Herbert. I favour a draw as the outcome, or possibly 6-4 to Castaways. The first set started unexpectedly as Gareth Jones looked favourite to go two ends to one up on Harris. Somehow Pete got himself out of that and you just feel that might have been Gareth's best chance gone. But, no, Gareth comes back to take the fourth and amasses a 4-1 lead in the fifth. Big upset coming? Well, it's a strange old game, as it turned out Gareth won just one of the next 11 points and that was the set gone 11-5 in the fifth to Pete! An unexpected win there would have put Nat West in the driver's seat! The second set saw unbeaten Tony Catt get the better of LeMilliere in four ends. Next comes Loveder versus Herbert. Over the years these two have had some cracking contests, almost always requiring all five ends. Mike has won two of the last three times they played but Chris won their single meeting last season. The first end went to Chris by 11-6. At that point, things changed dramatically and suddenly as Mike ran off the next three ends fairly comfortably to take the set. Surprisingly easy win! Castaways were ahead 2-1 and converted that to a 4-1 lead with wins for LeMilliere over Jones and Harris over Herbert, the latter set ending at 11-8 in the fifth after a tense 102 points. Tony Catt pulled one back for Nat West with a win over Loveder which brought LeMilliere and Herbert to the table. History says this is a banker win for Nat West as Chris has been the victor on their previous four meetings. The set developed a strange pattern with Chris having runaway wins in the first and third ends with Neil having nail biting narrow wins in the second and fourth ends. We go into the deciding end thinking Neil's lucky to still be in this set but suddenly Neil comes from being second best throughout to winning point after point, coming off the table an 11-6 winner! A very good win involving 104 points. That took us to the set we were all waiting for: Harris against Catt. There's not much between these two. Pete's in front on the head-to-head contests but Tony won their clash in the first half. Sit back and enjoy! The first two ends were shared. Pete storms away with the third end 11-4. It's make or break for Tony in the fourth end but Pete holds on to sneak home 11-8. That put Castaways 7-2 up, founded on winning the three key sets that each went to a fifth end. Nat West took the doubles to end on a 7-3 scoreline. Looking back, you'd have to say Castaways were definitely the better team on the night! And we should note, Harris has just stripped Catt of his unbeaten record!

The very next night Castaways played again. This time against Morpeth. Castaways leave out Harris and bring in Johnny Bispham. Morpeth put out what looks like their "normal" team this season: Bekele, Blyuss and Robertson. LeMilliere opened with a comfortable win over Blyuss and Bekele replied with a routine defeat of Bispham. Set three pitted Loveder against Matt Robertson who are teammates, along with Oleg Blyuss, playing

for Morpeth in the Central League. The first two ends go Robertson's way fairly easily. Loveder comes back to take the next two ends. Hard to spot the winner. The final end was close but it was Matt who claimed the victory with a final 11-8 scoreline. The next set saw Bispham register a good win over Blyuss. Matt Robertson continued his fast starts, taking the first ends from LeMilliere. But then, in a repeat of his battle with Loveder, he lost the next two ends and, in the process, dropped a heart-breaking three match points in the third. You can feel what's coming. We're in the fifth end and Matt just can't wrestle back the momentum, going down 11-8 after 103 points. Bekele continued his untroubled night with an easy win over Loveder. That was countered by a win in four for Bispham over Robertson. Castaways were 4-3 up and Loveder faced Blyuss, both winless at this point. Mike wins the first two ends only for Oleg to win the next two (this pattern of "win two, lose two" was an odd feature of this contest). In the final end Loveder decided to become unplayable and reeled off point after point to walk away 11-2 in the fifth. Another long contest with an important influence on the match outcome. The 5-3 scoreline became 5-4 as Bekele won his third set of the evening. Castaways have lost their last two doubles sets but this time stormed home in four. A 6-4 win for Castaways despite a Bekele maximum. A long night for Matt Robertson who contested 18 ends but emerged with a single set won. Two good performances from Castaways this week which adds significantly to their points tally.

Nat West also had a second game this week. It was against high flying Comets. Winston Wong and Perry Fung come in for Comets to join Ian Francis. Nat West made one change from their Castaways' match – bringing in Andrew Muller in place of Tony Catt. The first two sets were over in an instant - Wong and Fung made short work of Jones and Herbert respectively. Not looking good for Nat West. Ian Francis then took on Gareth Jones. Gareth gets the better of the first three ends but Ian comes back to win the fourth. Ian won their first half encounter but this time it's Gareth who emerges victorious 11-9 in a close final end. Good win! Set four went back to the three straight routine - Winston Wing having no trouble with Muller. In the first half Francis has a surprisingly easy win over Herbert. This time it was very different as there was nothing between them after the first four ends were shared. With everyone expecting a close finish the set suddenly became totally one sided and ended at an extraordinary 11-1. Who accelerated away? It was Chris, getting revenge for his first half loss. So, after five sets Nat West are still in it – 3-2 down. Set six saw Perry Fung continue his winning ways beating Muller in four. In the first half Wong delivered a crushing performance to defeat Herbert, conceding just 12 points. Surely, he couldn't repeat that. Maybe he can though, as he cruises through the first two ends. At this point the "win two, lose two" theme of the week resurfaced and Chris levels the set at two ends all. Against the odds, Chris continues to dominate and sweeps home 11-6 in the fifth. Hard to explain that. There's been some strange final ends this week! Set eight gave Fung his maximum for the night – another three straight win, over Jones. Francis then completed a miserable night for Andrew Muller scoring a comfortable victory three straight. The match did however end on a high note for Nat West as they took the doubles in four close ends. A respectable 6-4 loss for Nat West which betters anyone else's performance against Comets. Three sets went the distance and Nat West won all of them!

"Seems we can't buy a win these days". So said John Crawford as his PRO team drew with Outcasts. In PRO's defence they did find Nabil Chair in the opposition. The writing was on the wall after the first set as Nabil edged out Crawford three straight. But PRO fought back well with an excellent "hold your nerve" win 11-8 in the fifth win for Ronnie Turner against Petko Guimichev and an easier win for Jai Persaud over Alan Jones. Set four was a real nail biter. Turner took the first two ends off Chair but then promptly lost the next two (theme of the week again!). In the final end that winning momentum was enough to carry Chair home to victory 11-7. A case of what might have been! After that, the match petered out a bit with wins and losses following a predictable pattern. Chair duly completed his maximum. Guimichev beat Persaud in four – a key win for Outcasts. And in the final singles set John Crawford put PRO ahead 5-4 with a steady three straight win over Guimichev. Could PRO secure the win? To my surprise, Outcasts really came good in the doubles, cantering home without dropping an end. So, a draw it was. I don't think PRO should have many regrets about that. It was always going to be hard to get a good result in the face of that Chair maximum.

A great week's table tennis: good performances, heroic comebacks, inexplicable losses and unpredictable twists! Just as it should be!

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥9 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Catt	NAT WEST	14	15	93.3
Fung	COMETS	13	14	92.9
Persaud	COMETS	13	14	92.9
Harris	CASTAWAYS	8	9	88.9
Wong	COMETS	10	12	83.3
Bekele	MORPETH A	15	19	78.9
Fagan	COMETS	10	13	76.9
Francis	COMETS	9	13	69.2
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	5	9	55.6
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	5	9	55.6
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	11	20	55.0
Herbert	NAT WEST	9	18	50.0
Robertson	MORPETH A	8	16	50.0
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	6	12	50.0
Crawford	PRO	10	21	47.6
Blyuss	MORPETH A	5	11	45.5
Turner	PRO	9	21	42.9
Link	GOOD KARMA	5	12	41.7
Muller	NAT WEST	7	18	38.9
Guimichev	OUTCASTS	3	9	33.3
Persaud	PRO	3	9	33.3
Jones	NAT WEST	7	27	25.9
Roullier	OUTCASTS	2	12	16.7
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	1	12	8.3