

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 14

AS AT 26 JANUARY 2020

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
CASTAWAYS	13	10	3	98	32	39	137
COMETS	12	10	1	96	24	36	132
MORPETH A	12	9	2	87	33	36	123
EMPLOYMENT	13	8	0	76	54	39	115
NAT WEST	13	8	3	76	54	36	112
MORPETH C	13	3	2	56	74	39	95
GOOD KARMA	12	4	1	54	66	36	90
SPARTA	13	3	1	42	88	39	81
PRO	12	3	0	37	83	36	73
TREASURY B	12	2	1	34	86	36	70
OUTCASTS	11	1	0	24	86	33	57

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
https://www.tabletennis365.com/LondonBanksAndCivilService/Fixtures/Season_2019-2020/Division_One

COMMENTARY

Week 17

It's the relegation battle up first: PRO against Sparta. PRO are having a bad run but, having won the first half fixture, had high hopes here. Just like last week when Treasury fielded their best team against PRO, this week Sparta did the same: Loveder, Evans and Tokely. Dave Evans had to leave early so the sets were played out of order. John Crawford struck an early blow for PRO beating Peter Tokely. Dave Evans countered that with a win over George Buck in four ends. Next Mike Loveder faced Jai Persaud and managed to win in four ends while picking up a back injury in so doing. Dave Evans then played two on the trot, beating Persaud but losing comfortably to a competent John Crawford performance. Sparta were 3-2 up when match swung Sparta's way. Tokely beat George Buck and then took a vital set with a narrow win over Persaud (in four ends, two of which finished at deuce). Loveder had a straightforward victory against Buck but had to concede to John Crawford because of his injury. The doubles was the closest set of the night. PRO get the better of the first three ends, Sparta just managed to stay in it, winning the fourth end 12-10. The deciding end saw a largely immobile Loveder with Tokely having to dance around him coming home by 11-5! A 7-3 win for Sparta and a shock reversal of the first half result. PRO are in a lot of trouble!

Last week Nat West didn't really get going against Morpeth A and lost easily. In the second half fixture they looked much stronger and fielded Tony Catt and Chris Herbert who hasn't played since late-November. Morpeth were also at strength with Alex Luk partnering Bekele but found themselves unexpectedly without a third player. Adam Alnak happened to be at Morpeth that night and stepped up to fill the vacant slot. Alex Luk showed why he's unbeaten with an efficient opening win over Catt in four ends. Chris Herbert then got one back, handing out a three-straight defeat to Bekele. The third set was a close contest between Gareth Jones and Alnak. Adam leads after three ends but Gareth takes the fourth. The momentum was with Gareth and he took the deciding end 11-5. An important win for Nat West but a good effort from Alnak. Morpeth took the next two sets, Bekele having no trouble against Catt and Luk beating Gareth Jones. Alnak then faced Herbert and again was in front after three ends. Chris then upped his game, taking the fourth end and the fifth end too. Another narrow loss for Alnak. The best set of the night saw Chris Herbert putting Luk under immense pressure. It was honours even going into the fifth end but Chris nosed ahead and Alex's unbeaten run looked a goner. Chris goes 5-3 up, then 6-4 up but Alex brings it back to deuce. At this point Lady Luck intervened and granted Alex an edge! That proved to be decisive as Alex takes the next point too and with it the win. Excellent contest. Bad luck Chris and Alex extends his

unbeaten record to 27 successive wins. The doubles proved to be just as competitive and 100 points were played before Nat West triumphed 12-10 in the fifth. A good match! Four sets needed a deciding end in reaching a draw. Special mention for Adam Alnak standing in unexpectedly and battling hard.

With PRO rapidly descending the table, Treasury need to keep the pressure on them by winning sets, if not matches. Against Employment, David Shore struck an early blow in that direction with a comfortable win over Richard Mak. A few sets later, David couldn't repeat that feat against Paul Baylis, Paul winning in four. Meanwhile, Tony Dight was playing his part with two excellent fifth-end wins over Baylis and Mak. Tony didn't look favourite against Baylis losing the first two ends easily but then managing to take the next three. Really, the match outcome turned on Chris McKee's sets. He opened with a straightforward win over Dight. Chris then got himself in all sorts of trouble against Joe Shavila and really had to apply himself to get home in five. The same "start slow, finish fast" pattern occurred in Chris's set against Shore. David got the better of the first three sets but then got blown away, winning just six points in the next two ends. So, Chris takes all three and match goes to Employment 7-3. Interesting fact for numbers geeks, seven of Employment's 13 matches this season have ended with that scoreline. Treasury fought well, four sets went the distance and only two sets ended three straight.

In the Outcasts versus Morpeth C match an old friend re-emerged. It was Mark Green who played for Revcust A along with Ian Windle and Tony Bostic about eight or more years ago. This was a strong team and Mark was a 75%+ player. He hasn't played for more than five years so has some catching up to do. Simon Jameson began the night for Outcasts, against Matthew Robertson. Simon took the first end with ease but then seemed powerless as Matthew won the next three ends at a canter. Mark Green's debut set was a tough one – against Adam Alnak. Mark was two ends to one up, but got badly beaten in the fourth end before coming back to take the deciding end. Mark's next opponent was Robertson and this proved to be a real ding dong. Mark got his nose in front after three ends, lost the fourth end and ran out of steam in the final end, losing 11-5. Mark went on to beat Clark Nicholls in four. These encounters really typified how close this match was. Four sets went to the fifth end and only two sets ended three straight. Simon Jameson went to five with both Adam Alnak and Clark Nicholls, losing to Alnak 13-11 but beating Clark 11-6 in the final ends. The outcome could very easily have been a draw but it finished 6-4 to Morpeth C.

Which brings us to the clash of the titans: Castaways versus Comets. Neil LeMilliere wrote a blow-by-blow account of this match [here](#) that I won't try to emulate but I'll make a few comments. The match was won by Castaways, 6-4. Castaways' hero and Player of the Match was Jonny Bispham for his defeat of Yiji Zhao. I'd rank that as one of the most unexpected victories I've ever reported on. Yiji has previously looked unbeatable but on this night she dropped two ends to LeMilliere and one end to Pete Harris. It was also a significant point in the evening when the shock result occurred. Before the Bispham win, the match score was 4-2 to Comets. After that, Comets never won another set! Pete Harris deserves a mention for a good win over Laikram Persaud. And all three Castaways players beat Ian Francis, which is a notable achievement in itself and too easily overlooked. Only two sets went to five, one of which was the vital doubles victory for Castaways that gave them the win. The match marked the end of Pete Harris's 21 set unbeaten streak and Yiji Zhao's first ever loss. One record did stay intact: Castaways remain unbeaten since 30 January 2019! A commendable team effort!

Castaways claw a few points back on Comets and the gap narrows to five points. Comets must still be favourites but this week's win keeps Castaways' hopes alive. Next week Castaways take on PRO where, for different reasons, both teams will want to get as many points as possible. Comets have a trickier fixture, away at Morpeth C. Not straightforward! Outcasts face a tough challenge in Morpeth A and would probably settle for a 8-2 loss before a ball is hit. Employment take on Sparta – another 7-3 outcome possibly (that was the first half result)?? And finally it's Karma against Nat West. Should be straightforward for Nat West but you never know with Karma.

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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥13 sets played)

Sets Sets Average

Player	Team	Won	Played	(%)
Fung	COMETS	20	20	100.0
Penrose	NAT WEST	17	18	94.4
Harris	CASTAWAYS	28	30	93.3
Persaud	COMETS	19	21	90.5
Bekele	MORPETH A	16	18	88.9
Ji	MORPETH A	23	26	88.5
Killip	EMPLOYMENT	12	14	85.7
Chambers	MORPETH A	16	20	80.0
Herbert	NAT WEST	21	27	77.8
Catt	NAT WEST	11	15	73.3
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	15	21	71.4
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	25	36	69.4
Fagan	COMETS	9	13	69.2
Francis	COMETS	14	21	66.7
Baylis	EMPLOYMENT	17	28	60.7
Loveder	SPARTA	10	17	58.8
McKee	EMPLOYMENT	14	24	58.3
Alnak	MORPETH C	12	21	57.1
Brown	MORPETH A	8	14	57.1
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	10	19	52.6
Dight	TREASURY B	11	21	52.4
Evans	SPARTA	11	21	52.4
Robertson	MORPETH C	11	21	52.4
Crawford	PRO	15	29	51.7
Greenberg	GOOD KARMA	7	14	50.0
Coull	OUTCASTS	7	15	46.7
Guimichev	TREASURY B	8	18	44.4
Nicholls	MORPETH C	10	27	37.0
Mak	EMPLOYMENT	8	22	36.4
Tokely	SPARTA	12	36	33.3
Jones	NAT WEST	11	33	33.3
Jameson	OUTCASTS	7	21	33.3
Shilo	MORPETH C	7	21	33.3
Blyuss	MORPETH A	4	15	26.7
Persaud	PRO	6	23	26.1
Buck	PRO	6	24	25.0
Buchanan	PRO	5	23	21.7
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	3	14	21.4
Bulvicius	MORPETH C	3	15	20.0
Hattrill	SPARTA	4	24	16.7
Roullier	OUTCASTS	3	18	16.7
Macalister	OUTCASTS	2	21	9.5
Johansson	GOOD KARMA	1	14	7.1
Gittens	TREASURY B	1	15	6.7