

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 12

AS AT 4 FEBRUARY 2024

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS A	10	7	3	80	20	30	110
CASTAWAYS	10	6	3	66	34	30	96
COMETS B	9	6	3	60	30	24	84
NAT WEST	10	3	3	47	53	30	77
MORPETH A	9	4	2	49	41	27	76
PRO	10	2	3	40	60	30	70
NORDWEST	10	1	0	25	75	30	55
GOOD KARMA	10	1	1	23	77	30	53

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_23-24/Division_One

- Check out the photos on the front page of the website under Featured Photos. Is your team there?

COMMENTARY

Week 16

PRO have two wins this season and one of them was against this week's opponents, Morpeth. On that occasion, Morpeth fielded a below usual strength team. Not so this time as unbeaten John Yi returns to join Adam Alnak and Duncan Brown. PRO have Crawford and Buck and, as last week, Oliver Pink covering for Ronnie Turner. Crawford against Brown is the first set. In the first half this was a comfortable win for John. The first two ends were shared. John went up a level in the third and won it 11-2. That created the momentum for him to push on to win the fourth end too. 1-0 to PRO. Adam Alnak won all three in the first half and he began against Oliver Pink. This set progressed in exactly the same way as the first set except it was Morpeth who were the winners. Same pattern though – first end to Adam, second to Oliver, then Adam goes on to take the next two. Yi made light work of beating George Buck three straight and Alnak and Crawford came to the table. Last time they played it was a really close duel that needed all five ends to resolve in Adam's favour. Fast start from Adam and he's won the first end 11-3. Second end reaches deuce but John takes the next two points and it's one end all. Third end is close but Adam comes home in front 11-8. The fourth end also reaches deuce. Make or break time for John. Can he repeat the second end deuce win? If not, the set is lost. And that's how it ended – Adam took both the next two points to do the double over John! Good contest though, not much in it! Four quick sets followed, all completing three straight. Brown and Alnak beat Buck, while John Yi hardly broke sweat in beating Pink and Crawford. An easy night for Yi. Three three-straight wins, conceding an average of five points per end! The final singles set was between Duncan Brown and Oliver Pink. Neither player could achieve dominance in the first four ends which were shared two each. Not sure I could pick the winner. In fact, it turned out to be Pink who stole the honours 11-6 in the fifth. A second narrow loss for Duncan! Saving the best for last, the night ended with a good doubles where the Crawford / Pink combination was going strong for three ends only to collapse in the fourth and fifth, handing the win to Alnak / Yi. An 8-2 win to Morpeth, having Yi in their team made all the difference.

On paper, the best match of the week ought to be Nat West against Comets B. That said, both teams have big squads and it will depend on team selection. For Nat West, the ever-present Gareth Jones was joined by Tony Catt – not seem much of him this season- and Andrew Muller, who you may remember from last season. The Comets B team looked stronger. Jamie Mullineaux, Kevin Fang and Allam Bhangoo. I fancy 6-4 or 7-3 to Comets! Mullineaux began against Muller. It didn't last long as Jamie was too strong in a quick three-straight

victory. To have any chance of winning, Nat West have to take sets off Bhangoo. The first test of that was faced by Gareth Jones. They began by sharing two very close ends with just a point or two in it. The third end was also close but Gareth came out in front 11-7. The fourth end was again close and it too was won by just two points. The winner was Gareth 11-9 and Nat West had successfully negotiated the first hurdle en route to a potential win. The next set was between Catt and Fang. I have no idea who'll win this. First blood to Tony, an excellent start winning the first two ends. Signs of a comeback in the third end which Kevin wins 11-6. Into the fourth end, and Kevin can't get in front. Tony wins it 11-7 in the fourth! Good win! Morpeth then win two sets: Mullineaux beats Jones in four and Fang beats Muller three straight. It's 3-2 to Morpeth. It's level at 3-3 when Catt scores a comfortable win over Bhangoo. A Fang win over Jones brings it back to level pegging 3-3. If things go to plan, looks as if the result will turn on the doubles. But, before that, Catt has got to beat Mullineaux – no easy task. First end to Tony but second end to Jamie. The third end proved to be crucial, and it went to Tony, just, at 13-11. Having got his nose in front, Tony pushed on to add the fourth and final end 11-8. The match score is 4-4. A vital set for both teams was to follow. Nat West find a hero as Andrew Muller beats Allam Bhangoo and Nat West are first into the final straight 5-4! At the end of a hard-fought contest, it's only fitting that the doubles goes the distance. The Bhangoo / Mullineaux combination leads after three ends. Back come Catt and Jones to edge the fourth end 11-9. So, it's down to the final end to decide if this match is a draw or a win for Nat West. The winner of the final end was Bhangoo and Mullineaux, by a score of 11-5 and Comets B salvage a draw! A good match! Those three excellent wins from Tony Catt were the key.

Comets A take on Northwest and are looking for maximum points. Their team is Steve Fagan, Winston Wong and Laikram Persaud. Northwest have Rhyen Nelson and Albert Francis as normal, with Tobias Svensson in place of Grace Stair. The first round of matches were all won comfortably by Comets. Fagan never allowed Nelson to get going. Wong cast off last week's issues against PRO to register a clinical victory over Svensson. And Laikram Persaud gave no quarter in defeating Francis three straight. Next up, it's Wong against Nelson. Winston captured the first two ends fairly comfortably. Rhyen comes back to win the third 11-6. Unfortunately, that marked the end of his revival as Winston took the fourth end 11-8. Comets A are 5-0 up and motoring along! Here's a question. Do you remember all the players you've beaten and lost to? I knew a player who kept a little black book with details of every match he'd ever played. I ask that question because it's relevant to the next set: Steve Fagan against Albert Francis. Albert gets out in front after three ends. He's leading but the averages say he's still not the favourite to win. We're in the fourth end waiting for Steve to accelerate away. But that doesn't happen. They play 18 more points and Albert wins 11 of them – sufficient for him to win the set and pull off an upset win! Back to my question about remembering who you beat and who you lose to. Well, in 2017, Albert beat Steve in another upset win. I wonder if either of them remembered that? Persaud then continued to crush everyone he plays dismissing Svensson with ease. Back to the table came Albert the hero to see if can upset Winston Wong. It's looking possible, as Albert wins the first two ends. Winston gets back into it with an 11-7 score in the third end. The fourth end is mighty close and Albert's within a whisker of winning it but goes down 11-9. And that proved to be the turning point as Winston completed his revival to run away with the deciding end 11-4. If that was a "near miss" so was the next set. It's Persaud against Nelson, one end each, and deuce in the third. Rhyen just can't get the next two points and he's behind by two ends to win. But, all is not lost, as Rhyen fights back to win the fourth. At this point let's give Rhyen a pat on the back, because whatever the outcome, few players take Laikram to a deciding end. What did happen? Like so many other times over the years Laikram engages unbeatable mode and suddenly he's won it 11-3. Unlucky Rhyen! Comets A mop up the remaining sets and add a 9-1 to their season's record. The outcome may look a bit one-sided but it certainly wasn't a dull night!

If Castaways are going to pose a threat to Comets A's title ambitions they've got to outscore Comets every week and/or hope for an upset win in their favour. This week their opponents are Karma – Michael Miller, Peter Schmidt and George Sanders. Castaways had a last-minute setback when Terry McKee called off sick and Mike Loveder had to be drafted in, despite the fact he's not fully match fit. Johnny Bispham was on first against Miller. Johnny's been up and down over the last four matches after an excellent first half of the season. Nevertheless, he was too strong for Michael, winning two close ends and a runaway third. Loveder then faced Schmidt and his lack of match fitness became evident. Peter won three straight and to be honest Mike was never it. LeMilliere successfully negotiated his set against Sanders and Loveder then faced Miller. Loveder began well taking the first end only for Miller to counter by taking the second. The third end goes to Loveder but again Miller hauls him back to level the set. Loveder's playing a bit better now so the deciding end looked optimistic. Added to that, Miller's not won a five-ender this season in three attempts. Despite those signs, Miller opened a gap that Loveder couldn't close. 11-8 to Miller and the match score is 2-2. After that, everything went Castaways' way. Bispham had no trouble with Sanders and Schmidt. It was harder for LeMilliere, a very close four-end win against Schmidt

that included two deuce finishes and Neil was probably happy to avoid a fifth end. And an even closer match against Miller, when Neil looked in trouble after three ends but managed to win the next two. Loveder beat Sanders in four and Castaways had recovered from a difficult start to win the match 8-2. Not the result Castaways wanted which adds pressure to next week’s fixture against PRO – a match they so nearly lost in the first half!!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY
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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 12 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Yi	MORPETH A	15	15	100.0
Persaud	COMETS A	22	24	91.7
Johnson	NAT WEST	16	18	88.9
Fang	COMETS B	13	15	86.7
Francis	COMETS A	13	15	86.7
Adesanya	COMETS B	15	18	83.3
Luu	COMETS B	10	12	83.3
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	20	27	74.1
S Fagan	COMETS A	13	18	72.2
C Fagan	COMETS A	15	21	71.4
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	20	30	66.7
McKee	CASTAWAYS	8	12	66.7
Wong	COMETS A	8	12	66.7
Crawford	PRO	17	27	63.0
Turner	PRO	14	24	58.3
Alnak	MORPETH A	10	21	47.6
To	MORPETH A	7	15	46.7
Brown	MORPETH A	9	21	42.9
Nelson	NORDWEST	12	30	40.0
Samuels	NAT WEST	6	15	40.0
Herbert	NAT WEST	7	18	38.9
Schmidt	GOOD KARMA	9	24	37.5
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	5	15	33.3
Francis	NORDWEST	8	30	26.7
Persaud	PRO	3	12	25.0
Jones	NAT WEST	4	24	16.7
Miller	GOOD KARMA	3	18	16.7
Stair	NORDWEST	2	21	9.5
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	1	15	6.7