

AS AT 17 FEBRUARY 2019

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
CASTAWAYS	16	12	3	132	28	48	180
MORPETH	16	12	4	120	40	48	168
TREASURY A	14	9	2	102	38	42	144
NAT WEST	15	9	3	98	52	45	143
COMETS	15	8	1	84	66	45	129
PRO	16	8	1	78	82	48	126
EMPLOYMENT	15	8	1	76	74	45	121
INSURANCE	16	3	2	53	107	48	101
SPARTA	15	4	1	46	104	42	88
BTB	15	1	1	27	123	45	72
DIT	15	0	1	24	126	45	69

Bonus points shown in penultimate column. Ultimate column shows total points from sets won and bonuses

THINGS TO NOTE

- ✓ Treasury and Comets postponed their match this week
- ✓ Individual match scores can be found on the website
https://www.tabletennis365.com/londonbanksandcivilservice/Fixtures/Season_2018-2019/Division_One

COMMENTARY

Week 20

First up is Castaways versus Sparta, with Castaways looking for a whitewash and Sparta wanting every point to avoid relegation. Castaways take a 3-0 lead, including Dave Evans losing to Pete Harris though taking one end, and Peter Tokely losing a real battle with Phil Wroe 15-13, 14-12, and 12-10! Set four proved to be the best of the night with Dave Evans going 2-1 up on Phil Wroe after three ends. Dave seemed to have it won in the fourth end but an impressive Wroe comeback saw him take the end 12-10. In the fifth end, Evans is 9-5 up but Phil stages another remarkable comeback to win the next six points and with them the set! Talk about never say die! Not much joy for Sparta after that as Castaways took all the remaining sets to achieve their desired 10-0. This match threw up an interesting statistic when Dave Evans lost all three. That had never previously happened to Dave in his three seasons in this League! Quite a record! Next match is the one we're all waiting for: Morpeth against Nat West. Surprises in the team compositions as neither side is at maximum strength. For Morpeth, no Alex Luk, an unfortunate match not to have your best player in the team. For Nat West, it's Mike Hughes and Gareth Jones who join Chris Herbert, so no Les Samuels or Adam Johnson. Nat West go 1-0 up with Herbert beating Duncan Brown. In set two, Mike Hughes defies the averages to lead two ends to one against Samson Bekele. In the fourth end, Sammy comes back with an efficient 11-5 scoreline. All to play for in the final end. It's close in the fifth end, but in the biggest shock result of the season, it's Mike that wins it 11-9!! Wow, no one saw that coming! More trouble was to come for Morpeth as Chris Herbert reverses his first half loss to Bekele to beat him in four ends. That seemed to give Nat West momentum and they soon led 4-1 and Morpeth's title dreams are slipping away. Morpeth's lone win was Rob Chambers over Gareth Jones. Set six sees Mike Hughes against Rob Chambers. Can he do it again? Rob leads two ends to one but ominously Mike wins a titanic fourth end by 13-11. This looks like a coin toss to find the winner. In the end it's Rob who holds his nerve to fend off a valiant effort by Mike at 11-8 in the fifth. The next set in this unpredictable contest sees Bekele in trouble against Gareth Jones, with Gareth coming from behind to take the set into a fifth end. Not another upset? Might Bekele who's been unbeatable all season go home empty handed? Well, on a night when strong nerves were called for, Sammy holds on to win the set 11-5 in the deciding end. Rob Chambers gave Herbert a good game in the first half but this time was no match for Chris, losing in four. Morpeth are now 5-3 down and are clinging on for a

draw. In the final singles' set, Hughes goes two ends to one up on Duncan Brown before Duncan wins the fourth end 11-9. Another close finish in prospect and this time it's Duncan that creeps in front to win it 11-8. People will look back at this match as the "Mike Hughes moment" but Duncan deserves a pat on the back for a gutsy win in difficult circumstances. Give fresh momentum by that win, Bekele and Chambers combine to beat Herbert and Jones in the doubles and secure the draw. Extraordinary match! Four sets went the full distance and only one set was won three straight. For the first time this season all six players won at least one set. A big hand for Chris Herbert's three wins, which earned him Player of the Match and made him the outright leader in that category. Back to normality and BTB are up against a PRO team that had lost its last three matches and were without John Crawford. By the end of the night, Ronnie Turner had secured a maximum and Ian Buchanan had done the same, in both cases without dropping an end. Life was a bit tougher for Jai Persaud who dropped an end to Geoff Waterhouse and ran out of luck against Flavinda Xavier, losing in four. A good win for Flavinda! The doubles contained the longest end of the season to date – 19-17 to BTB – but PRO stepped up a gear and won the next three ends for a 9-1 victory. And finally, Insurance versus Employment, which ended 6-4 to Employment in the first half and both teams hoped to do better in the return fixture. It turned out Employment's Lew Hodges had the biggest influence on the result, winning all three, though he might consider himself lucky against Albert Francis, scrambling home 12-10 in the fifth. On paper Paul Baylis should have walked through this match with his 60% average but, in an unusually unproductive night, he lost to both Cranstone and Francis. Ian Cranstone managed to beat Anita Jermyn but she was too strong for Francis, beating him three straight. Insurance put up a spirited effort in the doubles and got to 11-11 in the fourth end only to lose 13-11. All in all, a 7-3 win for Employment, leaving Insurance still winless in the second half.

So, is it all over now? Morpeth are 12 points adrift with four matches remaining. Strange how one week can make so much difference. The maths show that if Morpeth win all their remaining matches 10-0, Castaways would need to do worse than 7-3 on average in each of their last four matches to lose the title. Much as I'd like to see this go down to the wire I can't see that happening – though Castaways might yet have their own version of the "Mike Hughes moment"! This week's draw opens the possibility of Treasury pipping Morpeth for second place and they play each other in the last week of the season! At the bottom, only a miracle can save DIT and BTB though they're having their own battle not to be the bottom club. Nat West versus Treasury is the pick of next week's fixtures. Morpeth travel to Employment with all the pressure on them not to drop another point while Castaways can relax for a week and spectate on how their rivals fare.

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

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AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥16 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Luk	MORPETH	21	21	100.0
Bekele	MORPETH	32	35	91.4
Harris	CASTAWAYS	31	35	88.6
McKee	CASTAWAYS	15	17	88.2
Herbert	NAT WEST	31	36	86.1
McKee	EMPLOYMENT	17	21	81.0
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	38	47	80.9
Turner	PRO	28	36	77.8
Wong	TREASURY A	19	26	73.1
Blyuss	MORPETH	13	18	72.2
Caunt	CASTAWAYS	13	18	72.2
Robinson	TREASURY A	15	21	71.4
Evans	SPARTA	21	30	70.0

Codrington	COMETS	24	36	66.7
Fagan	COMETS	24	36	66.7
Chambers	MORPETH	20	32	62.5
Francis	COMETS	25	42	59.5
Giuffrida	TREASURY A	14	24	58.3
Baylis	EMPLOYMENT	22	38	57.9
Crawford	PRO	16	30	53.3
Persaud	PRO	15	30	50.0
Brown	MORPETH	10	20	50.0
Cranstone	INSURANCE	23	47	48.9
Jermyn	EMPLOYMENT	13	27	48.1
Jones	NAT WEST	17	36	47.2
Buchanan	PRO	9	21	42.9
Francis	INSURANCE	16	44	36.4
Sinarain	BTB	9	33	27.3
Tokely	SPARTA	9	42	21.4
Miller	DIT	7	36	19.4
Waterhouse	BTB	6	36	16.7
Goodman	DIT	6	41	14.6
Velinor	INSURANCE	6	41	14.6
Xavier	BTB	5	36	13.9
Gazheli	DIT	5	38	13.2
Buck	PRO	2	21	9.5
Hattrill	SPARTA	2	24	8.3
Roberts	BTB	1	18	5.6
John	SPARTA	1	24	4.2