

AS AT SEASON END 2018-2019

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
CASTAWAYS	20	16	3	166	34	60	226
MORPETH	20	15	4	149	51	60	209
TREASURY A	20	14	2	144	56	60	204
NAT WEST	20	12	3	127	73	60	187
COMETS	20	10	1	107	93	57	164
EMPLOYMENT	20	10	2	96	104	60	156
PRO	20	9	1	91	109	60	151
SPARTA	20	6	2	73	127	57	130
INSURANCE	20	3	2	64	136	60	124
BTB	20	2	1	43	157	60	103
DIT	20	2	1	40	160	60	100

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

THINGS TO NOTE

- ✓ Individual match scores can be found on the website
https://www.tabletennis365.com/londonbanksandcivilservice/Fixtures/Season_2018-2019/Division_One

COMMENTARY**Week 24 (late result)**

PRO had the misfortune of facing Comets' strongest team and took a bit of a hammering. The outcome was a 9-1 win for Comets due to three wins each from Steve Fagan and Ian Francis and two from Steve Codrington. PRO's lone success was a come-from-behind win for Ian Buchanan over Codrington. Steve appeared to have it won in the fourth end but let that slip by 12-10 and then faded away to an 11-7 loss in the fifth. Good win for Ian!

Week 25

And so to the last week of the season. Who's going to end their season on a high note? Well, Sparta made the first bid for that with a confident 8-2 win over DIT. DIT were 2-1 up in the match following a convincing win for Gazheli over Steve Hattrill and a 12-10 in the fifth success for Simon Goodman over Peter Tokely. After that, everything went Sparta's way and the 2-1 scoreline became 2-8 by the end of the night. Only one set might have gone the other way as Graham Miller put up a good fight against Tokely, only to lose 11-5 in the fifth. For Sparta, Michael Loveder looked unbeatable on the night and dropped one end in reaching a maximum. With the title race over, the Morpeth versus Treasury match did not have the frisson that I thought it would have some weeks ago. Nevertheless it proved to be a good close contest. Rob Chambers struck the first blow for Morpeth with a surprisingly easy three straight defeat of Perry Fung. He backed that up with a second three straight win, this time over Petko Guimichev. His final contest was against Tony Egan and here Rob met his match and went down in four close ends. It was Egan who proved to be Morpeth's undoing, taking three victories and tipping the match in Treasury's favour. For Morpeth, Oleg Blyuss contributed a single win, over Guimichev, which left Morpeth 3-6 down going into the doubles. Now these two teams have pretty similar doubles' records and the pairings – Chambers/Blyuss versus Fung/Egan – probably gave Treasury a slight edge. Just to prove an advantage on paper counts for nothing, it was the Morpeth pairing that came home victorious in four ends. So, a 6-4 loss for Morpeth but enough to keep second place in the division secure. Treasury had a second match in the last week – a postponed game against Comets. Comets only had two players – Fagan and Gargrupe – while Fung was joined by Jeremy Jones and Winston Wong for Treasury. First set of the night and an upset in sight as Jeremy Jones came from two ends down to level the set with Steve Fagan. The final end proved to be close but Fagan nudged ahead to win it 11-7. Steve was taking no chances against Winston Wong and blew him away three

straight. Treasury's hero was Perry Fung who was unbeaten and had a surprisingly straightforward win over Fagan in four ends. The match result was 8-2 to Treasury. Employment at full strength might have troubled Castaways but it was an unusual looking Employment side that was fielded on this occasion because Employment's normal squad were playing elsewhere. Frank Dos Santos, Richard Mak and Kevin Hawkes had played a total of seven matches between them this season so this was a tall order. Added to that both Hawkes and Mak were returning from injury. Given all that, I suppose 10-0 was the expected outcome and so it was. For Castaways, Phil Wroe won all his sets three straight while Pete Harris dropped an end to Hawkes. Best set of the night was Mak against LeMilliere where Neil let a two end lead slip, and only scraped home 11-8 in the fifth. Narrow escape! Final match of the season saw Insurance take on BTB. I had this down as 8-2 to Insurance but that prediction evaporated as it emerged Insurance only had two players. Things were still looking good for Insurance as Ian Cranstone rattled off a clinical maximum but, against Jon Velinor, the BTB players seemed inspired. Flavinda Xavier beat him three straight while Rishi Sinarain fended off Jon's challenge 11-7 in the fifth. Closest, and cruellest set of the night was when Jon had the better of the first three ends against Geoff Waterhouse, came within a whisker of winning the set in the fourth only to lose the end 15-13, and then fell away to an 11-5 defeat in the fifth. So near yet so far! The doubles was close but was going Insurance's way until BTB won the fourth end and then the fifth end for the narrowest of victories after 120 points were played. Perhaps it was BTB's determination to finish above DIT that spurred them to a 7-3 win.

So, we come to the end of the season with the title going to Castaways. I don't remember exactly when Castaways was formed – 2004-05? – but this is the first time they've won the title, having got very close in recent years. Congratulations! They fielded the same three players – Wroe, Harris, LeMilliere – for most of the second half. The composition of their team in the early days was pretty much the same as today. I think this is a unique feature of this league: that if I showed you the averages from, say, 2006 you would find a strong correlation with the names in this season's averages. Morpeth finished in second place, their highest finishing position since they joined the league. Their best team – Luk, Bekele and Chambers – is capable of beating anyone and if they played regularly would be strong contenders for the title. Alex Luk finished top of the averages with an unbeaten 100% from seven outings. Bekele took second place in the averages and also won the most Player of the Match Awards. They just fended off the challenge for second spot from Treasury, another team with strength in depth. Fung, Wong and Egan plus Yiji Zhao – the best player in the division – would be a formidable combination but Treasury are strong even without their stars and the inclusion of Denis Robinson added much to the playing strength. Nat West finished fourth. I always think they will do better than they actually do. This season they lost Tony Catt at Xmas but despite that had a much better second half, picking from Chris Herbert, Adam Johnson, Les Samuels and Gareth Jones. Herbert and Samuels finished up high in the averages. They were followed by Comets who, with Steve Fagan, Ian Francis and Steve Codrington, were pushing for a top four spot at one stage. They had a much better first half than second half, when Steve Codrington became unavailable for much of January and February. I thought Employment had a good season. They lost a strong player in Richard Oppenheim this season but were much strengthened by the addition of Lew Hodges. Chris McKee hovered around seventh or eighth slot in the averages for most of the season, adding about 25 percentage points to his last season's average. Towards the end of the season perhaps they had their eyes on the Central League where they just missed out on promotion to Division Two but a commendable sixth place finish for Employment. Next come PRO – the perfect example of a team that's been largely unaltered for more than ten years. This year they started really well and were top of the division in Week Five. That was followed by a rapid decline when they just couldn't seem to win a match. Their early success was mainly due to a run of good form from Ronnie Turner whose average was an impressive 78% until the last four matches of the season. John Crawford was less successful than last season but together with Ronnie Turner held that unbeaten doubles record for most of the season. A bit like last season, Sparta did just enough to keep out of relegation trouble. Dave Evans showed his strong performance last season was no fluke and actually boosted his average by a few percentage points this season. Put him alongside Mike Loveder for most of the matches and Sparta would be mid-table. Both Peter Tokely and Steve Hattrill found this season harder than last. I thought Insurance's performance in their first season in the top division would provide a solid basis from which to improve this year. Sadly, it didn't work out like that. Last season Albert Francis was a revelation but just couldn't seem to recapture that form. Ian Cranstone became their mainstay and upped his average from 37% to 52%. With both Francis and Jon Velinor struggling, Insurance had one eye on avoiding relegation for most of the season, which they managed to do despite a fairly barren second half. Insurance have a three-player squad and with Ian Cranstone not playing next year there must be doubts about their continued existence. It's been tough for BTB and DIT and I commend both of them for keeping going in the face of heavy defeats. Their battle with each other not to finish in last place has provided a welcome distraction. BTB hold the bragging rights there. They can continue that battle next season to see who

comes first and second in Division Two. Familiar names – Outcasts and Treasury B – will replace BTB and DIT in this division next year.

That draws to an end the 2018-19 season. And, despite falling away a little in the last few weeks, I think it's been a good competitive season. I hope you get as much enjoyment from playing in it as I get from commenting on it!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

Issued: 05/04/2019

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 21 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Luk	MORPETH	21	21	100.0
Bekele	MORPETH	38	41	92.7
Harris	CASTAWAYS	42	46	91.3
Samuels	NAT WEST	20	24	83.3
Herbert	NAT WEST	39	48	81.3
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	46	58	79.3
Fung	TREASURY A	18	23	78.3
McKee	EMPLOYMENT	21	27	77.8
Wong	TREASURY A	25	34	73.5
Wroe	CASTAWAYS	19	26	73.1
Evans	SPARTA	26	36	72.2
Johnson	NAT WEST	15	21	71.4
Robinson	TREASURY A	21	30	70.0
Hodges	EMPLOYMENT	16	23	69.6
Blyuss	MORPETH	18	26	69.2
Fagan	COMETS	29	42	69.0
Chambers	MORPETH	28	41	68.3
Francis	COMETS	33	51	64.7
Turner	PRO	31	48	64.6
Codrington	COMETS	26	42	61.9
Giuffrida	TREASURY A	14	24	58.3
Loveder	SPARTA	15	27	55.6
Baylis	EMPLOYMENT	26	47	55.3
Crawford	PRO	21	39	53.8
Cranstone	INSURANCE	31	59	52.5
Jermyn	EMPLOYMENT	17	33	51.5
Brown	MORPETH	11	22	50.0
Persaud	PRO	15	33	45.5
Jones	NAT WEST	21	48	43.8
Buchanan	PRO	11	27	40.7
Sinarain	BTB	15	41	36.6
Francis	INSURANCE	18	50	36.0
Tokely	SPARTA	16	56	28.6
Goodman	DIT	11	55	20.0
Waterhouse	BTB	9	47	19.1
Gargrupe	COMETS	5	27	18.5
Gazheli	DIT	9	49	18.4

Miller	DIT	9	50	18.0
Hattrill	SPARTA	5	29	17.2
Xavier	BTB	7	44	15.9
Velinor	INSURANCE	7	53	13.2
Buck	PRO	3	27	11.1
Roberts	BTB	1	27	3.7
John	SPARTA	1	29	3.4

The 2018-19 season - in facts and figures

All-time divisional records set this season:

Chris Herbert played 309 points in one evening, won all three, two at deuce in the fifth.

Albert Francis played in 31 consecutive matches (streak broken)

Champions: Castaways

Runners up: Morpeth

Relegation: BTB and DIT

Top of the averages: Alex Luk – unbeaten all season

Longest live unbeaten streak: 21 wins by Alex Luk

Longest unbeaten streak: 23 straight wins for Sammy Bekele. Streak ended by Neil LeMilliere

Best doubles team: A triple tie. Castaways, Morpeth and Treasury – all with 16 wins out of 20.

Most Player of the Match awards: Sammy Bekele with eight awards

Played in every match: Neil LeMilliere and Ian Cranstone

Players involved: 67 players appeared this season, two more than appeared last year

Biggest squad: Nat West with eight players

Smallest squad: Insurance with three players

Sets conceded: in 16% of all matches played one or more sets were conceded. That's down from last year's 20%.

Most sets conceded: Insurance conceded 12 sets in the season

Greatest beneficiaries from sets conceded: Morpeth, Treasury and DIT each had six sets conceded to them

Here's how the matches finished (with last year's corresponding figures in brackets)

Match result	10-0	9-1	8-2	7-3	6-4	5-5
% of all results	23%	15%	20%	19%	14%	10%
	(14%)	(22%)	(18%)	(20%)	(17%)	(9%)

Quite a similar pattern of results but whereas 9-1 was the most common score last season, this season it's 10-0

Other records and highspots:

Longest single end: 20-18 in the match between Petko Guimichev and Anita Jermyn

Longest set: 120 points were needed before Jon Velinor beat Flavinda Xavier. The second longest match in the division's history.

Match involving most five-enders: Five sets went the distance when Morpeth beat Comets

Closest match: Seven sets went on past the third end when Castaways drew with Morpeth and when Morpeth beat Employment

Fewest points played in a five ender: In the Chris McKee / Flavinda Xavier set just 73 points were played in five ends

Matches in which all six players registered at least one victory: Nat West v. Morpeth, PRO v. Sparta and Employment v. Sparta. Unusual for that to happen in as many as three matches.

Man in a hurry: Perry Fung conceded just 35 points in achieving his maximum against DIT

Highlights of the second half

After playing 117 points, Anita Jermyn lost 12-10 in the fifth to John Crawford having held three match points

Thirty-eight ends were played when PRO faced Employment and 22 of those ends were won by a two point margin

Yiji Zhao's extraordinary demolition job on Castaways

Chris Herbert played three sets, 15 ends and more than 270 points in achieving his three wins against Comets.

Anita Jermyn doing the double over Steve Fagan

Ian Cranstone's win over Ronnie Turner

Sammy Bekele beating Pete Harris

Neil LeMilliere ending Bekele's winning streak

Phil Wroe edging out Rob Chambers having been 7-10 down in the fifth and edging out Dave Evans from 5-9 down in the fifth

Ian Buchanan's near miss against Alex Luk, losing 11-8 in the fifth

John Crawford's 11-8 in the fifth defeat of Rob Chambers and defeat of Dave Evans 12-10 in the fifth

Nat West's Mike Hughes beating Sammy Bekele 11-9 in the fifth

Peter Tokely's win over Ronnie Turner

Simon Goodman beating Duncan Brown

Employment's good team performance to beat Treasury

Mike Loveder's fourth end defeat of Chris Herbert after 110 points were played