

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 12

AS AT 26 FEBRUARY 2023

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS A	11	10	0	91	19	33	124
CASTAWAYS	11	8	2	78	32	33	111
NAT WEST	12	7	2	68	52	36	104
MORPETH A	12	5	3	68	52	36	104
COMETS B	10	5	1	49	51	30	79
OUTCASTS	12	2	0	36	84	36	72
PRO	11	2	3	39	71	33	72
GOOD KARMA	11	0	1	21	89	33	54

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_22-23/Division_One
- Check out the photos on the front page of the website under Featured Photos. Is your team there?

COMMENTARY

Week 21

This week's first match sees the third placed team play the fourth placed team – Nat West versus Morpeth. Out goes Duncan Brown for Morpeth and in comes Ettore Miuccio to join Toan To and Chris Alexander. Immediate problem for Nat West as they don't have a third player. That's highly unusual – hasn't happened since January 2020. It's Chris Herbert and Gareth Jones fighting it out for Nat West. So, Morpeth have a 3-0 start and that becomes 4-0 as Miuccio beats Jones in the first set. It looks to be 5-0 as To leads Herbert by two ends to one. Chris takes the fourth end and we've got a battle on our hands. The score reaches 9-9 – who does the odds favour? Well, the players didn't know this but Chris has the best record for winning five-enders in the division. And he adds another notch on his belt as he takes the next two points to win the set 11-9. Nat West begin the fight back! Gareth Jones has been going through a lean spell recently but put that to an end beating both To and Alexander. Good wins and crucial in the circumstances! Herbert went on to beat Chris Alexander and Nat West have come from a losing position to having the chance of a win. Miuccio against Herbert is a key set. If you follow averages you have to give this one to Ettore. However, they have played each other before and it's usually close but Chris has never lost to him! And Chris maintains that record with an impressive three straight victory! Nat West go on to win the doubles and they've come from 4-0 down to win the match 6-4. Most unexpected and great team effort! Hats off to Chris and Gareth!

PRO narrowly beat Karma in the first half, let's see if they can do it again in the return fixture. PRO replace George Buck from the first half team with Jai Persaud while Karma turn out a completely different threesome - Jason Killip, Michael Miller and Ben Link. Hard to predict the outcome. The first set sees Crawford take on Killip. John starts well, winning the first end, but things go downhill after that as Jason cruised through the next three ends. Miller against Persaud was next up and this looks to be a close contest. Michael takes the first end at deuce, and Jai takes the second end, also at deuce. The next two ends were almost as close but Michael managed to win both, giving Karma a 2-0 lead. Ben Link's set against Turner followed a similar pattern. Turner led after three ends, the fourth end reached 9-9 and just as we're anticipating a fifth end Ronnie pinches the next two points to secure the set. 2-1 to Karma and three good contests. Crawford against Miller was next and this proved even closer. From one end all, two deuce ends followed and both went to Crawford 12-10, 16-14. The match score is 2-2. We've played 16 ends and five of them have ended at deuce! Another deuce end followed as Killip edged Turner 15-13 in the first. Jason goes two ends up but Ronnie keeps his hopes alive winning the third end. The

fourth end was expected to be close but Jason ran away with it 11-5 to take the set. Persaud then beat Ben Link, again in four ends. Six sets played and every one has needed four ends! That trend was then broken as the next two sets finished three straight – Miller beat Turner and Crawford beat Link. That Miller win over Turner deserves a pat on the back. So, the match has reached 4-4 and the outcome depends on Killip versus Persaud and the doubles. If you consult the formbook at this point, it says Killip must beat Persaud comfortably and Karma should win the doubles as they have a better doubles record. So, what happened? After four ends it's all square between Persaud and Killip. Persaud should have lost by now! Into the fifth and we have one of the upsets of the season on our hands as Persaud holds a match point at 10-9!! 10-9 becomes 10-10, then 10-11 and to cap it off, 12-10 to Jason. How did he pull that out of the bag! It's moments like this which confirm you must have been cursed at birth to lose that set! Just not fair! The doubles then went, not to Karma as predicted, but to PRO in another four-end contest and the formbook is over there, in the bin! The match ends in a hard-fought draw. Eight of the ten sets played went past three ends. Well done to both teams for a fascinating contest!

Castaways whitewashed Outcasts in the first half and had every hope of the same outcome in the return. There were two "buts" standing in their way. First, no Johnny Bispham following last week's injury but in came Mike Loveder so no great loss there and, second, Terry McKee was not feeling well and was dosed up on medication. Outcasts' team was Nabil Chair, Simon Jameson and Ben Towers. The first set showed the significance of McKee's bad health as he went down to Nabil Chair three straight. A bad start for Castaways but hope returned in the next three sets as Castaways won all three. LeMilliere beat Jameson, Loveder narrowly beat Towers and LeMilliere then beat Chair in a "must win" set for Castaways. 3-1 to Castaways, so far so good. At that point things went wrong for the title-chasers. McKee, already under the weather, aggravated a long-standing shoulder injury and couldn't keep up with Towers. And then Loveder totally lost his way against Jameson, losing three straight. I wonder if Mike remembered the last time he played Simon, seven years ago, and he lost then too. The match is deadlocked at 3-3 and Castaways' title chances are evaporating. It was up to LeMilliere to carry the flag which he duly did with a win over Towers in four ends. Loveder had to beat Chair to keep hopes alive. Loveder took the first two ends, the second of which ended 18-16! Things then swung in Nabil's direction as he took the next two ends to level the set. Sighs of relief as Loveder came good in the deciding end, accelerating away to a 11-5 outcome. The final singles set pitted McKee against Jameson and, to his credit given how rough he felt, McKee won it in four. That took the match score to 6-3 and Castaways had secured the win. The doubles should have been a foregone conclusion – Castaways have an excellent doubles record while Outcasts have only a couple of doubles' wins all season. After four shared ends it was clear previous doubles records were not going to count for much. Into the final end and the score reaches 9-9. The next two points decided the set and both went to Outcasts for an unexpected win. The final score was 6-4 to Castaways. Coming into the match Castaways had a small chance of taking the title but the dropped sets here probably put an end to their title aspirations, despite a successful night for LeMilliere.

I've been quite impressed with Comets B since they settled on a regular team. This week they faced a huge challenge, taking on their A team. The A team put out S Fagan, C Fagan and Ian Francis. The B team had Allam Bhangoo, David Adesanya and Adil Islam. The A team won the first three sets but they weren't straightforward. Adesanya took an end off Francis and Islam did the same with Steve Fagan. Bhangoo then also took an end off Francis and the B team were 4-0 down but this wasn't completely one sided. The A team began to assert their superiority with a run of four three-straight victories in which the B team were simply outgunned. The last singles set was probably the best of the night with Adesanya losing the first two ends against Cain Fagan by narrow margins and winning the third end 14-12. Could he mount a challenge in the fourth? Well, I don't know what happened but Fagan totally dominated the end to achieve a crushing 11-2 outcome. The doubles also went the A team's way so the match ended 10-0, their third whitewash of the season. A pretty emphatic demonstration that the A team are the best in the division.

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

Issued: 26/02/2023

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 14 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Persaud	COMETS A	17	18	94.4
Penrose	NAT WEST	19	21	90.5
C Fagan	COMETS A	15	17	88.2
S Fagan	COMETS A	21	26	80.8
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	12	15	80.0
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	25	33	75.8
Francis	COMETS A	17	23	73.9
McKee	CASTAWAYS	13	18	72.2
Miuccio	MORPETH A	11	16	68.8
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	18	27	66.7
Adesanya	COMETS B	12	18	66.7
Luu	COMETS B	10	15	66.7
Chair	OUTCASTS	11	18	61.1
Herbert	NAT WEST	11	18	61.1
Alnak	MORPETH A	9	15	60.0
Crawford	PRO	16	27	59.3
Brown	MORPETH A	17	29	58.6
Turner	PRO	15	27	55.6
Coull	OUTCASTS	9	18	50.0
To	MORPETH A	10	22	45.5
Alexander	MORPETH A	6	14	42.9
Jones	NAT WEST	11	27	40.7
Bhangoo	COMETS B	8	21	38.1
Miller	GOOD KARMA	6	18	33.3
Jameson	OUTCASTS	4	15	26.7
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	3	12	25.0
Persaud	PRO	5	27	18.5
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	2	15	13.3
Roullier	OUTCASTS	2	18	11.1
Jones	OUTCASTS	1	15	6.7
Link	GOOD KARMA	1	12	8.3
Buck	PRO	1	18	5.6