

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 07

AS AT 24 NOVEMBER 2024

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
MORPETH A	6	5	0	39	21	18	57
COMETS A	4	4	0	38	2	12	50
CASTAWAYS	4	2	2	26	14	12	38
COMETS B	4	1	1	20	20	12	32
NAT WEST	4	1	1	15	25	12	27
PRO	4	0	2	13	27	12	25
COMETS C	5	0	0	7	43	15	22
OUTCASTS	3	1	0	12	18	9	21

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_24-25/Division_One

- Check out the photos on the front page of the website under Featured Photos. Is your team there?
- Want a trip down memory lane? Every weekly bulletin issued since the 2014-15 season can be found on the website under the “Div Sec Reports” heading

COMMENTARY

Week 07

This week's highlight match features this season's frontrunners Morpeth against last season's champions Comets A. Our first opportunity to see if Morpeth can halt Comets seemingly inexorable march towards another title. No surprises in team selections. For Morpeth, it's Toan To, Duncan Brown and Simon Holohan. Their opponents are Laikram Persaud, Steve Fagan and Ian Francis. Potential for a lot of 100% records to go tonight! First to put their perfect playing records on the line are To and Persaud. This set doesn't last long as Laikram strolls through it three straight comfortably. Next is Duncan Brown against Steve Fagan. Duncan's on a nice little run of form – remember the Tony Catt scalp last week – and Steve is as yet unbeaten. First blood to Duncan but Steve counters with a narrow 12-10 win in the second. The next two ends were also shared and so a deciding end is needed. The set looks pretty evenly balanced to me. They've only played each other a couple of times and Steve's always won. Will he do that again here? The interesting answer is, “no”, as Duncan fends off the challenge to come home 11-5 in the fifth. Good win! Might this be the start of something good for Morpeth? Set three sees unbeaten Simon Holohan up against Ian Francis. Simon gets a brilliant start taking the first two ends. Then the bubble begins to burst as Ian wins the next two ends and we're all square. Into the fifth end and Simon stems the tide to take a commanding 10-6 lead. Surely the win is his! 10-6 becomes 10-7 and then 10-8 and 10-9! We've all been in this position. How do you play the next point? That point goes to Ian and he has just won five points in a row and now all the momentum is on his side. You've guessed it – 10-10 becomes 10-11 and finally 10-12 and Ian had completed a huge comeback. You have to feel sorry for Simon! After that, Morpeth are looking for a win to restore morale but the order of play gives them another kick in the teeth as Laikram Persaud stands up to face Duncan Brown. I think this is a bridge too far, even for an in-form Duncan. It didn't take long to prove me right – three straight to Laikram in a clinical performance. This match is running away from Morpeth. Now it's down to Toan To to get Morpeth back into this match. His opponent is Ian Francis and Scottie starts well winning the first two ends. But history then starts to repeat itself as Ian wins the third and fourth. And adds a win in the fifth to that to complete another comeback! More bad news for Morpeth in the next set as Steve Fagan eases past Simon Holohan and the match score is 5-1 to Comets. Set seven sees Francis win the first two ends against

Duncan Brown but this time it's Duncan's turn to win the third and fourth ends. No one's betting against the master escapologist pulling off another win. And so it proves to be – 11-4 in the fifth to Ian. A long night for Ian. 15 ends played but crucially three sets won! Things got no better for Morpeth – Persaud beat Holohan and Fagan beat To. Both teams went into the doubles unbeaten this season but it was Comets who ended the night with their perfect record intact. 9-1 to Comets but a “what might have been” night for Morpeth. It was those three Ian Francis losses that made the difference!

Unlike PRO, Comets B don't have a settled squad and this week they put out David Adesanya, Jason Morley and Arunn Sathasivam. PRO fielded John Crawford, Ronnie Turner and Jai Persaud. I think this looks like a close match with PRO possibly having the edge. The first set is over no time. Crawford delivers a dominant performance to defeat Morley three straight, conceding a measly 11 points in total. To come out on top in this match there are a few 50:50 sets that need to be won. The first of these is Jai Persaud against Sathasivam. Don't think these two have played before. Arunn's looking good after two ends, winning them both. Jai comes back in the third – a narrow 11-9 win. The fourth end proved to be decisive as Arunn went in front and stayed in front to claim the win 11-7 in four. Arunn stayed on the table to meet Crawford in set three. John carried on from his flying start in set one to win this contest three straight. It's 2-1 to PRO. Next on is Ronnie Turner against Jason Morley. Ronnie takes the first end with ease, 11-4. There then followed two very long ends, 16-14 and 12-10, that had a big bearing on the outcome. When things are that close both players have chances but in this case it was Jason who won both ends to take the lead. That provoked a big reaction from Ronnie who blitzed the fourth end 11-2. I've no idea how this will end. No one seems able to gain the upper hand. I think I'd back Ronnie on the strength of that 11-2 whitewash. Wrong again! It was Jason who edged the decisive end 11-8. That's a good win for Jason. That makes the score 2-2 and the match predictor has moved a few points in Comets' favour. Ronnie stays on to face Sathasivam. The first end reaches deuce and finishes 13-11 to Arunn. Ronnie takes the next end. It's another seesaw contest. But, just as I say that, Arunn strings together a run of points to take the third and fourth ends. Another win for Comets – I didn't expect that. PRO need a hero. Might that be Jai Persaud as he takes on Adesanya? The formbook says he has little chance but not sure that counts for much on a night like this. The first three ends were very close. 11-8 to David followed by 14-12 and 15-13 to Jai. David squares the set with a 11-9 win in the fourth but Jai's hanging in well here. Serve had played a big part in this set and so with David leading 9-5 in the final end, his lead looked wide enough to secure the win. But Jai then wins both his service points. Followed by capturing both of David's service points to reach 9-9. And, back on his own serve, Jai took the next two points to pull off a brilliant surprise victory. 113 points in that set – the longest of the season so far. Adesanya made amends in the next set beating Turner comfortably three straight. Comets still have the advantage in the match leading 4-3. The last two singles sets were shared. Persaud beat Morley and Adesanya narrowly beat Crawford in another long set that required 100 points before David came out on top. Lack of time meant Comets conceded the doubles so the result was a draw. Good match with lots of long hotly contested ends and Jai Persaud's win being the highlight.

Final match of the week involves Comets C and Outcasts. The Comets team was Adil Islam, Gary Defroand and Anoop Sharma. Outcasts fielded Petko Guimichev, Bing Siah and Simon Jameson. The first four sets came and went quite quickly. Guimichev was the victor over Islam in four and Siah beat Defroand three straight. In set three things got more competitive as Anoop Sharma was in front of Simon Jameson after three ends. Simon won the fourth end and held on to take the decisive end in an 11-9 victory. Could have gone either way! Guimichev then made it 4-0 to Outcasts with a routine victory over Defroand. In set five Comets opened their account as Adil Islam overcame Jameson in four close ends. The resistance proved to be fleeting however as Siah, Jameson and Guimichev each posted three-straight wins over Sharma, Defroand and Sharma respectively. The final singles set was the closest of the night. Islam and Siah shared the first two ends. The third end was key and it was narrowly won by Siah 13-11. Islam struck back to take the fourth end but he couldn't repeat that in the fifth, giving Siah the win 11-5. Good effort but not quite enough. With an 8-1 scoreline to Outcasts you'd have to favour them for the doubles. But just to underline this game's unpredictability, Comets won the doubles without raising a sweat! It's a funny old game!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 5 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Persaud	COMETS A	11	11	100.0
Sultani	COMETS B	6	6	100.0
C Fagan	COMETS A	5	5	100.0
Francis	COMETS A	7	8	87.5
Guimichev	OUTCASTS	5	6	83.3
S Fagan	COMETS A	5	6	83.3
To	MORPETH A	9	12	75.0
Brown	MORPETH A	10	15	66.7
Adesanya	COMETS B	6	9	66.7
Holohan	MORPETH A	6	9	66.7
Marott	MORPETH A	6	9	66.7
Johnson	NAT WEST	4	6	66.7
Siah	OUTCASTS	4	6	66.7
Crawford	PRO	7	12	58.3
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	5	10	50.0
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	4	8	50.0
Muller	NAT WEST	3	6	50.0
Bhangoo	COMETS B	3	6	50.0
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	3	8	37.5
Turner	PRO	3	12	25.0
Persaud	PRO	2	9	22.2
Islam	COMETS C	2	12	16.7
Alexander	MORPETH A	1	6	16.7
Coull	OUTCASTS	1	6	16.7
Morley	COMETS B	1	6	16.7
Sharma	COMETS C	1	9	11.1