

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 12

AS AT 6 FEBRUARY 2022

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS	8	8	0	66	14	24	90
MORPETH A	9	5	1	50	40	27	77
NAT WEST	9	4	2	48	42	27	75
PRO	9	1	2	35	52	27	62
CASTAWAYS	7	4	1	38	32	21	59
GOOD KARMA	7	1	1	23	47	21	44
OUTCASTS	7	1	1	17	53	21	38

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_21-22/Division_One

COMMENTARY

Week 16

First match of the week sees Morpeth take on Outcasts. A comprehensive win in prospect for Morpeth? But let's look at the teams. For Morpeth, it's Bekele, Duncan Brown and Adam Alnak. Their opponents are Bob Coull, Alan Jones and, for the first time this season, Andrew Macalister. Predictions? The first set of the night started well for Outcasts as Bob Coull took the first two ends from Adam Alnak. Do you remember the "win two, lose two" mantra from the previous week? Well, it repeats, as Bob promptly loses the next two ends to level the set. I think the final end is very open with no obvious winner. In the event, it was Adam who came home in front, 11-6 in the fifth. Well done! The second set also seemed to be going Outcasts' way when Alan Jones got the better of the first three ends against Duncan Brown. A weirdly erratic three ends they were, each very one sided, in none of them did the losing player win more than five points. Then, fortunes changed, as Duncan suddenly romped away to take the next two ends 11-4 and 11-3 to capture the win in the fifth end. That seesaw set ran for 73 points, rivalling the all-time divisional record for the fewest points played in a five ender. That stands at 70 points, set in 2017. Outcasts might have been 2-0 up but found themselves 2-0 down! That became 3-0 down as Duncan Brown raised his game to defeat Bob Coull in three. A good win! The match score moved to 4-0 down when Bekele had a fairly comfortable win over Macalister, albeit dropping one end in doing so. The match continued in that rhythm with Morpeth winning each successive set for the loss of one end and a 7-0 scoreline. At that point, out of the blue, Morpeth dropped a set. Where did that come from and who was involved? Well, for two ends, Samson Bekele just could not shake off Bob Coull, losing both ends narrowly. In the third, Samson gets ahead and stays there, winning 11-6. This is the comeback. But the comeback disappeared as fast as it had materialised and Bob swept home 11-6 in the fourth. Well played Bob, one of the upset wins of the season! Morpeth went on to capture the last two sets and a 9-1 outcome. Despite the convincing scoreline, this was by no means a demolition job by Morpeth. Six sets went to the fourth end or beyond and Outcasts should judge themselves unlucky to come out with just a single victory.

Karma against PRO is the next match. A draw resulted in the first half and both these teams are candidates to finish in the bottom three. PRO are on a really bad streak and have yet to win a match on the table this season. Karma are in the same position – no win this season – but they do have matches in hand. The line-ups are Crawford, Buck and Turner facing Link, Zhao and Frederic Fremion. Frederic plays most of his table tennis in Division Two but he did turn out once before in this division this season. I remember him for an upset win over Chris Herbert a year or so ago. John Crawford struck the first blow for PRO, with an efficient three straight defeat of Ben Link. The lead didn't last long as Xavier Zhao then won an important contest over George Buck. Big influence on the match outcome that win! Crawford then became the first to take on Fremion. The first two ends were shared. The third end went point for point. Crawford held a point to win the end but Frederic fought

back and finally took it 12-10. The fourth end was a repeat of the third. Point for point, Crawford again holds a point to win the end, only for Frederic to sweep past him for another 12-10 win. Four very close ends! Enter Ronnie Turner and he makes short work of Ben Link, dropping one end. Two sets later, Ronnie's back at the table, this time beating Zhao three straight. At this point the match score was 3-3. Link then beat George Buck to nose Karma ahead. The next set featured the two players thus far undefeated on the night: Turner versus Fremion. I expected this to be a close contest with Ronnie coming out on top. How wrong I was! Frederic blew him away three straight, of which only one end was close. Didn't expect that! PRO desperately needed the last singles set to have any chance of a draw. That looked unlikely as Zhao took the first two ends off Crawford. But I hear the mantra again as Xavier promptly loses the next two. All to play for in the fifth! Xavier goes 5-1 up – is it all over? John pulls back to 5-4! At this moment the table tennis Gods decided to desert Crawford and Xavier then won six points, four of which involved nets or edges, to take the set! Cruel! And unexpected! That gave Karma the win and left PRO fighting for the doubles and a fourth point. The Crawford / Turner doubles combination has not had the best of seasons but this time they managed to pull off the win in four ends. A 6-4 first win for Karma, leaving PRO still not having won a match on the table. A funny match which really turned on Fremion's maximum plus a couple of other key sets that went Karma's way. And the intervention of the table tennis Gods!

Coming towards the final few matches and the bottom of the division is looking more interesting than the top. Castaways must surely pull away from the bottom three. Karma and Outcasts have matches in hand but PRO have points in the bag, albeit with tough run-in to the final match. I suspect this will go all the way to the final week!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

Issued: 06/02/2022

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥10 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Catt	NAT WEST	14	15	93.3
Fung	COMETS	13	14	92.9
Persaud	COMETS	13	14	92.9
Wong	COMETS	10	12	83.3
Bekele	MORPETH A	17	22	77.3
Fagan	COMETS	10	13	76.9
Francis	COMETS	9	13	69.2
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	11	21	52.4
Herbert	NAT WEST	9	18	50.0
Robertson	MORPETH A	8	16	50.0
Sanders	GOOD KARMA	6	12	50.0
Crawford	PRO	11	24	45.8
Turner	PRO	11	24	45.8
Alnak	MORPETH A	5	11	45.5
Blyuss	MORPETH A	5	11	45.5
Link	GOOD KARMA	6	15	40.0
Muller	NAT WEST	7	18	38.9
Jones	NAT WEST	7	27	25.9
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	3	15	20.0
Roullier	OUTCASTS	2	12	16.7