

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 06

AS AT 5 DECEMBER 2022

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS A	6	6	0	51	9	18	69
CASTAWAYS	6	3	2	42	18	18	60
NAT WEST	6	4	1	40	20	18	58
MORPETH A	7	2	3	36	34	21	57
OUTCASTS	7	2	0	24	46	21	45
COMETS B	6	2	1	25	35	18	43
PRO	6	2	1	23	37	18	41
GOOD KARMA	6	0	0	9	51	18	27

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 9

First match this week involves Nat West and Karma. Nat West have their usual look: Jones, Herbert and Penrose. Karma introduced two more new names. Xavier Zhou was joined by debutants Chandraprakash Shreeram and Aman Kanwar. Karma have played 11 different players this half – an all-time Divisional record by some margin. Kanwar usually plays in Division 2 and the Central League, while Shreeram is unbeaten in Division 2 of the North Middlesex league. Chris Penrose started for Nat West and gave them the usual good start with a comfortable win over Shreeram. Next up, Gareth Jones had an equally comfortable win over Kanwar and it's looking like a long night for Karma. The third set broke the trend and went to four but once again Nat West came out on top with Chris Herbert beating Xavier Zhou. The next set also went to four with Gareth Jones beating Shreeram. 4-0 to Nat West. The remainder of the match proceeded in the same way – competitive but Nat West always having the edge. Karma did have one ray of hope as Shreeram went two ends to one up on Herbert. But the next two ends went Chris's way and Shreeram went down 11-9 in the fifth. The closest set of the night. So, 10-0 to Nat West, their first whitewash of the season.

The next match brought together the two title contenders: Comets A versus Castaways. This is always a good game but latterly Comets A have the edge, probably more so this season as Comets have added Cain Fagan and Castaways have lost Pete Harris. The teams were Bispham, LeMilliere and Loveder against the two Fagans plus Laikram Persaud. It's going to take a Herculean effort from Castaways to win this! First blood to Comets as Cain Fagan beats Johnny Bispham in four. Next set and things are looking better for Castaways as LeMilliere takes the first two ends off Steve Fagan, both ending at deuce. But there the nailbiter came to a finish as Steve took the next three ends for the loss of just 15 points. Comets are two up. I thought Loveder might have a good chance against Persaud but again Comets triumphed with Laikram winning in five, Loveder having been in front after three ends. Suddenly Comets were 4-0 up, with Bispham coming out second best to Steve Fagan. Is this going to be a landslide? The next set was Loveder against Cain Fagan. It was over in four ends. Every end finished 11-9, so not much in it! The victor was Mike Loveder – a great effort to remove Cain's 100% record. Castaways break their duck! Comets quickly return to winning ways as Persaud beats LeMilliere comfortably. It was up to Loveder to stop Comets' momentum and he stepped up again to beat Steve Fagan three straight! Bispham was having a bad night so you don't fancy his chances against Persaud. Last time they played I commented there was

nothing in Bispham's record to suggest he could beat Laikram – but he did!! Well, it happened again! Bispham wins with the impressive scores of 11-4, 11-7, 11-6! Comets lead 5-3 so Castaways may yet salvage a draw. The final singles set proved to be a real dogfight. After three ends LeMilliere leads Cain Fagan. The fourth end goes to Cain and the fifth end reaches 9-9 when the ball cracks mid-rally. When play resumed Cain took the next two points for the win! The doubles became the fourth set to go the distance. The Loveder / Bispham combination put up a good fight but lost to Persaud and Cain Fagan. A 7-3 win for Comets and they open a significant gap at the top of the table. Kudos to Mike Loveder for his two wins.

Comets B are putting up a good fight in their first season in this Division. They followed up last week's win over PRO with a match against Morpeth. The Comets team is Bhangoo, Kemp and Adesanya. Morpeth have Brown, Chris Alexander and, for the first time this season, Oleg Blyuss. Duncan Brown opens with a good three straight defeat of Rob Kemp. That's immediately countered with Bhangoo beating Blyuss, also in three. Another three-ender followed with Adesanya getting the better of Chris Alexander. The trend continued with Duncan Brown coming out ahead of Bhangoo. The match score stands at 2-2 but we've yet to have a set go past the third end! Robert Kemp versus Chris Alexander put an end to that but Chris looked the winner throughout, dropping a single end. It was the same in the next set as Adesanya had too much for Blyuss, winning in four. The match score reached 5-3 to Comets and they're on the verge of a notable win. But, with the winning post in sight, Comets suddenly faltered. First Oleg Blyuss beat Robert Kemp and then the Blyuss / Brown pairing was too strong for Bhangoo and Adesanya. The outcome was a strange draw – a close result in which oddly none of the individual sets was close! Pats on the back for David Adesanya who won all his sets.

The final match of the half saw PRO take on Outcasts. PRO were again without John Crawford – when was the last time PRO played two successive fixtures without him? – fielding Persaud, Buck and Turner. Outcasts have a good team out: Guimichev, Coull and Roullier. Outcasts start quickly, winning the opening two sets. Wins for Guimichev over Persaud and Coull over Buck. PRO got one back as Turner opened their account beating Roullier in four ends. Back to winning ways for Outcasts with Coull's second win, this time over Persaud. Outcasts are 3-1 in front. Next, Guimichev takes on Turner. This looks to be close. Guimichev opens a lead after three ends. Ronnie fights back to level the set and take it into a deciding end. Ronnie opens some daylight on Petko and reaches match point at 10-8. Petko fights back with a lucky net and a second point to make it deuce. Ronnie again reached match point at 12-11 and, proving what goes around comes around, it's Ronnie's turn for a bit of luck, winning the set on an edge! 95 points played of which ironically Petko won 49 of them. More drama in the next set. Eddie Roullier nudges ahead of George Buck but winning the third end required going all the way to 16-14. George is not going down without a fight and takes the fourth 11-7. In the fifth, Eddie opens a gap but having not capitalised on a hatful of match points suddenly he faced the unthinkable – George was up match point! Eddie keeps cool, saves the match point, and gets another match point at 13-12. At this moment 108 points had been played and we still don't have a winner. On the 109th point, fate intervened to cruelly end this hotly contested set, granting Eddie a lucky final point. Very bad luck George! The next set brought together the night's two unbeaten players: Coull and Turner. The first two ends go to Ronnie and he's well on his way to victory. In an evening of fightbacks, we then had another as Bob pulls it back to two ends all. The last time these two played each other Ronnie won the first two ends but Bob triumphed 11-9 in the fifth. Déjà vu? Indeed it was, as Bob pulled away to take the last end 11-5! No one has played more five-enders than Bob in this half (but Chris Herbert has won most five-enders). That win took Outcasts to 5-3 up. Try as they might, PRO couldn't stem the tide, losing the last two sets. A good match that was closer than the outcome suggests. Only two sets completed in three ends and three sets went the distance. On another night that match might have ended as a draw!

So we come to the end of the half. Comets are top of the division, with a gap on their rivals. But the gap could be caught up – Comets aren't out of sight yet! Castaways are in second place but Nat West are hard on their heels. This isn't a two-horse race! At the bottom of the Division, all the teams except Karma have won matches and showed they are no pushovers. Karma have individual players who can be successful – but they never seem to all play on the same team! The averages reflect Comets A's dominance but Nat West's Chris Penrose is the only player left with an unblemished record. Ronnie Turner has done well to find himself in fourth spot. Plenty of scope for things to change in the second half!

AVERAGES (Qualification: ≥ 7 sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Penrose	NAT WEST	12	12	100.0
Persaud	COMETS A	8	9	88.9
C Fagan	COMETS A	7	8	87.5
Turner	PRO	12	15	80.0
Francis	COMETS A	11	14	78.6
S Fagan	COMETS A	11	14	78.6
Loveder	CASTAWAYS	7	9	77.8
LeMilliere	CASTAWAYS	13	18	72.2
Bispham	CASTAWAYS	10	15	66.7
Alnak	MORPETH A	6	9	66.7
Herbert	NAT WEST	6	9	66.7
Miuccio	MORPETH A	5	8	62.5
Jones	NAT WEST	9	15	60.0
Crawford	PRO	7	12	58.3
Brown	MORPETH A	10	20	50.0
Coull	OUTCASTS	6	12	50.0
Guimichev	OUTCASTS	4	9	44.4
Luu	COMETS B	4	9	44.4
To	MORPETH A	5	14	35.7
Jameson	OUTCASTS	2	9	22.2
Roullier	OUTCASTS	2	9	22.2
Persaud	PRO	2	12	16.7
Zhao	GOOD KARMA	2	12	16.7
Jones	OUTCASTS	1	9	11.1
Link	GOOD KARMA	1	9	11.1
Buck	PRO	1	15	6.7