

LONDON BANKS AND CIVIL SERVICE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE BULLETIN 02

AS AT 30 OCTOBER 2022

	P	W	D	F	A	B	P
COMETS A	2	2	0	19	1	6	25
OUTCASTS	3	1	0	13	17	9	22
CASTAWAYS	2	1	1	15	5	6	21
MORPETH A	2	1	1	15	5	6	21
NAT WEST	2	1	0	10	10	6	16
COMETS B	2	1	0	7	13	6	13
PRO	2	1	0	7	13	6	13
GOOD KARMA	3	0	0	4	26	9	13

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

COMMENTARY

Week 4

This week we begin with Morpeth taking on Karma. Both teams introduced a new face. Morpeth has Brown and Alnak plus debutant Toan To, nicknamed Scottie! Karma has Zhao, Ben Link and newcomer John Faldo. Should be a win for Morpeth but hard to predict a scoreline. The match ran late and ended with two tables being used making it hard to describe how the match unfolded. It began with two comfortable three-straight wins for Duncan Brown over Ben Link and Adam Alnak over Xavier Zhao. That was followed by To versus Zhao, which was far from comfortable for either player. To began slowly and was soon two ends down. He then found another gear and won the third and fourth ends to level the match. His momentum continued into the deciding end and that, plus the run of the luck, meant To came home 11-6. A good comeback win! That was followed by the best set of the night: Alnak against Link. This set had everything: great shots, impossible returns and nail-biting finishes. The first two ends were shared. Alnak took the third and looked on course for the fourth too but Ben fought back to make it two ends all. The final end could not have been closer but it was Alnak who emerged the hero with a narrow 12-10 victory. 95 points played and excellent spectator sport! Duncan Brown then continued his untroubled way with a straightforward win over Faldo. Morpeth led 5-0 and the match was slipping away from Karma. Having narrowly lost his opening encounter, Link set out to make amends against To. This was another cliff hanger. Ben took a two ends to one lead but Scottie managed to take the set to a deciding end. At this point history cruelly decided to repeat itself and Ben, as he did against Alnak, lost by the narrowest of margins, 11-9 in the fifth. 93 points played on this occasion and you have to feel sorry for Ben. That spelled the end of Karma's resistance and Morpeth took the remaining sets without too much drama. Given the 9-0 scoreline no one would have expected a close doubles to end the night but so it was. The set involved another 94 points struggle in which the Morpeth pairing – Brown and To – just edged our Zhao and Link 12-10 in the fifth. So, a 10-0 win for Morpeth but Karma probably felt hard done by as they were in the running to take three or four sets. Ben Link in particular had a luckless night.

Nat West versus Outcasts saw two players make their season debut. For Nat West, Chris Herbert joined Gareth Jones and Andrew Miller, while Outcasts had Petko Guimichev paired up with Bob Coull and Alan Jones. The first set was a seesaw affair with Bob Coull taking the first two ends off Chris Herbert, only for Chris to win the third. The fourth end found Bob with a match point at 10-9 and a good win in sight but Chris won that point and went on to win the next two points to save the day. The final end went Chris's way as he got in front and pulled away to an 11-6 win. Good fight back by Chris and commiserations to Bob for a narrow miss. The next two sets

were less dramatic. Guimichev made short work of Gareth Jones and Andrew Miller beat Alan Jones in four. Things hotted up in set four as Jones and Coull went head to head. Like his first set, Coull was ahead after three ends only for Gareth to win the fourth. The deciding end had a déjà vu feel to it as, for the second time, Bob was overhauled in the final strait to go down 11-8. Nat West are 3-1 up. Set five had all the hallmarks of an upset as Alan Jones took Herbert all the way to a fifth end but, once again, the table tennis Gods favoured Nat West and Chris edged home 11-8. Outcasts were down 4-1! Guimichev then made that 4-2, beating Miller. Next came the only straightforward set of the night as, in the battle of the Jones's, Gareth triumphed three straight over Alan. Two singles sets to go, might Outcasts stage a comeback? Bob Coull started well against Andrew Miller, for the third time that evening, being ahead after three ends. When Andrew won the fourth you had to fear for Bob's chances. Was it going to happen again? The score reached 9-9 and no one was betting on a Coull victory. Yet that's what happened! A much relieved Bob won the next two points and secured his first victory. Quite a night for Bob – three sets and fifteen ends played, two losses and one victory. The last singles set would surely be an anti-climax after that and featured the two unbeaten players: Herbert and Guimichev. Just like in his first set, Chris loses the first two ends. But suddenly we have a contest as Chris wins the next two ends. In the fifth end, Petko held multiple match points but just couldn't convert and finally succumbed to Chris 14-12. 105 points contested, the longest set of the season so far. For Chris, three sets and fifteen ends played, three victories and no losses! Nat West took the doubles and won the match 7-3. An excellent night's table tennis and many sets that might easily have ended differently. The key to the match was those five enders – five contested and all bar one won by Nat West!!

PRO versus Comets A was I'm afraid a bit of a procession. Fagan, Wong and Francis against Crawford, Buck and Persaud. Crawford took an end off Fagan and Francis and was involved in the only close singles set – against Winston Wong. John went two ends to one up but couldn't keep it up, losing the fourth end 11-2 and the deciding end 11-4. Otherwise, it was a string of three straight wins for Comets and a 9-0 scoreline. Just like the Morpeth versus Karma match above, a close finish in the doubles looked highly unlikely. The first two ends were shared. PRO then won the third and we might have a surprise on our hands. Comets came back to take the fourth end but it still looked an even contest. So, what happened in the fifth? May be PRO ran out of steam or perhaps Comets upped their game but Comets came home the winners at 11-5. Perhaps the expected outcome in a hard match for PRO.

The last match this week was Comets B against Castaways. For Comets, Greg Gargrupe and Tai Luu were joined by Richard Hallinan, who plays his table tennis in the North Middlesex league. Castaways retained LeMilliere and Bispham from last week and replaced Phil Wroe with Mike Loveder. This proved to be even more of a procession than the PRO/Comets A match. We had to wait until the eighth set before Comets won an end. That was Tai Luu losing in four to Loveder. The ninth and tenth sets also went three straight to Castaways to complete the whitewash in what I suspect was record time. I never expected Comets to get anywhere near Castaways but the manner of the win surprised me – the individual end scores suggest this really was a runaway victory for Castaways.

An odd week's table tennis. Three 10-0s out of four matches this week. Boring one-sided contests? Actually, we contested 40 sets in total in this week's fixtures and 20 of them went to five. Perhaps not as unexciting and one sided as it might appear!

RICHARD CAMPBELL
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

Issued: 30/10/2022

AVERAGES (Qualification: \geq xxxxxx sets played)

Player	Team	Sets Won	Sets Played	Average (%)
Will be included after a few weeks.				