

December 2023

READING
& DISTRICT
TABLE TENNIS
ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

Editor:
Derek Wavell



New Year is a time to honour old friends, and here are two living and unforgettable ones from a land before COVID.

Martin Gunn, who taught us how to make it to the very top using a hard bat, and Wendy Porter, to whom a whole rising generation owes a mighty debt.

Happy New Year to them, and all of us!



Derek Wavell

PS - What do you make of Bob Woodmansee's comment on Page 2?

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Notes from our Chairman

Hello everybody I hope you all have/had a good Christmas and wish you a good and healthy 2024.

For those of you that have entered the individual handicap I hope you have a good day and enjoy your table tennis



On the league front at the half way stage I note that there is still all to play for in most divisions, it is wide open.

All the best
Derek

Notes from the RDTTA General Secretary

The season is progressing well with the majority of teams up to date with their fixtures. Kingfisher 'A', after initially looking like they would have it all their own way again, have Kingfisher 'B' and a Sonning Common & Peppard 'A' side, complete with new recruit Danny Moses, breathing down their necks. In division 2 Kingfisher 'F' remain at the top with OLOP 'A', Reading FC and Kingfisher 'E' in hot pursuit. Kingfisher 'I' have a healthy lead at the top of division 3, although OLOP 'C' can close the gap by winning their matches in hand. OLOP 'B' and Tilehurst Methodists 'A' are also in the hunt for promotion. Sonning Sports 'D' opened up a sizeable gap at the top of division 4 after beating nearest rivals Sonning Common & Peppard 'F' 8 - 2 recently. Springfield 'C', OLOP 'F' and Tilehurst RBL 'C' remain in

the hunt.

It is looking as if the Centenary event planned for May will now take place on Wednesday 5th June 2024, incorporating the awards presentations - we will keep you all posted.

A reminder that the Individual Handicap tournament is being held on Sunday 14th January 2024 at the Cippenham Club. Entry is available via the website and you now need to be quick as entries are very limited. The Reading Closed Championships are to be held on Sunday 17th March 2024, again at Cippenham - entries also available via the website.

Enjoy your TT in 2024!

Nigel



Open Letter from Bob Woodmansee of Sonning Sports.

...on behalf of anyone who has ever played table-tennis in the Reading League:

The RDTTA's recent Centenary Handbook was an interesting, nostalgic and, in one respect at least, quite a sobering read. The latter because it brought home to me that I must be getting really old now as I have been a member of the RDTTA for almost half (45) of its 100 years!

Yes, plenty of nostalgia when looking at the various lists of winners - both individuals and teams - many of whom I have played against over the years. But what was both interesting and, perhaps, a little surprising was the relatively short list of names who have served on the Committee for a long time given the RDTTA's 100-year existence (or, given how committees work, maybe it's not that surprising, really).

Anyway - a few weeks ago - on the same evening that I received my copy of the handbook, in fact - I went into The Sonning Club adjoining our premises for a post-match beer expecting to see the usual bunch of Phil Taylor lookalikes playing their regular Thursday evening darts league match. On enquiring as to the reason for their absence, I was told that the league had folded because the organiser had been forced to stand down for personal reasons and that not one person from any of the participating clubs had come forward to take on the role -

almost unbelievable - and such a shame, I thought.

Now, having served on a few committees in my time (including a couple of brief stints on the RDTTA), I know that most committee meetings aren't exactly 'fun' - and always seem to be held miles across town on a cold, winter evening! And committees tend to get far more moans than 'thankyous' - for example, when was the last time you wrote to your Divisional Secretary at the end of the season to thank him/her? And it's all very well being a Captain or Secretary of your own club where you have a personal interest, it takes much more commitment to serve on the committee of a league.

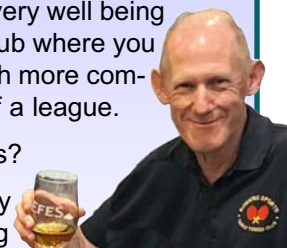
So what's the point of saying all this?

Well - it made me realise how lucky we playing members of the Reading League are to have such a dedicated, hard working group of people running our league so that we can continue to enjoy our table-tennis into another century. The website, the newsletter, the handbook, the fixtures, etc, etc, don't just happen - it all needs people who volunteer to do it.

So - a huge thankyou to anyone who has ever served - and, in particular, to those who continue to serve - on the RDTTA Committee - we mere players really, really, do appreciate all your efforts. Here's to the next 100 years!

Bob Woodmansee

Sonning Sports TT Club





DIVISION ONE

by Martin Adams

Season's Greetings Everyone! I hope you have enjoyed our own season thus far and I also trust you have reserved Wednesday 5th June in your calendars for what promises to be a great celebratory evening of our centenary.



Somewhat predictably, last season's theme of mini-leagues seems to be repeating itself. The top three, mid table positions and bottom four are all closely contested with the balance of ambition and rotation a quandary for many of the team captains.

It slightly pains me to admit that it's not the same walk-in-the-park as in previous seasons for my beloved Kingfisher 'A' - but a pleasure in the fact that we are being challenged with healthy and friendly rivalry from our nearest competitors who help to maintain a high playing standard for the Reading League.

Now I have to research 11 Christmas previously unpublished, high quality Christmas Jokes. Let's see how I do!

1st: Sonning Common & Peppard 'A'

The Commoners find themselves at the top at Christmas! Well done to all of you!

When top player and top bloke Daniel Moses approached me for a team to join, the one that favoured his work location and weekly schedule was this one. I hope I don't live to regret it and Jason - you owe me a beer. Daniel was called in to face both Kingfisher 'A' and Kingfisher 'B' and remained largely untroubled against the best this league has to offer (Martin Adams, Hari Gehlot, Prayrit Ahluwalia, Ross Saxby, Graham Mendick), despite hardly picking up a bat for the last eight months or so.



DANIEL MOSES

	DIV 1	PL	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	SC&P A	11	9	0	2	90	20	90
2	Kingfisher A	10	10	0	0	87	13	87
3	Kingfisher B	10	8	0	2	78	22	78
4	Kingfisher C	9	5	1	3	55	35	55
5	Sonning Sports A	9	4	2	3	47	43	47
6	Tidmarsh A	9	3	3	3	47	43	47
7	Tilehurst RBL A	9	6	0	3	45	45	45
8	Kingfisher D	10	1	2	7	27	73	27
9	SC&P C	11	1	2	8	26	84	26
10	SC&P B	11	1	1	9	26	84	26
11	SC&P D	11	0	3	8	22	88	22

The most-appearances accolade in this team goes to Ed Lush, although he missed the Kingfisher 'A' clash and did not have the best night against Kingfisher 'B'. Gary Morgan went one better in defeating Graham Mendick that evening.



ED LUSH, GARY MORGAN AND JASON ROBERTS OF SONNING COMMON AND PEPPARD 'A'

Ian Cole hasn't been defeated since the last edition versus worthy opposition, including Tilehurst RBL and Tidmarsh. Finally, and somewhat predictably, Jason Roberts has been beating most of the <50%ers and losing to most of the >50%ers with an overall average of 54%.

MVP: Welcome Back. ...Daniel Moses.

Christmas Cracker: How much did Santa pay for his chimney? Nothing - it was on the house.

2nd: Kingfisher 'A' have a game in hand a mere 3 points behind but have not been as convincing as in recent seasons. While they may yet have enough in the tank to retain their title, they only have a handful of points to play with at the halfway stage. Narrow 6 - 4 victories against both Sonning Common & Peppard 'A' and Kingfisher 'B' mean they stand alone with a 100% record in terms of matches won - but only just. Hari Gehlot and Martin Adams have only been defeated by Daniel Moses (convincingly) but the other regulars Darren Jones and Ross Saxby faltered against



HARI GEHLOT AND MARTIN ADAMS OF KINGFISHER 'A'

Kingfisher 'B' despite comfortable wins over Graham Mendick, while Rishaan Sawant's single outing since the last edition resulted in a decent win over Keith Winter.

Joint MVPs: Martin Adams and Hari Gehlot

Christmas Cracker: Why did no-one buy toy Rudolphs or toy Blitzens this Christmas? They were too deer.

3rd: Kingfisher 'B' have also topped the table in previous weeks. I would say Prayrit Ahluwalia and Rajan Waterman are currently among the top five league players. Prayrit breezed through Gary Morgan and Ed Lush three

between themselves and the chasing pack to win the mid-table mini-league. It's really tough to choose an MVP this time. Nigel Keedy finds himself high up in the averages and hasn't lost since the last edition although they were all against the Sonning Common & Peppard B, C, D. Similarly, Matt Isherwood's victories have been at the expense of the bottom four. Theo Kniep's average predictably went up after the big three had been negotiated. Alan Cummings is on exactly 50% and Phil Mead hasn't played too much recently.

MVP: Nigel Keedy

Christmas Cracker: What do you call a yeti with a sixpack? The abdominal snowman.

5th: Sonning Sports 'A'. It's a slight shame that we have not yet witnessed whether Dave Croucher can upset the higher ranked teams (I know he can), as he remains unbeaten. Graham Diplock gained his first maximum since signing up. Paul Savage continues his epic run of not missing a match for 6 seasons, and it's not just about the quantity. The quality is often there as well including a cracking maximum at Tidmarsh, the same night that Nick Sears also notched up useful wins over Duncan Groves and Lee Calcutt. Bob Woodmansee almost managed a win vs Lee Calcutt and again vs Mark Jones, but lost out 9 and 11 in the fifth respectively.

MVP: David Croucher

Christmas Cracker: How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizza? Deep-pan, crisp and even.

6th: Tidmarsh 'A' have been ultra-consistent as expected and boast all their regular players over 50% with Antony Baker (58%) just shading it at the moment with Lee Calcutt, Duncan Groves and Dale Ballard slightly behind with no disasters against the lower teams nor heroics against stronger squads. They are yet to face Kingfisher 'A' who postponed on them, as did Kingfisher 'B' in their first return match - so a few more tough matches still to be negotiated. They might have expected more from their 5 - 5 draw



PRAYRIT AHLUWAHLIA OF KINGFISHER 'B'

straight and they each took out both Ross Saxby and Darren Jones in the Kingfisher 'A' clash. Graham Mendick didn't have such a good evening, but these three won't drop many (if any) points outside the top two teams. I wonder if they will continue to push for maximum points - Julian Telford and Cath Venning have tailed off their appearances in recent weeks.

MVP: Prayrit Ahluwalia

Christmas Cracker: Why didn't the children want to visit Santa's Grotto? They were Claustrophobic.

4th Kingfisher 'C' have opened up a small gap



with Kingfisher 'D' where Simon Barter's sole appearance almost resulted in a point but he narrowly lost out to Ajai Kamath 11-4, 7-11, 5-11, 12-10, 9-11.

MVP: Antony Baker

Christmas Cracker: I bought my Gran a fridge for Christmas. I can't wait to see her face light up when she opens it.

7th: Tilehurst RBL 'A' have not had Marc Brent available for the last handful of matches and hence have slumped a few places since the last edition. That said, Jon Willis and Keith Winter, who remain inseparable on 14/27, combined fantastically well with super-sub Kate Maksimenko on the night against Kingfisher 'C' to all turn over both Matt Isherwood and Alan Cummings for a notable 6 - 4 victory. Jon has also enjoyed creditable successes such as Rishaan Sawant and Danny Dockree.

Joint MVPs: Jon Willis and Keith Winter

Christmas Cracker: Why is it getting harder to find advent calendars? Their days are numbered.

8th: Kingfisher 'D' sit just above the three SC&P teams in the fight for survival (as in the last instalment). Ajai Kamath has been registered and included in the last couple of matches and contributed against both SC&P 'C' and Tidmarsh 'A' to produce promising results (8 - 2 and 5 - 5 respectively). If their strongest three of Ajai, Georgi Ivanov and Mike Douglas can stick at it, they can (and should) maintain this league position, given that neither of the bottom four teams has yet managed a win against the top seven. Georgi has played every match and with victories over Rishaan Sawant and most members of the other struggling teams (including Danny Dockree), his 37% overall should be commended. Mike has only missed one and with a win over Antony Baker he showed what he is capable of on his night.

MVP: Georgi Ivanov

Christmas Cracker: What did one snowman say to the other? 'Do you smell carrots?'

9th: Sonning Common & Peppard 'C'. Captain Danny Dockree has led the team by example and contributed the majority of their points. Worryingly for their nearest rivals, his results appear to be trending upwards as he now sits on 50% overall. Missing just a single match, recent notable victories include Jason Roberts, Keith Winter, Marc Brent and Paul Savage. Jon Abbott also managed a great win over Paul and sits on 29%. Mark Jones has now opened his account. A special wish of Christmas good luck goes to Angus Jones who is still to register his first singles win.

MVP: Danny Dockree

Christmas Cracker: What did Adam say on the 24th December? 'It's Christmas, Eve.'

10th: Sonning Common & Peppard 'B' are equal on points but placed beneath their C team having lost more overall matches. On 44% Tom Astle is emerging as their best performer. Particularly impressive is that he only took up table tennis over the last two years having spent more time previously on the tennis court, something one may observe in his playing style. His impressive list of recent victories already includes Phil Mead, Georgi Ivanov, Mike Douglas, Paul Savage and Graham Diplock. He saved some face for his squad during their 5 - 5 with their D team winning his maximum where his colleagues slipped up. Matt Stone and

DIV 1 LEADING AVERAGES

David Croucher	Sonning Sports A	12	12	100.00%
Daniel Moses	SC&P A	11	11	100.00%
Martin Adams	Kingfisher A	23	22	95.65%
Hari Gehlot	Kingfisher A	23	22	95.65%
Julian Telford	Kingfisher B	18	17	94.44%
Rajan Waterman	Kingfisher B	12	11	91.67%
Prayrit Ahluwalia	Kingfisher B	21	19	90.48%
Ed Lush	SC&P A	26	23	88.46%
Ian Cole	SC&P A	14	12	85.71%
Rishaan Sawant	Kingfisher A	12	10	83.33%
Nigel Keedy	Kingfisher C	12	10	83.33%
Gary Morgan	SC&P A	21	17	80.95%
Marc Brent	Tilehurst RBLA	15	12	80.00%
Graham Mendick	Kingfisher B	24	19	79.17%

Tim Raby have also contributed important points notably against Simon Berry that same evening and both contributing well in their 7 - 3 victory over Kingfisher 'D'.

MVP: Tom Astle

Christmas Cracker: I cannot open the chocolates in my advent calendar. Foiled again!

11th: Sonning Common & Peppard 'D' still prop up the table four points back and look favourites for the drop. I mentioned in the last edition that Simon Berry will need to play more often to stand a chance, something I still maintain as he has the best average in this survival mini-league. However, he was outperformed by his teammates, Brian Meheux and Malcolm Gregory, in the aforementioned epic 5 - 5 encounter against their B team. Brian and Malcolm won over Matt Stone and Tim Raby while Simon could not add any singles points, despite teaming up with Nigel Maltby to take the doubles. Simon showed us what he is made of just four days later as he made amends by taking his maximum against Danny Dockree and his C team in another tight 5 - 5.



THE FESTIVELY DECORATED PLAYERS OF SC&P 'C' - DANNY DOCKREE, ANGUS JONES AND JON ABBOTT

Nigel and Brian each made contributions that evening. Despite forcing three draws so far, they are the only team who are yet to record an overall victory. They will no doubt be asking Santa for a win in 2024!

MVP: Simon Berry

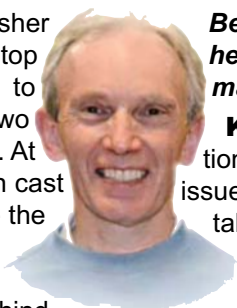
Christmas Cracker: Why is Christmas dinner different after Brexit? No Brussels.



DIVISION TWO

by John Willcocks

Reading FC Community Trust and Kingfisher 'F' are still the favourites to finish in the top two with the title very likely to go to Reading FC. OLOP 'A' are just behind the top two but will probably have to settle for third or fourth. At the bottom of the table Kingfisher 'H' have been cast adrift and I cannot see them being able to close the gap on the teams above them. The second relegation place is a bit more difficult to call as although Pangbourne WMC are a long way behind the teams above them they have matches in hand.



Best Recent Performance - Mike Childs, not only is he unbeaten but a run of twenty one three-straight maximums in a row

Kingfisher 'F' have put themselves in a strong position to gain promotion despite continuing availability issues with some of their squad. They lost their top of the table clash with Reading FC Community Trust 8 - 2 recently but that is their only defeat so far this season and they look very capable of maintaining their promotion push. Adrian Cretu, Akeel Mir and Wayne Alleyne have played in the majority of the recent matches and hopefully other members of the squad will be able to play more often in the second half of the season.

Prediction – 2nd

Best Recent Performance – Adrian Cretu with a very good maximum at Tidmarsh 'B'

OLOP 'A' have won their last six matches to move up to third in the division, although three of the victories were 6 – 4. Chris West and Darek Kaminski are having very good seasons with Chris on 80% and Darek on over 70%. They have had good support from Dave Godfrey and skipper Alistair Richardson who are both averaging around 50% so they should be able to maintain their good results in the second half. However, they will probably come up just short in the promotion battle and are likely to end up third.

Prediction – 3rd

Best Recent Performance – Darek Kaminski with an excellent maximum against Tilehurst RBL 'B' which included a win in four against Kate Maksimenko

Kingfisher 'E' have had four very close results recently and they find themselves in a comfortable mid-table position. Their regular four players are all averaging between 45% and 56% so their pattern of mostly close results is likely to continue for the rest of the season. They should finish in the top six and could possibly end up as high as fourth.

Prediction – 4th

Best Recent Performance – Andrew Adair with a fine maximum at Tilehurst RBL 'B' including a very close win in five against Kate Maksimenko

Kingfisher 'G' have not won since mid-October, apart

There have been quite a few postponements in the first half of the season and although revised dates have been arranged for some of the matches there are a number still to re-arrange. Could I please ask the team captains to try to get dates agreed fairly early in the new year even if the date turns out to be a long way off. Postponed matches can be played in the two weeks after the season ends but I would prefer most to be played before then if at all possible. Easter also falls in those two weeks which limits the available dates plus of course many people go away at that time.

Reading FC Community Trust were down to three players at the last newsletter but they moved swiftly to bol-



MICHAEL CHILDS, TONY ALLEYNE AND JAZZ DHILLON OF READING FC COMMUNITY TRUST

ster their squad with two good signings, first Tom Lewis and then Simon Rowland, who won the Reading Closed in the 1980's, as did team mate Mike Childs.

They have had four good wins and a draw since the last newsletter with Tom getting two maximums and with their strengthened squad they should end up winning the division comfortably. Mike Childs is still unbeaten and has only dropped two games and Tom Lewis is also on 100% after his first two matches. Anthony Alleyne and Jazz Dhillon have been playing solidly, although Jazz is currently injured, and although Simon Rowland has only won four times so far I am sure his record will improve a lot in the second half of the season.

Prediction – 1st



KINGFISHER G – PARVIN BAISHKIYAR, QING WU, EAPEN JOHN



from a walkover against the bottom team, and they find themselves in mid-table having won exactly the same num-

ber of sets as they have lost. Captain Parvin Baishkiyar is having a consistent season and is on 67% and Gennadi Armashula is on 78% but he has only played in three matches. The rest of their players have struggled a bit at times but the team should do well enough in the second half of the season to finish mid-table.

Prediction – 8th

Best Recent Performance – Matt Hickman with a fine maximum against Kingfisher ‘G’ including recovering from two games down to beat Qing Wu 11-9 in the fifth

Tidmarsh ‘C’ have had a lot of player availability issues but that situation looks to be improving. Apart from an 8 – 2 defeat in the Tidmarsh local derby their recent results have been pretty good and if they can keep that up they should comfortably do enough to avoid one of the relegation places. Their cause was helped a lot by winning their re-arranged match at Pangbourne 7 – 3 which increased the gap between themselves and the bottom two. Simon Craig has been playing well recently and he has got his average up to 67% and Ian Wu and Toby Usher have also been winning consistently.

Prediction – 9th

Best Recent Performance – Richard Hudson with a fine win in four against Darek Kaminski

Pangbourne WMC have played fewer matches than the rest of the division and still have three postponed matches to re-arrange, including one against the bottom team. However, with only three players registered, getting all of the matches played may turn out to be a problem but hopefully that will not be the case.

If they get some good results in their matches in hand, which are mostly against teams in the lower half, they can get fairly close to the two teams immediately above them but with only three players it may be too tall an order for them to get themselves out of the relegation places. However, their cause was not helped by losing 7 – 3 to Tidmarsh ‘C’ who are immediately above them in the table. Clive Taylor is on over 50% and he is likely to improve his average in the second half but John Simmonds and Leroy Wilson have not won as often as they would have liked.

Prediction – 10th



SPRINGFIELD ‘A’ - ROB WILKIE, JASON KING, PETER GURNEY, MAT HICKMAN



TIDMARSH ‘C’: SIMON CRAIG, IAN WU AND DAVID SHEPPARD

Prediction – 7th

Best Recent Performance – Qing Wu with two excellent wins against Reading FC Community Trust

Tilehurst RBL ‘B’ have only won once since October and have been impacted a bit by the absence of your DFS who has had knee keyhole surgery (hopefully I will be back on the table in January). However, although they have only had one recent win this was 10 - 0 and their other results have either been draws or close defeats so they have maintained their mid-table position. With Kate Maksimenko winning three most weeks they could finish as high as fourth but they will probably end up slightly below that position.

Prediction – 6th

Best Recent Performance – Your DFS, recovering from losing the first two games against Simon Craig to win 12-10 in the fifth

Tidmarsh ‘B’ have had a decent run of results recently with three good wins, a draw, plus a defeat against the leaders. They are a consistent all-round team with averages ranging from 45% to 67% so they should continue to win regularly and should finish in the top half of the table. Their squad has been strengthened by a new signing: Rob McMillan who already has two maximums to his name.

Prediction – 5th

Best Recent Performance – Rob McMillan recovering from two games down to beat Parvin Baishkiyar 11-9 in the fifth

Springfield ‘A’ have had three close wins plus a couple of fairly heavy defeats against two of the top three teams in recent weeks. If they can keep this sort of form up they should finish comfortably clear of the relegation places. Their prospects are also helped by the fact that they have

Prediction – 5th

Best Recent Performance – Rob McMillan recovering from two games down to beat Parvin Baishkiyar 11-9 in the fifth

Springfield ‘A’ have had three close wins plus a couple of fairly heavy defeats against two of the top three teams in recent weeks. If they can keep this sort of form up they should finish comfortably clear of the relegation places. Their prospects are also helped by the fact that they have



	DIV 2	PL	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	Reading FC	10	8	1	1	75	25	75
2	Kingfisher F	10	7	2	1	69	31	69
3	Our Lady Of Peace A	10	7	1	2	59	41	59
4	Kingfisher G	11	4	2	5	55	55	55
5	Kingfisher E	10	5	1	4	54	46	54
6	Tilehurst RBL B	10	3	2	5	53	47	53
7	Tidmarsh B	9	4	1	4	49	41	49
8	Springfield A	10	5	1	4	45	55	45
9	Tidmarsh C	10	3	2	5	45	55	45
10	Pangbourne WMC	8	0	3	5	25	55	25
11	Kingfisher H	10	0	0	10	11	89	11

Best Recent Performance – Clive Taylor recovering from two down to beat Simon Craig 15-13 in the fifth

Kingfisher 'H' have struggled with player availability issues all season and although they signed two new players in October they are still having problems. Since the last newsletter they have lost 10 – 0 three times and have conceded a match so they are well adrift at the bottom of the division. Their player situation is likely to improve in the new year so hopefully their results will as well but they are all but guaranteed to finish 11th,

Prediction – 11th

Best Recent Performance Rupesh Ahluwalia who was close to picking up two wins in his first match for some time against Kingfisher 'F'

DIV 2 LEADING AVERAGES				
Player	Team	P	W	%
Mike Childs	Reading FC	30	30	100.00%
Shashwat Somani	Kingfisher F	9	9	100.00%
Kate Maksimenko	Tilehurst RBL B	30	26	86.67%
Adrian Cretu	Kingfisher F	27	22	81.48%
Chris West	OLOP A	15	12	80.00%
Gennadi Armashula	Kingfisher G	9	7	77.78%
John Willcocks	Tilehurst RBL B	18	13	72.22%
Darek Kaminski	OLOP A	21	15	71.43%
Tony Alleyne	Reading FC	27	19	70.37%
Parvin Baishkiyar	Kingfisher G	30	20	66.67%
Simon Craig	Tidmarsh C	18	12	66.67%
Robert McMillan	Tidmarsh B	9	6	66.67%
Mike Aistrop	Tidmarsh B	11	7	63.64%
Akeel Mir	Kingfisher F	27	17	62.96%

DIVISION THREE *by Huzeyfe Borazan*

As we bid farewell to the first half of the season and welcome the festive cheer of the Christmas break, I'm delighted to bring you the latest updates from Division 3. It's been a great journey so far, with 53 of the 55 scheduled matches successfully played - which shows the dedication and passion of all our teams. As the Divisional Secretary, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the captains and players for their commitment and dedication, and for doing all the hard work in arranging venues, all the teams overcoming all the impediments and more importantly, being welcoming and tolerant in tough situations.



Reflecting on my mid-term predictions, it's nice to see how actual outcomes have aligned. While most predictions were spot on, there have been some surprises. OLOP 'B' and Sonning Common and Peppard 'E' have exceeded expectations, delivering impressive performances that have slightly surpassed my forecasts. Conversely, Sonning Sports 'B' faced some challenges,

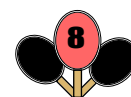
resulting in scores that fell a bit short of what was anticipated.

Now it's time to review the first half of the season. So let's dive deeper into the performances and celebrate the achievements and progress of all our teams ordered by the current standings.

Kingfisher 'I' is at the top of Division 3, doing really well with many wins. They've only tied twice and haven't lost at all. Both their ties were against the same team, OLOP 'B'. Since Kingfisher 'I' and OLOP 'B' play very differently, their games are always exciting and hard to predict. All 4 players of the Kingfisher team have a +70% average, which comes in handy when you need to win the games consistently.

A big moment in the first half was when they beat OLOP 'C' 8 - 2, which gave them a strong lead in the table. Looking ahead, their rematch with OLOP 'C' is going to be important. They also have tough games coming up against Tilehurst Methodists 'A' and Tidmarsh 'D'.

OLOP 'C' is in second place, 16 points behind the lead-





DIV 3		PL	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	Kingfisher I	11	9	2	0	83	27	83
2	OLOP C	9	7	1	1	67	23	67
3	OLOP B	11	6	3	2	64	46	64
4	Tilehurst Meths A	10	7	2	1	59	41	59
5	OLOP D	11	5	1	5	56	54	56
6	SC&P E	11	3	3	5	49	61	49
7	Tidmarsh D	10	4	1	5	44	56	44
8	Tilehurst Meths B	10	2	4	4	42	58	42
9	Sonning Sports B	10	1	3	6	42	58	42
10	Tilehurst Meths C	10	2	0	8	32	68	32
11	Kingfisher J	11	1	0	10	32	78	32

er, but they have 2 games in hand and they score heavily in almost every game. They're really strong. They have the highest-ranked players and their experience in Division 2 makes them a tough team to beat. They've won four out of their seven games with more than 9 points, showing how hard it is to play against them when they're on form.

A key moment in the first half was their 8 - 2 loss to Kingfisher 'I', which set them back a bit, but they're working hard to close that gap. Their upcoming games against Kingfisher 'I' and the two matches against Tilehurst Methodists 'A' are really important for the title race. I think they're likely to move up to a higher division no matter what the results from those matches.



OLOP 'B' - MARK CARLESS, GRAHAM STARK SIMON BROOKES

Having some of the highest experience levels in Division 3, **OLOP 'B'**'s deep familiarity with their opponents' styles has been a key advantage. Their consistency, resulting from always fielding the same strong lineup, has allowed them to accumulate a significant points tally.

A highlight of their season was the impressive 9 - 1 victory over Tidmarsh 'D', significantly strengthening their promotion chances. Looking ahead, the OLOP 'D' derbies with C and D teams and the match against Tilehurst Methodists 'A' will be pivotal in their quest for promotion.

Tilehurst Methodists 'A' kicked off the season strongly but faced some setbacks due to injuries. With just one loss and two draws, they've held a solid record. However, their victories have often been narrow, creating a gap between them and the top spot in the table. A crucial moment was their 7 - 3 home defeat to Kingfisher 'I'. Another significant match-up against OLOP 'C' is on the horizon.

Looking forward to the second half of the season, the most anticipated matches for them will be the two against OLOP 'C' and the rematch with Kingfisher 'I'. These matches are set to be decisive in determining their standing in the league.

OLOP 'D' has been consistently in the middle of the table throughout the season. Their journey so far has been a rollercoaster, marked by some striking victories and notable defeats. This balance is reflected in their sets won and lost, standing at 56 and 54 respectively. Their toughest match was the OLOP 'D' derby, where they faced a 9 - 1 loss against OLOP 'C', but they bounced back with an equally strong 9 - 1 win over Sonning Common and Peppard 'E'. Their unpredictability and well-rounded skills make their matches exciting to watch.

As we enter the second half, their performances against the teams in the upper side of the table will be crucial in determining if they climb into the promotion zone or remain mid-table. Their re-match with OLOP 'C' would be especially interesting.

Even with just three wins, **Sonning Common and Peppard 'E'** have managed to secure a safe spot away from the relegation zone. This achievement is largely thanks to their narrow losses and three draws, which have contributed valuable points to their tally. Particularly, their back-to-back 7 - 3 victories played a key role in keeping them clear of the bottom of the table.

Looking ahead to the second half, their upcoming matches against Tilehurst Methodists 'B' and 'C' teams will be crucial in determining whether they finish on the upper or lower side of the table.

Tilehurst Methodists 'B': If there were 3 teams to be relegated the relegation race would be much more tense for them, as they are currently in a tight spot with Sonning Sports 'B', through having 44 points. Fortunately, they are 12 points clear of the relegation zone, giving the 'B' team a better survival chance than their 'C' team in the division. With four draws, they've become the team with the most draws in the division. These draws, coupled with two wins, have contributed to their total of 44 points.

Looking ahead to the second half of the season, their critical matches will be against Sonning Sports 'B' and their own 'C' team, making for some interesting internal club dynamics.

Unlike the last season, this one has been interesting for **Tidmarsh 'D'**, as they've struggled to maintain a consistent winning streak. With five losses already, they currently sit in 6th place, and their prospects for joining the promotion race appear slim. Notably, their most significant victories came against Tilehurst Methodists 'B' (8 - 2), Tilehurst Methodists 'C' and Kingfisher 'J', both with a score of 7 - 3. However, they've also experienced some heavy defeats.

Looking forward to the second half of the season, their rematches against the teams they previously lost to will be crucial for improving their position in the league table.



CHRIS WEBB, THEREASA WATSON AND RAY WEBB OF TIDMARSH 'D'

With the same low number of wins as Kingfisher 'J', **Sonning Sports 'B'** is currently out of the relegation zone, showing an improvement from last year's predicament. While they've grown stronger this year, they've yet to translate this strength into more wins. On the positive side, most of their losses have been close, often at 6 - 4, frequently decided by tight 5-game sets.

Going into the second half of the season, there's potential for them to climb higher in the rankings if they can overcome these narrow defeats and turn their fortunes around.

Tilehurst Methodists 'C' now face a critical need to bridge a 10-point gap to avoid relegation. This gap risks widening if they fail to secure a win against Sonning Sports 'B'. In the second half of the season, every game they play will be crucial. However, their matches against Sonning Sports 'B' and Kingfisher 'J' will be particularly decisive, determining the division in which they will compete next year.

Following a challenging streak of 10 consecutive losses, **Kingfisher 'J'** achieved a breakthrough with a win in their final game of the first half. This victory offers a ray of hope for remaining in Division 3. However, with one more game played than their rivals, they face an uphill battle.

Nevertheless, if they can secure a few more wins after the break, particularly against direct competitors, it could significantly boost their chances of staying in the division. Anything can happen, and if a miracle is on the way we will see it in the new year.

In summary, the first half of the table tennis season in Division 3 has been a rollercoaster of victories, challenges, and surprises. Teams have showcased their resilience, determination, and unique playing styles. Some have excelled in maintaining their winning streaks, while others have faced tough battles in the danger zone. With crucial matches on the horizon and hopes of promotion or avoiding relegation, the stage is set for an exciting second half. As the competition intensifies, one thing is certain: the teams are ready to bring their best to the table, ensuring that the remainder of the season will be filled with thrilling rallies and memorable moments.

Anticipation is building, and the competition is heating up. Will the underdogs stage a comeback, or will the top contenders maintain their dominance? There's only one way to find out - stay tuned for the excitement, drama, and exciting table tennis action that awaits! Until then, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

DIV 3 LEADING AVERAGES				
Dave Sanket	OLOP C	9	9	100.00%
Binit Bhaskar	OLOP C	18	16	88.89%
Eyup Odemis	Kingfisher I	27	22	81.48%
Eapen John	Kingfisher J	27	22	81.48%
Huzeyfe Borazan	Kingfisher I	30	24	80.00%
Nigel Rowland	Tilehurst Meths B	18	14	77.78%
Jacek Krzyzanowski	Tilehurst Meths A	24	18	75.00%
Muharrem Aydin	Kingfisher I	21	15	71.43%
Ruben Hernandez	Kingfisher I	21	15	71.43%
Pradeep Desh	OLOP C	21	15	71.43%
Jeremy Willis	SC&P E	27	19	70.37%
Louise Forster	OLOP D	23	16	69.57%
Mark Carless	OLOP B	27	18	66.67%
Shawnik Thakur	OLOP C	18	12	66.67%
James Smith	OLOP D	26	17	65.38%

DIVISION FOUR *by Derek Harrison*

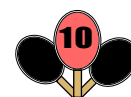
Hello everyone, I hope that you all have/had a good Christmas and wish you a Healthy 2024. So carry on enjoying your table tennis and I hope you will check the score cards before sending them to prevent all of the errors so far

Sonning Common & P 'F' in a match that was re-arranged beat Tilehurst Royal British Legion 'C' 6 - 4 thanks mainly to a maximum by Gerry Bacon who beat Paul Treadgold 11-8, 11-6, 11-5, Geoff Johnson 11-6, 11-7, 11-7 and Jim Brent 11-9, 11-4, 11-4. Helping was Mike Casserley who gained a double besides teaming up with Gerry to win the doubles. At home to O.L.O.P 'E' Oliver Bonser won all three in straight games. Mike won 2 and Alistair Scott picked up a single in a 7 - 3 win. They then beat Springfield 'C' 7 - 3



with Olly winning two and Mike gaining a single; however Graeme Streets was the star by obtaining a three straight maximum. At Sonning Sports 'C' they won 1 - 9 with Gerry and Mike doing the business with hat tricks. Alistair Scott obtained a nice double. In a top of the table match against Sonning Sports 'D' without Gerry they lost 3 - 7 with Graeme, Cris and Olly all beating Linda Barlow. Next they beat Springfield 'B' 6 - 4 with Graeme winning all three. Mike hit a double while Alistair won one. They then won a vital match at OLOP 'F' 3 - 7 with Gerry, Graeme and Mike all gaining doubles.

O.L.O.P 'F' beat Kingfisher 'K' 6 - 4. Gopi Ponnappalli hit a treble while Roland Marslin won two. Next they hammered TRBL 'C' 8 - 2 with Gopi gaining a three straight





DIV 4	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Sonning Sports D	12	9	1	2	81	39	81
2 SC&P F	11	9	1	1	75	35	75
3 Springfield C	11	7	1	3	69	41	69
4 OLOP F	11	7	2	2	65	45	65
5 Tilehurst RBL C10	6	0	4	60	40	60	
6 Springfield B	11	6	0	5	58	52	58
7 Kingfisher K	11	5	0	6	57	53	57
8 OLOP E	11	3	3	5	44	66	44
9 SC&P G	11	0	1	10	35	75	35
10 Kingfisher L	11	2	1	8	34	76	34
11 Sonning Sports C	12	1	2	9	32	88	32

maximum. Alice Walker and Roland won two each. Gopi played his three sets in a row at the start. I hope you will not make a habit of this. At Kingfisher 'L' they won 4 – 6 with Anish Shukla and Roland both winning three. In the derby against the 'E' team they ended in a draw with Jan and Roland winning two each and Alice picking up a single. A brilliant hat trick from Gopi was all in vain as they lost 3 – 7 to Sonning 'F'.

Sonning Sports 'D' beat one time leaders T.R.B.L. 'C' 8 – 2 with James Miller and Cris Reynolds both gaining hat tricks. Linda Barlow did well to beat Jim Brent 11-3, 5-11, 11-13, 11-5, and then 15-13. In the doubles Cris and James beat Jim and Paul 11-4, 11-2, 11-3. At bottom side Kingfisher 'L' they showed no mercy, winning 0 – 10 in straight sets. Cris, James and John Churchhouse were the hat trick men. Next they played a weak OLOP 'E' without Pat and Fitzroy and won 10 – 0 with John, James and Cris getting trebles. In the big clash at Sonning 'E' they came away with a fantastic 3 – 7 victory with James and Cris both gaining trebles. For James they were all three-straight, beating Grahame Streets 5-11, 4-11, 6-11, Olly Bonser 11-13, 4-11, 8-11, Mike Casserley 3-11, 4-11, 6-11. Regarding Cris he lost the first game to Olly 11-9, but wise words from James helped him win the next 3 games. In the doubles they kept their unbeaten record when Cris and James beat Graeme and Mike 7-11, 6-11, 12 -10 were 9 – 4 up but lost 12-10, 4-11. Although Linda Barlow lost all three she gave all three something to think about. In the Sports derby they beat the 'C' team 6 – 4 with an impressive three straight treble from James who also teamed up with John in the doubles. John also won two. At Springfield 'C' they were beaten 6 – 4. James won two losing for the first time while Cris won one besides teaming up with James to win the doubles.

Springfield 'C' welcomed Sonning 'G' and won 6 – 4 with Ludo Couillard gaining a good hat trick. Richard Sabberton-Coe and Tom Berryman both picked up singles. At Sonning 'F' they lost 7 – 3 with Marcello Caramma winning two and Benson Shiu gaining a single. They then played Kingfisher 'K' and won 9 – 1. Benson and Marcello both won all three with Richard picking up a double. At Sonning Sports 'C' they won 1 – 9 with Richard and Ludo winning all three and Benson picking up a double. Against leaders Sonning Sports 'D' they won 6 – 4 with Ludo winning all three in style which included beating 100%-er James Miller 11-6, 4-11, 13-11, 5-11, 15-13. Marcello picked up a double while Tom won one.

Tilehurst Royal British Legion 'C' lost 6 – 4 at Sonning 'F' with Geoff Johnson winning two and Paul Treadgold and Jim Brent both picking up one each. At Sonning Sports 'D' they crashed to an 8 – 2 defeat with Paul and John Walker beating Linda. They then got back to winning ways by beating Springfield 'B' 7 – 3 with Linda King and Paul both gaining trebles. Jim managed a single. At OLOP 'F' they went down 8 – 2 with Linda and Geoff winning one each. So they were fading fast in the promotion race, then they had a win against Sonning 'G' 6 – 4 with Linda and Paul winning two each. Jim played his part by winning one and teaming up with Paul to win the doubles. At Kingfisher 'K' they went down 6 – 4 with Linda winning two and Geoff and Jim one.

Kingfisher 'K' went to O.L.O.P 'F' and just lost 6 – 4. Mick Mitcham weighed in with a double and Emrah Bulut and Houran Tsun both won one each. At home to Sonning 'G' they won 7 – 3 with Walter Aldridge and Emrah both gaining trebles. Moto Mitcham won her first match of the season by beating Graham Paddick 11-9, 11-6, 11-3. In her first match, at Springfield 'C' only a Houran single showed for their efforts in a 9 – 1 defeat. Doubles from Mick and Walter could not prevent a 4 – 6 defeat to OLOP 'E'. At home to TRBL 'C' they won 6 – 4 after being 0 – 4 down with Mick and Walter picking up two each and Emrah one. Against their 'L' team Mick come up trumps by gaining a three straight treble and with Houran and Moto won one each to help them to a 6 – 4 win.

Springfield 'B' went to T.R.B.L 'C' and lost 7 – 3 with Rob Atack and Steve O'Connor beating Jim They bounced back by beating Kingfisher 'L' 9 – 1. With Rob and Shas Veeraamani both on the treble trail James McGeogh hit a single. At O.L.O.P 'E' they won comfortably 2 – 8 with Steve and Rob both winning three, Shas hit a double. Against Sonning 'F' Steve won two besides teaming up with Rob to win the doubles who also picked up a single. At home to Sonning Sports 'C' doubles from Steve, Shas and reserve Benson helped them to a 7 – 3 win.

Sonning Sports 'C' drew with Kingfisher 'L' with Stephen Reader winning all three. Phil Cantor and Mo Cole both won one each. At O.L.O.P 'E' they gained a draw. John Scott hit a double and Harry Edgington and Peter Evans won one each.. At home to Sonning 'E' they lost 1 – 9 with Stephen saving the whitewash Against Springfield 'C' Stephen won the single set in a 1 – 9 defeat. Against their 'D' team they lost 6 – 4 with Stephen winning two and Mo and John both winning one Next Stephen won all three at Springfield 'B' but could not prevent a 7 – 3 defeat.

Sonning 'G' went down 6 – 4 at Springfield 'C'. John Evans and David Riddle did well to win two each. At Kingfisher 'K' they lost 7 – 3 with Derek Wavell and Simon Blake both winning one each besides teaming up to win the doubles. At OLOP 'E' they just went down 6 – 4 with John winning two and Derek and Simon winning one each. At TRBL 'C' David hit the jackpot by gaining a great hat trick however John could only win one so the team lost 6 – 4. At home to Kingfisher 'L' they lost 3 – 7 with Derek and David getting singles besides teaming up to win the doubles.



DIV 4 LEADING AVERAGES

Player	Team	P	W	%
James Miller	Sonning Sports D	24	23	95.83%
Patrick Daniels	OLOP E	21	20	95.24%
Gopi Ponnappalli	OLOP F	21	20	95.24%
Gerry Bacon	SC&P F	18	17	94.44%
Ludovic Couillard	Springfield C	17	16	94.12%
Cris Reynolds	Sonning Sports D	30	24	80.00%
Oliver Bonser	SC&P F	15	12	80.00%
Graeme Streets	SC&P F	15	12	80.00%
Mcello Caramma	Springfield C	15	12	80.00%
Linda King	Tilehurst RBL C	18	14	77.78%
Fitzroy Licorish	OLOP E	12	9	75.00%
Geoff Johnson	Tilehurst RBL C	18	13	72.22%
Robert Atack	Springfield B	30	21	70.00%
Walter Aldridge	Kingfisher K	27	18	66.67%
Steve O'Connor	Springfield B	24	16	66.67%
Alice Walker	OLOP F	24	16	66.67%
Michael Mitcham	Kingfisher K	21	14	66.67%
Paul Treadgold	Tilehurst RBL C	21	14	66.67%

O.L.O.P 'E' lost 7 – 3 at Sonning 'F' with Fitzroy Licorish winning two and Derek Brook one. Next at home to Sonning Sports 'C' Pat Daniels won three and Wade Daniels and Sue Daniels won one each. At home to Sonning 'G' Pat hit yet another treble with Wade winning two and the two of them winning the doubles they won 6 – 4. At Sonning Sports 'D' they crashed to a 10 – 0 defeat. At home to Springfield 'B'

they lost 2 – 8. Wade won one and Susan and Derek won a fine doubles by beating Shas and Rob. They then won 4 – 6 at Kingfisher 'K' with Pat winning three and Wade and Susan winning one. Away to their 'F' team Pat won all three, Wade won one.

Kingfisher 'L' gained 5 good points at Sonning Sports 'C', Atinc Erguven won two while Sue Parker and Mehmet Bilgin both picked up singles besides teaming up to win the doubles. At home to Sonning Sports 'D' they crashed to a 3 straight ten nil defeat. They lost 7 – 3 .at Springfield 'B'. Atinc and Peter won one each Sue and Atinc also won the doubles. At home to O.L.O.P 'F' they lost 4 – 6 with Peter and Gill Bennett and Mehmet Bilgin all gaining singles. A win came next at Sonning 'G' 3 – 7. Mehmet hit a nice treble while Peter and Atinc won two. Against the 'K' team Sue and Peter both won two each in a 6 – 4 defeat.

Leading POMs

James	7				
Gerry		5			
Pat			5		
Gopi				5	
Robert					4
Cheers					
Derek					

LOWER DIVISIONS TOURNAMENT

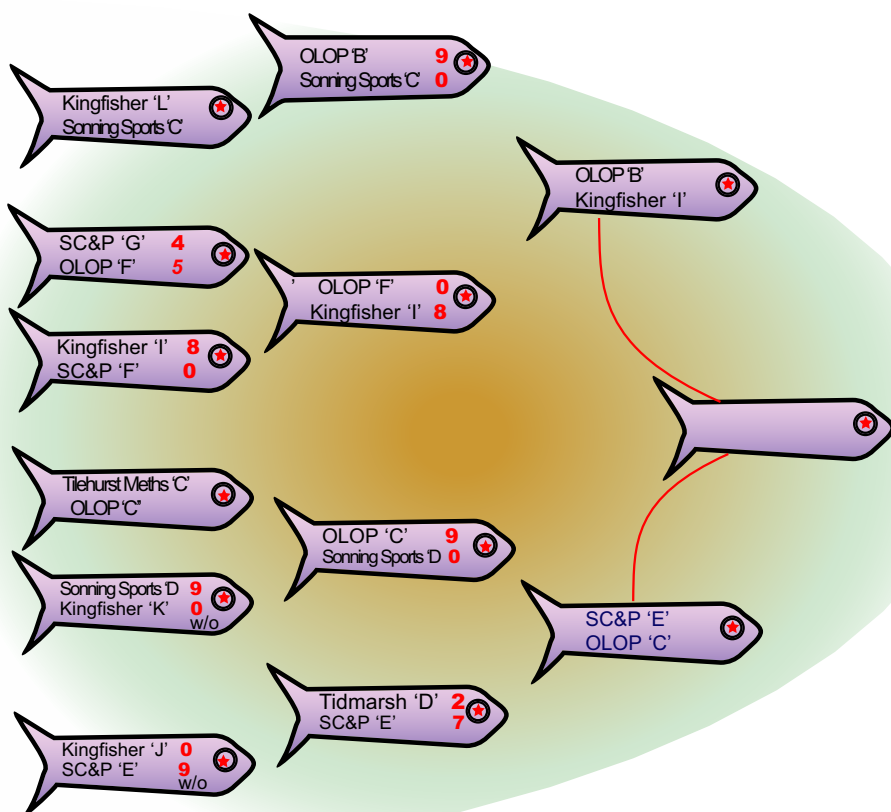
by Louise Forster



The November cup week brought us to the quarter finals of the Lower Division Knockout Cup, and all four matches were successfully completed. Well done everyone for organising the matches and getting them played promptly.

All four matches were resounding victories for the winning sides. OLOP 'B' beat Sonning Sports 'C' 9 – 0, Kingfisher 'I' beating OLOP 'F' 8 – 1, and OLOP 'C' beating Sonning Sports 'D' 9 – 0. The final match of the draw was a little closer and saw SC&P 'E' taking a 7 – 2 win against Tidmarsh 'D'.

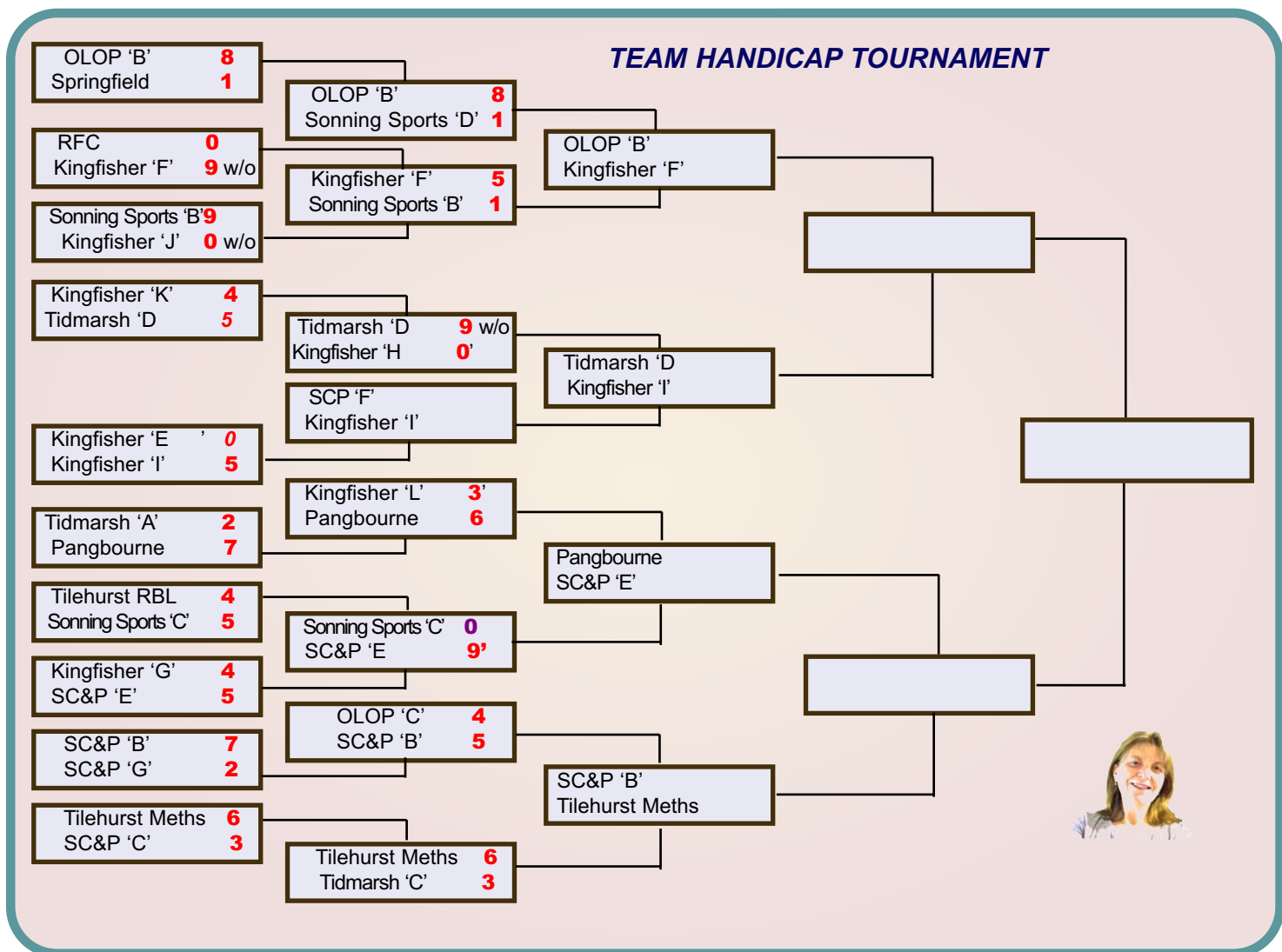
The two semi finals (OLOP 'B' vs Kingfisher 'I' and OLOP 'C' vs SC&P 'E') will take place in February. Happy Christmas to all.





TEAM HANDICAP TOURNAMENT

by Louise Forster



We were down to the last 16 teams in the Team Handicap for the November cup week; almost all matches were played on time, thank you to all teams for getting their matches organised.

OLOP 'B' met Sonning Sports 'D', and won the match comfortably 8 – 1, with hat-tricks from both Mark Carless and Alice Walker. Kingfisher 'F' were up against a two-man Sonning Sports 'B' team and took the match 5 – 1. Brett Hastings won the first set against Adrian Cretu but the team went on to lose the remaining sets, seeing Kingfisher 'F' through to the next round. Kingfisher 'F' will meet OLOP 'B' in their quarter final.

Tidmarsh 'D' had a walkover against Kingfisher 'H' who were unable to form a team and will meet the winners of Kingfisher 'I' and SC&P 'F' in their quarter final.

Reigning champions Pangbourne are through to the quarter finals after a 6 – 3 win against Kingfisher 'L'. This one was very close, with five of the nine sets being three-gamers, and also lots of close call deuce finishes.

SC&P 'E' had a convincing 9 – 0 win over Sonning Sports 'C' taking them through to the quarter final where they will meet Pangbourne.

One of the closest matches of this round was where my own team, OLOP 'C', met SC&P 'B'. OLOP started well and went 4 - 1 up as a result of a couple of good wins by James Smith. SC&P fought back valiantly to take the match 5 – 4 thanks to great play by Ed Lush, who won all three sets despite giving all three opponents around 15 head start, this took not only skill but also great mental focus. Completing the draw we saw Tilehurst Meths take a 6 – 3 win over Tidmarsh 'C', despite three wins by Tidmarsh's Simon Craig. SC&P 'B' will now meet Tilehurst Meths in their quarter final

I look forward to seeing the results of the upcoming quarter finals, all the best to all teams for some good matches. Happy Christmas to all.