



Leicester & District: Bateman on the brink

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With one session still remaining Charlie Bateman has all but won the daytime monthly ladder league, now approaching its third year culmination and still going strong.

He had an unbeaten penultimate session with two 3-0 and two 2-1 for a plus six total. Only if he lost all four of the final session 3-0 as well as his nearest challenger winning all four 3-0 can he be caught.

Bateman is also instrumental in setting up a daytime 2x2 challenge. This is two players playing another two in four singles and a doubles with the emphasis very much on social rather than competitive, apart from an obvious element with the match itself.

A few pairs have shown their interest, the idea being that if one pair is of a significantly higher standard than the other they simply each switch a player to even things out. All matches are best of three games so 15 games played and one match has been played so far: Bateman and Chris Woodward (Gruesome Twosome) beat Andy Searle and Rod Pickering (Ruffcut Diamonds) 13-2.

In the Leicester & District League the battle for runners-up spot in Division Two behind Holwell intensifies and there was my Performance of the Week from Brajesh, who spearheaded Knighton Park III to a 6-4 over Abbots Road II.

Patel has shown gradual, but significant, improvement over the season and is now at 60%. His grading is 149 and he beat Geoff Hancock (181), Fahed Sacoer (173) and Richard Martin (169), with Patrick Cox a supporting two, Rayan Kotecha one. Patel has won 14 of his last 15 played.

Regent Sports remain second, just, after an 8-2 success over Blaby and Whetstone when Kevin Sanderson and Martin Bolton each won three, Charlie Bateman two. John Winsper won the one singles for Blaby. Arnesby II are also up there after beating Electricity III 7-3 and had Dave Small top of his game in winning three, two apiece from Dave Wagstaff and Bruce Johnson. Two for the Sparks' Russ Pettitt.

Still with possibly the best chance are Syston Casuals II who look a little down the table but have matches in

hand. They defeated Knighton Park IV thanks to some super form by Mike James and Chandresh Sodha, each emerging undefeated.

If second in the second division is exciting then one from three for the big drop from Division One is even more so with all three teams having three matches remaining. Desford Village are on 26 points, Arnesby firsts on 25 as are Unicorn II. A win for any of the three would probably see them safe.

Arnesby fought out a thrilling 5-5 draw against Knighton Park II for two very useful points with Darren Bramhall and Ian Brown each recording two while James Lancaster grabbed a vital singles. For KP Karen Smith and Les Baker each won two. Bramhall and Brown won the first two games of the doubles but Smith and Baker then took the next three to secure the share of points.

Abbots Road will be disappointed to gain only one point against Electricity II who won 6-4 with Sam Henderson three and Adam Pettitt two. Vishal Parmar won two for Abbots. Unicorn II, meanwhile, were going down 9-1 to Ajax Wolvey who, as usual, gifted them a consolation doubles.

In Division Three a clash of Electricity teams sparked a 5-5 draw. Andy Wright came back to full form with a maximum for the fifth team, Dan Woolman one, while the fourth team proved just stronger in depth when Andy Searle and Sheriff Makhani each won two, Dave Greasley one. Good win for the fifth in the doubles.

Great Glen went a long way to gaining second place behind Winstanley in this division by defeating Syston Casuals III 8-2 with Alex Mason top of his game and unbeaten, Kelvin Herbert and, making his debut, Carl Slevin both taking two. Ajay Lad won the two for Syston.

Ian Lockington looked back to near his best when he secured a maximum for Wigston Conservatives in Division Four when his team beat Desford Village III 7-3. Unicorn III are battling with Goons for the second promotion spot in Four and a good 7-3 team win should prove very useful. Three for Tony Geanta, two from Eric Baker and a David Green contribution.

Meantime it was dragon slaying time in Division Five when 10-0 was the norm rather than the exception. The one team gaining a consolation point was Winstanley Wizards III who lost 7-3 to Nomads – Dave Weston three – but had Eiz Eddin Al Katrib winning two and then combining with Chris Hillyard for an 11-8 in the fifth win in the doubles.

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