



Leicester & District: Regent hopes rekindled

Author: Paul Stimpson

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The second promotion position in Division Two of the Leicester & District League took a funny turn this week. Regent Sports, who had lost their final match to drop out of the running, so they thought, with slight sighs of relief suddenly find they are back in the frame after their two nearest rivals drew.

Arnesby II visited Abbots Road II and came away with a 5-5 result despite three by Rhys Emery, while Bruce Johnson won one before Emery team up with Dave Small for success in the doubles. For Abbots, Geoff Hancock and Chetan Tailor both won two and Fahed Sacoor one. But this puts Arnesby one point behind Regent and finished.

Syston Casuals II, the only team who can overtake Regent in the one match left to play in the division, could only share with Knighton Park III for whom Brajesh Patel took an excellent maximum, backed by one each from Shirley Pickering and Patrick Cox.

Bob Whittaker scored two for Syston, Mike James and Chandresh Sodha one apiece and then James and Sodha won a very crucial doubles 11-9 in the fifth for 5-5 and still a chance, but now they will need to beat Desford Village II, instead of a draw being sufficient, on a date yet to be finalised.

Meanwhile, Abbots Road know exactly what they have to do to stay in Division One. They have to beat bottom team, Syston Casuals. Sounds easy but Abbots' season has not been their best and Syston can still come up with the occasional shock. Abbots just lost out 6-4 to champions, Unicorn, for whom George Briskolas won an easy looking three-straight maximum.

Great Glen are mourning the death of their outstanding stalwart, Dermot Whelan, who has done so much for table tennis in Leicester during his 50-odd years in the sport, particularly for Glen where he was secretary for many years, and a very popular and respected gentleman, only releasing his bulging club file a few weeks before his death.

The club are in line for promotion from Division Three along with champions, Winstanley Wizards, but suffered a

6-4 defeat at the hands of Knighton Park VI, despite the customary maximum by Alex Mason, as they still went ahead with the fixture. The Park proved stronger in depth with Vishaal Sharda, Zia Malik and Oscar Bentley all gaining two.

Glen are on 57 points with a match to go while Abbot Road III have 53 points and two matches, although one of those is against Winstanley while the other is against the ever improving Knighton Park VI. Great Glen have a relative lowly Nomads to play and a win would give them elevation.

Down in Division Five, Fleckney firsts easily took the title after an exciting four-team tussle for three-quarters of the season, one more match remaining but beating off one of the main four, Abbots Road IV, 9-1 with their three main men, Jason Prescott and James Robertson, three apiece, Bob Palmer two.

Fleckney have another team in Five and this promotion should allow them to put a third team in next season with Prescott, the club's secretary and coach, running a thriving community and keen to build up the club as well as get teams up the league.

The second promotion slot is still up for grabs with Abbots Road IV on 67 points and one match to go, but Syston Casuals are in the favourite's seat having two matches remaining and just one point behind, albeit one of the matches against fourth placed Blaby and Whetstone who could, on paper, still get there having 65 points but require some unusually poor results by the other two.

Division Four, meanwhile, is done and dusted both at the top and the bottom.

Syston Casuals IV, all five teams of the club featuring in all sorts of promotion and relegation issues from top to bottom of the league, have won the championship while Unicorn III are second and will have two teams in Division One and one in Three next term.

Going down from Four will be bottom team Winstanley Wizards II, although something might have to be arranged as they already have three teams in Five which is probably one too many as it stands. Joining the Wizards are Regent Sports III.

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