



Milton Keynes League: Danny Boy seals shock win

Author: Julie Snowdon

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Premier Division

Welcome to the new season.

The Premier Division again consists of 6 teams this year, with promoted Division 1 champions Greenleys Warriors the only new side in the mix. Greenleys Monarchs have been given a welcome reprieve, following the disbandment of MK Bandits, and become the first bottom placed team from the previous season to escape relegation. The committee have opted to maintain the highest standard of play possible in the top division in spite of the alarming rate that former regulars are dropping out of the League. In the past couple of years alone this list runs into double figures – Dan Smalley, Thai-Anh Lieu, Peter Bannister, Neil Riddy, Dave Murphy, Ryan Murphy, Kelvin Choong, Dave Buckley, James Tapp, Julian Adams & Nigel Metcalfe. Enough for 4 additional teams! Will we see any of them or their like again?

Action on the tables in this first week of the new Winter season centred on the remarkable upset at Greenleys on Tuesday night when Warriors hosted a fresh looking MK Sasaki outfit, without their founder/figurehead, the charismatic Kelvin Choong, for the first time in their 30 year history. Kelvin has moved on although Sasaki have picked up the core of the old Bandits outfit which means the return of Matt Evans to the team where he made his name. Sasaki won 6-4, although new boys Warriors took them close despite fielding reserve Danny Sedgwick, who's last MK appearance was in Division 6. Undaunted by his sudden rise in status Danny shot his side into a 4-3 lead by overcoming experienced journeyman Michael Wilkins and in doing so became the lowest rated player ever to win in the Premier. Well played Danny. However Sasaki recovered to win the match with Matt taking his usual maximum, a brace from Tring youngster James George and a single from Michael. James was on MK debut here as was Colin Huang, who chalked up a handsome brace himself as his Warriors' skipper Ricky

Taiwo remained winless.

Greenleys Kings start the new season where they finished off the old one and extended their current run to 6 wins after beating clubmates Monarchs. Skipper Nick Howard was in tremendous form as he saw off the strong looking trio of Ian Johnston, Iain Dummett and Tomak Nowakowski. Guy Sparrow took a brace but his impressive sequence of individual wins came to an end at 17 with a defeat to Ian, and this after the hard bat specialist had provided Jordan Wood with her only win of the night. Kings took the doubles, always a strength, to round off a 7-3 victory.

To end on a sad note the MK Spinners v MK Kingpins fixture remains unplayed as all matches at the Kingston centre on Wednesday night had to be abandoned because of a medical incident in a lower Division match which required the attendance of an ambulance unit.

Player of the week is Danny Sedgwick.

Division 1

This reduced division (from last year) of 9 sees promoted Greenleys Glory sitting out the opening week while fellow promotees Newport Pagnell Vantage started their campaign by thrashing Glory's stablemates Eagles 8-2. Ian Ardis and Sue Lewis hit hat-tricks while Mike Howard chipped in with a brace. The unfamiliar Eagles line-up had Div. 2's loan players James Zeng and Dwight Edwards alongside regular Dave Plumb. James scored the only Eagles singles win and they took the doubles.

Woburn Sands Data faced favourites MK Pumas, who's two big guns were in fine fettle. Julie Snowdon had reached the last 32 in the over 50s Womens Singles in the World Veterans Championships in Las Vegas in July and Andy Smith's form is red hot at present on the back of his Corby Open National Veterans Ratings tournament success last week. Data's only success was a James Molloy win over Chris Belton. Dave McGarragh and Rob McPheat completed their side.

St.Christopher Van Hire's Biao Wang, by far the best player in this Division, tells me he'll only be turning out against the top teams this year. However it's hard to say who the 'top teams' are going to be this time round. Without him his team went down 8-2 to MK Phoenix who, after finishing bottom in their Division twice in the past 3 years, look well set to regain former glories. Phoenix' Alan Bolding's and new boy Ianon Constantin's considerable defences will be hard to breach and they hit maximums in this opening fixture. Only Gerald Ridgway faltered when losing to Fabrice Spelta and Paul Haigh. There should be some late, late night coming Phoenix' way this Winter. A blank here for Jez Wilcox.

My MK Stormers side beat MK Powers 7-3 with maximums from Mervyn Kelly and myself plus a single from Russell Penn. It was so good to see Sarah Hudson back in the Powers side, for the first time since October following an enforced absence. The 8 times League Singles champion competed with all her old verve to beat Russell and come close in her other games. How I've missed seeing those trademark flashing forehand drives these past few months. Pete Tillotson also picked up a win and shared the doubles success with Sarah, while a winless Clare Styles completed the Powers' line-up. But the most impressive player on view was Mervyn, dominating the table with his first treble for 12 matches.

Player of the week is Sarah Hudson.

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