



Leicester & District: From Ping! to league success story

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Marcin Kasprzyk, a Polish chef who came over to England to live a few years ago, was walking through the centre of Leicester during the summer, minding his own business, and came across a "Ping!" session being organised by Harry White, one of the major coaches of table tennis in this area.

Ping! is Table Tennis England's mission to bring the sport to the people by way of table tennis tables in town centres and other catchment areas.

White recognises a decent player when he sees one and immediately signed Kasprzyk up for one of the Electricity league teams in the Leicester & District League and he made his debut in Division Three this season, and what a debut.

So far Kasprzyk is undefeated, picking up another maximum in helping the Sparks' fifth team defeat their own fourth team 8-2 to remain at the top of the individual averages. Andy Wright was back on form and also unbeaten while Dan Woolman is playing way above his 129 grading, picking up two, and this team could well push for promotion. Chris Woodward won one for the fourth team and combined with Dave Greasley for success in the doubles.

Holwell Sports remain top of division three after a win they felt flattered them a little when beating Fleckney 9-1 as they put out their strongest trio in Dave Roche, Martin Brunning and Mike James, the latter dropping the one, while Jason Prescott won Fleckley's sole success, as well as going down 11-9 in the fifth against Brunning. James Robertson lost by the same margin against James.

Knighton Park V moved into second place with a competent 6-4 victory over Abbots Road III, mainly thanks to another maximum by the in-form Steve Bessant, with Martin Pember and Simon Aldis each taking one in support, Bessant and Pember the doubles for full points. Steve Pratt and Hardik Patel each won two for Abbots.

Gary Pitts won a very good maximum for Goons against Unicorn III but saw his side go down 6-4 against the deeper strength of Tony Geanta and Ron Forster winning two apiece and Josh Powell one with the first two taking that all-important doubles.

In a top-of-the-table clash in Division Two Arnesby II swapped places with Desford Village to take top spot by winning their clash 6-4 when Nathan Thomson recorded a particularly good maximum, including the scalp of Malcolm Truman who is graded at 238. Thomson is on 203. Rhys Emery gave good support with two while the ever dependable Dave Wagstaff won a very important singles to clinch full points. Truman won his other two for Desford while Jessica Birbeck took one.

Division Five has secured a little less coverage so far this season, mainly because as so often happens a large number of the newer players coming into this lowest rung of the ladder, coupled with a goodly number of seasoned players with many years of experience, many of the early results have been quite heavy at 10-0 or 9-1.

Only one of the top five played this week as school holidays took their toll and that was Winstanley Wizards III who secured a 6-4 verdict against Nomads IV when four of the players, two from each side, scored a brace each. Ben Cooke and Ted Eastman for the Wizards while Trevor Hawkins and Julie Edwards did for Nomads with a crucial singles set taken by Nathan Joseph while Cooke and Eastman won the doubles in five for full points.

This takes the Wizards to 17 points from five matches to sit alongside Knighton Park VIII but it is Blaby and Whetstone II residing in third spot who have taken the eye so far with four from four victories, three of them 10-0 and the other 9-1. They are one point off the lead but their games average so far is massive. Their match this week was postponed.

Winstanley's fifth team also grabbed a 6-4 success, against Fleckney III in their case when Steve Burrage scored a good maximum with two in support from Ken Wadeson and these two the doubles. John Woodward won two for Fleckney, Jan Nix and Ian Prentice one apiece.

The closest result came with a 5-5 draw between Regent Sport IV and Desford Village IV renewing old rivalries. Gary Featherstone recorded a splendid three-straight maximum for Regent with Bob Smith grabbing one and these two the doubles. Desford had a little more depth with Lee Berrill and Matt Woolerton two each and Gemma Hargrave one.

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