



MK League: Howard's special delivery

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PREMIER

Leaders MK Sasaki keep up their unbeaten record although for the 2nd week running could only manage a draw, this time to high flying 2nd placed Greenleys Kings. Sasaki were denied the win at the death by a Gary Deakin straight games victory over Jamie Hendy. It's been a while since the Northants man has played a match in MK and he acquitted himself well by also beating James George and sharing the doubles win with Kings' regular Guy Sparrow, only Michael Wilkins proving too strong for him. Guy beat Michael and James but lost to Jamie whilst Jordan Wood failed to register a win. The only downer of the match, for me anyway, was the absence of a Nick Howard report, always entertaining reading. But Nick, absent from the match, was too busy preparing to deliver his own baby daughter. Is there no end to this man's talents?

Surprise package Greenleys Warriors move into 3rd place after thrashing MK Kingpins 8-2. I watched them perform with a real verve on Monday, though admittedly it was against bottom placed opposition MK Kingpins. Half the sets went to a decider including all of skipper Ricky Taiwo's, who went down fighting to Craig Brown and substitute Sarah Hudson but beat Mark Purcell. Sarah was the pick of the Kingpins' players just missing out in another 5 game set, this time to Diego Garrido, who joined Colin Huang on a fine hat-trick, his very first in MK.

Former Sasaki star Dakshinamoorthy Thopay made a debut appearance for Greenleys Monarchs in their match with MK Spinners and helped his new club to a 6-4 victory over his old one. Dakshin joined Dan Appanna on a brace and extended Alan Cherry to 11-8 in the 5th. Usual hat-trick for Alan but with just a Tim Cheek win over Ian Johnston in support. Another blank here for Spinners' Gary Jones.

Player of the week is Diego Garrido.

DIVISION 1

The top two teams were in action on adjacent tables at Kingston on Monday playing lowly opposition. My MK Topspin side faced 6th placed Greenleys Eagles while MK Phoenix were up against rock bottom Woburn Sands Data. The matches were fiercely competitive as usual with both camps cheering on their rivals' opposition (or was that just us?). At the end of the night Phoenix had narrowed the gap on the leaders to a single point, ensuring exciting times ahead.

Topspin were held to a draw for the first time this season, but rather than be disappointed, we were delighted to bounce back from 3-5 down. Eagles' Iain Lindsay had bossed the match up to this stage while his opponent in the vital 9th set, Russell Penn, was having a poor night. Iain had looked great when beating Mervyn Kelly and me as well as guiding Barry Bishop to a doubles win. Russell was all at sea against Barry and had struggled to beat Dave Plumb. A lost cause? Not a bit of it as Russell turned his form around in an instant to hit his way to a brilliant win.

Meanwhile Phoenix were meeting some surprise resistance of their own with Data's James Molloy showing some of his old form to dispense with both Alan Bolding and Gerald Ridgway and Dave McGarragh also triumphant over Gerald 14-12 in the decider. But there was no way past the new League Handicap Singles champion loan Constantin who stayed rock solid, not even dropping a single game to the Data lads, whose line-up was completed by Rob McPheat.

MK Powers made short work of St.Christopher Van Hire with an 8-2 win on Tuesday with only Clare Styles dropping sets to Paul Haigh and David Broome. No heroics from Paul this time to follow on from last week, stopped by fine hat-tricks from Sarah Hudson and Jit Pitamber with only the doubles, these two again, requiring a deciding game. Jez Wilcox was the third Van Hire man.

Finally, a tight match at Greenleys between mid table teams Glory and MK Pumas, nothing between the sides all night with the resulting draw always on the cards. The 2 ladies on view went into the 8th set of the night, with Glory 4-3 up, having lost their previous encounters, Christine Scaysbrook to Keith Carrington (14-12 in 5th) and Andy Smith and Julie Snowdon to Ian Brown and Scott Dixon. Julie emerged the winner to set up the 'heavyweight' contest of the night between unbeaten Ian and Andy. The ace defender, celebrating his elevation into the English Veterans top 400 this week, won in 4 games for the visitors only for Scott to level the match score at 5-5 with a final set victory over Keith.

Player of the week is Andy Smith.

DIVISION 2

(courtesy of Martin Johnson)

Chackmore Hasbeens maintained the division's only unbeaten record, although were held to a draw for the second time this season, by Milton Keynes Classics. But Bub Burman was the star of the show, with his maximum (taking his run of wins to eight) including a first defeat of the season for Masoud Nassor. Hasbeens also kept up their 100% doubles record, as Bub teamed up with Andy Whitehead, to make it eight from eight. Their other singles win came from Andy against Barbara Peters, but a rare blank for Sam Willett, as Masoud & Dylan Cox each won twice for the Classics, with Barbara also winning one.

OU Primes, who started the week joint top with Hasbeens, appear to be the in-form team, and took the chance to leapfrog above Hasbeens at the top of the table, racking up another big win, this time 8-2 against MK Tornadoes. Patrick Wong was the one unbeaten player on the night, taking his winning run to fourteen sets, whilst team mates, Charity Wong and Martin Lok, each won twice, both losing to Charlie Gray, but no joy for either Tanmay Tijare or Nicholas Wong on the night, as Primes have opened up a three point gap at the top of the table, with their 7th win in a row. The top two teams play each other next week, so something has to give?

MK Hit n Hope lost some ground on the two leaders, as they lost out 6-4 to Mursley Hawks. Mervyn Phillips notched up yet another maximum, and he was ably assisted by Richard Hare, who won twice, both at deuce in the fifth, whilst Andy Palmer finally picked up his first win in 18 tries. For Hit n Hope, Mike Ainsworth, Tony Coomber and Andy Frearson each won once, and they also comfortably took the doubles.

Elsewhere, the bottom two teams, Greenleys Cardinals and MK Blades, lost further ground, each losing to mid-table rivals. Cardinals started promisingly against Mursley Swallows, to go 2-1 up early on, but finally lost out 3-7, as Roger Shelton was again unbeaten for Swallows, whilst Blades were the wrong side of a 6-4 scoreline against NP Lagondas, although it had looked like being worse when they stood 4-0 down, early doors. Chris Horn scored a maximum for Lagondas, aided by a pair by Roy Read, with Blades' reserve, Bernie Raffie, scoring two of their wins.

Player of the Week : Bub Burman

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