



MK League: Michael back with a bang, and Mark too

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PREMIER

The top of the table clash between MK Sasaki and Greenleys Kings was a close run affair with the leaders edging home 6-4. Matt Haynes got his standard maximum but it was a return to form by Michael Wilkins that swung the match in Sasaki's favour. Michael was back to winning ways with a brace after firing blanks in his last 2 outings. His victims were Matt Horrocks and Guy Sparrow, only losing to Gary Deakin. Then together Matt & Michael took the doubles to seal the win. Minesh Pitamber played up from div 1 for Sasaki.

Another player welcoming his old form back this week was MK Kingpin Mark Purcell, who hit his first hat-trick of the season against a Greenleys Warriors trio of Ollie Horswell (14-12 in the 5th), Ricky Taiwo and div 1 sub Iain Lindsay. Mark has been a regular 'top 8' man over many years but has found the going tough this season. Dave Allison joined him on a maximum and they took the doubles between them in a 7-3 win. Craig Brown completed the Kingpins line-up. 5 of the first 6 sets went the distance with bottom placed Kingpins, who have now narrowed the gap to MK Spinners to just 3 points, winning 4 of them.

Spinners themselves fought out a terrific draw with Greenleys Monarchs. Skipper Alan Cherry was in good shape with a fine maximum while Gary Jones and Neil Massa chipping in with a win a-piece. For Monarchs Bogdan Boghi and Dakshinamoorthy Thopay each scored a brace, leaving Tomek Nowokowski winless.

Player of the week is Mark Purcell.

DIVISION 1

Only 2 matches this week what with Woburn Sands Data's visit to Newport Pagnell Vantage having been brought forward (reported on at 'Week 16') and the beleaguered Greenleys Glory team unable to field a side, for the 2nd time in 5 matches, for their scheduled trip to MK Phoenix.

Leaders Phoenix may be slightly aggrieved at only being due the 7-0 statutory walk-over win (pending committee ratification) as they would have hoped for more points against a bottom 3 team weakened by an unfortunate combination of circumstances. With title rivals Topspin equalling Phoenix' score against the odds, the title chase remains wide open with a fortnight to go. Phoenix should have been 'out of sight' by now but this week's developments have brought my Topspin side back into the reckoning.

St.Christopher Van Hire put out their strongest team against a struggling Topspin, forced by illness ourselves to field 2 lower division reserves. However Keegan Barstow and Dylan Cox rose to the occasion magnificently to conjure up 5 wins between them in support of a brace from skipper Russell Penn. 2-3 down at the half way stage, we reeled out all of the last 5 sets to pull off an unlikely 7-3 victory. Pick of the wins was Keegan against Biao Wang over 4 tight games, all decided by 2 point margins. To our credit this was the first time this season Van Hire have not won with starman Biao Wang on the scorecard. Fabrice Spelta and Paul Haigh remained winless.

It was a late finish at Greenleys Eagles where MK Pumas were the visitors. The match ended honours even thanks to a last gasp Geoff Callaway win over Andy Smith to deny the chief Pumas his hat-trick. Julie Snowdon hit a great one herself with plenty to spare too when taking apart Geoff, Iain Lindsay and Barry Bishop. Barry and Andy had contributed to the evening's length when enjoying their usual tight encounter, at least until Barry inexplicably 'fell apart' in the decider, losing 11-1. No joy though for Chris Belton, who had a bad night and finished with a blank.

Player of the week is Keegan Barstow.

DIVISION 2

(courtesy of Martin Johnson)

Open University Primes may have finally, with their fifteenth consecutive win, mathematically assured the promotion spot that has seemed inevitable for many weeks, but they could still have a battle on their hands to clinch this season's Division 2 title, as Chackmore Hasbeens have yet again narrowed the gap slightly, as for the third week running, Hasbeens produced the biggest win of the week. Elsewhere, the three remaining matches each ended up with honours even, as all were 5-5 draws, to leave the overall positions in the Division unchanged.

Second placed Chackmore Hasbeens picked up the biggest win of the week for a third week in a row, this time collecting an 8-2 win on their visit to Mursley Hawks. As usual, Bub Burman lead the way, with yet another maximum, to extend his winning run to 26 in a row, surpassing the previous longest run of 25 wins, this season, by Patrick Wong. Bub was backed up by Andy Whitehead and Sam Willet, who each won twice, whilst Bub/Andy picked up their thirteenth consecutive doubles win against Mervyn Phillips/Andy Palmer. Bub's wins included a tight four games defeat of Averages topping Mervyn, a set which included three deuce games, as Bub thus ended Mervyn's own run of 16 wins, and it leaves the two virtually neck and neck at the top of the Averages, with Mervyn just fractionally ahead, by virtue of just one extra win. Andy King completed the lineup for Hawks, and despite Andy Palmer pushing Andy Whitehead to five legs, neither of the Hawks Andy's could make any further inroads. Hasbeens are now fifteen points clear of third placed Tornadoes, who still have to play the leaders,

Primes, so a Hasbeens' promotion spot seems to be a formality. In the other direction, although their recent run of form has closed the gap to Primes to just six points, it might just be a bridge too far, with just two matches to go.

Open University Primes remain top by six points, racking up their fifteenth consecutive win, 6-4 versus Milton Keynes Classics, despite having to call upon the services of Division 4 reserve, Linda Lo, who nevertheless pushed Nick Markham to five games in the opener, but found things even tougher against both Dylan Cox and Masoud Nassor, who both beat her three straight. Dylan/Masoud also picked up the double against Primes regulars, Charity Wong and Patrick Wong, but none of the Classics team were able to defeat either Charity or Patrick in singles, with Masoud going the closest, as he lost in a tight five games encounter against Charity. Primes have still to play third placed Tornadoes, then second placed Hasbeens, in their final two matches, so there is still work to be done if they want to secure the title.

Third placed Milton Keynes Tornadoes visited sixth placed Mursley Swallows, but were denied a win, and had to settle for a 5-5 draw. Charlie Gray and Tanmay Tijare each collected two singles wins, but these were countered by a battling treble from Martin Johnson, plus one win each for Peter Sear and Roger Shelton. Nicholas Wong completed the Tornadoes trio, and whilst he had a poor night in the singles, he teamed up with Tanmay to win the doubles against Martin and Peter. Tornadoes had looked good for the win at 3-2 ahead and Charlie 2-0 in games up against Martin, but Charlie just lost out at deuce in the third, with Martin making a comeback to win in five games. Roger almost turned things back Swallows way in the next set, but Tanmay hit his way to win at deuce in the fifth.

Newport Pagnell Lagondas hosted Milton Keynes Hit 'n' Hope, and although Ivor Howard collected a maximum for the visitors, there were two wins each for Chris Horn and Glen Davison for the home team, as neither team could pull ahead, and it finished with the match score 5-5. Mike Ainsworth also won one for the visitors, with Ivor/Mike also taking the doubles against Chris/Roy Read, whilst Roy had started proceedings with a singles win against Andy Frearson.

The bottom two teams, Greenleys Cardinals and Milton Keynes Blades played each other, but they remain locked together, honours even and level on points, after their 5-5 draw. No-one was able to win all their singles, although Dan Englander was the closest, for Cardinals, winning two, but losing out at deuce in the fifth in the opening set to Mark Thomas. James Zeng also won two for Cardinals, and teamed up with Dan to take the doubles against Bill Tyler/Brian Evans, but no joy for Gary Viner, despite twice taking his opponents to a fifth game. For Blades, it was two wins each for Brian and Mark, plus one for Bill. The draw leaves both teams 18 points adrift of the safety of eighth place, and with just two more matches to go, both teams are inevitably destined to fill the relegation places, with a private battle for which will finish above the other.

Players of the week (joint) : Charity Wong / Patrick Wong

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