



MK League : Turner prize not enough to save Kingpins from bottom spot

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PREMIER DIV

With the top positions already settled the main focus of interest centred on which team would finish bottom, the 2 contenders tantalisingly level on points going into this last round of matches. MK Kingpins were in action first on Monday and received a tremendous boost when this year's champions MK Sasaki picked Geoff Turner alongside regulars Matt Haynes and Michael Wilkins. While it was a rare privilege for a division 3 player to be invited to make an appearance for a Premier title winning side, his selection did provide 3 much needed straightforward wins for the Kingpins trio of Mark Purcell, Dave Allison and Craig Brown. But they could add 2 more at Michael's expense to force a draw.

Rivals Greenleys Warriors played on Wednesday needing just 5 points from their match with clubmates Monarchs to finish above Kingpins and easily achieved this with a tremendous 9-1 result, their biggest win of the season which catapulted them above both Monarchs and MK Spinners into 3rd place. Star of the show was skipper Ricky Taiwo with stunning victories over ace defenders Ian Johnston and Dave Tiplady as well as Division 2 reserve Dan Englander. Charles Philippe joined him on a hat-trick and Ollie Horswell only lost to Dave for Monarchs solo point.

Greenleys Kings, who finished 2nd, took on former champions MK Spinners in the remaining match. The contest was closely fought in the early stages with 3 of the first 4 sets going the distance which saw Gary Deakin coming from behind to beat Tim Cheek and Guy Sparrow doing likewise to defeat Gary Jones. Both Gary D. and Guy went on to score maximums leaving team-mate Jordan Moss winless in their 7-3 victory. Neil Massa made up the Spinners side, which finished 4th.

Player of the week is Mark Purcell who only beat Michael Wilkins and Geoff Turner this week and had a disastrous season anyway by his standards. However what a trooper. He was the only 'ever present' player for his team this season and has not missed a match for over 5 years now, which is a record for consecutive appearances this millennium. Come hell or high water, in sickness and in health, Mark is always there for the Kingpins.

DIVISION 1

Going into this final round of matches the title race was still in the balance with my MK Topspin side needing 7 points from our last match against MK Pumas. A tall order as we would need to inflict Pumas biggest defeat of the season with a side weakened by holiday commitments. And so it proved with the match ending in glorious failure, Topspin going down 6-4. Mervyn Kelly and myself won 2 each against Chris Belton and Keith Carrington whilst Andy Smith stood firm to deny any further progress, this despite losing the opening game against all opponents. Masoud Nassor played up from division 2 for Topspin but regrettably couldn't get on the scoresheet. On reflection, winning just 3 doubles all season was the cause of our downfall. Only 2 teams in the whole of the League had a worse record. Many congratulations to Phoenix though, who last won the division in 2015.

5th placed Greenleys Eagles ran riot over 3rd placed MK Powers with Iain Lindsay going home with a great hat-trick, all 4 game wins, over Sarah Hudson, Pete Tillotson and Clare Styles. 2 wins here for Geoff Callaway and one for Barry Bishop. Powers sets came from Sarah (2) and Pete. Pumas finishing 4th, 5 points ahead of Eagles, emphasised the significant gap in standard though between the MK club teams and the rest of the Division.

8th placed Woburn Sands Data beat 7th placed Greenleys Glory 6-4 in a late finish at Greenleys. A hat-trick here for James Molloy with singles from Dave McGarragh and Rob McPheat, plus the doubles at 11-9 in the 5th. Data were 5-0 up at half-time but were made to work hard for the victory, their 3rd of the season. A brace for Glory's Jacob Midson and single wins for skipper Ian Brown and Christine Scaysbrook.

St.Christopher Van Hire, in 6th, saw off bottom team Newport Pagnell Vantage 7-3 with a maximum from Biao Wang supported by braces from Paul Haigh and David Broome. Tony Ardis beat David, Sue Lewis beat Paul and together they won their 7th doubles of the season, the most by any pairing in the division. If only Topspin had a record even approaching that we'd have won the League! Mike Howard made up the Vantage side.

Sad to see Newport Pagnell Vantage go out the Cup last week as they were the sole remaining representative of the top 2 tiers. They may be going out of this Division too next season (pending any adjustment in divisional structure), alongside Woburn Sands Data, to be replaced by last year's relegated teams Open University Primes and Chackmore Hasbeens, who both proved to be too good for Division 2.

Player of the week is Iain Lindsay.

DIVISION 2

(courtesy of Martin Johnson)

The final League week saw the Division 2 title finally decided, as well as the final positions confirmed.

At the top, it was the clash of the top two, both already assured of promotion, but with the form team of the second half of the season, Chackmore Hasbeens, needing an unlikely 8-2 (or better) win against long time leaders, Open University Primes, who were on a run of 16 wins in a row. In the end, it was a slight anticlimax, as Hasbeens only had two players, meaning Primes had won the title before a ball was hit, as they effectively started 3-0 up. However, Hasbeens took the honours on the night, winning five of the seven sets played, to make the final result a 5-5 draw, and thus bringing Primes' runs of match wins to an end. Bub Burman and Andy Whitehead each won twice for Hasbeens, plus they teamed up for the 15th time this season, duly completing a perfect 15 wins from 15. However, in the final set of the night, with Hasbeens ahead 5-4, Bub Burman's individual run of 31 wins came to an end, as he was beaten by Larry Lung. The other win for Primes came when Martin Lok beat Andy, but Patrick Wong unusually came away without a win on the night.

Milton Keynes Tornadoes confirmed their third place spot, despite an unusual line-up, on their visit to Greenleys Cardinals, as they recorded a 5-5 draw. For Tornadoes, Nicholas Wong secured a maximum, including a doubles win with Mo Duncan, who was playing his first match of the season. Mo also picked up one singles, whilst the team was completed by reserve, Daniel Shea. For Cardinals, both James Zeng and Dan Englander grabbed two wins, whilst Gary Viner scored the team's other point. The five points took Cardinals up to ninth place, level on points with Blades, but above them due to one extra win.

Milton Keynes Classics finished in fourth spot, completing their program with a 7-3 win over fifth placed Milton Keynes Hit 'n' Hope. Dylan Cox recorded a maximum, including teaming up with Masoud Nassor for a doubles win, whilst Masoud won two singles, with Nick Markham contributing the final point. For Hit 'n' Hope, there were two wins for reserve, Steve Jordan, plus one for Andy Frearson, with Tony Coomber completing their line-up.

The final match played in the week was Mursley Hawks in seventh, against ninth placed Milton Keynes Blades. Hawks came through 6-4, with the regular maximum for Mervyn Phillips meaning he finished the season at the top of the individual averages. Andy King also won two for Hawks, although there were no wins for Richard Hare, but 4th player, Andy Palmer played and won the doubles with Mervyn. Brian Evans grabbed two wins for Blades, with both Mark Thomas and Andy Phillips taking a win each.

Mursley Swallows and Newport Pagnell Lagondas had played their final match a week early, when Lagondas took the match 6-4, primarily due to a maximum for Chris Horn, also backed up by one win each from Glen Davison and Roy Read. For Swallows, Peter Sear won two, whilst Roger Shelton and Martin Johnson each won one, with Lagondas also taking the doubles. The result confirmed Lagondas final eight place, whilst Swallows default 7-0 win from the previous week, meant they finished the season in sixth place.

Player of the Week, and of the Season : Mervyn Phillips.

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