

Gareth Herbert wins five-set thriller

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Second-placed Drumchapel Glasgow warmed up for their afternoon clash with Barrow by beating DHS Greenhouse Progress 1 7-1. No messing about. The game between Gareth Herbert and Po Huang "Barry" Chen could hardly have been more exciting. A razor sharp Gareth won the first end at a canter 11-4 and led 9-6 in the second. Barry looked to be out of it particularly with Gareth serving but Barry "toughed it out" and won 11-9. The momentum was now with Barry and he stormed through the third end 11-4. And the fourth well all the way to 10-5 !. At this point Gareth staged the comeback of the day and somehow he saved five match points before winning 12-10. Barry led 7-5 in the decider but again Gareth rallied and he eventually won 11-4, 9-11 4-11, 12-10, 12-10. Ashley Willetts was the London Club's sole winner and the still improving England no. 36 will be delighted with his 11-7, 8-11, 11-8, 5-11, 15-13 victory over Welsh international Stephen Jenkins. England no. 14 Terry Young showed that even without the same level of practice as in the past he can't be discounted. He secured an excellent 11-8, 12-10, 12-10 win over Colum Slevin.

Barrow's 6-2 win over Fusion saw Fusion's Sule Olaleye involved in two titanic battles. Sule levelled the scores at 1-1 by beating Gavin Rumgay 18-16, 11-7, 11-2 and when he pinched the first end off Paul Drinkhall after trailing 6-2 an upset looked on the cards. It wasn't enough. Paul raised his game and after some delightful free flowing rallies Paul ran out a 9-11, 11-2, 11-9, 11-8 winner. Gavin Rumgay eventually secured the Fusion victory, beating Kaseem Adelele Adisa 11-9, 11-6, 4-11, 8-11, 11-8 after a magnificent match. Rumgay's high tossed serves and some amazing lobbed retrieving from the Scottish ace were a major feature of what was a spell-binding game. A man of the match wasn't nominated for this game but the Table Tennis 365 programme had it's own take on proceedings. It awarded it to Paul Drinkhall.

The battle to avoid relegation took another turn when Sycamore and Westfield drew 4-4. As you might have expected there was never a lot between the two sides, and the scores were tied at 2-2 and 3-3. Four games were decided in the fifth end and as you might have guessed these were shared 2-2. Parity was retained in the last game when England no. 41 Mark Simpson got the better of England no. 33 Daniel Lowe 5-11, 9-11, 11-8, 11-4, 11-6 to force the draw. England no. 16 Richard Andrews, both the Umpires and Table Tennis 365's Player of the Match reinforced his status as the ETTA's most improved player with two excellent wins. He beat Omkar Torgalkar 13-11, 11-8, 11-6 and Sam Perry 14-12, 11-7, 11-6. In a fiercely fought battle between the Scottish internationals Niall Cameron fought back from 2-0 down to beat Stewart Crawford 8-11 5-11, 11-4, 11-9, 11-7.

Ormesby's 6-2 win over BATTS was fairly routine, but a spirited BATTS side won't be displeased with their showing. Martin Kubrt scored an excellent 4-11, 11-7, 11-3, 11-6 win over Nigel Eckersley and BATTS'S new signing – England no. 26 Tom Maynard secured an even better 11-3, 11-9, 9-11, 11-6 win over England no. 13 Michael Marsden. All action Damien Nicholls and John Murphy were both undefeated for Ormesby with John's 11-8, 15-13, 11-7 win over Wang Zheng looking particularly impressive.

Steve Kerns – British League Press Officer

Picture: Gareth Herbert – Great comeback win

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