MK League : Outstanding Ollie obliterates top dogs

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PREMIER

Greenleys Kings 5 point lead at the head of the table was gone it a flash this week as they failed to win for the first time this season when held to a draw by club-mates Warriors. Ollie Horswell was the star turn with a glorious maximum that stunned the opposition. His first victim was Guy Sparrow, dispatched at 12-10 in the decider. This was followed by a straight games defeat of Jordan Moss, but it was the hat-trick set that had heads turning, as Ollie trailed 9-4 in the 5th to Nick Howard before making a remarkable comeback to clinch it 11-9. Ricky Taiwo and Valentin Cazacu both beat an under par Jordan to complete the Warriors score while Guy and Nick won the Kings' sets between them.

Greenleys Monarchs are now level on points at the top after thumping MK Phoenix 10-0 for the second time this season. They excluded all of their hard bat specialists last week but this time round selected two, Ian Johnston and Dave Tiplady, who both had an easy match. Rubber bat man Martin Hall was no less inconvenienced in the whitewash against the Phoenix trio of Terry Lau, Alan Bolding and Gerald Ridgway. We are a step nearer to seeing the hard bat 'dream team' all in action together as Monarchs continue to pick and mix from their pool of players. Come on Monarchs – make it happen!

3rd placed MK Spinners called on Div 2 reserve Dylan Cox for his Premier debut. alongside team regulars Alan Cherry and Gary Jones, against promoted MK Powers. And he did not disappoint with a crucial win over Colin Munford that earned his side a 6-4 victory. Alan took his standard maximum but Gary got into difficulty against Clare Styles and Minesh Pitamber, losing both by 2 point margins in the 5th. So a good night for Clare and Minesh with a brace a-piece.

In the absence of skipper Russell Penn, my bottom of the pile MK Topspin side gave their own debut to another Div 2 player, Paul Tompkins, alongside Mervyn Kelly and myself. Paul was part of the title winning MK Likely Lads squad from 2005/06 but hasn't played much since and struggled here against the MK Kingpins line-up of Dave Allison. Mark Purcell and Peter Bannister who were giving nothing away. The 9-1 scoreline hardly flattered Kingpins as I avoided what would have been a 3rd successive blackwash for Topspin by scraping out a 12-10 in the 5th victory against Mark.

Player of the week is Ollie Horswell.

DIVISION 1

PUMAS EXTEND LEAD

Favourites MK Pumas went 7 points clear this week after beating 5th placed Greenleys Glory 7-3, enjoying some good fortune along the way. An eventful but frustrating evening for home skipper Ian Brown, who wasted 3 match points for what would have been a straight games win over Julie Snowdon. Staring defeat in the face, Julie managed to dig deep into her reserves and turn the set around to win over 5 games. Then Ian came as close as he's ever come to beating Andy Smith, going down 14-12 in the decider. So Ian had to settle for just a win over Chris Belton and a share in the doubles with Jacob Midson, who surprisingly was winless on the night. Dan Englander was Glory's other winner against Chris. Pumas' ace Andy extended his current unbeaten run to 18.

2nd placed Greenleys Eagles welcomed back stalwart Geoff Callaway after a six match absence and he won twice in their 6-4 win at Chackmore Hasbeens, beating both Andy and Chris Whitehead, but finding hot property Bub Burman a step too far. No such problem for Iain Lindsay who snapped up his 7th hat-trick of the season in 8 appearances. Dave Plumb beat Chris Whitehead for Eagles other point to end a run of 8 consecutive losses. Eagles take on Pumas next and a mouth watering clash between Iain and Andy awaits.

Fabrice Spelta was the man of the match when St. Christopher Van Hire entertained Woburn Sands Data. The Luxembourger scored a treble at the expense of James Molloy, Darren Ward and Rob McPheat to see his team home by 6-4 . Paul Haigh contributed with two wins and David Broome one. Darren notched a brace for Data, James one and they won the doubles together. Half the sets went the distance here.

A second win in a row takes bottom placed Newport Pagnell Vantage to within 4 points of this week's vanquished opponents Open University Primes. Vantage like their time on the table and took 6 of the sets to a 5th game (one more than last week) in a match that ended at 11.15 pm. Michael Howard lost 2 of these marathons in what is becoming an annoyingly regular habit for him. He really should have taken the first though when 10-5 up in the decider against Andy Tan, who had earlier won from 7-9 down in the 5th to Tony Ardis. No such dramas for in-form Sue Lewis who walked away with another maximum and once again shared the vital doubles with Tony, who won 2 singles on the night. Patrick Wong and James Zeng got one each for Primes.

Player of the week is Fabrice Spelta.

DIVISION 2

(courtesy of Martin Johnson)

With two thirds of autumn gone, the League programme in division 2 has reached the halfway point (bar one postponed match), and so teams were playing the last different opponents, this week, prior to starting the second half – when teams / players will be aiming either to repeat or improve on their wins from the first half of the season, or looking for revenge wins! It also means that positions after this week are 'true', given that each

team has played every other team. At the top of the table, things have got a lot closer, with the leaders being held to a draw, whilst the second and third teams picked up wins, to close the gap.

As referenced above, leaders Milton Keynes Hit 'n' Hope's run of five wins was halted, as they were held to a 5-5 draw by Woburn Sands Mosquitoes. Glenn Barcham got things off to a flying start for Mosquitoes, beating Paul Tompkins by the narrowest of margins, at 11-9 in the deciding leg, but Hit 'n' Hope were very soon level, as Mike Ainsworth blasted his way through the usual solid defence of Paul Hamer, for an emphatic three games win. The leaders seemed to be back on track, as despite dropping the first two legs to Robert Mungham, who was playing up from division 5, Andy Frearson did just enough to win through in five games. Mosquitoes used Glenn / Robert in the doubles, and it worked, as they won through in four games against Paul / Mike. From there on, Mosquitoes kept nudging their noses in front, with Glenn going on to hit a fine maximum, whilst Hit 'n' Hope kept on levelling the scores, in a series of closely fought sets, in particular Paul Hamer snatching a win over Andy at 13-11 in the fifth. At 5-4 to Mosquitoes, Paul Tompkins stepped up to win the battle of the Pauls in set 10, to conclude a competitive match and seal the draw. The results leaves Hit 'n' Hope just two points ahead of Tornadoes, and five ahead of Classics. Mosquitoes stay in sixth place, but effectively are probably around fourth, allowing for their match in hand.

Milton Keynes Tornadoes moved into a clear second spot, with their biggest win of the season, 10-0 against struggling Milton Keynes Blades. Maximums here for Nicolas Wong, Tanmay Tijare, and for Matthew Curley, who seems to be improving each week, against the luckless Blades trio of Bill Tyler, Mark Thomas and reserve, Jakin Greyling, although Jakin had chances against Matthew, just losing out at deuce in the fifth, having lead 2-0. Nicolas' wins take him back top of the individual averages (bar players who've only played once), whilst Tornadoes join Hit 'n' Hope equal top of the doubles averages, as Nicolas / Tanmay took the doubles against Bill / Jakin, though it needed a fifth game. Blades remain at the foot of the table, now six points adrift of the next team up.

Milton Keynes Classics also closed the gap on the leaders, though they drop to third position, three points behind Tornadoes, after winning 7-3 versus Newport Pagnell Lagondas. Masoud Nassor again won all his sets, extending his run of singles wins to ten, plus teamed up with Dylan Cox to take the doubles against the Lagondas pair of Glen Davison / Chris Horn. Dylan also gained two singles wins, only denied his maximum by a 10-12 loss in the decider to Chris. Nick Markham won the other point for Classics, beating the Lagondas reserve, Tanya Paice, who despite losing all three, did very well to extend Massoud to a fifth game. For Lagondas, Chris won twice and Glen won once, with the result leaving them in fifth place in the table, although Mosquitoes have a match in hand, so are likely to overtake them when they catch up that match versus Spitfires.

Milton Keynes Shambles picked up their first win of November, in a good all round performance, to see them emerge victorious 6-4 against St. Christopher Spitfires, and move to seventh place. Player of the match, however, was Spitfire's Bernie Raffe, who scored three singles wins, plus the doubles with Jock Campbell. Unfortunately for Spitfires, neither Jock, nor Graham Silversides, were able to collect a singles win, as the Shambles trio of Paddy Patel, Steve Jordan and Dave Burrill each grabbed two wins. Paddy had come closest against Bernie, losing out 11-7 in the decider, whilst Paddy was pushed to 13-11 in the decider before edging out Jock. Steve survived an even closer call, as he was 2-0 down to Graham, but sneaked it 17-15, 11-9 in games 4 and 5, in set 9, to actually seal the win. Spitfires are now in equal eighth place, but their match in hand against Mosquitoes will likely see them move up to seventh, to leave what looks to be a four way battle to avoid the two relegation spots. Incidentally, this was Spitfires' seventh scoreline of 6-4 out of eight matches!

The final match of the week featured yet another very closely fought out encounter, between Milton Keynes Cavaliers and Mursley Hawks, although the final scoreline of 8-2 to Hawks rather belied how close the match really was. Six of the ten sets went to a decider, four of them at 11-9 or deuce, with five of those six going Hawks' way, as they rode their luck for their biggest win of the season. Frank Beck and Martin Johnson each won maximums, though both had very close calls along the way, with Frank edging out Chris Paddon at deuce in the fifth in the final set of the night, having earlier saved set points against him when playing John Bradley, whilst Martin had to come back from two games down to Chris Paddon in the opening set. Chris Welch had earlier scored a win at 11-9 in the fifth, from two games down, to edge past Hawks' reserve, Richard Hare, and Chris Paddon was stretched to 17-15 in game 4 when he played Richard. In an evening of close sets, perhaps the set of the night was John against Richard, as the advantage ebbed to and fro, setting up a thrilling final leg, which

Richard finally sneaked at 14-12, to end his run of eight consecutive losses in a fifth set. The match also saw two individual games won from 10-3 down! The win moves Hawks up to fourth place, but leaves Cavaliers effectively in ninth place, but just two points behind Shambles.

Players of the Week **: Matthew Curley and Glenn Barcham.**

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