



Leicester & District: Logjam at the top

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The top of Division Five of the Leicester and District League is ticking like a timebomb at the moment with four teams within touching distance.

Abbots Road IV are top with 35 points, Knighton Park X on 34 and their own ninth team third with 33. Winstanley Wizards have 29 points but a match in hand – a win would bring them to level third. Two points between four in that case, in terms of league points just a draw.

Abbots Road maintained their advantage with a 10-0 victory over Nomads IV when Kishen Mistry, Sameer Shaikh and Zakaria Yusuf took all before them. Dave Croucher fought long and hard, losing two sets in five and winning a fourth game in the other, but to no avail in the end.

Second team, Knighton Park tenth, had a somewhat tougher task in defeating Winstanley's fourth team 7-3 but Phil Wood continued some excellent form this term with a maximum, two each for Mike Smith and Bill Walmsley. The Bhakta brothers, Kai and Kalan each won one for the Wizards as well as grabbing the doubles for a deserved point in a well fought contest.

The Park's ninth team, meanwhile, were defeating Regent Sports III by the highest score, Paul Ducksbury, Ayman Gabbar and Fares Gabbar superb, especially the latter all at three straight, and it is very unusual to see Regents' Gary Featherstone come away winless.

Winstanley's third team need to keep winning to maintain contact which they did, also by 10-0, with Ras Kotadia, John Hurst and Natham Joseph all doing the job, although Mick Clayton took Kotadia to five first set of the match.

Most of the top four have already faced each other and have shared the points around but the one crucial match left involves Abbots Road facing Knighton Park ninth, the latter without skipper, Alec Downes, who has a trapped nerve. But it will be whoever keeps their nerve on the night that matters.

Bob Whittaker scored a terrific maximum for Syston Casuals II in Division Two to secure a share of points for his

team against Electricity III, John Szostak weighing in with two. The Sparks just had the depth with Russ Pettitt taking two John Winsper and Preetpal Sangha, playing up, one apiece and the doubles.

Alex Mason won two for Great Glen against Abbots Road and partnered Cliff Smith for the doubles to secure a point. But Abbots Road had Vishal Parmar in excellent form to win all three while Chetan Tailor and Geoff Hancock both won two for Abbots to give them a 7-3 verdict.

There were plenty of very close results in this division not least of all Knighton Park IV's 6-4 victory over Arnesby II when all six players came away with something to show. Andy Searle and Osman Bawa each notched a brace for KP with John Underwood taking one before Bawa and Underwood won that all important doubles. For Arnesby it was two for Bruce Johnson, one each for Dave Wagstaff and Nathan Thomson, the latter's a very good success over Bawa.

Another at 6-4 saw Regent Sports just home against Fleckney thanks largely to an excellent maximum by Regent's Kevin Sanderson, with support from Richard Anderson (2) and one from Charlie Bateman. Jason Prescott recorded another pair for Fleckney while James Robertson took the other singles with Fleckney grabbing the doubles.

The top of Division Three appears a three-team race but Winstanley Wizards are beginning to get going and there is still more than half the season to go, plenty of time. Their latest was an astonishing 10-0 victory over Nomads who are never easy to beat, let alone by that score. Dave Seeds, Mick Box and Jack Kermode did the damage.

Meanwhile the top three all won, the easiest that of Knighton Park VII against Goons II whom they defeated 9-1, Amardeep Gudela and Simon Aldis spearheading with three each, Martin Pember the other two.

Abbots Road II maintained their interest by beating Electricity IV 6-4 when Richard Lee showed a clean pair of heels with all three, Steve Pratt two and Raju Rahul one. Andy Wright won two for the Sparks, Daniel Woolman one and these two the doubles.

Another 6-4 saw Knighton Park's fifth team home against Electricity IV thanks to a very good maximum by Dave Mountain trying a new, faster, bat – and working. Steve Adams and Eddie Kwok each won one and the Park needed the doubles for full points in this case.

Syston Casuals III consolidated their top position in Division Four with a 10-0 beating of Regent Sports II, Tony Monteiro, Wes Glauds and Nick Bishop all on top of their game and, while they were doing that, second placed Blaby and Whetstone were losing 6-4 to Abbots Road III.

It was a match where all six players won something, Eiz Eddin Al Katrib and Bradley Lapworth each a couple for Abbots, Dave Rana one, the first two taking the doubles for full points. Ian Knight won two for Blaby, Alan Willson and Tom Phipps one apiece in a match that throws second position open again.

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