



MK League : Kings roll over Spinners in pre Christmas rout

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PREMIER DIVISION

As we head into the festive break leaders Greenleys Kings hold an 11 point advantage over club-mates Monarchs, which should be enough for them to secure the title with just 7 matches left. Kings beat 3rd placed MK Spinners 8-2 this week with the Spinners wins coming from the bat of Alan Cherry over Nick Howard and Gary Deakin. Blanks for Neil Massa and div 2 sub Nicolas Wong, a difficult introduction to the Premier for the promising Tornado. Only one singles went beyond 3 games but what a set that was, Gary Deakin coming back from 5-0 down in the decider to clinch a dramatic victory against Neil. Matt Haynes continued his winning ways for Kings, now on a 7 run win after Ian Johnston ended his 39 set winning streak 3 weeks ago.

My MK Topspin outfit took a good point from title chasing Greenleys Monarchs when Russell Penn pulled off a sensational victory over Ian Johnston 11-8 in the 5th. Russell's first win against a team in the top half of the Division, the biggest upset of the season so far and a contender for the best win of his career. Monarchs' Martin Hall struggled a bit for his maximum but Dave Tiplady found the going all too easy before heading back home to Cambridge. Mervyn Kelly and myself completed the Topspin line-up.

Greenleys Warriors trounced bottom team MK Phoenix 10-0. Last time they met Gerald Ridgway recorded his only win so far at the expense of Ollie Horswell. Young Ollie wasn't about to let that happen again but he did show his vulnerability against defenders when struggling against Mervyn Phillips. Mervyn looked comfortable enough at 7-3 in the 5th and again at 10-8 but Ollie found a way through his defence to recover from 3 match points down, which left Mervyn gutted. Gerald battled hard as usual and came close to beating Valentin Cazuca before fading at the end of the 5th game. Man of the match Ricky Taiwo won his sets in straight games and Terry Lau was the other Phoenix man.

We had our first 2-a-side match of the season this week when MK Powers pair Pete Tillotson and Masoud Nassor (playing up from Div 2) took on MK Kingpins' Dave Allison and Mark Purcell. That meant only the 5 sets played on the table counted (under a rule change introduced in 2017) with no walk-overs allocated to either team for the unplayed sets. Powers have been there before, featuring in the first ever '5 set match' with Chackmore Hasbeens. Kingpins took the shortened match 4-1 but what a terrific consolation win for skipper Pete to make it 5 losses in a row for the usually dependable Dave. Has the 'Mackem machine' hit the rails?

Player of the week is Russell Penn

DIVISION 1

TABLE TOPPERS IN ANTI-CLIMAX

The two leading teams met in an anticipated mouth-watering clash on Tuesday but the match turned into a non-event with Greenleys Eagles showing up with just 2 players at St. Christopher Van Hire. Old habits die hard for Eagles who have been serial offenders down the years of not bothering with a third player if any of their squad members are unavailable. Van Hire won 7-3 with Fabrice Spelta unbeaten, a win from Jez Wilcox plus the doubles. Geoff Callaway got a brace for Eagles and Dave Plumb one. David Broome completed line-up for the home side, who extend their lead to 5 points.

MK Pumas slip back into 2nd place after a scrappy 6-4 win at Chackmore Hasbeens to end a disastrous (for them) run of 3 defeats. As usual Andy Smith proved to be 'Mr Reliable' with a hat-trick that included Bub Burman, who had earlier lost to Julie Snowdon, in the final set. But, that was Julie's only win as she went down to both Andy Whitehead and Sam Willett, which were possibly their best ever wins. Pumas took the doubles and needed to rely on a singles success from Keith Carrington, his first of the season against a Div 1 player, for the win.

4th placed Woburn Sands Data took their full side to bottom placed Newport Pagnell Vantage, who still had Tony Ardis out injured. James Molloy and Darren Ward hit maximums in their 8-2 win with Vantage's Sue Lewis stopping the singles whitewash with a victory over Rob McPheat. Steve Peak played up from div 3 alongside skipper Mike Howard with Vantage's other set victory coming in the doubles with the Sue/Mike combo putting in another great performance to win 11-8 in the 5th.

Open University Primes reeled off their third win in a row, after only one in their previous 11 matches, but still remain in the relegation zone. This week's victims were Greenleys Glory thanks to a brace each from Patrick Wong and Andy Tan, a single from Martin Lok plus the doubles. 4 sets went the distance including Glory boy Danny Sedgwick's 2 wins and one by Scott Dixon in his pair that completed their scoring. Jacob Midson remained winless.

Player of the week is Sam Willett

DIVISION 2

(courtesy of Martin Johnson)

This week saw just the one overdue match played in Division 2, whilst the remaining eight teams started up their seasonal rest from table tennis. This now completes all of the fixtures for another calendar year and also completes the two thirds point of the League fixtures in the Division.

St. Christopher Spitfires hosted Woburn Sands Mosquitoes in a match held over from mid-October, to bring the

Division fully up to date. It was Spitfires who were able to move themselves up the League Table, with their best result of the season, an 8-2 win, that moves them from equal eighth up to seventh, and now just a couple of points behind Mosquitoes, who stay in sixth spot. First to play, Graham Silversides defeated Glenn Barcham in four games, followed by Bernie Raffie doing likewise against Paul Hamer, to put the home team 2-0 up. Mosquitoes' reserve, David Shapter, had a close tussle with Jock Campbell, which went the distance, with David just taking the decider at 11-9, to claw back a point for the visitors. The doubles went to a fifth leg, too, and although the Mosquitoes pairing of Glenn / Paul went two legs up, Jock / Bernie battled back well to take the next three legs, and the set, for Spitfires. The home side further extended their lead, as Bernie beat Glenn, Graham beat David, and Jock beat Paul, all in four legs, followed by Bernie completing his maximum, winning in straight games against David, to give Spitfires a 7-1 lead. Glenn then took the next, to stop the rot, beating Jock in straight games, but Spitfires ended the night with the final set, as Graham beat Paul in four, to join Bernie as unbeaten on the night.

With six further League weeks to go, the Division sees Milton Keynes Tornados in front, four points clear of Milton Keynes Hit 'n' Hope, followed by Milton Keynes Classics another six points back. At the foot of the table, Milton Keynes Blades look to be struggling, ten points adrift of Milton Keynes Cavaliers, who are themselves five points behind eighth placed Milton Keynes Shambles.

I hope that everyone enjoys the Christmas / New Year break, but then it's back to League action in the week commencing 6th January, with the Challenge Cup and League then alternating weeks up until early February.

Players of the week are Bernie Raffie and Graham Silversides

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