



MK League: Martin first out the blocks

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PREMIER DIVISION

A new decade dawns and the honour of being the first Premier singles winner fell to Greenley's Monarchs' Martin Hall in his team's 6-4 victory over Milton Keynes Kingpins on Monday. Coincidentally the second 'loser' was Peter Bannister for the second successive decade (he lost to me in 2010). Although this was Martin's only win on the night he was well supported by a brace from Ian Johnston and a Tomek Nowakowski hat-trick. Skipper Dave Allison was back on form for Kingpins with a good brace himself and a narrow 12-10 in the 5th defeat to Tomek. He scored a magnificent victory over Ian, whose style suits him well, over 4 games all decided by 2-point margins. In the 3rd of those Dave led 9-1 before losing 9 consecutive points and recovering to take the game 12-10! Peter won one for Kingpins, who also took the doubles. Mark Purcell remained winless.

Incidentally, Ian has qualified once again for the World Championship of Ping Pong to be held at Alexandra Palace on January 25/26. All the best to him and local hero Andrew Baggaley, 3 times winner and defending champion, in this cash rich tournament.

Top team Greenleys Kings met my bottom placed side MK Topspin this week and came away with an 8-2 victory. Skipper Nick Howard had rushed by car from Exeter to make the match in time and the weary traveller was rewarded with a hard won hat-trick although far from his best at his best. Guy Sparrow certainly was though with easy wins against me, Russell Penn and Mervyn Kelly. Kings gave a rare outing to Jordan Moss, who featured in 3 close sets, all decided at 12-10 in the 5th, winning two but losing to Mervyn. The Northants hitter played out 305 points in the evening, a Premier record and more than twice than Guy on the night. The doubles set went to the Russell/Mervyn pairing, formerly winless, against the previously unbeaten Guy/Nick combination to provide the shock of the season so far.

MK Powers fielded a man short for the 6th time and went down 8-2 to club-mates Phoenix. Some teams go the extra mile to provide their opponents with 3 players to play against while others don't bother, such is the modern world. A good match for Powers' Pete Tillotson, who beat both Mervyn Phillips and Gerald Ridgway for his team's points. Ioan Constantin was unbeaten for Phoenix and Clare Styles was the other Powers player.

Greenleys Warriors beat MK Spinners 6-4 in the remaining match with Ricky Taiwo and Valentin Cazacu winning 2 a-piece, a single from Ollie Horswell plus the doubles set. Beleagured Spinners fielded div 2 reserve Paul Tompkins, who played well without winning a game. Skipper Alan Cherry won his usual maximum and Tim Cheek provided the other win.

Player of the week is Tomek Nowakowski

DIVISION 1

PUMAS NARROW THE GAP

Leaders St. Christopher Van Hire continued their winning ways with a 7-3 success at Greenleys Glory this week. Hat-tricks here for Biao Wang and Fabrice Spelta while team-mate Jez Wilcox remained winless against Christine Scaysbrook, Jacob Midson and Ian Brown.

MK Pumas narrowed the gap at the top to 3 points after a 9-1 victory over Open University Primes. The 'one that got away' from them was an Andy Tan straight set win over Chris Belton. Regulation hat-tricks here for Julie Snowdon and Andy Smith while Patrick Wong and James Zeng made up the numbers for Primes.

Greenleys Eagles kept up the habit of winning when Iain Lindsay is on the score-card, beating Woburn Sands Data 6-4. Their star man logged his usual hat-trick and shared the doubles success with Geoff Callaway, who bagged a brace himself. Darren Ward got a couple for Data with James Molloy and Rob McPheat one each. Dave Plumb was the other Eagle.

Chackmore Hasbeens beat fellow strugglers Newport Pagnell Vantage 6-4 thanks to a first maximum of the season from Sam Willett, supported by a brace from Bub Burman and a single from Andy Whitehead. This fixture brought together the two most successful doubles pairs in the division and it was appropriate that the set went to a deciding game before Tony Ardis/Sue Lewis got the better of Bub/Andy. Vantage's other sets came from Sue (2) and Tony while winless Steve Paice played up from div 3. Another big scalp for Sue here in the shape of Bub, a former Premier man for MK Spinners.

Player of the week is Iain Lindsay

DIVISION 2

(courtesy of Martin Johnson)

In the first League week of the New Year, all five matches resulted in close scores, with one 5-5 draw and four 6-4 results.

Leaders, Milton Keynes Tornadoes, were given a tough match by third placed Milton Keynes Classics, but managed to come away with a 6-4 win, which leaves them six points clear at the top of the table. Tanmay Tijare picked up wins in all his singles sets, including a win from 2-1 down in games against Masoud Nassor, in the evening's only five game set. For Tornadoes, Nicolas Wong won twice, but he was handed a rare defeat by Dylan Cox, who won in straight games. Matthew Curley won the final point for the leaders by beating Masoud, but lost out to both Dylan and to Nick Markham. Dylan / Masoud also took the doubles against Nicolas / Tanmay, to keep Classics in third spot.

Milton Keynes Shambles produced the surprise result of the week, defeating second placed Milton Keynes Hit 'n' Hope 6-4. Steve Jordan was the chief architect in the win, with three singles wins, although he was taken to five games by both Ivor Howard and Paul Tompkins. Steve was backed up by Dave Burrill, who collect wins versus Mike Ainsworth and in the final set of the night, to clinch the win, against Ivor. Paddy Patel provided the final win for Shambles, although they were defeated in the doubles as Ivor / Paul beat Steve / Paddy. The result leaves Hit 'n' Hope six points behind Tornadoes, but still six points clear of the chasers, whilst Shambles stay eighth, but have extended the gap above the relegation zone to seven points.

Fourth placed Mursley Hawks suffered a 6-4 reverse away at seventh placed St. Christopher Spitfires, for whom Bernie Raffe was on fine form, collecting a maximum that included the doubles with Jock Wallace, whilst Graham Silversides grabbed the other two wins. Spitfires gained the early advantage as Graham took a tight five game set against Martin Johnson, followed by Bernie doing likewise versus Frank Beck, and although reserve Peter Sear pulled one back with a win over Jock, the home team built up a 5-1 lead. Hawks battled back to narrow the advantage, as Frank won his other two sets and Martin one, but fittingly it was Bernie who clinched the win at 6-3 with his final singles win.

Fifth placed Newport Pagnell Lagondas have closed the gap on fourth spot to just one point, after securing a 6-4 win over Milton Keynes Cavaliers. Two wins apiece for Glen Davison and Chris Horn, supplemented by one for Roy Read, plus Glen / Chris taking the doubles, was enough to grab the spoils. For Cavaliers, who remain in ninth spot, Chris Welch picked up two wins, with one win each by Chris Paddon and John Bradley.

The final match saw bottom team Milton Keynes Blades a player short, but they managed to pick up an unlikely looking 5-5 draw with seventh placed Woburn Sands Mosquitoes. The Blades pairing of Mark Thomas and Brian Evans each won twice, both losing out to Paul Hamer in four games, but beating both Glenn Barcham and Mosquitoes' reserve, Paul Sargent, although Glenn lost out in five games both times. Mark / Brian also teamed up to beat Paul / Glenn in a five game doubles.

Players of the Week : Tanmay Tijare and Bernie Raffe

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