



Clacton & Dist: Kestrels turn the tables

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This week saw the opening matches of the Group stage of the Clacton & District League's **Handicap Cup** and in **Group B** Windsor Kestrels took an immediate opportunity to inflict a revenge defeat on Second Division club-mates Windsor Buzzards.

The Kestrels put to one side their disappointing League results this season to beat the Buzzards 5-1, just seven days after the Buzzards had convincingly won the corresponding League match 9-1.

Graham Bunce and Debra Found both remained undefeated on the night whilst Jackie Bunce played her part in two successful doubles, including the only match which went the distance, Jackie and Graham (+1) defeating Dave Martin and Pete Bloomfield (-3) 3-2 (13-15, 11-2, 8-11, 11-4, 11-3).

The second match in the Group between Windsor Hawks and Nomads Jaguars proved a tighter affair, the Hawks trailing 0-2, taking the next three games to lead 3-2, before the Jaguars levelled at 3-all. But singles wins from Andy Vincent and Ian Fielder in the next two games secured a 5-3 win for Division One Hawks over their Second Division opponents.

There was another reversal of fortunes in **Group A** when the two teams of juniors from Division Three, Windsor Merlins and Brotherhood F, met for a second time in three weeks. In their League meeting, Brotherhood had triumphed 7-3 but this time it was the Merlins who came out on top, winning 5-2 in a match where there was little difference in the players' grades.

Sam Plummer stayed unbeaten, winning both his singles close in five, (on +1) defeating Ben Bryden (-1) 3-2 (8-11, 11-5, 11-7, 8-11, 11-8) and, in a scratch match against Alex Marsh, edging it in five (11-8, 8-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-8). Bryden (-1) had a tough match in his second singles against Joe Plummer (+1) but finally took it 3-2 (6-11, 11-7, 7-11, 11-5, 11-7).

Nomads Bobcats, the only Division Two side in Group A, were 5-2 winners against Nomads Lynx, Allen Denyer unbeaten in the three games he played. In the only encounter which went to five, Lynx captain Dominic Joannou

(+1) enjoyed a strange-looking 3-2 (11-7, 9-11, 11-9, 8-11, 1-11) win over Andy Teemal (-5).

In **Group C**, Brotherhood B could only field two players against Walton B and, although Grant Sharpe (+2) defeated Kevin James (-6) in the opener, a win for Derek Willis (-3) over Martin Scarfe (+1) in the next game meant it was all over for Brotherhood, Walton winning 5-1.

In the Group's other match, a two-player Brotherhood E faced Nomads Lions and, when they won the first three games of the tie, they may have dreamed of pulling off an unlikely victory. But Nomads' skipper Jason Lloyd (-3) came to his side's rescue by beating Kevin Pryor (+1) 3-0 (11-9, 11-9, 11-5) to spare the Lions' blushes and give his team a 5-3 victory.

In **Group D**, Division Two Brotherhood D eventually came out on top 5-1 against Third Division opponents Nomads Ocelots.

But the match was a hard-fought affair, exemplified by the first game of the evening where Mark Beckham and Paul Metcalf (-8) scraped past Arthur Wells-Garrett and Hazel Blanche (+2) 3-2 (14-12, 9-11, 11-6, 4-11, 16-14). Only Beckham of the Brotherhood trio remained unbeaten.

An all-Division Three tie between Walton E and Windsor Robins was level in the early stages at 2-all but Walton crucially won both doubles and eventually ran out 5-2 victors. The middle doubles was particularly important, with Rivhu Khan and Maggie Earle (-5) beating Neil Chegvidden and Mick Coker (+1) 3-2 (9-11, 11-8, 11-7, 12-14, 11-8).

There was a similar situation in **Group E** where another all-Third Division encounter between Windsor Magpies and Nomads Leopards was level at 2-2 before the Magpies pulled away to win 5-2, Dave Sweetland (-6) edging past Dave Wright (+1) in the seventh and final game of the evening (5-11, 6-11, 11-9, 12-10, 14-12). Windsor's Alan Rutledge was 'Man of the Match', unbeaten in his two singles and one doubles.

Unfortunately, following this match, the Leopards decided that problems in getting enough fit players to matches meant they would have to concede their two remaining ties, leaving the other two teams in the Group, Brotherhood C and Windsor Penguins, with automatic 5-0 walk-over wins.

Group F comprises four First Division sides but only one match was played this week, Walton C defeating Walton D 5-1. John Marshall and John Rankin stayed unbeaten for the C team.

In **Group G** Division Two Windsor Harriers defeated Division One Windsor Eagles 5-3, the Harriers importantly taking the three games which went the distance, including the final two of the tie.

Isabel Barton was the Harriers' heroine, winning her two singles and one doubles, crucially using her grade advantage (+3) to edge out Mel Rampton (-10) 3-2 (11-9, 6-11, 6-11, 11-9, 11-7) in the closest game of the tie.

Finally, Division Two promotion-hopefuls Lawford led Division One champions Nomads Panthers 2-1 but the Panthers rallied to take a tightly-fought tie 5-2.

The teams shared the four games which went the distance, the middle doubles proving pivotal when James Denyer and Liam Harris (-8) won a nail-biter against Richard Spence and Ian Sherwood (+3) 3-2 (4-11, 3-11, 11-9, 17-15, 11-6) to set the Panthers on the road to victory. Denyer was the only unbeaten Panthers' player.

* The latest Handicap Cup results and tables can be found on the Information Page of the League's website under 'KO Cup Results and Tables'. This page will be updated twice a week during the Group stages. The remaining Group matches are scheduled to be played during weeks beginning 13th December and 3rd January. All these matches need to be played, and results sheets received, by Sunday 9th January.

* A reminder that the usual Cup format applies to all Group matches, that is, it's the best of nine individual matches with the first team to win five individual matches declared the winner. This is set out in the Rules and Notes (item 5) circulated to all players in November. Players can, of course, play any remaining games on a friendly basis but these do not count in the final score.

* The first of the League's Tournaments, the Handicap Singles, is scheduled to take place on Sunday 13th

February at the Coastal Academy Sports Hall. Full details will be circulated to players early in the New Year.

* All players should have received the latest Covid advice from Table Tennis England. Full details are on both the Clacton League and Table Tennis England websites.

RESULTS

HANDICAP CUP

Group A

Windsor Merlins 5 Brotherhood F 2

Nomads Bobcats 5 Nomads Lynx 2

Group B

Windsor Hawks 5 Nomads Jaguars 3

Windsor Kestrels 5 Windsor Buzzards 1

Group C

Brotherhood E 3 Nomads Lions 5

Walton B 5 Brotherhood B 1

Group D

Walton E 5 Windsor Robins 2

Nomads Ocelots 1 Brotherhood D 5

Group E

Windsor Magpies 5 Nomads Leopards 2

Nomads Leopards 0 Brotherhood C 5 (walk-over)

Nomads Leopards 0 Windsor Penguins 5 (walk-over)

Group F

Walton D 1 Walton C 5

Group G

Windsor Eagles 3 Windsor Harriers 5

Lawford 2 Nomads Panthers 5

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