



## MK League: Hero Howard returns in triumph

**Author:** Paul Stimpson

**Posted On:** December 14, 2021

*Pictured is Varsha Tijare at the Women & Girls session held at MKTTC on Sunday 10th Dec. Photo by David Johnson.*

### Premier Division

Following an enforced lay-off Nick Howard made his long awaited seasonal debut for Greenleys Kings in this early relegation battle with fellow strugglers MK Pumas. How much the League champions have missed their star can be seen in the result, Kings' first win of the season thanks to a hat-trick from the main man himself. Guy Sparrow got a brace and Iain Lindsay one with the doubles win ensuring a solid 7-3 victory. Not that the Pumas went down without a terrific fight with sets 6 to 9 all going to a deciding game, the last two of these with scores of 16-14 and 17-15 in the 5th respectively. Division 1 substitute Russell Penn played the proverbial 'blinder' for Pumas and should have closed out his final set when holding 3 match points against Nick, but the Kings' skipper just would not be beaten and hung on to win a great encounter and complete his maximum, having earlier taken out Puma regulars Andy Smith (1 win on the night) and Hakan Karaagac (2 wins). A brilliant match and more performances like this one will see the Kings shooting up the table.

Mid table teams MK Sasaki and Greenleys Warriors fittingly fought out a draw with Warriors skipper Ricky Taiwo rightly taking most of the plaudits with another fine maximum. His victims this week, all in straight games, were William Kit Liang, Michael Wilkins and Nicolas Chong. Darren Ward picked up Warriors other sets by beating Michael and, in the crucial final set, William. In the continued absence of Ollie Horswell, Warriors gave a debut here to Division 3 substitute Saravana Kumar.

Leaders MK Spinners, meanwhile, clocked up back-to-back 10-0 results against promoted teams with their whitewash victory over Leighton Buzzard Van Hire. There were some close encounters along the way though for the formidable trio of Alan Cherry, Tim Cheek and Jecu Aurelian to overcome. The closest of these was Tim's 11-9 in the 5th win over Fabrice Spelta. The other Van men were Biao Wang and Paul Haigh.

**Player of the week : Nick Howard**

## Division 1

### MINNOWS SHINE THROUGH

Another pair of 6-4 results this week to bring the total to 17 for the season, which is over half of the matches played and a great credit to the evenness of the standard in this Division.

The exception involved the League leaders, who were a man short and on the wrong end of a hammering. The 2-man MK Powers unit crashed out 8-2 to Leighton Buzzard Avengers. Despite taking 4 of the 7 sets to a deciding game they could only win one of them, Minesh Pitamber beating Bernie Raffe. Minesh also provided Powers other victory when defeating Christinel Hulpan, leaving Keith Carrington winless on the night. Richard Hardy was the other Avenger.

6th placed Greenleys Glory seem to be getting into their stride at long last with a consecutive win to follow up last week's success. This time Open University Primes, in 3rd spot, were their victims despite another prime performance from Andy Tan which stretched his current hot streak to 11 unbeaten. But the only other win the Primes could manage was a Charity Wong success over John Stamp in a match that needed deciding games 5 times over. Jacob Midson and Scott Dixon took 2 wins apiece while John Stamp left Patrick Wong winless and Glory triumphed in the crucial doubles.

Good win for 7th placed MK Hit 'n' Hope this week as they brought down high flying colleagues Topspin. The architect of their unlikely victory was Paul Tompkins, with half his side's wins in the 6-4 scoreline. This was 'peerless' Paul's second hat-trick of the season and follows a blank from last week. The reliable Marco Hahn took a brace and Mike Ainsworth one to complete Hit 'n' Hope's scoring. Russell Penn hit a brace for Topspin and Mervyn Kelly one, the pair also combining successfully for the doubles set. Paddy Patel from Division 3 was brought in to complete Topspin's depleted line up.

Chackmore Hasbeen's match with MK Phoenix was called off and is planned to take place in the new year.

**Player of the week : Andy Tan**

## Division 2

*Courtesy of Martin Johnson.*

With just one more round of matches before the Christmas/New Year break, Milton Keynes Sharks remain top of the table, with a bit of a gap to a chasing pack of four, who are within four points of each other – although Woburn Sands Mosquitoes gap week means they have a game in hand on the others.

In top versus sixth, Milton Keynes Sharks took on Little Horwood Wooden Tops, and Sharks duly won their seventh match in a row, but Wooden Tops managed to hold it to a 6-4 result. It was the usual maximum for Derick Rodrigues as he extended his winning run to 12 sets, although John Sharp took him to a fifth game. Rupert Greyling won twice, but lost out in five to Andy Hooper, plus Derick / Rupert made it five from five in the doubles, but despite some close games, no wins this week for Pedro Anastacio. For Wooden Tops, Andy won twice, plus John Sharp and John Cripps each won once. The win extends Sharks lead at the top to nine points, whilst Wooden Tops have edged four points ahead of bottom club, Milton Keynes Shambles.

In a mid table clash, Mursley Hawks raced into a 3-0 lead against Newport Pagnell Lagondas, but at the end of the night the teams drew 5-5. No-one could win all their sets, here, with two wins each for Tony Ardis and Sue Lewis for Lagondas, plus for David Bartlett and Martin Johnson for Hawks, with Ian Spanswick taking one win for Hawks in a tight five game against Roy Read, whilst the accomplished Tony / Sue pairing took the doubles against David / Martin. Sue certainly got her money's worth on the night, going to five games in all three of her singles sets, plus four games in the doubles. Lagondas have thus moved top of the chasing pack in second place, whilst Hawks are in fifth place, but only four points back.

In the final match of the week, it was a big 8-2 win for Leighton Buzzard Spitfires on their visit to bottom placed Milton Keynes Shambles. Although Nick Markham and Jim Robinson won against Paul Baker, it was otherwise a fairly one-sided affair, as Andy King only dropped one game, whilst Graham Silversides dropped none, as well as winning the doubles in four games against Nick and Jim Saunders, with Paul Baker also picking up his first win of the season against Jim Saunders in a tight four gamer. Spitfire blast up to third place, two points adrift of second place, whilst Shambles remain rooted to the bottom of the table, now four points behind their nearest rivals.

**Player of the Week : Graham Silversides**

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