

# Rowhedge TTC at National Cadet League

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Rowhedge Table Tennis Club have once again entered a team in the National Cadet League hosted this year at the new Morpeth Table Tennis Centre in Bethnal Green, London.

The first date for the event had to be postponed due to the centre not being available on Sundays so day one became Saturday November 26<sup>th</sup>. The team comprised Jermaine Fearon, Ben Jackson, Finn Thomas and Daniel Rhodes.

The team was thrust in at the deep end, being placed in Division One leading to some very tough matches on the day. They were up against some very experienced sides from Fusion, Dulwich and Kemnal. All London based clubs whose players get a great deal more table time than our local players. However, they gave good account of themselves and managed a few wins between them to secure one overall win on the day against a Greenhouse managed school side, Raines A.

For day two the divisions were rearranged and Rowhedge were placed in Division Two alongside Raines A, Dulwich B, Eastbury A, Bridge B and Eastbury B. The Rowhedge side this time comprising Jermaine Fearon, Daniel Rhodes and Kier Brown.

A flying start was made against Raines A with all the players recording two wins each. Kier Brown did especially well to recover from two games down against his first opponent and with some solid tactical play came through to win in five games 11-9 in the fifth.

Jermaine Fearon looked dominant in both his matches whilst Daniel Rhodes, after a slightly nervous start, gauged his opponents style to win through with some good attacking play.

The second match against Bridge B was tougher, though Jermaine remained unbeaten, Daniel and Keir lost one each against more experienced players. It was back to 6-0 against Eastbury B and then also Eastbury A, which nicely lined up a final match against the only other unbeaten team from the division, Dulwich B. This was to become a very tense battle with the Dulwich players having more tournament experience.

Their number one player Maxwell Allen provided a challenge both with his smooth easy style of play and also his unexpected questions regarding disputed edge shots. Daniel played him first and coped well with his opponents manner, including at one point when he stopped playing to enquire how a teammate was doing in another match. A very unexpected and unacceptable action.

Although Daniel did not win, he went down three games to one, he did gain some invaluable match experience against a testing player. Jermaine had maintained his unbeaten run against the Dulwich no. 2 and for his final match faced Maxwell Allen. To add further to the interest Daniel was down as umpire.

The first two games were tremendous battles, Maxwell producing a variety of shots to try and get an advantage but Jermaine stood his ground to take a two game lead. The third game was even tighter and with the score at 14-14 Jermaine made a strong cross-court smash with Maxwell making a valiant attempt to return the ball. Everyone, except Maxwell, saw the ball hit the side of the table, but his protest that the ball was good even saw the Tournament Referee come onto the court to give advice. Yet more valuable experience for both player and umpire.

The third game went to the Dulwich player but Jermaine was now more determined than ever that the match would be his and he confirmed it with a strong display in the fourth game to take the win and maintain his 100% record for the day. A draw was the final result with Daniel winning his match against the Dulwich number 3 player.

All three players represented themselves and their team to a very high level and should be commended for their composure and contact on the day.

The league table should follow shortly. The date for the final round of matches has yet to be set but rest assured the players will be looking forward to taking part.

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