

Leicester League Division One Preview

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LEICESTERSHIRE TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION



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It could be a fascinating battle for top position of the Leicester Table Tennis League Division One this season that starts this week. Five teams appear to be in the mix including Leicester Electricity who topped it comfortably last season, mainly because they have what appears to be great team depth.

The Sparks' have Matt Hobday (grading 288), Andy LeButt (278) and David Grundy (276). Leicester's grading system has been in existence for 50 years and has been a very big part of the league during that time. In its heyday of 20 divisions there were up to ten players who would be above the 300 points benchmark, but these days that is a very difficult target to pierce and only a couple of players do so each season.

One of these is Dave Gannon with 312 who is registered for Abbots Road, one of the challengers. The problem with the challengers, however, is the slight lacking in depth as Abbots have Ian Brown at 274 but no-one else above the 270 mark. They are a progressive club, though, with their second team having gained promotion last term so someone could quite easily come out of the mix.

Arnesby, with Abraham Conteh (289) and Ian Brown (274), will always be a threat, as will Knighton Park who have Adam Cross (279) and Leicester's most successful ever woman player by a very large margin in Karen Smith who is graded 274. She has attained that magical 300 plus mark many times in the past. Once again that elusive third player over 270 should make a difference.

Having said all that there is one team who might beat the lot. Ajax Wolvey joined the league last term and a place was luckily found for them in Division Two – any lower would have been unthinkable, as their record shows.

Ajax have three players below that 270 mark with Mick Allsopp (251), Aidan Walsh (245) and Jon Williams (245), but their record in winning Division Two last term was: played 22, won 22 and a phenomenal sets average of 213-7. The big problem with players like that in the second division is playing enough opponents of the right quality to gain enough grading points. They have the capabilities of increasing those gradings and, if they do, they could be well in sight of a championship challenge.

John Bowness, Publicity Officer. (September 18, 2013)

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