

Howieson spearheads home challenge

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Posted On: October 30, 2014



Craig Howieson (picture courtesy of John Upham)

Britain's elite table tennis teams head to Glasgow this weekend for the second instalment of the 2014/15 Premier British League season.

Following a mesmeric opening weekend in Middlesbrough, all eight teams travel to Scotland hoping to shape their destiny in what could well be a pivotal weekend in the championship and relegation race.

All eyes will inevitably be on the home side, Drumchapel Glasgow. Their foreign contingent set the division alight last time, but with star signing Xu Ruifeng not expected to feature this weekend, Craig Howieson will lead an attack that could well feature Chinese talent Hui Hui. Hui's potential presence could have massive implications on the division, with Drumchapel playing league leaders Sycamore on Sunday.

Sycamore, who are joint top of the division with Ormesby, will be keen to dispatch the Scots in their own back yard after Ormesby defeated them in the opening weekend. Sycamore's task is to maintain their sets advantage over Ormesby, who don't face a side in the top half of the division throughout the weekend.

Ormesby have been dealt a slight blow going into the weekend with Tom Jarvis ruled out, however, Ormesby's British League star Karina LeFevre takes his place, keen to maintain her staggering record when representing Ormesby.

With the top three currently split from the rest of the division, the other five teams all have eyes on the final spot in the top half of the division. The position is currently held by Fusion, who enjoyed a solid start to the season with two impressive wins, largely down to the incredible performance of Luke Savill. With Michael O'Driscoll expected to return to the fold, Fusion will prove to be a major threat to anyone in the competition.

The same can be said for LVA London Academy, who replicated Fusion's record of two wins from four. Despite facing Ormesby twice over the weekend, they have the calibre to scare them and push to the higher echelons of the league with the likes of Dexter St Louis in their ranks.

Barrow Tornadoes approach a tough weekend full of hope that they can build on their victory over Kingfisher. Illness to Gavin Evans somewhat disrupted Barrow's opening to the season despite his valiant efforts to play on, and Evans will now be keen to improve his and his side's win percentage.

Promoted Kingfisher endured a tough start to life in the Premier Division, yet their victory over Bournemouth Sports gives them something to build upon as they search for a way out of the bottom two.

Meanwhile, winless Bournemouth Sports approach the weekend with four rounds worth of invaluable Premier Division experience, a fact that can only aid them in their quest to pick up results. The additions of the previously absent Chloe Thomas and Hannah Hicks could help them produce such results in what will be an inevitably tough challenge.

As ever, the British League press and publicity team will be making the trip to Scotland to provide the best coverage possible.

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Matthew Shaw (British League press officer)

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