

Leicester League: Power to Cliff's Elbow as Nomads shade it

Author: **Paul Stimpson**

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The long-awaited final of the **Elbow Tankard**, a handicap competition run during the summer for Leicester League teams, has finally been played, and lived up to all expectations with some fine competitive handicapping.

With holidays just before the season and then a busy league period it was deemed best to wait until both teams were at full strength, Nomads and Vicars battling out a full-time draw at 10-10 with Nomads winning 12-11 after a nerve jangling the tie-break.

Nomads' Andy Searle drew 1-1 with Raju Rahul before Tosh Singh put Vicars two games up by beating Trevor Hawkins, and then Cliff Smith (Nomads) drew with Shabnam Ahmed. The fourth set saw Searle just getting the better of Singh 2-0, winning the second game 24-22 after giving six away, this making it 4-4 with the two doubles next.

Searle and Hawkins shared with Rahul and Ahmed and then Vicars went two up again as Singh and Ahmed defeated Smith and Hawkins in the easiest set of the whole match.

Back came Searle to beat Ahmed, giving 10 points each game to complete a superb five from six in the match.

Rahul made his return four from six with a two-game win over Hawkins and, needing both games to tie, Smith defeated Singh 2-0 (22-20, 21-17) to complete the match proper.

No ties in the final so on to the tie breaks with the three players in each team playing one designated game. Still the excitement persisted with Searle beating Rahul 24-22 and then Singh overcame a three-point deficit to defeat Hawkins 21-17.

The two final opponents had shared earlier but this time Smith prevailed at a nail-biting 23-21 over Ahmed to give Nomads the title by the narrowest of margins.

[Click here for full scorecard](#)

Unicorn moved to the top of **Division One** of the Leicester League thanks to a default against Knighton Park III who have had a terrible time with injury and unavailability for most of the first half of the season.

Second, just one point adrift, are the Knighton Park first team squad, who have Chris Rogers now top of the individual averages, having lost two sets so far. Park defeated Desford Village 9-1 in their final first-half match with Rogers winning a three-straight maximum. Karen Smith also took three while Tobit Dehnen won two, the latter only just going down 11-9 in the fifth game against Tony Smith, who was pleased to prevent the full house. Unicorn have two players unbeaten but neither have played enough to qualify individually.

Dave Gannon (Abbots Road) has also lost two but is just behind Rogers having played slightly less, while Maurice Newman is third. Newman featured in a very tight match against the team currently third, Ajax Wolvey, when he won three for Thringstone, just managing to beat John Fuller 14-12 in the fifth along the way. Fuller, as well as team-mates Mick Allsopp and Aiden Walsh, all won two to secure full points.

Still going great guns in **Division Two** are Desford Village II, now 11 points ahead at the top (four points for a win). They scored a decent 8-2 victory against Nomads in the last match before the break, but it was tougher than the score suggests.

Neil Matthams won two for Desford and lost in five games to Zaheer Mohamed, while Matthew Briggs also perished to Mohamed. Man of the match was Kevin Parker, who emerged undefeated, and included a real cracker in beating Mohamed 11-9 in the fifth. Andy Searle and Cliff Smith both fought hard and both lost in five to Briggs.

Meanwhile, there is a very good tussle for second position with Queens just shading it at the moment after beating Nomads 7-3. Dave Daniels won three and John Winsper two for the winners.

Electricity lost a bit of ground, dropping from second to third, after losing to Regent Sports. For the latter, Charlie Bateman was in good form with two while Martin Bolton also took two.

Newfoundpool are another vying for second at the moment after beating Great Glen 7-3 with Chandresh Sodha notching a maximum and Richard Hayes two.

Individually, Eddie Lyons (Knighton Park V) and Desford's Richard Hayes are unbeaten but have not quite played enough, Vishal Parmar of Abbots Road II being the official leader on 88 per cent.

John Bowness (publicity officer)

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