

Leicester League: Gannon still making the grade at the top

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Posted On: January 05, 2015



Fifty-five years ago, almost to the day, the Leicester League decided to add a grading system to their activities having undergone tests for a couple of seasons at that point. So successful were they proving that the English Table Tennis Association, as it was then, had negotiated introducing the system to all member leagues as they felt a way of comparing not just players in a league but players in all leagues appealed enormously.

Unfortunately a change of top officials by the parent body at the time meant the plan from a national prospective was shelved and never, ultimately, taken up. However, the Leicester League went ahead and that same grading system is still very much up and running and has stood the test of time exceedingly well.

This season, with three previously ungraded players either making their debut or back into the fold at the very top means there will almost certainly be three new names in the top 10 at the end of the season. The system lends itself to adjusting the figures after every match so it is possible to see what the state is at any time, including the current halfway stage.

Still top is Abbots Road's Dave Gannon, but only just having dropped six points thus far with two defeats in the league. Snapping at his heels is newcomer Jared Patel (Unicorn) who, despite being undefeated, fails at the moment to reach top position for two reasons. One is a lack of matches, only six, while he has only played against one of the other three top players and needs those successes under his belt to gain higher status.

Making a comeback to the League is Knighton Park's Chris Rogers who is top of the official averages – Patel does not qualify for those yet – and fourth in the gradings, just behind Maurice Newman.

Current top 10 gradings (all play in Division One):

305 Dave Gannon (Abbots Road) minus 6 this season so far
303 Jared Patel (Unicorn) previously ungraded
299 Maurice Newman (Thringstone) minus 2
295 Chris Rogers (Knighton Park) previously ungraded
292 Tim Sheppard (Unicorn) minus 2
285 Mat Hobday (Electricity) unchanged
278 Aiden Walsh (Ajax) plus 8 – currently most improved
275 John Fuller (Ajax) previously ungraded
274 Karen Smith (Knighton Park) plus 5
272 Andy LeButt (Electricity) minus 5

The final divisions of the Leicester Development League have been sorted after session four, with just one more session remaining and everything to play for. So far there has been promotion and relegation each time but the sections will remain the same for the final fifth session coming soon.

With Aman Rashid now back on full throttle, KP Scorpions ruled the Division One roost as he proved unbeatable in their three victories, and received more than ample support from the ever improving Jack Rogers, who lost just the one to Harborough A's Ross Campbell, their three results being 4-0, 4-0, 3-1.

Harborough A won their other two and still fancy their chances in the final play-offs of reversing that one deficit. Campbell only just lost to Rashid while Rhys Emery is a very assured player who could cause any result upset on any day and he won his four against the other two teams.

Of the other two teams, KP Bears have the beating of Winstanley A with Kieran Storer, Adnan Ebrahim and Rayan

Kotecha all picking up vital experience, as are Jack Kermode and Gurnak Singh of Winstanley.

South Wigston High School have Richard Martin in very good form and unbeaten in **Division Two**, with Tommy Lane offering very good support with five from six and they are very much in charge with relatively little needed next time to retain top position. KP Giraffes and Electricity/Fullhurst are battling out the runners up spot.

Oscar White, Rafe Walton and Max Huggins all play for the same team in the senior league and they are all bringing that experience to **Division Three** of the DL with perfect individual records for their team, KP Tigers, running away with Division Three.

The closest of the groups is **Division Four** where three of the four teams vied for top spot with Harborough B and Electricity/Fullhurst 3 in the end tying and the latter's fourth string just two points behind with this section sure to provide a competitive finish to the event in the final round of matches. Individually, it was Electricity's Tian Clark who topped the averages for their fourth team with five from six.

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January 5, 2015

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