

Northumbria League: Casuals beaten but still top

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Posted On: February 02, 2015



Cramlington Casuals are still top of the Premier Division despite losing for the first time. Having started the second half by seeing off Byker, with Andrew Wilkinson and Steve Penman both defeating Dave Robson, Wilkinson getting his revenge for a loss to the same player just before Christmas, they went down to 6-4 Saint Chads when Wilkinson was not available.

Keith Weatherby won all of his matches for the Saints with Jimmy Scope and Chris Blake getting one each and Weatherby and Blake combining to take the doubles.

Cramlington Reivers had Dale Aitkenhead in form with a hat-trick as they defeated second placed NESLC Eagles and they are now well in contention to challenge the Casuals.

The North East Chinese Association took a big step to move away from the bottom of the table by beating Byker when their University student Chun Yin Yu won all of his matches, including a victory over Robson.

However they still persisted in playing Yu in their third division side the following week.

Division One

The Newton team of Anthony Ainley, John Russell and Graeme Bell continue to dominate the first division and it is most unlikely that anyone will stop them from winning this division.

However, several teams are in the hunt for the second promotion spot. Currently the Mortimer squad of Micky Grimes, Dave Cutler and Dave Bannon are the side in form but North Fire B, Seaburn Dene and Old England Jacks are hot on their heels.

At the other end of the table it is hard to see how Cramlington Cobras will avoid relegation.

Division Two

The Springwell B squad of Mike Hope, Caron Guthrie, Alan Livingstone, Robert Renton and Charlie Mouzon have now won all 12 of their matches and are way out in front.

YMCA North Tyneside B are now favourites to join Springwell in achieving promotion to the first division, having moved into second place after successive 10-0 victories over the bottom two teams Old England FATS and Saints, who will both struggle to avoid relegation.

Division Three

The Tynedale side Matfen B are still top and their squad of Alex Holliday, Dave Swan, John Henderson and Philip Spencer will be difficult to dislodge. The North East Chinese Association C side have moved into second spot, which is hardly surprising as they are playing Premier Division standard Chun Yin Yu in this division. As expected he remains unbeaten, as he has been when playing up in the First and Premier Divisions. The Chinese team are now five points ahead of third-placed Matfen C.

At the foot of the table Cramlington Dragons avoided defeat for the first time when new signing Jon Rippington won all of his matches in a drawn match with their Corinthians side. NESLC Codgers, Sacriston Comets and Cramlington Spartans are all in danger of dropping into the bottom division.

Division Four

The YMCA North Tyneside C team of Ray Pini, Ron Bain and Gerry Meller are just two points ahead of Brandon in what now appears to be a two-horse race, although Matfen D could come into the picture. Brandon include juniors Simon Knopf and Max Duffin in their squad and both youngsters still boast 100 per cent records.

The division includes four teams of young developing players from Cramlington TTC who are all gaining league experience. At present the Magpies team of Elliott Dorrington and the Anderson twins, Richard and Peter are having the best results.

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