



Leicestershire TTA: Bateman climbs to top of ladder

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The best innovative feature in local circles recently is the Daytime Ladder League, which was trialled last season to high acclaim and continued this term with exactly the same format.

A maximum of 20 players, largely because there are just 10 tables available at once, playing in a ladder/League format that involves four matches of three sets each time with points either gained or lost so that players move up and down throughout.

The other big feature is that all players are guaranteed their four matches irrespective of how many are available on the day, and they play in a standard format each time, with opponents being those around the same place on the ladder, making it highly competitive. There are 19 registered at the moment with another expected to sign before next month to bring it to the full complement.

Week Two saw Charlie Bateman in very good form as he scored three successive 3-0 victories, including the scalp of current leader Andy Searle, and even a final set 2-1 defeat did not prevent Bateman tip-toeing into the lead, just one point ahead of Searle who had two 3-0 successes of his own later.

Played as usual in two groups, the second group saw league team-mates, Robert Geary and Steve Bessant, slugging it out at the top with Geary winning 2-1 in their personal clash, while both of them had positive scores to move them up a few rungs.

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There was a terrific scrap in **Division Two** of the Leicester and District League, when Abbots Road II took on the team promoted from three last term in Unicorn II with, in the end, a draw that was fully deserved by both sides.

No-one emerged undefeated, with Ben Stone and Alex Jackson securing two apiece for Unicorn while Jinious Sheth and Fahed Sacoor did the same for Abbots Road. Sheth was involved in two classics when he defeated Stone 3-2 (11-4, 5-11, 11-9, 8-11, 14-12) but losing to Jackson 2-3 (10-12, 13-11, 2-11, 12-10, 8-11). Geoff Hancock won the extra singles for Abbots while the students took the doubles.

Amazingly, it is Knighton Park III who are top of this particular tree despite having two matches with only two players. In their latest fixture a new signing failed to materialise, leaving Peter Wilson winning three and Patrick Carton two, and the doubles for a 6-4 success against their own fifth team to record four wins from four.

For the fifth team Eddie Kwok, who had been playing in Division Four last season, made his second division debut with an excellent victory against Carton for his side's only legitimate success, Tracey Smith and John Underwood striving in vain.

Harry White is making his first season in two an enjoyable experience and won a second successive maximum for Electricity III against Blaby & Whetstone, with backing from Chandresh Sodha (2) and one from Richard Martin in a 6-4 win. For B & W Dave Daniel scored two and Nick Rayner one.

Top of the averages at the moment is 14-year-old Jack Rogers, who secured three more for Knighton Park IV in a 6-4 win against Syston Casuals, all in four games against Terry Hall (2), Mike James and Ian Wetherley one each. Rogers received support from Kinar Sheth with two while these two took the doubles three straight for full points.

A clash between the top two teams in **Division Five** produced the expected 5-5 draw but it needed a spearheading performance by Jim Mee, dragging on all his experience to emerge unbeaten for Goons II against Regent Sports IV.

But it was a second set of the match victory for Steve Webb, squeezing home 16-14 in the fifth against Mick Smith, which ultimately helped towards the share of spoils, with Webb combining with Mee for a doubles win. For Regent, Keith Bramhall and James Smith both won two and the other Smith one.

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