



Leicester & District: Arnesby scent title after victory

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Two crucial matches in the Leicester & District League to bring the first half to a close with every match having been played included a clash of unbeaten teams at the top of Division Three when Arnesby II pulled off a superb 9-1 victory over Blaby and Whetstone II to become odd-on favourites for the championship at this stage.

Blaby started well when Phill Hinson got the better of Dave Wagstaff in the first set but it was all one-way traffic from there as both Dave Small and Rhys Emery proved unbeatable while Wagstaff recovered well to win his other two, including a good victory over Eileen Shaler.

It was an altogether different affair in Division Two where it was a relegation zone tussle taking place when League Chairman, Peter Wilson, came back to top form with a splendid maximum for Knighton Park III, including a crucial win in five games against Zaheer Mohamed who won his other two for Nomads. Offering good support to Wilson were Steve Adams and Mike Lapworth with two apiece in KP's 7-3 success.

The final two quarter-final matches in the County Association's Rose Johnson Challenge Trophy, a four-a-side handicap, included an all-Knighton Park affair when the fourths beat the thirds 325-316. The third team, with a 138-point start, gained a few more when Steve Bessant won the first against Max Huggins 21-10 but, from there, the fourth team won the next 14 games to set up a thriller.

In top form was Karen Smith who gave away only 20 points in a plus 64 return. After 15 games the scores were level at 304-304 and it was left to young Mayan Dehnen to try to turn back the tide but she found Patrick Cox too strong, the latter winning 21-12 to bring his total to plus 33 which was the same as Oscar White.

Last season's winners, Regent Ladder Boys, were well beaten by Knighton Park firsts. The latter began 76 ahead and made full use to win 360-314. Simon Aldis, Tracey Smith, Martin Pember and Chris Parmar-Saville will take some stopping, John Bowness recorded plus 36 for the losers. The semi-final draw is: Knighton Park 4 v Knighton Park 1, Vintage Nomads v Syston Casuals.

The traditional mid-season event, the Phil Reid Memorial Trophy, an individual handicap singles very well organised by Andy Wright each year, has had all eight qualifying groups played with some excellent performances, not least by Mike Lapworth, who won his group. Eighteen months ago whilst on holiday Lapworth came close to death with sepsis before undertaking his long recovery road. Back playing he is approaching his best once again.

Father and son, Russell and Adam Pettitt, both won their group with the former toughing it out to beat Steve Webb before losing in five to Chris Parmar-Saville and then having to beat Ross Adams, which he did in a real nailbiter at 2-1 (19-21, 21-8, 27-25). Meanwhile Adam was winning his section with an unbeaten return.

John Genovese, top of the Division Two averages at the half way point, is clearly in very good fettle as he proved in winning all four of his group matches two straight, giving anything from 5 to 13 points along the way.

One has to admire Karen Smith, who is always up for a challenge despite constantly giving many points away. She gave away 10, 11, 13 and 14 up to 21 against her four opponents, losing only to Kenny Obilaso, but securing the other three in a very tight group in which three finished at 2-2.

Other winners were Dean Jordon, Harry White and Kevin Trueman, the latter gaining access to the finals in a tied situation at the top with Peter Wilson when his head-to-head success over Wilson took him through.

Click on the attachment below to see full Phil Reid Memorial Trophy summary.

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