



Leicester & District: You can't keep a good man Downes!

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Alec Downes started playing table tennis many years ago before taking a rest to pursue other interests.

A few years ago he was advised to start playing again in order to build up leg muscle strength to reduce arthritic hip pain. He also rides horses regularly at his horse rescue centre, falling off being part of the fun.

He has returned to table tennis with gusto and this week played in four matches, two Leicester League and two Hinckley, playing 51 games altogether, many of them finishing at deuce. He is an ideal role model at 73 years of age to show what playing the sport can achieve.

At the end of the week he commented: "My hips don't hurt, but the rest of my body hurts like hell." No gain without pain.

Unicorn firsts are still 100% after a scare against Syston Casuals in Division One of the Leicester & District League when Syston took them close before the students snuck home 6-4 with Lois Peake recording a hard fought maximum, George Briskolas two and Geoff Parsons supplying a crucial one. For Syston Lucky Obi grabbed two, John Szostak one and the doubles.

This maintains Unicorn's position at the top of the chart while Knighton Park maintained their challenging by defeating Electricity firsts 8-2. Andy LeButt won a very good brace for the Sparks but Chris Rogers was unbeaten for KP, Jack Rogers and Adam Cross each supplying two in support.

Ajax Wolvey are not prepared to give much ground as they chip away in a relatively challenging third position and await any slip-ups by the leading pair. They clinched a solid 7-3 victory over Unicorn II when Aidan Walsh took three, Mick Allsopp and Jon Williams one apiece. Luke Greenfield won both for Unicorn who were given a free point when Ajax forfeited the doubles as usual.

The aforementioned Syston Casuals is a team battling against relegation along with Arnesby and Electricity II

and will be disappointed they couldn't share with Unicorn. Arnesby went down 8-2 to Knighton Park II for whom Karen Smith won three, ably supported by the two "Georges" Rebecca George and George McClurkin, both with two.

Meanwhile Electricity's second team lost 7-3 to Abbots Road, at least getting a point, who had Dave Gannon in good form and winning all three, two from Vishal Parmar and one by Fahed Sacoor playing up. Harry White won two for the Sparks.

There was potential bad news from Division Two after the two Blaby and Whetstone teams had both crashed 10-0. Because of injuries and illness it looks as if one of the teams will have to be withdrawn, which would be the first drop out in the league for some years. One of those results was by top team Holwell Sports who have already almost lapped the rest.

The keenly awaited clash of teams vying for second proved well worth waiting for as Abbots Road II and Knighton Park III fought out a thrilling 5-5 draw.

KP went 2-0 after Patrick Cox had beaten Geoff Hancock while Brajesh Patel scored a good success against Fahed Sacoor. Steve Pratt joined the fray and pulled one back when defeating Vishal Sharda. From then it was nip and tuck with Sacoor grabbing a crucial final singles when he beat Cox 12-10 in the fifth of their set. Cox came back well to partner Patel to take the doubles for a well deserved share.

No-one won or lost three and all six players gained something. Sacoor and Pratt two each for Abbots, Hancock one. For the Park two for Cox, almost three, one each from Patel and Sharda.

Meanwhile, Syston Casuals kept close to the runners up battle by defeating Knighton Park VI 8-2 with a very solid looking team success. Three for Chandresh Sodha while Mike James and Ian Wetherly each scored a couple.

Other highlights include a very good victory for Syston Casuals IV over Goons II in Division Four by 6-4 when Pritesh Nakeshree, Ketan Gohel and Scott Morris all won two, while Mark Clay and Laszlo Kocsis each won maximums in the 7-3 victory for Nomads II over Regent Sports III.

In Division Five James Robertson spearheaded Fleckney I to a 6-4 success over Winstanley Wizards V while Knighton Park VIII defeated the Wizards' fourth team 6-4 thanks to three by Phil Wood and two from our old friend Alec Downes rounding off his busy week.

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