

LEICESTERSHIRE TABLE TENNIS <https://www.topspin-ldttl.co.uk/>

Championship finishes do not get any closer than the top of Division One of the Leicester and District League, unless, of course, things are tied right across the board. The final match of the season was a humdinger between the two top teams.

For most of the season Unicorn have been three points clear of Knighton Park with a superior sets average meaning that the Park would have to beat their opponents by at least 8-2 to avoid Unicorn picking up a bonus point. But lately the sets average has reversed leaving the Park needing simply to win, while Unicorn could settle for a draw. Mind you, Simply is not the apt word.

Chris Rogers, top of the individual averages, won a superb maximum for the Park, albeit two of them needing a fifth game and one 15-13 in the fifth against David Arrowsmith, with Richard Hayes and James Berry each grabbing one.

For Unicorn both Arrowsmith and Adam Pettitt won two leaving the score 5-4 to KP with the doubles to come, and everything at stake. Arrowsmith and Pettitt against Rogers and Berry and if ever a set deserved to be shared this was it.

First two games 11-9, 11-9 to Unicorn, next two games 12-10, 12-10 to the Park. In the deciding fifth Unicorn managed to get away to win 11-6 for a 5-5 draw which secured them defending their title. All credit to the opposition to take it to the wire in such a way.

Also in the top division Wing Tat Victor Tam has had a decent first season in the local league for KP seconds as he showed against his KP third team club mates when winning all three in a 5-5 draw with only two player, Zia Malik winning two. For the thirds Karen Smith grabbed one and the doubles with Jack Mooney to go with the three defaults.

It was good to see international Lois Peake getting her first match for Loughborough Unicorn this season, helping her team to a 10-0 victory over Winstanley along with Garry Knights and Geoff Parsons.

Another promotion place decided came in Division Two when Syston Casuals III defeated Unicorn III 6-4 despite the latter's star, Abin Islam, scoring all three to finish the season on 75%. For Syston, who made sure of second place, Ian Whetherly, Martin Bolton and Kevin Sanderson all won their other two.

Just missing out on a promotion spot in Division Three were Abbots Road II despite overwhelming Goons 10-0 with Steve Pratt, Bhulesh Rathod and Raju Rahul all very much on form. In the end too little just a little too late.

So, the end of a successful league season which is gradually inching back up to full strength – of 60 teams – with a very good chance of two or three extra teams next season if all goes well. Five divisions of 12 would be perfect.

John Bowness.