



County Championships: Lancashire take title as Notts falter

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: December 21, 2018

Lancashire took this season's County Championship Junior Premier division after a thrilling weekend's action at Wellingborough as they fought out a battle with Nottinghamshire.

They looked like their title hopes had gone up in smoke as they were beaten by Notts in the penultimate match of the division, only for Kent to beat Notts in the last round of fixtures, handing the title to Lancashire.

Saturday saw both Lancashire and Nottinghamshire win all their three matches as Lancashire overwhelmed Sussex 9-1 and recorded solid 8-2 victories over Devonshire and Kent, while Notts scored 7-3 wins over Middlesex and Durham but were taken all the way by Devonshire and just eased past them by the narrowest of margins, 6-4.

Nottinghamshire found themselves looking down the barrel when they trailed 4-3 to Devonshire and when Gemma Kerr took the opening two games against Erin Green it looked like Devonshire were going to halt the progress of Notts. But Green pinched the third which sparked Notts as she took the fourth to level and just scraped home in the fifth and recorded a fine 3-2 (8-11, 4-11, 11-9, 11-4, 13-11) victory as the teams drew level at 4-4.

Maxim Stevens beat Leon Zacharkin 3-0 (11-5, 11-4, 11-6) to give Notts a 5-4 lead which was quickly confirmed as a 6-4 win when Naphong Boonyaprapa beat Uther Kingdom 3-0 (11-3, 11-6, 11-7).

At the end of the first day Lancashire and Nottinghamshire were well clear of the remaining counties as they had both established a three-point lead over the third-placed county even at this early stage.



The winning Lancashire squad (photo by Chris Rayner)

First matches on Sunday morning saw the top two counties extended before both securing 6-4 wins as Notts beat Glamorgan and Lancashire overcame Middlesex, which were followed by victories for both in the fifth round of matches as Lancashire beat Durham 7-3 and Notts whitewashed Sussex 10-0.

The penultimate round of fixtures saw the match everyone was waiting for as the top two counties faced each other and there was not much to choose between the counties all through the match until the match score stood at 4-4.

At that point Notts produced a thrilling finish as they took the last two sets when Boonyaprapa dropped the first game to Rhys Davies before storming back to record a 3-1 (10-12, 11-9, 13-11, 11-8) win as did Stevens over Ryan Choong (9-11, 11-9, 11-9, 11-3) to secure a 6-4 win for Notts to put themselves in the driving seat with one round of matches to go.

The final round did not pan out as expected as although Lancashire got back to winning ways with an 8-2 win over Glamorgan, an out of sorts Nottinghamshire were never in the match with Kent and found sets very hard to come by, losing 7-3 giving the title to Lancashire, who took the title on a superior sets advantage.

Two of the stronger counties historically, Middlesex and Sussex, were relegated and two players went through the competition unbeaten as Tom Rayner from Durham won 14 straight singles, with Megan Gidney of Lancashire winning 13 straight.

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	Sets		Games		Pts
					F	A	F	A	
Lancashire 1	7	6	0	1	50	20	167	90	12
Nottinghamshire	7	6	0	1	45	25	155	107	12
Kent	7	4	2	1	41	29	146	113	10
Durham 1	7	3	2	2	41	29	149	112	8
Devonshire 1	7	3	1	3	37	33	139	123	7
Glamorgan	7	2	1	4	31	39	116	138	5
Sussex 1	7	1	0	6	14	56	75	177	2
Middlesex 1	7	0	0	7	21	49	84	171	0

The final table



Thomas Rayner had a 100% record for Durham (photo by Chris Rayner)

Downloaded From:

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/county-championships-lancashire-take-title-as-notts-falter/>