



Collier in rich vein of form for WBL leaders

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Joola Plymouth lead the way and are unbeaten after the first weekend of the Women's British League.

Evie Collier, who averaged 90% for the leaders, won the player of the weekend award, while Division Five leaders Wensum were the team of the weekend.

Having started their Premier Division campaign with a 5-1 defeat of Glenburn Irish Ladies, Plymouth dropped a point in the second round, drawing 3-3 with Knighton Park.

Anaya Patel won twice for the Leicester-based club, beating Lois Peake and, in the final match, Rachel Trevorrow to secure the draw. Rosemary Rainton's defeat of Trevorrow had earlier put Knighton Park 2-1 ahead, but Collier's pair of victories and Peake's win over Karen Smith saw Plymouth 3-2 up.

The leaders were also pushed by Fusion in round three, winning 4-2 after coming from 2-1 down following defeats for Collier, at the hands of Elena Todirca, and Trevorrow, to Tiana Dennison.

But Plymouth showed their class on Sunday as they defeated both Draycott and Colebridge 6-0.

Fusion, who won their other four matches, are in second place, ahead of Colebridge and Knighton Park, with Glenburn (2pts) and Draycott, beaten in all five matches, in the bottom two.

Peake and Collier top the averages with nine wins out of 10 apiece.

Byng Hall top Division One with a perfect record, dropping only four individual matches over the weekend as they dominated the division.

Two of those were against Drumchapel, who took the lead when Beth Farnworth defeated Letitia McMullan thanks to a superb comeback, winning 3-2 (9-11, 9-11, 11-8, 13-11, 11-9).

Byng Hall won the next four though, making Rebecca Plaistow's four-set victory over Gina Rieck largely

academic.

Drumchapel are second, having won all their remaining four matches 6-0, while each of the top two boast a player with a 100% record – Naomi Jackson for Byng Hall and Alicja Czarnomska for Drumchapel, both with eight out of eight.

Joola Plymouth II made it a memorable weekend for their club as they matched their first-team's record to head Division Two with four wins and a draw.

As with the firsts, the dropped point came in round two, when they drew 3-3 against Halton II. Halton twice led thanks to Sue Collier and Denise McEvoy, but Marketa Myskova's double levelled it up for Plymouth and Gemma Kerr then put them ahead with a 3-2 (11-4, 9-11, 11-5, 9-11, 11-6) victory over McEvoy. The points were shared when Deborah Auvache recovered a two-set deficit to beat Elaine Short 3-2 (10-12, 8-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-9) in a tight final match.

Plymouth also came from 2-1 down to beat Draycott 4-2 – Craycott and Halton are both three points behind the leaders. Myskova enjoyed a perfect record of 10/10 over the weekend to top the averages.

Division Three is tight at the top, with Cardiff leading the way with seven points, ahead of Brighton by virtue of having won one more individual match. However, Sussex Blades are unbeaten and a point behind in third place having drawn four and won one of their five matches.

Cardiff actually lost their opening match, 4-2 to Brighton, although Lauren Stacey's comeback 3-2 win over Joelle Bennett in the fifth match (9-11, 9-11, 11-4, 11-8, 11-8) kept Cardiff hopes of a draw alive, before Jodie Morris won it for Brighton 3-0 against Jamie-Lee Harley.

The Blades drew 3-3 with both of the top two, coming from 2-0 and 3-2 down against Cardiff, with a double for Alice Hazell, and then clawing back a 3-1 deficit against Brighton as Amy Hutchings and Isabelle Joubely won the final two matches.

Brighton's defeat was 4-2 against St Andrew's, for whom it was the only victory of the weekend. Rachel Pligrim sealed it in the final match with a 3-1 (11-13, 11-6, 11-9, 11-3) victory over Joelle Bennett.

With six matches drawn in the division and only four points separating the entire league table, not surprisingly, there were no 100% records. Cardiff's Stacey tops the averages with eight out of 10.

In the eight-team Division Four, Dun Laoire are top of the pile thanks to a perfect record over the weekend. They dropped only two matches – one to Ormesby and one to Halton – and stand two points clear of NETTS and Ormesby in the table.

Claire Heller, Sabina Devereux and Mia O'Rahilly Egan all had 100% records from eight matches each – as did NETTS' Maria Boulton, who missed the 6-0 defeat by Dun Laoire.

The young Wensum team lead the way in Division Five but only on match-difference ahead of Cippenham. Both teams won three and drew two – including a 3-3 scoreline when they met in round four. Cippenham led that match 2-0 and 3-1, but Isobel McGerty won two, including the final match against Julie Dean, and Isabelle Lacorte one to secure a draw.

Wensum also drew against Fastbats, though this time they led going into the final match, only for Ulricha Zhang to turn the table against Lacorte to win 3-2 (7-11, 5-11, 11-5, 12-10, 11-8).

Cippenham's draw was against Stantek, who levelled in the final match when Kim Selfe beat Mary Heffernan 3-1, and are third in the league table, two points behind the top two.

Yin Wing Choy of Fastbats won all 10 matches to lead the averages, though Wensum's McGerty also had a 100% record, from eight matches.



Wensum were team of the weekend (picture by Melvyn Lovegrove)

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