



Dalgleish comeback win sends North Ayrshire top

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North Ayrshire moved to the top of the Senior British League, Premier Division, with a hard-fought 4-3 victory at BATTs.

The Scottish team's journey was delayed as planes at Glasgow airport contended with high winds, but they showed no ill effects from that, or the fact that they were missing the injured Martin Johnson.

Not that the tie was plan-sailing – far from it, as five of the seven matches went to a deciding set and BATTs threatened a great comeback from 3-0 down.

The hosts might have considered themselves unfortunate to be behind and the match could have had a very different complexion had they managed to win even one of those clashes, all of which went to five.

First, Colin Dalgleish came from 2-1 down to defeat Josh Bennett 3-2 (5-11, 13-11, 8-11, 11-3, 11-9) and then Sean Doherty overcame Ethan Walsh 7-11, 11-7, 11-5, 3-11, 11-7.

The doubles saw Dalgleish & Doherty hold off a fightback by Shayan Siraj & Bennett to win it 11-7, 11-9, 4-11, 5-11, 11-3, putting Ayrshire on the brink of overall victory.

By Siraj reduced the deficit as he overcame Chris Main in four – his opponent was a doubt for the match but was passed fit – and Bennett then outplayed Doherty in three (7, 4, 7).

When Siraj took a 2-0 lead over Dalgleish, it look as if BATTs would take it to a decider, only for the Scottish No 2 to roar back and claim it 3-2 (6-11, 8-11, 11-9, 11-6, 11-4).

The final match also went the distance as Walsh saw off Main 3-2 (9-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-13, 11-9).

The result lifts Ayrshire to the top of the standings, although they have played more matches than all the other

teams.

In the other match, Fusion took a step into mid-table by defeating bottom-placed Urban 6-1 at home – though the scoreline obscures a closer match than might be suggested, with the hosts winning all three matches which went the distance.

Urban actually took the lead as Alim Hirji saw off Robert Pelc in three (5, 0, 6), but Lorestas Trumpauskas levelled by defeating Mateusz Mikosz in four.

The first of the five-setters was the doubles, in which Trumpauskas & Joshua Bruce twice saw opponents Hirji & Joseph Hunter level the match, before the Fusion pair took it 3-2 (11-7, 8-11, 11-1, 7-11, 11-7).

Bruce then defeated Hunter in three (9, 7, 2) to put Fusion on the cusp of victory, but when Hirji took the first two games of a titanic struggle against Trumpauskas, it looked as if Urban were going to get back into the tie.

However, Trumpauskas turned the tide and eventually prevailed 3-2 (11-13, 15-16, 11-9, 11-9, 11-8) to seal victory.

The hosts put a gloss on the scoreline as Pelc survived a comeback from two sets down by Hunter to sneak a victory 15-13 in the fifth, and Bruce beat Mikosz 3-1.

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