

Derbyshire and Middlesex draw

Author: Paul Stimpson

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When the two leading sides – Middlesex and Derbyshire met in round five of the County Championships Senior Premier Division the match finished tied at 5-5. A fair result in a match which saw Middlesex jump into a 2-0 lead, Derbyshire level at 2-2 and from that point no side take more than a one game lead. England no. seven lady Emma Vickers, for so long an integral part of the Derbyshire “juggernaut” won twice. She beat Tin-Tin Ho 11-5, 12-10, 16-14 and Sarah Horsnell 11-9, 11-4, 11-7. Star in the making – England no. one Under 15 Igor Morais held the Middlesex side together. He beat David Arrowsmith 11-6, 11-7, 9-11, 11-6 and in the last game he defeated Sam Perry 11-6, 14-12, 11-5 to secure a point for his side. Sam Perry had also been involved in the closest game of the match. He came through a real hum-dinger against Neil Charles 14-12, 11-7, 16-18, 10-12, 11-4.

Cleveland dented Sussex’s ambitions. Three times National Champion Paul Drinkhall defeated Ritchie Venner 11-5, 11-6, 11-9 (much easier than their epic five-ender of last year) and he really turned on the gas against Craig Bryant. Paul raced home 11-4, 11-3, 11-5. Sussex’s England no. 10 Veteran lady Rosemary Rainton scored another big win. She defeated England no. 16 lady Chloe Whyte 11-8, 11-4, 11-6. However, the real success story was the display of England no. two Under 15 Helshan Weerasinghe. Perhaps aware that their side is one of the older teams they are giving their young stars a chance. Helshan proved he was ready. He scored two excellent wins. He beat England no. 120 Danny Welsh 11-8, 11-6, 11-4 and then sensationally England no. 33 Bryn Drinkhall 11-4, 11-8, 11-6. The 5-5 draw looks a fair result.

Essex took a big step away from the relegation dog-fight. They beat Yorkshire 6-4 after the match had been tied at 3-3. Lucy Wang gave Essex the lead as she beat Sarah Noutch 11-6, 15-13, 11-9 and Emran Hussain scored his second win, a vital one against Simon Noutch : 4-11, 11-4, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8. Essex held the lead and Sarra Wang sealed the victory with a very hard-fought 11-8, 8-11, 13-11, 8-11, 11-8 success against England no. 22 lady Joanna Roberts. Powerful newcomer Roman Doryn made the score 6-4 beating Ewan Liddle 8-11, 11-7, 11-0, 11-8 in the last game. He had also impressed by defeating Clive Carthy 11-2, 13-11, 11-8 in his first game.

Berkshire’s 6-4 win over Devonshire virtually ensures their safety for another year. The big win here was Richard Marshall’s excellent hard-fought 15-17, 16-14, 11-9, 12-10 win over Richard Andrews, who was perhaps feeling the pressure of an excellent Season which saw him peak at an England no. 11 Senior ranking. Marshall also had a great battle against David Barr before David ran out a 11-8, 12-10, 10-12, 8-11, 11-6 winner. Berkshire’s England no. five Cadet girl Maria Tsaptinos secured a fine 11-6, 8-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-6 win over Lisa Radford.

In the Junior Premier Division Sussex’s level of domination has taken on epic proportions. Here, they hammered last year’s runners-up Essex 9-1, the first game they have dropped. Da Shuai Zhang, Helshan Weerasinghe, Mark Scutts and Yolanda King were all undefeated. Evangeline Collier with a 11-3, 11-7, 11-5 win over Lois Peake was Essex’s only winner although Ifunanya Okafor gave a great account of herself against England no. seven Junior girl Yolanda King. “lifie” only missed out 15-13, 9-11, 11-7, 9-11, 8-11.

Yorkshire edged out Hertfordshire 6-4. Hertfordshire’s Luke Walsh, the England no. 19 Cadet made his mark with two great wins. He beat England no. 23 Junior Boy Reece Lo 10-12, 13-11, 13-11, 13-11 and if that wasn’t close enough he also defeated James Foster 15-13, 13-11, 13-11. Reece Lo hit back in his second singles, defeating England no. 16 Junior Boy Bradley Tuttle 11-7, 10-12, 6-11, 11-8, 11-6. It wasn’t a great match for Hertfordshire no. one Tuttle who also missed out in five ends against Michael Fraser 14-16, 6-11, 11-3, 13-11, 4-11.

Middlesex beat Kent 7-3, a result that always looked on the cards after they led 5-1. Kent’s leading player Jasmin Ould was responsible for both of her side’s wins. The England no. 19 Junior Girl beat both Samantha Lai 11-4, 11-6, 11-8 and Sushmita Limbu 11-8, 11-5, 11-3 whilst Emma Tovey picked up Kent’s other win. She defeated Samantha Lai 10-12, 11-5, 7-11, 11-4, 11-7. Middlesex were very much in control in the Boys Singles and Ping Ho, Ryan Maynard and Tyrone Wells won their six singles. It was Ping Ho who came under the most pressure and he had to pull out

all the stops to get the better of Luke Savill 3-11, 11-9, 10-12, 11-9, 13-11.

Cleveland emerged as 7-3 winners over Hampshire, good going as Chloe Whyte's two concessions formed part of Hampshire's three wins. Jonathan Evans scored an opening game win over Anthony Phoenix (11-9, 9-11, 7-11, 11-7, 11-8) but thereafter Cleveland dominated. Shannon Walker, Karina Lefevre, Paul Smith and Anthony Phoenix raced through the remaining games.

Steve Kerns

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