

# County Championships Premier Results

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**Posted On:** October 17, 2011



Middlesex and Derbyshire look good at the top once again

Middlesex lead the way from Derbyshire

It is two of the most familiar names in Senior County Table Tennis – Middlesex and Derbyshire who are battling it out for top honours after the first weekend of Senior County Championships Premier Division action took place at Cippenham TTC in Slough.

With three newly promoted sides; Avon, Cornwall and Nottinghamshire, all battling to retain their Premier Division status, the division could well turn out be one of the more interesting ones in recent years.

Middlesex and Derbyshire both have five points out of six and as the two sides didn't meet this weekend it is clear that the competition is going to be very evenly matched this year. Middlesex dominated their first round game beating Cornwall 8-2. Fielding a very young side – Daniel Basterfield, Ryan Maynard, Tin-Tin Ho and Sarah Horsnell, were all undefeated.

England no. 38 Daniel Basterfield had to battle hard for his two wins. He was given a fright by Adrian Noot before he scraped home 11-6, 6-11, 5-11, 11-8, 11-8 and he was pushed even harder by England no. 45 Darren Reed before he emerged as a 9-11, 11-9, 11-7, 4-11, 12-10 winner. England no. 147 Ryan Maynard made an excellent Premier Division debut beating both Matthew Trevor and Adrian Noot 3-1.

Derbyshire's first round game was closer and they beat Nottinghamshire 6-4. England no. seven lady Emma Vickers and England no. 40 Sam Perry both won twice for Derbyshire whilst father/daughter pairing Lee and Sophie Neil and Jason Ramage showed up well for Notts. England no. 48 lady Sophie scored a fine 3-0 win over England no. 24 Abbie Milwain whilst Lee scored an excellent 3-2 win over England no. 36 Shaun Marples. However, it was England no. 68 Jason Ramage who hit the jackpot. He scored two excellent wins, beating both Shaun Marples (3-1) and David Arrowsmith (3-2).

Derbyshire made it two wins out of two by beating Essex 6-4 in round two whilst Middlesex were held to a draw by Avon. Shaun Marples had a much better game against Essex and he beat both Clive Carthy (3-2) and Martin Kubrt (3-1). The ladies matches were shared. England no. 26 Sarra Wang was well-beaten 3-0 by Abbie Milwain but she hit back in her second singles defeating Emma Vickers (Emma's only defeat of the weekend) after a five game thriller (11-8, 11-8, 9-11, 9-11, 13-11).

Lucy Wang did well to beat Abbie Milwain but she in turn lost to Emma as the ladies games played a very prominent role in this match. Sam Perry who had beaten Martin Kubrt in five ends sealed the Derbyshire victory by getting the better of Euan Liddle 11-9, 11-8, 11-7 to secure his side's victory.

Middlesex's Tin-Tin Ho, the only player to win all six games over the weekend, held her side together in their 5-5 draw against Avon. She beat Michele Reeves 3-1 and she produced a very polished performance to get the better of England no. 14 Melissa Wright 11-9, 11-7, 11-6. In a match where the Ranking List took a real battering England no. 88 Lloyd Gregory scored a superb 3-1 win over Daniel Basterfield but was found wanting in his second singles, when he lost 3-0 to Ryan Maynard.

Basterfield in turn did well to win his second singles. He beat England no. 26 Garth Kinlocke 7-11, 11-8, 11-9, 12-10. Ping Ho secured what could turn out to be a very valuable point for his side by getting the better of David Reeves 3-1 in the final game.

In round three Middlesex raced to an impressive 8-2 win over Nottinghamshire. England no. one Cadet Girl Tin-Tin Ho came under real pressure against Sophie Neil and despite serving into the net at 8-7 in the final game she kept her nerve brilliantly to win 11-3, 5-11, 11-7, 6-11, 11-9. Jason Ramage suffered his only defeat when

succumbing 3-0 to Daniel Basterfield whilst Ping Ho and Ryan Maynard both did well to beat England no. 111 Mark Green.

Meanwhile Derbyshire found themselves pegged back by Berkshire. Again the form book counted for little. Sam Perry scored a fine 3-1 victory against England no. 21 Tom Maynard but he was brought back down to earth in his second singles by Martin Adams. It was 3-0 to Adams (12-10, 11-6, 11-4). Adams will have been pleased as he had already lost his first singles 3-2 against a battling David Arrowsmith.

Abbie Milwain was involved in two five enders. She missed out 3-2 against Megan Knowles but she came through 3-2 against Maria Tsaptsinos. England no. 53 David Barr played his part. He defeated both Shaun Marples and David Arrowsmith 3-0. At the end of the day 5-5 looks a fair result to what was a very intriguing match.

Cornwall went a long way to securing another season in the top flight by beating Avon 6-4. And they achieved it without top player Darren Reed. They struck two big blows in the early Men's Singles clashes. Jeremy Williams secured a vital 11-7, 11-8, 6-11, 7-11, 11-8 win over Paul Hooper and Adrian Noott an excellent 12-10, 8-11, 8-11, 12-10, 11-9 win over Lloyd Gregory.

Cornwall had the early advantage and they didn't relinquish it. England no. 16 Junior Rachel Trevorrow who had already beaten Michele Reeves produced some stunning play by battling back from losing a close first end to get the better of Melissa Wright 15-17, 11-7, 11-8, 11-7 to seal a Cornwall victory. On this showing expect Rachel Trevorrow to make a significant move up the ETTA Junior Rankings by the end of the season.

Essex will be a little disappointed to have lost 8-2 to Sussex. Six successive games were decided in the fifth end and Sussex came out on top of these 4-2.

England no. five Veteran Ritchie Venner was involved in two of these battles and he came out on top both times. He beat Clive Carthy 11-9, 8-11, 11-7, 5-11, 11-9 and he fought back after losing two close opening games to get the better of Martin Kubrt 13-15, 9-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-9.

Sarra Wang pulled through in the fifth end against Rose Rainton but despite leading 2-0 she couldn't hold off Yolanda King. Yolanda came out on top 5-11, 9-11, 12-10, 11-7, 11-8.

It was a good match for Nigel Eckersley and the Sussex Over 50 Veteran beat both Euan Liddle (3-0) and Clive Carthy (3-1) whilst Euan Liddle made his mark. He scored a fine five game victory over Da Shuai Zhang.

Steve Kerns

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