

Middlesex retain County Premier title

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Egle Adomlyte helped Middlesex to the Premier Division title

MIDDLESEX RETAIN COUNTY SENIOR TITLE

Middlesex retained the County Championships Senior Premier Division after an exciting weekend's play at Wood Green Academy.

They consolidated their first weekend's lead from Slough even though they were not the outstanding team of the weekend as it turned out to be Nottinghamshire who put in a sterling effort to record four straight wins. This left Notts to rue their poor opening weekend.

The first round of matches on Saturday proved pivotal for Middlesex as their nearest rivals Sussex and Derbyshire were due to face each other and it could not have gone better for Middlesex with this match ending in a draw whilst Middlesex recorded a fine 7-3 victory against Berkshire.

The drawn clash between Sussex and Derbyshire produced contributions from eight of the ten players on duty with maximum performances coming from Da Shuai Zhang for Sussex and Emma Vickers for Derbyshire. Sussex players Richie Venner, Yolanda King and Rose Rainton scored one win each as did David Arrowsmith, Sam Perry and Shaun Marples for Derbyshire.

Middlesex then eased to a 7-3 victory over Berkshire as Daniel Basterfield, Egle Adomeltye and Tin-Tin Ho were all unbeaten and were supported by Ryan Maynard who also recorded one win to move their county one point clear of Derbyshire.

The other results saw Nottinghamshire beat Cornwall 8-2 while Essex who narrowly defeated Avon 6-4.

The second round of matches on Saturday saw Middlesex consolidate their position at the top with a 10-0 thumping of Essex which was matched by second place Derbyshire who also beat Cornwall by the same score.

Notts continued their revival when they recorded a whitewash against Avon but another draw for Sussex, this time against Berkshire saw Sussex lose ground on the top two as they were joined on six points by an improving Nottinghamshire.

Close of play Saturday Positions:

Middlesex 9 pts
Derbyshire 8 pts
Sussex 6 pts
Notts 6 pts
Berkshire 4 pts
Essex 4 pts
Cornwall 2 pts
Avon 1 pt

The first round of matches on Sunday saw Middlesex and Derbyshire start the day on nine and eight points respectively and it was Derbyshire who moved level on points with their southern rivals as they beat Avon 6-4 whilst Middlesex had to be content with a draw against Sussex.

It was a fine team effort for Derbyshire in their narrow win as David Arrowsmith and Emma Vickers both recorded two wins with team mates Sam Perry and Shaun Marples both chipping in with one win each to complete the victory.

Middlesex missed the opportunity to keep their lead when they opened with a hard fought draw against great rivals Sussex in which Igor Morais lead the way with an unbeaten performance. He was well supported by team mates Daniel Basterfield, Egle Adomelyte and Tin-Tin Ho who each chipped in with one win apiece to secure their draw.

There were also wins for Nottinghamshire, 7-3 over Berkshire, and another draw, this time between Cornwall and Essex, to complete the third round of fixtures with Derbyshire and Middlesex now level on 10 points apiece.

Sunday afternoon saw the fourth round of fixtures and brought together the leading two teams as Derbyshire faced Middlesex with the title at stake but it proved to be a one sided clash as Middlesex started the match in fine style and quickly established a 5-0 lead which left Derbyshire reeling.

Shaun Marples hit back in the next set for Derbyshire with a 3-0 (11-5 12-10 11-7) win over Ryan Maynard to reduce the arrears to 5-1 but two more wins by Middlesex as Tin-Tin Ho beat Abbie Milwain in four which was followed by a five-game win by Basterfield over Perry 3-2 (11-9, 8-11, 11-5, 8-11, 11-8) saw Middlesex establish a commanding 7-1 lead and with it the title.

The next two ends were shared with Vickers beating Adomelyte 3-1 (12-10, 12-10, 12-14, 11-9) to pull one back for Derbyshire but a final match win by Morais 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 12-10) over Arrowsmith completed a splendid 8-2 victory for Middlesex and took them back to top spot.

Other fourth round matches saw Sussex thump Cornwall 10-0 to consolidate their position and Berkshire also scored heavily with a 9-1 win over Avon while Notts picked up their fourth win of the weekend with a 6-4 win over Essex.

With Middlesex retaining the title it was Notts who moved into the runners-up spot on ends after a splendid weekend as they relegated Derbyshire to third place and we say goodbye to Avon and Cornwall who filled the bottom two places and are sadly relegated.

[Click here](#) to see the full County Championship tables

Barry Snowden

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