

# County Championships Senior review

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## County Championships 2011-2012

### Senior Divisions

#### Premier Division

Middlesex took the title after two thrilling weekends, firstly at Cippenham and then at Wood Green. After sharing the lead with Derbyshire following the first weekend, they moved into top gear and were never headed and thumped Derbyshire 8-2 on the second Sunday to confirm their title.

Derbyshire themselves were overhauled in the chase for the runners-up spot by Nottinghamshire who will be kicking themselves as, after starting the second weekend on two points, they recorded four straight wins to move above Derbyshire on sets.

The Premier Division says goodbye to Cornwall and Avon who finished on three and one point respectively and must try to fight their way back to Premier League status from Division One next season.

#### Division 1A

Yorkshire are the first team to replace Cornwall and Middlesex as they won Division 1A over one weekend played at Draycott. They won all their seven matches to complete the season five points clear of runners-up Leicestershire who stayed ahead of Suffolk who were beaten into third spot on sets.

South Yorkshire were one of the two relegated teams and are joined by Lancashire who had a torrid time losing all their seven matches, winning only eleven sets during the campaign.

#### Division 1B

Yorkshire are joined by Glamorgan in the Premier Division next season as the Welsh county won a highly exciting and entertaining Division 1B. This division was also played over one weekend at Cippenham where Glamorgan overtook Kent and won the title by a single point.

It was Kent who led the way after the first day with four straight wins while Glamorgan dropped one point as they drew with Devon. They were led by Regina Grech who recorded two wins while she was well supported by team mates Wiktor Dwonkowski, Dean Cundy and Clare Flannagan who each chipped in with one win each.

Glamorgan only just scrapped a draw as they had to rely on Cundy who took the final set 4-11 11-9 9-11 11-7 11-9 against Mike Hugh as Kent headed the division overnight on 8 points with Glamorgan on 7.

Sunday saw the one point gap remain until the sides faced each other and, in a thrilling encounter, it was the Welsh team who leap-frogged their opponents with a 6-4 win. On this occasion they had their female players to thank who scored four of their six sets as Grech was joined by Anna Labuz in recording maximums.

They were joined by Cundy and Neil Wright who each chipped in with one win apiece to complete victory and, as in their clash with Devon on the previous day, one set proved pivotal which saw Grech beat Emma Tovey 3-2 (6-11, 13-11, 6-11, 11-7, 13-11).

Worcestershire finished the campaign next to bottom on three points, one ahead of Buckinghamshire, and are joined in being relegated by Middlesex seconds who were unable to get off the mark with seven straight losses.

## **Division 2A**

In this highly competitive division played at Westfield TTC it was Cheshire who took the title winning four and drawing one match in a six team division. They dropped their only point to Warwickshire seconds who also drew with Northumberland, but with Cheshire beating Northumberland 8-2 it was Cheshire who took the title by one point from Warwickshire with Northumberland a further point back.

It was a fine weekend for the Cheshire quintet of Jonathan Taylor, Neil Powell, Malcolm McEvoy, Janay Gibson and Denise McEvoy who took the title after a splendid two days of action.

## **Division 2B**

This division was played over two weekends with the first played at Plymouth before Christmas and the second at Taunton in March. The crucial match of the division we go back to Plymouth for the clash between the Dorset first team and Devonshire seconds.

Devonshire began brightly enough as Dom Sussex beat Nathan Bingham 3-2 (11-8, 13-11, 9-11, 1-11, 11-8) but wins by Steve Foster, George Dowling and Chloe Thomas put Dorset in command at 3-1 only for Vicky Smith to bring the sides to within a set as she beat Becky Kuzu 3-0 (11-5 11-2 11-5).

The next two sets were shared as Bingham beat Harry Cutler 3-1 (11-4 11-4 13-15 11-1) only for Lisa Radford to beat Kuzu 3-0 (11-8 11-9 11-3) to once more bring the sides to within a set at 4-3 to Dorset.

Dorset then took command of the match as three successive wins from Downing, Thomas and Foster saw them complete a 7-3 victory and with both teams winning their remaining matches of the campaign it was Dorset Firsts who took the division by two points from their rivals.

## **Division 2C**

The tightest division in the senior ranks was Division 2C which saw the top two teams head the division on the same number of points. In another six team division it was Norfolk who took the division on a superior sets advantage over Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire actually won the clash 6-4 when the two sides met but, draws against Cambridgeshire first team and Suffolk seconds, while Norfolk won their remaining matches meant that both teams completed their campaign on eight points.

A hard fought 6-4 victory against Essex seconds was the closest any other team got to Norfolk as comprehensive wins over Cambridgeshire firsts (9-1), Cambridgeshire seconds (10-0) and Suffolk seconds (7-3) saw them complete the season seven sets clear of Oxfordshire.

## **Division 2D**

The Surrey first team were the stand out Division 2D side with six straight wins to complete the season four points clear of runners-up Kent seconds. They beat Surrey seconds into third by one set with both teams finishing the season on eight points.

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