

Yorkshire lead Over 60's County Champs

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YORKSHIRE LEAD OVER 60's PREMIER

There must be something in the air or water in Yorkshire that makes the more mature players in the County Championships hot-shots as, not only are the veterans' first team leading the Premier Division, but the over 60's first team are also in touching distance of picking up their first Premier Division title.

After the first weekend of the over 60's event, played at Milton Keynes and impeccably organised by Ted Tydeman, the Yorkshire side are unbeaten from their five matches with three wins and two draws as they lead the division by two points from Essex with Kent a further point adrift.

The division looks a bit lopsided at the end of the first weekend with not of all the counties playing the same number of sets due to the late withdrawal of Surrey. A quick adjustment to the schedule had to be done so another overnight stay was prevented when the counties all meet up again to complete the division.

Yorkshire's three wins were a 9-1 thumping of Hertfordshire, a 7-3 win over red rose rival Lancashire and a hard-fought 6-4 win over Middlesex.

Essex lie in second spot having only played four matches. They too beat Herts 7-3 and Middlesex 8-2 respectively, but they also drew two matches against Lancashire and Yorkshire.

It proved a strange mix of results for former champions Kent who drew with Herts before losing to Lancashire then bouncing back with two solid wins against Middlesex (9-1) and against Sussex (7-3).

The outstanding match of the weekend was the drawn clash between Yorkshire and Essex which, in the long run, could have a large influence on the outcome of the division.

Newcomer Freddie Yeung gave Yorkshire an opening set lead with a 3-1 (11-9, 18-20, 11-7, 11-7) victory over Stuart Gibbs only for Essex to hit back with interest by taking the next three sets. Dave Bowles levelled the match with a thrilling five-game victory over Doug Bartle 3-2 (12-10, 5-11, 11-9, 1-11, 11-9).

Peter Radford then put Essex ahead when he beat Steve Kosmowsky in four 3-1 (11-8, 11-3, 9-11, 11-6) and when Radford partnered Shirley Carroll to a fine 3-1 (5-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-7) mixed doubles win over Bartle and Sandra Rider, Essex were firmly in control.

Surprise package Yeung took his second win of the match when he beat Bowles 3-0 (11-7, 11-5, 12-10) to bring the sides to within a set and when Rider eased past Carroll 3-0 (11-2, 11-8, 11-6) the sides were level at three

apiece.

Essex moved ahead when they took the mens' doubles as Radford and Gibbs beat Kosmowsky and Bartle 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-4) and then they moved into an unassailable 5-3 lead when Radford beat Bartle 3-0 (13-11, 11-9, 11-7) to guarantee themselves at least a share of the spoils.

That was all they received though as the White Rose County fought back. In the penultimate set Kosmowsky won the battle of the number ones with a 3-0 (11-6, 11-4, 11-9) win over Gibbs and the match ended all-square as man of the match Yeung partnered Rider to a comfortable 3-0 (11-7, 11-3, 11-1) mixed doubles victory over Carroll and Bowles.

Although Yorkshire are in a commanding position the division is far from over.

They lead Essex by two points with one match left to play, but both sides still have third-placed Kent to play so all is to play for when the teams meet up once again in Milton Keynes next March.

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