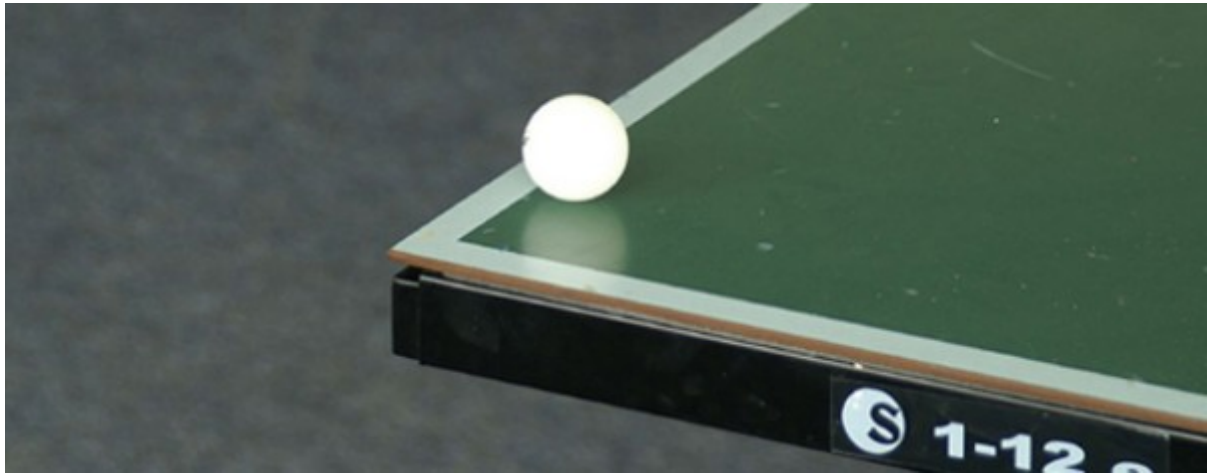


Another county title for Yorkshire

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ANOTHER COUNTY TITLE FOR YORKSHIRE

Following on after the success of their veteran first team, who recently won the Veterans Premier Division, Yorkshire's over 60's team followed suit by completing the season on identical match points as reigning champions Essex, but they took the title on a superior sets advantage.

Yorkshire over 60's travelled to Milton Keynes to play the second round of fixtures with only one match to play as they had already played five of their six matches and lead the division by two points from Essex with Kent a further point adrift.

Both the southern-based teams had played one match less than Yorkshire but with Kent having to play both the teams above them and Essex also due to play the strong looking Sussex team there was all to play for.

Yorkshire had a bye in the first round of fixtures and had to watch on to see if Essex could eat into their seven-set lead as they faced a weakened Kent who called up event organiser Ted Tydeman as a last-minute replacement.

It was Kent who hit the floor running as they took the opening two sets, both in five game victories, as Keith Clark beat Peter Radford 3-2 (7-11, 11-8, 15-13, 4-11, 11-4) which was followed by an impressive effort from late call up Tydeman who beat Dave Bowles 3-2 (10-12, 11-9, 11-8, 8-11, 11-8) as Kent led 2-0.

Stuart Gibbs steadied the ship for Essex with a 3-1 (3-11, 12-10, 11-6, 11-6) victory over Roger Pingram which was followed by a mixed doubles win by Gibbs and Marjoie Dawson who beat Clark and Pam Butcher 3-1 (7-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-9) as the teams drew level after four rubbers. When Radford eased passed Tydeman 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-6) it was Essex who had rallied to lead 3-2.

The next set was the ladies singles which proved to be an epic and was just won by Pam Butcher who beat Marjorie Dawson 3-2 (9-11, 13-11, 5-11, 11-4, 11-9) to tie the match at 3-3 and it was Essex who took the lead once more as Gibbs and Radford took the men's doubles 3-0 (11-9, 11-9, 11-7).

Pingram levelled the match once again for the determined former champions with a four game win over Bowles 3-1 (11-13, 11-6, 11-4, 11-9) but Essex, who were doing all they could to retain the title, guaranteed themselves at least a draw as Gibbs beat Clark 3-1 (11-6, 11-13, 11-9, 12-10).

With Essex leading 5-4 it was time for the final mixed doubles which was won by Bowles and Dawson 3-1 (11-7, 11-7, 11-13, 11-3) over Butcher and Tydeman as Essex completed a hard fought 6-4 victory.

The final round of matches saw Yorkshire meet Kent and Essex face Sussex. The job for Yorkshire was simple in that they had to match whatever Essex did to win the title by one set.

As well as playing their own matches, both counties were keeping an eye on each other as the matches unfolded. At the half-way stage things could not have been closer as Essex lead 6-nil whilst Yorkshire had dropped one set and now lead 5-1 which brought the sides level on 11 match points each and exactly level on sets.

Both counties lost the mens doubles as the Sussex pairing of Barrie Gilbert and John Clarke beat Radford and Gibbs in a thriller 3-2 (11-4, 9-11, 10-12, 11-9, 11-9) while Keith Clark and Ted Tydeman beat Steve Kosmowsky and Doug Bartle in an equally thrilling match 3-2 (11-8, 11-8, 8-11, 7-11, 11-9).

The next two sets in both matches proved crucial as Barrie Gilbert beat Bowles 3-0 (11-5, 11-9, 11-8) while Freddie Yeung beat Tydeman for Yorkshire 3-1 (11-3, 7-11, 11-3, 14-12). Therefore, it was the White Rose county who had taken the initiative and led the title race by a set.

The penultimate set of both matches ended the title race as the battle of the number one players was contested in both matches. Yorkshire took the title as Gibbs was just beaten by Clarke 3-2 (3-11, 11-5, 11-9, 5-11, 12-10) while Kosmowsky beat Keith Clarke 3-1 (11-9, 9-11, 11-5, 12-10). Yorkshire therefore led 7-2 and, with Essex leading just 6-3, Yorkshire could not be overhauled.

With the pressure now off, both counties eased to their final mixed doubles clash in straight games as Radford and Dawson beat Gilbert and Dolly Gilbert 3-0 (11-7, 11-5, 11-9) while Sandra Rider partnered Yeung to a 3-0 (11-9, 11-5, 11-5) victory over Butcher and Pingram to complete the title victory for Yorkshire.

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