

Lancashire set early pace in Vets' County Champs

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This season's County Championships began with the first weekend of the over 60's Premier Division which was held at Milton Keynes TTC (October 5-6) with all counties playing four matches.

Defending Champions Yorkshire were looking to repeat their title success of last season and they got off to the best possible start with a 10-0 win over Hampshire as skipper Steve Kosmowsky and Freddie Yeung were joined by newcomer Phil Cawser and Linda Simpson making her first team debut.

The outstanding match in the first round of fixtures was a 6-4 win by Lancashire over Essex as over 60's 'newbie' Phil Bowen picked up four vital wins in the victory.

Bowen opened with a 3-1 (11-6, 10-12, 11-4, 11-3) singles win over Peter Radford before partnering Sylvia Graham to a tight mixed doubles win over Stuart Gibbs and Marjorie Dawson 3-2 (11-9, 3-11, 13-11, 11-13, 13-11) which brought the teams level at 2-2.

Bowen and Brian Clements won an equally close men's doubles against Gibbs and Terry Guymer 3-2 (11-7, 8-11, 11-6, 7-11, 11-9) which gave Lancashire a 4-3 lead then, in his final singles, Bowen beat Gibbs 3-0 (11-6, 14-12, 11-7) which guaranteed Lancashire a draw with a 5-4 lead. In the final set Lancashire completed their win with another mixed doubles win as Kenny Jackson partnered Graham to a 3-2 (11-4, 10-12, 9-11, 11-6, 11-3) win over Radford and Dawson.

The second round of fixtures saw Lancashire establish themselves as favourites for the competition as they eased passed reigning champions Yorkshire 7-3 and on this occasion it was not all Bowen's work.

This time Brian Clements joined Bowen in remaining unbeaten in singles play while Jackson dropped the only men's singles set to Yeung 3-1 (11-9, 11-7, 4-11, 11-7). Despite Linda Simpson winning the ladies singles and Yorkshire taking the first mixed doubles, it was Lancashire who ran away with the match converting a match score of 3-3 into a convincing 7-3 victory.

It is Hertfordshire who are lying in second place after the first weekend as they recorded three wins, against Cheshire (7-3), Kent (7-3) and an 8-2 win over the unfortunate Hampshire side but they were held to a draw by Sussex in a match which Herts actually led 5-1.

However, an impressive Sussex comeback saw them recover to take the last four sets and deny their opponents the opportunity to join Lancashire on maximum points.

Both the two northern counties completed their weekend with two comfortable victories as Lancashire beat both Hampshire and neighbours Cheshire 9-1 while Yorkshire also beat Cheshire 8-2 and former champions Kent 9-1.

Standings:

County	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against	Points
Lancashire	4	4	0	0	31	9	8
Hertfordshire	4	3	1	0	27	13	7
Yorkshire	4	3	0	1	30	10	6
Sussex	4	2	1	1	25	15	5
Essex	4	2	1	1	22	18	5
Cheshire	4	0	1	3	11	29	1
Kent	4	0	0	4	10	30	0
Hampshire	4	0	0	4	4	36	0

Barry Snowden – County Championship Press Officer (November 1, 2013)

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