

Lancashire claim first Over 60s County crown

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LANCASHIRE TAKE OVER 60's PREMIER TITLE

Lancashire took their first County Championships over 60's Premier Division title when they emerged just ahead of deadly rivals and reigning champions Yorkshire after another thrilling weekend at Milton Keynes. The title went right down to the wire and the outcome was not determined until the final set of both Lancashire and Yorkshire's last match.

Lancashire held a two-point lead over their rivals after the first weekend of fixtures by virtue of a 7-3 win when the counties met although it was surprise package Hertfordshire who began the second round of fixtures in second spot, one point adrift of Lancashire.

The first round of fixtures saw no change in the positions as Lancashire beat Kent 7-3, Hertfordshire beat Essex 6-4 and with Yorkshire accounting for Sussex 6-4 so it was still the red rose county who led with two matches remaining on 10 match points. They were one ahead of Hertfordshire who in turn were one ahead of Yorkshire but all that was to change with two rounds left as Hertfordshire were due to face both their championship chasing opponents.

It was Yorkshire who made the first move as they beat Hertfordshire 7-3 and it was a fine all-round team effort for the northerners as Phil Cawser lead the way – winning both his singles and he was well supported by team mates Steve Kosmowsky, Freddie Yeung and Linda Simpson who each chipped in with one singles win apiece. With Yorkshire taking the first mixed doubles and mens' doubles they quickly established a winning 6-1 lead and ran out comfortable victors in the end.

This win allowed Yorkshire to pull to within a set as Lancashire seemed to be feeling the pressure after being held to draw by Sussex. Lancashire, who established an unbeatable 5-4 lead in the penultimate set, lost their 100% record in the final set as Robin Stace and Pauline Steele took the final mixed doubles for Sussex against Freddie Bainbridge and Sylvia Graham 3-1 (6-11, 11-7, 11-7, 11-3) to salvage a draw.

Yorkshire had now leap-frogged Hertfordshire into second spot and were only one point behind Lancashire with one round of matches to play.

The final round of matches saw Lancashire play Hertfordshire and Yorkshire face Essex and they did not disappoint as both sets of players from Lancashire and Yorkshire were obviously watching events unfold in their own matches but were also keeping a keen eye on how their rivals were doing across the hall.

Both matches were keenly contested and neither produced a runaway win which would help determine the destination of the title as each set was played out with great vigor. To their credit, Essex gave their all against

Yorkshire and despite leading 4-2 at one stage, a run of three sets on the trot by Essex saw Yorkshire needing to take the final mixed doubles in order to secure anything out of the match. This they managed as Kosmowsky and Simpson took the last mixed doubles 3-1 (11-2, 9-11, 11-7, 11-6) against Dave Bowers and Shirley Carroll to end the contest as a draw which left Lancashire the task of matching Yorkshire to take the title.

Lancashire and Hertfordshire's meeting was every bit as tense as the Yorkshire/Essex match and it was not until the penultimate set of the tie when Brian Clements took his second singles with a 3-0 (12-10, 11-5, 11-4) result that meant Lancashire reached their fifth set and with it, the draw that secured the title.

In the end a draw was all Lancashire achieved as Ken Stonebridge and Sally Bax took the final mixed doubles 3-1 (12-10, 11-7, 8-11, 11-9) for Hertfordshire yet it was Lancashire who took the title by one set over Yorkshire with Hertfordshire a further set adrift.

To see the [full tables and results click here](#)

Barry Snowden

County Championship Press Officer (March 11, 2014)

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