

Mesmerising play at WBL comes to a close

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As play drew to a close on a mesmerising weekend at Tipton Sports Academy, there was still time for a few glimmers of excellence in and amongst the siege of final round games.

Once again, Ormesby shone brightly as they produced another exceptional result that secured their place in Women's British League history.

Having cruised through their opening four matches with consecutive 6-0 victories, their top of the table clash with unbeaten Draycott was labelled as the true test of their ability to claim a third consecutive league title.

They responded in emphatic style. A stunning 5-1 win against a Draycott side oozing talent was a sign that this team could well be the greatest in Women's British League history.

A return of 29 sets in 30 is testament to the ability the team possesses.

The game they dropped came against Draycott. After Karina Le Fevre won an epic five end thriller against Abbie Milwain, Draycott's Emma Vickers, unbeaten at this point, dispatched of French star Sarah Berge in what stands as the only blemish on her record.

Vickers deserves enormous adulation for her own performance over the weekend. It wasn't just her results, with another fine victory coming over Yolanda King, but it was the manner of them, comprehensively dismantling the majority of her victims with ease. If this was a glimpse into her upcoming season, there is much promise ahead for Vickers.

However, she eventually succumbed to the impeccable Karina Le Fevre, who finished the weekend with her most impressive victory. Le Fevre has become the figurehead of a side that has dominated the league for years, a fact that resembles her enormous value. Her record of 42 wins in 50 for Ormesby is starting to put her in the bracket of British League greats of recent years.

Berge recovered from her defeat with a routine victory over Natalie Slater. Slater also fell victim to the explosive Maria Tsaptsinos.

Tsaptsinos, a player still just 17 years old, still learning her craft in the juniors, eased to ten straight victories in the country's finest division, a staggering achievement.

However, Ormesby weren't the only success story of the opening weekend.

Newly promoted YHL came into the season full of promise and duly delivered. The trio of Yolanda King, Vicky Smith and Rachel Trevorrow ended the weekend in third after picking up victories over Knighton Park and Halton.

King came agonisingly close to beating Le Fevre before being edged out in the fifth whilst Smith remained consistent throughout. As for Trevorrow, ranked below the vast majority of her opponents, registered four wins from ten, notably beating Slater, to wrap up a successful weekend for the newbies.

The same can be said for Burton Uxbridge. Having lost star player Milwain to Draycott, they remained resolute and ended the season with two crucial wins. Youngster Isobel Ashley was a notable performer, picking up a superb win over King in one of the big individual results of the weekend.

Halton ended the weekend in fifth after a mixed bag of results. Lacking Gillian Edwards and Janay Gibson, performances were understandably patchy for the Cheshire outfit, but their fifth round victory over Burton, largely aided by Nicole Hall's superb performance, leaves them with a platform to build on going forward.

As for Knighton Park, an inevitably difficult weekend was rewarded with a draw against Halton. Karen Smith played admirably throughout the weekend, with a return of 50 percent playing at No 1 a remarkable accomplishment for the veteran.

In Division One, a solid effort from Team of the Week Fusion Wags left them all set for promotion to the Premier Division. Dominant displays from Lois Peake, Nivedita Sunil and Sarah Short saw the team drop just three sets throughout the weekend, with Sunil remaining unbeaten.



The Fusion Wags, who were Team of the Week. Picture courtesy of John Upham

Hot on their heels are the popular Thorntons Table Tennis. Eager to reclaim a spot in the Premier Division, four wins from five games gives them the opportunity to do just that.

A topsy turvy weekend in Division Two resulted in three teams claiming the top spot. Draycott ended the weekend perched at the pinnacle largely thanks to consistency throughout their four players. Yet Pink Pong are breathing down their neck, trailing them on sets difference. The performances of Letitia McMullen and Jazmin Johns proved crucial to their success.

Meanwhile, the other three divisions have all been intriguing with every side dropping points.



Player of the Weekend, Elena Moraru of York Garden Angels. Picture courtesy of John Upham

Fusion Ladies and St Andrews are neck and neck in the race to be crowned champions of Division Three, whilst Player of the Weekend Elena Moraru was influential in leading York Garden Angels to the top of Division Four.

Finally, York Garden Angels 2 and Sutton At Hone look set to battle it out in the final weekend to become champions of Division Five. Despite losing to Sutton, York lead the division on sets difference after Sutton drew twice.

Here are a few photos from the weekend; a full catalogue including shots of every player will be released over the few next days, after processing by John Upham.



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