

County Championship: Pilgrim and Sagoo spearhead Warwicks march

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A six-team County Championship Senior Division 2A was played to completion over the last weekend in November at the excellent Draycott and Long Eaton TTC. Warwickshire seconds swept all before them as they won all five matches with ease, winning 45 sets and dropping only five, averaging nine sets per match as they completed proceedings three points clear of runners-up Northumberland firsts.

As it turned out, the match between the top two teams took place first on Saturday and saw Northumberland take the opening set as Andrew Wilkinson beat Matthew Outhwaite 3-1 (7-11, 12-10, 11-8, 11-9). But they then had to wait until they were 7-1 down before recording another victory as Christine Burke beat Rachel Pilgrim 3-1 (11-5, 11-8, 7-11, 29-27) and despite Graeme Barella beating Ryan Stockham 3-0 (11-8, 11-7, 12-10) in the last set this did not prevent Warwickshire recording a 7-3 win.

Dawn Sagoo and Adrian Pilgrim both were unbeaten for Warwickshire and with Rachel Pilgrim, Outhwaite and Stockham both picking up one set it was a solid start for the Midlands.

East Midland rivals Derbyshire were next up for Warwickshire, and Derbyshire did themselves no favours by not fielding a woman player, thereby starting the match 4-0 down. They then proved no match for the Warwickshire outfit who swept all before them and recorded a 10-0 victory.

Staffordshire were the last opponents for Warwickshire on the Saturday and also proved no match the victors once again proved irresistible, reeling off nine straight sets before Stephen Ward stopped the rot for Staffordshire as he beat Ryan Stockham in the final set 3-2 (10-12, 11-7, 8-11, 11-8, 11-9).

Warwickshire will have slept well on Saturday night as they led the division, and they were in no mood to let their position slip on Sunday. South Yorkshire were the next side to be put to the sword as Warwickshire raced to a 5-0 lead before Mohammed Khan stopped the rot with a narrow 3-2 (11-7, 6-11, 11-5, 7-11, 11-9) win over Stockham. But this only delayed the inevitable as Warwickshire picked up again to reel off the next four sets to record an impressive 9-1 win.

The final match proved to be a lap of honour as Northumberland seconds provided little resistance as Warwickshire whitewashed their opponents 10-0 to complete their title march. Adrian Pilgrim and Dawn Sagoo were the star turns as they both completed the weekend unbeaten for the champions.

Barry Snowden (press officer)

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