



Dorset lead way after impressive double

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Posted On: November 02, 2015

The first round of fixtures in County Championship Veterans' Division 1B was played at Cippenham, with all counties playing two matches.

At the end of the opening day's play there was a three-way at the top of the division as Dorset, Essex II and Avon all won two matches apiece – and it is Dorset who top the table having secured two large wins with an 8-2 win over Wiltshire before overwhelming Bucks with a perfect 10.

Second on sets are Essex, who opened their account with a hard fought 6-4 win over Kent II, which proved to be one of the outstanding matches of the weekend as a Duncan Taylor-inspired Essex took victory with Taylor being undefeated in his singles sets, beating Andy Norwood and Martin Hewitt of Kent

The team lying in third spot on sets are Avon, who were involved in the outstanding match of the weekend as they needed a last-set mixed doubles win to secure a hard fought 6-4 win over Sussex II.

The match began brightly enough for Avon as Martin Gunn beat Shaun Parsley 3-0 (11-6, 11-8, 13-11), only for Sussex to hit back and take the next two sets as David Butler beat Mike Bishop in three (11-9, 11-6, 11-8), which was followed by a comfortable 3-0 (11-3, 11-7, 11-3) win by Paul Barry over Gary Baldwin as Sussex now led 2-1.

The match score soon became 2-2 as Gunn and Michelle Reeves eased to a 3-0 (11-7, 11-3, 11-1) win over Butler and Sheila King in the first mixed doubles, but it was Sussex who then retook the lead when Parsley beat Bishop 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-9).

Avon were back level once more at three sets all as Reeves beat Gill Locke in three (11-8, 11-8, 11-5) in the ladies' singles, but in this most exciting of matches it was Sussex who took the lead once more as Barry and Butler beat Gunn and Bishop 3-0 (11-6, 11-8, 11-5) in the men's doubles.

Avon remarkably drew level once more in the set of the match as Baldwin beat Butler 3-2 (7-11, 14-12, 6-11, 11-9, 11-9) and then took the lead for the first time since the first set as Gunn produced a solid performance to beat Barry 3-0 (11-8, 11-7, 11-8) to guarantee Avon at least a share of the spoils as they now led 5-4. But that was not enough as in the final set mixed it was Baldwin and Reeves who beat Parsley and King 3-0 (11-9, 12-10, 13-11) to give Avon the win 6-4.

League table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dorset	2	2	0	0	18	2	4

Essex II	2	2	0	0	14	6	4
Avon	2	2	0	0	13	7	4
Kent II	2	1	0	1	11	9	2
Middlesex	2	1	0	1	10	10	2
Sussex II	2	0	0	2	7	13	0
Wiltshire	2	0	0	2	4	16	0
Bucks	2	0	0	2	3	17	0

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