



County Championship: Worcs lead way after sinking champs

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Posted On: January 14, 2016

In a division of nine teams, Worcestershire are leading the race for promotion to the premier division as they lead the over-60s Division 1A with five wins from five starts. They consolidated their place at the top over the weekend fixtures played at Sycamore TTC, Nottinghamshire, when all counties met up for the weekend.

One of the two outstanding matches over the weekend featured the leaders against previously unbeaten reigning champions Yorkshire, when both counties played out a thriller which saw the Midlands record a hard fought 6-4 win.

Worcestershire opened with a win as Ken Walton beat Steve Morris 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 12-10), only for Yorkshire to hit back and take the next set as Geoff Dunne beat Chris Maiden in five (9-11, 8-11, 11-4, 11-8, 11-5).

Worcestershire established a grip on the match as firstly Pat McCabe beat Doug Bartle 3-1 (11-4, 11-13, 11-7, 11-9), which was followed by a 3-1 mixed doubles win by Walton and Margaret Dignum over Bartle and Sandra Rider (11-13, 12-10, 11-9, 11-7), but Yorkshire hit back and levelled the match by taking the next two sets as Morris beat Maiden 3-0 (12-10, 11-3, 11-6) and then Rider beat Dignum, also in three (11-8, 11-5, 11-8).

Walton and Maiden took the pivotal men's doubles in the next set as they beat Bartle and Dunne 3-2 (11-8, 7-11, 10-12, 11-8, 11-4) and when McCabe easily beat Dunne 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-2) the Midland county has established an unbeatable 5-3 lead.

In the penultimate set of the match Walton beat Bartle in three (11-8, 11-7, 12-10) to complete victory for Worcestershire, leaving Yorkshire to take the last mixed doubles as Rider and Keith Powell beat McCabe and Dignum 3-0 (14-12, 11-9, 13-11) which gave Worcestershire a 6-4 win.

The other outstanding match of the weekend was between Warwickshire No 1 and the home county of Nottinghamshire, who fought out a thriller with the match result being in doubt until the last point of the last game of the last set.

Steve Taylor gave Warwickshire the lead with an opening-set 3-1 victory over Alan Philpott (12-10, 9-11, 11-6, 11-5), but Notts levelled when skipper Mick Pestka beat Terry Cooper in a thrilling five-setter (11-9, 8-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9) and it was Notts who took a 2-1 lead as Ray Rider beat Phil Pain, also in five (9-11, 11-6, 13-11, 4-11, 11-7).

Another five-gamer saw Warwickshire level as Paine and Dot MacFarlane came from behind to take the first mixed doubles 6-11, 6-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-8, over Pestka and Betty Godfrey, and when Taylor beat Pestka 3-2 (15-13,

8-11, 9-11, 13-11, 11-6), Warwickshire then led 3-2.

Godfrey took the ladies' singles with a 3-1 (9-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-6) win over MacFarlane to level the match score after six sets and when Rider and Philpott took the men's doubles 3-0 (11-6, 11-9, 12-10) over Paine and Taylor Notts had retaken the lead at 4-3. When Rider beat Cooper in three (11-6, 13-11, 11-5), Notts had established an unbeatable 5-3 lead.

Paine brought the sides to within a set when he took the penultimate set of the match with a 3-1 (11-3, 11-5, 5-11, 14-12) win over Philpott which brought the sides to within a set and in the final set it was Notts who completed victory as Philpott and Godfrey beat Cooper and MacFarlane 3-2 (11-4, 9-11, 6-11, 11-9, 12-10).

With there being nine teams in the division and matches being played at various venues and on differing weekend, teams have played a different number of matches and everything will not be completed until the final round of matches at Halifax in March.

Although Worcestershire have won their five matches so far, Lincolnshire also have a 100% record from the three matches they have played so far and with a clash to follow at Halifax, the title is still up for grabs.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Worcestershire	5	5	0	0	39	11	10
Cheshire 2	6	4	1	1	45	15	9
Yorkshire 2	6	4	1	1	45	15	9
Lincolnshire	3	3	0	0	25	5	6
Warwickshire 1	6	2	0	4	25	35	4
Nottinghamshire	3	2	0	1	17	13	4
Cheshire 3	6	1	0	5	15	45	2
Warwickshire 2	5	0	0	5	6	44	0
Cambridgeshire	4	0	0	4	3	37	0

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