



Everything to play for after JBL opening weekend

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More than 200 junior players took centre stage as the first weekend of Junior British League kick-started this season's action.

At a packed out Derby Arena, the country's stars of the future engaged in battle on 38 tables that provided all the thrills and spills the British League has provided over so many years.

There remains everything to play for, too, with incredibly tight results leaving the second weekend of the season one full of intrigue and suspense.

That fact is perhaps best summed up by the Boys' Premier Division, with just three points separating the top five teams.

E-Batt Colebridge head the table at the midway stage after registering four wins from their opening five games.

An outstanding nine wins out of ten from French hotshot Thibault Bailliet was the catalyst for the league leaders, with defeat to Shiyan Siraj the only blemish on his record.

That defeat proved costly, however, as Siraj's Grantham Cliffedale Chandlers inflicted E-Batt to their only defeat, a 4-2 reverse that leaves the two teams locked on eight points apiece after five games.

Cliffedale had previously drawn with XLNT Draycott and BATTs A, the latter of which are just one point adrift of the pace-setters.



Girls Team – Ellenbrough (Photo by Chris Rayner)

The day was more straightforward for the Girls' Premier favourites Burton Uxbridge A, who stormed to five straight wins over the weekend.

In fact, their dominance was so much that they dropped just three sets along the way, with Charlotte Bardsley and Mollie Paterson ending the weekend with outstanding 100% records.

They have yet to face the only other unbeaten team in Ellenborough Girls, who sit one point behind the leaders having drawn with XLNT Draycott 1. Nevertheless, it leaves everyone plenty to ponder ahead of the second weekend.

Dublin A lead the way in Boys' Division 1, having overcome their five counterparts in the six-division competition largely due to the 100% records of Gaspar Romain and Jamie Liu.

Halifax, who they defeated 5-1, are their nearest rivals.

The Swerve A Girls are in control of Division 1 following an unbeaten start to the year, with the outstanding Nicole Scott playing a significant role following nine wins out of ten.

A three-horse race has developed in Division 2B with Cardiff CTC just ahead of XLNT Draycott B and Colebridge B. Martin Johnson's immaculate record over the weekend greatly contributed to Cardiff's cause.

The Girls Division 2 competition has an equally complex look, with Ulster holding a two-point cushion after a perfect 10 wins from 10 from Lucy Craig. Fusion Girls are also unbeaten, but three draws have left them playing catch-up.

Boys Division 3A is without question the most closely-fought league, with just three points splitting the top five teams.

Bishop Auckland, despite winning just two matches, are top of the table after also securing three draws thanks to the help of unbeaten Harvey McDonald.

Urban and Harrogate are a point adrift with Bribar St Neots a further point behind.

The location of the Division 3B title appears more obvious, however. Formby ended the event with five straight victories, with Yameen Al-Dahiri picking up 10 wins while he was ably assisted by Rhys Davies, who won on nine

of his ten outings.

A two-horse race for the Girls Division 3 title sees two of the country's most reputable clubs, XLNT Draycott and Greenhouse, battling it out, with Draycott's third team a point ahead of Greenhouse's second-string after five matches.

It appears to be a two-horse race in Boys Division 4A, with Horsham Spinners and Ulster neck-and-neck after the two teams drew to end the weekend on nine points. Horsham currently have the advantage due to a superior sets difference.

Finally, it's Hunts Boys who are in charge of Division 4B after cementing a three-point lead at the top of the table.

The second weekend takes place in Derby on February 10th & 11th.

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