



## Leicester & District: Development League off to busy start

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The Leicester Development League, effectively the junior league, has had its first session with 38 teams of youngsters involved at the Leicester Grammar School.

The top 16 teams were split into four divisions – 1A to 1D, the next 16 into four divisions, while the remaining six teams were in division three, the idea being for them to sort themselves out for the second session when they will be split into nine straight divisions based on these results.

The main reason is that more than half the players are new to the league and the number of teams grows ever more diverse. Where Knighton Park used to dominate, others are now coming through, especially Winstanley, whose A team topped 1A and looks particularly strong with Dan Andrews, Sufyaana Dhanji and Marcus Harvey all emerging undefeated.

Winstanley also won 1D with their B team when Ben Cooke claimed a 100% record. Barwell B won 1B with Frankie Hallam and Alana Richardson unbeaten, while no-one remained undefeated in 1C which was topped by KP1 Scorpions. When the dust has finally settled a better picture will emerge ready for matches in the second session in a couple of weeks' time.

An unprecedented number of postponements in Division Three of the Leicester & District League this season is causing concern as all first half matches have to be played before the second half kicks in, which means a veritable bottleneck building up for the spare weeks around the holiday period.

Winstanley Wizards, not all that many moons ago were a club testing the league waters with one very inexperienced team in the lowest division. Now boasting five teams, their first team has been taking division three by storm.

Having drawn with lowly Regent Sports II they have won their other four including a latest excellent 6-4 victory

over a talented Abbots Road III. Himansu Mishra continued his very good form with three while Dan Andrews took two. For Abbots Richard Martin won two, Steve Pratt and Raju Rahul one apiece. The Wizards were 4-1 up before Abbots fought back and then Mishra and Andrews won the doubles easily.

Knighton Park VI have also been performing well under the leadership of Zia Malik. They beat Syston Casuals III 7-3 and then did the same against Goons. Malik won three each time and is proving ever more difficult to beat, while Vishal Sharda won two in each match and Oscar Bentley came to the party against Goons to take two of his own.

Andy Searle maintained a distinct interest in the top of the averages with a fine maximum against Regent Sports II in a 5-5 draw. Searle has lost just one so far. He had a game taken from him by John Dewsbury in this match, the latter playing extremely well to win his other two with some excellent hitting.

Syston Casuals IV maintained their 100% record in Division Four by way of a resounding 10-0 pounding of Regent Sports III with Pritesh Nakeshree, Wes Glauds and Scott Morris taking no prisoners. They are firm favourites for the title.

Top, however, are Goons II because of playing one match more, and their 9-1 win over Lutterworth Rotary was out of the top drawer with Steve Harrison, Kevin Edwards and Scott Robinson all winning three singles. Lutterworth found some comfort in the doubles when Mike Eastell and Noelle Paine gained a little consolation to avoid the full house.

With Unicorn and Knighton Park still winning in Division One the focus fell on Electricity's Andy LeButt who took a very fine maximum off Ajax Wolvey in a 6-4 defeat for the Sparks. LeButt had been disappointed with his form in a recent County Veterans match but was back with a bang in this match, with David Grundy getting Electricity's other singles. John Fuller and Aidan Walsh each won two for Ajax and Mick Allsopp one.

Holwell Sports continue to rule the Division Two roost, latest being an 8-2 success over Regent Sports firsts, but the best individual performance might well have been from Knighton Park III's Brajesh Patel.

His team defeated Electricity III 8-2 and he at least matched his team mates by taking all three, alongside Patrick Cox while Rayan Kotecha won two. Russ Pettitt won one for the Sparks.

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