



Irish eyes smiling after historic Ormeau whitewash

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Ormeau celebrated Premier British League's arrival in Northern Ireland in style as they moved to the top of the table with an 8-0 whitewash of North Ayrshire.

The fixture was the first ever top-flight game to be staged in Northern Ireland, and the quartet of Oriol Monzo, Paul McCreery, Gavin Maguire and Keith Knox ensured it would be a day to remember as they gave the visiting Scots a harsh lesson at the start of their campaign.

This was North Ayrshire's first game of the season after their opening round match with Fusion was postponed, and without the talents of Colin Dalgleish and Craig Hardie, they struggled to make their mark on the contest.

But the day belonged to Ormeau, who top the division after dropping just one end on their way to victory.

Monzo gave the hosts a fine start with victory over Chris Main while McCreery dispatched Sean Doherty. Maguire and Knox made light work of promising youngsters Harvey McDonald and Andrew Macpherson to give Ormeau a 4-0 advantage, and while North Ayrshire did put up some resistance when Doherty took the first end of Monzo, the Spanish star hit back to win 3-1 and secure victory.

But in front of their own supporters, Ormeau were in no mood to rest up, and straight end victories for Maguire, McCreery and Knox over Main, Macpherson and McDonald secured a memorable victory.

Setting the pace alongside Ormeau are Urban, who picked up an impressive 4-4 draw against the defending champions, Drumchapel Glasgow.

Japanese star Satoshi Aida was the standout star for the hosts, who picked up two fantastic victories over England No 5 David McBeath and Drumchapel's Belgian debutant, Yannick Vostes.

But Drumchapel No 3 Simon Berglund secured a maximum of his own to ensure the champions picked up a

second consecutive draw.

An incredible contest saw Urban take the lead on three occasions, only to be pegged back each time.

Aida's superb five-set victory over Vostes was cancelled out by McBeath's win over Gyorgy, and although Urban went ahead again when Daniel Schaffer cruised past Victor Guang Shi, Berglund recorded an equally comfortable win over Alim Hirji to level things up.

Aida would come to the fore again as he picked up a stunning victory over McBeath in a pulsating five-end contest, but Vostes again brought Drumchapel level with a more straightforward win over Schaffer.

It appeared that Drumchapel might steal the points when Berglund secured his double with a win over Gyorgy, and when Guang Shi went 2-0 up against Hirji, the champions looked to be moving in on their first win of the season.

However, Hirji showed incredible determination in front of his home support and won the final three ends 13-11, 11-7, 11-9 to ensure his side earned a share of the spoils.

That result leaves Urban second and Drumchapel sixth, with the Scots currently in a four-way tie on two points.

Two of the teams joining them in that tussle are Ormesby and BATTs, after the former picked up a superb 6-2 win in Essex.

Following defeat to Urban first time out, the Cleveland-based side were dealt a blow when Viktor Brodd, who had won his two games in the previous defeat, pulled out through injury.

That gave England Cadet No 5 Josh Weatherby his chance to impress on the big stage against a BATTs side also disrupted by a late selection blow.

Helshan Weerasinghe was unavailable, but that gave BATTs the time to draft in French youngster Remi Betelu, who was thrown into the deep end playing at No 1.

However, the unknown quantity almost shocked everyone when he took England No 9 Danny Reed the distance, with Ormesby's local ace having to pull out everything in his arsenal to secure a 3-2 victory.

Darius Knight made lighter work of Jack Bennett to double the advantage, but BATTs hit back to the delight of their supporters by winning the next two sets, as Steve Beerling and Ethan Walsh picked up narrow five-set victories over Weatherby and Matej Mamut.

However, the second half of the match was Ormesby's. Knight clawed his way past Betelu 3-1 while Reed defeated Beerling in straight sets. The Croatian, Mamut, then secured victory with a 3-1 win over Jack Bennett, before a battle of the junior heavyweights saw Weatherby superbly dispatch higher-ranked Walsh in four ends.

Meanwhile, Fusion started their season with a victory as they overcame winless Cardiff 6-2. The Welsh outfit were all change from their previous 8-0 defeat to BATTs, with Canadian Antoine Berdanet, Marcus Pettersson, Mikka O'Connor and Ryan Owen all featuring.

It appeared the changes could have the desired effect when Berdanet picked up a 3-1 win over Lorestas Trumpauskas, which levelled the match after Kazeem Adeleke overcame Pettersson in straight ends.

However, Fusion would secure the next three sets to put them within touching distance of victory, as Emran Hussain, Joseph Hee and the in-form Adeleke defeated Owen, O'Connor and Berdanet respectively.

Although Pettersson offered Cardiff a glimmer of hope with a 3-1 victory over Hussain, Fusion wrapped up the victory as Trumpauskas defeated Finland's O'Connor, before Hee secured a double of his own with a 3-0 win over Owen.

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