



County Championship: Sussex hold narrow advantage

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The first round of fixtures in this season's Veterans' County Championship Division 2C was recently played at Batts TTC with all counties playing two matches.

At the end of the day Sussex No 3 and Middlesex No 2 lead the way as both county teams have two wins from their two starts which sees Sussex lead the way on a superior sets advantage.

Sussex started with a thumping 9-1 win over Hertfordshire No 3 and followed that with a hard fought 6-4 win over Kent thirds, while Middlesex recorded two 7-3 victories with wins over Kent No 3 and Essex seconds.

Sussex now hold a three-set lead over Middlesex No 2 with Surrey No 3 and Middlesex thirds ending the day on three points having won one each and drawn their match against each other.

Two teams not featuring in the top three, Surrey No 2 and Bedfordshire No 1, were involved in the match of the day when they fought out a thrilling draw, the result of which was in doubt until the last set and there was never more than a set between the counties throughout the whole match.

One of the outstanding matches of the day was the hard-fought victory by Sussex No 3 against Kent in a thrilling clash which saw Sussex just take the win in the last set which was the first time when there had been more than one set between the counties.

Sussex took the lead in the opening set as Jack Boulton just beat Simon Dilkes in five (11-9, 11-4, 3-11, 6-11, 11-8) only for Chris Knight to level the match with a four-game win over Tony Catt (11-4, 11-5, 5-11, 12-10) and it was Kent who took the lead for the first time in the match when Peter Ives beat Rory Scott 3-2 (11-13, 8-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-7).

The scores were level after the first mixed doubles as Boulton and Sarah Hilditch beat Dilkes and Jill Shipton in three but once again it was Kent who retook the lead as Dilkes beat Catt 3-1 (11-8, 11-6, 5-11, 11-3). Sussex hit back as Hilditch beat Shipton in the women's singles 3-0 (11-3, 11-7, 11-8).

Kent took the lead once more as they took the men's doubles as Ives and Knight beat Scott and Catt 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-5) but once again the sides were soon level as Scott beat Knight 3-1 (15-13, 12-14, 11-4, 11-5).

The penultimate set of the match saw Sussex retake the lead for the first time since the first set as in the clash of the two No 1s Boulton beat Ives 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 12-10) and Sussex completed victory as Scott and Hilditch beat Ives and Shipton in the final set mixed doubles in three (11-9, 11-5, 12-10) to complete the narrowest of victories.

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