



February 2019

SENIOR COUNTY

London made the long trek to Devon as they looked to build on their fine win against Dorset. Despite fielding a depleted squad due to PDC Q School, they were still confident of coming back with the win and three bonus points.

However those plans took an immediate hit, as the Ladies B were on the wrong end of a 5-1 scoreline. Tammy Mackenzie played well but only had one attempt at double in the match. Lynne Biondini held parity early on before losing in four. Jane Biggs went all the way but couldn't take advantage of throw in the decider. Jo Deamer was swept aside in straight legs. Dee Belcher got off to a flier, cracking home a great 107 finish, but was broken in the fourth before losing throw in the finale. Debs Watling (18.50) took the match award, but needed all five legs to avoid the clean sweep.

The Men's B took the first three contests which all went to a deciding seventh leg. Danny Faulkner started sluggishly but came back with a 124 checkout in the fourth and then snared the win courtesy of a 105 finish in the last. John Nelson (26.73) bagged the match award, before debutant Matt Crowley fought back from 2 down and won in an encounter where both were nervy on the doubles.

Danny Brown lost in minimum time, Matt Winzar scored well but was beaten in six. Chris Hogg was another wearing the London shirt for the first time, and completed a straight legs win with a 130 finish on the bull. Another point came London's way, Liam Hill backing up his debut win with another solid display for the victory in five.

Devon then rattled off four on the bounce. Steve Holt was seen off in six legs. Shane Wilson scored well but couldn't finish things off as he too went down in six. Sean Lahiff was 3-2 ahead but lost the last two. Darren Irving played well on his recall, but a slow start to the final leg proved decisive. Dean Coughlan ensured London would have the last word though, winning in six which meant the sides drew 6 apiece.

Day two saw Devon begin with a 11-7 lead going into the Ladies A. Steph Stutley (22.57) had a tough draw, facing Maria O'Brien who was full of confidence after her great showing at Lakeside. But she performed superbly to claim the match and weekend award, and the 3-1 win should be the springboard for bigger and better things to come. Carly Townsend was edged out in the last leg, as was Kerry Killick who found doubles elusive.

The next two games also went the distance, but this time London were able to claim the points. Mandy Solomons edged a tense game, and Su Holt held throw when it mattered most. Shaz Deboo Costello couldn't find her usual scoring power to leave the sectional honours even and the overall score at 14-10 to Devon.

The Men's A were always going to have a tough task, and so it proved. The first five games of the session all went the hosts' way and ensured that the bonus points would not be coming back to the capital.

Wayne Brown was defeated in the sixth leg. Darren Irving, backing up from the previous day, had chances to win the opener and lost the next two before losing in the fifth. Matt Winzar also tasted defeat in his second outing of the weekend. Tony Hamit lost the opening three legs before eventually succumbing in leg five. Devon then went nap, Graham Rackstraw unable to stop the flow of points going to the hosts.

London then finally got one in the win column. Lee Cocks (26.54) taking the match award as he continued to remain unbeaten. Matt Wood made his first appearance in the "A" a winning one, only requiring the minimum four legs.

It turned out to a brief respite, as Devon then regained control and took the next four points on offer. Ben Cheeseman was defeated in five. Liam Hill was another to step up from the B but didn't get a leg on the board this time around. David Wawrzewski scored well before losing in six. Will Blackwell was 3-2 ahead before being broken in the decider. Tom McGurn did give London the last word, signing off in style by hitting a 101 finish to take the match in the last leg.

A 9-3 loss meant London suffered a heavy 23-13 defeat overall which put them back in the relegation places.

Just before the column went to press, London faced league leaders Cambridgeshire, the first of three games in four weeks.

The Ladies B got the hosts off to the start they wanted. Dee Belcher was always in control in her whitewash win. Jane Biggs found the going tough in her straight legs loss, and the next game also went the minimum three legs with Lynne Biondini (15.49) getting the win. Parity was restored as Carly Townsend lost in four, before Jo Deamer (19.25) broke throw in the decider to claim the match award. Nikki Patten was another to win in minimum time to give London the 4-2 sectional win.

Dean Coughlan was first up for the Men's B. He missed a chance to go three nil ahead and was made to pay as he lost in six. Richard Ryan was good on his doubles, winning in five. Sean Lahiff never got out of the starting gate, Darren Irving played a lot better than the average may suggest for a confidence boosting win in five. The visitors third point in the section was another achieved in four legs, Matt Winzar losing out on this occasion.

Will Blackwell was seen off readily in five legs, John Nelson couldn't prevent Cambridgeshire taking three on the spin. London then fought back well from a 5-2 deficit. Matt Crowley won on his home debut. Match award winner Shane Wilson (26.03) was dominant and should kick on from his 4-0 win. Chris Hogg brought the sides level with a good display. Robbie Hain went down in the last leg despite struggling for any rhythm throughout, and Liam Hill won a tense finale to square the section, putting London 10-8 ahead going into day two.

The Ladies A found life tough against a very good side. Shaz Deboo Costello lost the opener where the third leg proved pivotal. Steph Stutley (21.17) produced another fine win to bag the match award for the second time on the bounce. That was as good as it got though, as Cambridgeshire then took the remaining points in the section. Kerry Killick struggled and lost in straight legs. Su Holt went down in an even tussle that could have gone either way. Mandy Solomons was edged out in four, as was Debs Watling which saw London 13-11 behind with one section to go.

The Mens A were simply outstanding. Birthday boy Lewis McGurn lost the opener in five, before London silenced the vociferous away support with three straight wins. Graham Rackstraw showed his usual grit and determination at the death to start the comeback. Steve Ferguson also needed seven legs for the point. Danny Faulkner was dominant in his straight legs win. It was now 14 each with all to play for.

Tom McGurn went down in six, David Wawrzewski only needed four legs to start a four game win streak to guarantee London at least one bonus point. Tommy Sanwell won in six despite developing an allergy to the outer ring. Matt Wood won in five. Ben Cheeseman lost the first two before a 110 finish in the third which was the platform for the win that ensured a draw at worst.

Wayne Brown ran into Dennis Harbour on top form, and Lee Cocks (28.93) bagged the match award as he claimed the point to give London the overall victory. Nick Cocks went all the way before going down in a tense decider to leave the final score 19-17.

The remaining fixtures are: February 23/24, home to Sussex; March 2/3, away to Gwent; March 30/31, home to Cornwall; April 27/28, away to Nottinghamshire.

YOUTH

London's youngsters produced their best performance of the season by far, going down by the narrowest of margins against a strong Sussex side who enjoyed home advantage.

The day's play started with the Ladies, who showed why they are the best side in the Division with a comprehensive 3-0 win. Ellie Larsson-Brown, match award winner Rosie Gaffney (16.10) and Rebecca Holt came away with the points.

The Under 18's have found life hard, but never give anything less than their best and finally got something to shout about. Joshua Murray (19.27) started off with his first win for

London in straight legs and took the match award. Philip Hollyhock also won in minimum time. Sussex then hit back to take the final five games of the section. Ben Gaffney, Charlie Mifsud and Hayden Robbie did well but were unable to get a leg on the board that their efforts deserved. London then made the hosts sweat as the last two games went the full five legs. Kurtis Hollyhock and Leo Gaffney could both easily have come away as winners.

This meant the scores were tied and it was all to play for in the Under 21's. Louis Whitehouse and Albie Rackley lost out before Will Blackwell hit back with a display that showed why he is doing so well at Senior level. Charlie King couldn't prevent Sussex getting the overall win, and Freddie Box (27.22) prevailed in a high quality finale to leave Sussex winners by a score of 8-7.

The remaining fixtures (subject to change) are: February 17, home to Essex; March 17, away to Kent; April 7, home to Sussex, and May 19, away to Essex.

MEN'S SUPER LEAGUE

With only 8 rounds of the season left, the Super League is poised for an exciting finish and could go right down to the wire. Welling A have 87 points and hold a single point lead over Romford, and the destination of the title may well hinge when the two meet in the final week. Plumstead A are still in with a real shout in third, with only four points separating them from top spot. Then there is a gap to fourth placed Wood Green who have 73. Next are Lewisham (70), Woolwich Ferry and Bethnal Green (both 65), Chadwell Heath (57), Vauxhall (56), Bermondsey (55), Welling B (54), Woolwich (52), Southwark (46) with Plumstead B (31) bringing up the rear.

LADIES SUPER LEAGUE

Wanderers are sitting pretty atop the Super League on 75 points, and are holding a 3 point advantage over Edmonton. Third are Panthers (67) who still harbour hopes of winning the title. Next are Ninjas (46), Booshes (43), Clapton (38) with Flaming Drongos and Hustlers (32) trying to avoid the wooden spoon.

