



December 2019

SENIOR COUNTY

London rounded out the calendar year with a trip to Dorset. They came into the match full of confidence, lying second in the BICC Division One table and were looking to keep up the promotion push with a win. The hosts were looking to get themselves back in the winner's enclosure after a narrow loss last time out at leaders West Midlands and are always a tough proposition on home turf.

The weekend began with a tribute to the late Olly Croft. It had an extra layer of poignancy as he was also Honorary Life President of London, and along with everyone else our thoughts are with his family at this sad time, as we all fondly remember a gentleman who had such a profound and hugely significant influence on the sport we all enjoy so much.

It was the visitors who gained the early advantage as the **Ladies B** came away with a fine 4-2 sectional win. London got off to the best possible start as debutant Lindsey Ashton (21.78) looked utterly dominant in straight legs to waltz away with the match award. She found the big scores with ease and took out a nice 52 to start things off. From then on there was only ever going to be one winner as she cruised to her maiden win without allowing her opponent a dart at the double at any stage of the contest. Lynne Biondini (17.62) gave as good as she got in a game that ultimately went with throw throughout. She pinged out 54 to send the match into a one leg shootout but couldn't get the break of throw at the most crucial time. Nikki Patten (14.59) eased to the opening leg in the third game. The second and third legs saw both players miss chances but Patten was first to find the outer ring on each occasion and she completed a win in minimum time.

Carly Townsend (18.54) was swept without getting a dart at double. Her scoring was ok for the first leg and a half, but she couldn't keep pace in the remainder of the match. A break of throw in the second leg left her facing an uphill task and the job was completed in the next to bring the sides level. London then rounded off the session by taking the final two games. Joanne Deamer had to go all the way, and a break in leg three seemed to give Dorset the advantage. She survived a match dart in the fourth to return the compliment and utilized the throw in the finale to complete the comeback. Jane Biggs (16.34) came into the concluding match of the section with an unbeaten record, and kept up the winning run. She broke in the first leg, after her opponent squandered 12 darts at the outer segments. A well-known player once said, "scores for show, doubles for dough" and Biggs took out the game shot at the first time of asking. She then took the second on throw with plenty in the

locker to go one away and was well in control of the contest. The third leg saw the Londoner start the better. Biggs had a couple of opportunities to end it sooner, before she nailed the finish to break for a second time and round off a well-deserved win to leave London two ahead going into the afternoon's action.

The **Mens B** started well by taking the opening point. Danny Faulkner (25.58) had to show his usual battling qualities and needed the full seven legs. He raced into a quick two nothing lead as he cracked home a brilliant 156 checkout. The match was then all square after four legs before the rest went with throw as Faulkner took the match award. Dorset then turned the game on his head and rattled off seven straight wins to leave London in real trouble. Sean Lahiff (22.03) also went the distance, but this time the advantage of throw in the decider was with the home side and they duly obliged. Danny Brown (21.72) quickly went three nil down on the back of two breaks of throw, but he staved off the whitewash and then banged in a 109 finish to extend the contest into a sixth leg. A poor opening visit set the tone for the final leg and he never got a look in after that.

Liam Hill (24.49) started off on the front foot, taking the first two legs, but then lost four on the bounce as Dorset squared the overall score. The hosts then took the lead, Chris Holt (24.62) was broken in leg one and never got close to having a shot at the outer segments as he was dispatched in minimum time. Tony Hamit (24.00) also went down in straight legs and London were now firmly under the cosh. John Hind (21.29) fired home a smart 120 finish in leg three after losing the first two. He survived match darts in the fifth leg but was well behind throughout leg six as another point was garnered by the hosts.

Dorset then secured a third clean sweep in four games, Steve Holt (20.98) had no answer to the power scoring against him and was well adrift in each of the four legs played. London finally stopped the rot and took the ninth and tenth matches to close the gap. Chris Hogg (20.85) was far from his best, but at this stage it was all about getting the point as he built on a two nothing lead to seal the deal in the sixth and finally break the losing streak. Debutant Matt Edes (22.05) also had to go all the way. The game was going with throw right up until the last leg, before Edes broke when it mattered most to come away with a hard earned win.

The recovery was soon quelled as Dorset ended the day with two more wins. Matt Winzar (20.89) became London's fourth player of the session to be seen off without registering a leg on the board, and Matt Crowley (24.18) fared little better as he went down in five. This meant that Dorset were now well in command and carried a healthy 11-7 lead into day two.

Some fine darts were on show in the **Ladies A**. Casey Gallagher (22.10) opened up proceedings with a straight legs win, ending on a high with a quality 104 finish. Hopefully she will come up with more of the same at the BDO Worlds in January and we all wish her well in her quest for the title. Debs Watling (21.29) is never one to throw in the towel and smacked in a great 108 take out to send her match into a winner takes all decider. A slow start was her undoing and despite three straight scores of a ton or more she didn't get the chance to hit the winning double. Shaz Deboo Costello (20.15) shrugged off the loss of the first leg on throw and roared back, finding the big scores with regularity. She took three on the spin and ended in grand fashion with a fine 70 finish. Steph Stutley (20.95) joined in the

fun when it came to taking out the big shots, banging in 110 for a two nil lead. After losing leg three, she stormed out in front in the fourth and could afford to miss 14 darts under no pressure before eventually pegging the out shot. The penultimate match saw Tara Deamer (21.31) in a real see-saw encounter. The first leg was secured with a fine 72 checkout but she lost legs two and three before breaking throw with an assured fourth leg. Despite having throw in the last, she couldn't hold and bag another point for the London girls. The session was closed out as Mandy Solomons (17.12) was beaten in the fourth leg, to leave the section all square at three apiece and London still four points adrift with just the **Mens A** to come.

Any hopes of a stirring comeback were soon put to bed, as Dorset took the first five matches of the final session to ensure the overall victory with plenty in hand. Lee Cocks (30.78) threw down the gauntlet as he took out 81 for a 12 darter right from the get go. He led off the next with a maximum, but even though he was still knocking in the big scores with frequency he could only watch on as opponent Scott Mitchell fired in legs of 14,12 and 16 to go three one ahead. Cocks hit back in the fifth but had no answer as the match concluded in the next.

Lee Clifford (22.08) made a welcome return to the London side, but never recovered from missing chances for an opening leg break and he soon found himself three down with four to play. He averted the sweep by taking the fourth leg but it was to prove a mere consolation as he lost the next for a loss in five. Ritchie Edhouse (30.54) warmed up for Ally Pally by firing in 76 for a 14 dart opening leg. He lost the next three as both players went toe to toe in the scoring slugfest, and he bagged a 65 finish in the fifth before being unable to break throw in leg six. We wish Ritchie the best of luck and hope he has a good run in the tournament.

The fourth game went the distance. Tommy Sanwell (25.35) shrugged off the loss of legs one and two, squaring the contest after four. From then on the match went with throw and Dorset were already guaranteed of at least one bonus point with eight matches still to play. They didn't have to wait long to celebrate the overall victory. Michael Power (28.60) was never in the contest after being broken in the opener and didn't come close to threatening the outer ring from that point on.

It was now a case of London trying to get as many points in the bag as possible in order to keep up with the Division One leaders. They finally got the off the mark for the session in the sixth game. Graham Rackstraw (27.45) was at the oche for the shortest time possible, finding the big red with regularity to go three nil ahead and taking the point courtesy of a very one-sided fourth. The arrears were reduced still further as Ben West (26.00) stepped up to the Sunday squad and justified the move to the higher echelon with a solid win that came in the fifth leg. Nick Cocks (25.09) was looking to keep the momentum going, as he battled back from an early two leg deficit. Leg three was decided in only 14 darts and after taking the next, he repeated the dose with another 14 darter to send the match into a deciding leg. The advantage of throw was not his though, and he never got into the leg at any point before the winning dart was thrown.

Another seven leg battle then ensued, and David Wawrzewski (24.59) took the point in a game where the legs went with throw throughout. Daniel Day (32.32) finally broke his

seasonal duck with opponent Henry Cooper on the end of a barrage that brought back memories of his more famous namesake of the 60s and 70s. Day started off in fine form as he took the opener with a sublime 13 darter, the third leg saw another body blow with a 100 finish before a maximum in leg four paved the way for the proverbial KO punch to end the contest.

Dorset had the last word and rounded off the weekend's action with the last two points. Ben Cheeseman (22.74) was heading for an early bath as he lost the first three legs. He fought back well, taking the fourth and then smacking in 100 to bag leg five. The comeback was soon halted and he succumbed in the sixth. Jamie Green (21.50) was the last man on stage, and he too quickly went three behind, finding it difficult to get going after a very sluggish opening leg. He did take the fourth to avoid the whitewash, but again was well in arrears when the match was closed out in leg five.

The 8-4 loss in the section meant that London were on the wrong end of a 22-14 scoreline which puts Dorset right back in the promotion hunt at the mid-point of the season. London could be back in fifth place once Cheshire have played their game in hand before the festive period, and it makes the meeting between the two in January crucial for the Londoners if they are to remain in contention. A win would certainly keep them bang in the mix if they can replicate their early season form which they are more than capable of doing, and it has all the ingredients for a cracking game which should be well worth coming along to see.

Their fixtures for 2020 are as follows: (home games in bold);
18/19 Jan, **Cheshire**; 8/9 Feb Cambridgeshire; 29 Feb/ 1 Mar **Staffordshire**; 28/29 Mar West Midlands; 25/26 Apr **Humberside**

As usual, London will be playing their home games at Plumstead Common WMC, 71 Kirkham Street, Plumstead, London SE18 2JS. Entry for each home fixture is by wristband only, costing £4, which gives you admission for both days along with a match programme. The start time on both days is 11am. Hot and cold food will be available all day with drinks at club prices. All are welcome to come and support London's finest.

YOUTH COUNTY

London's youth produced their best performance for quite some time with a narrow 8-7 defeat when they entertained Essex. The **Under 18's** performed well, with wins for Max Stanley, Kurtis Hollyhock and Hayden Robbie. The **Ladies** are among the best in the Southern sections and showed their mettle again with Chelsea Coles Walsh and Ellie Larsson-Brown coming out on top. With the match all square it was everything to play for, and the **Under 21's** saw victories for Jamie Peetoom and Ben Gaffney as the visitors just edged it.

The remaining fixtures in the New Year are (home games in bold);

26 Jan, **Sussex**; 23 Feb, Essex; 15 Mar, **Kent**; 5 Apr, Sussex; 3 May, **Essex**

At the time of writing, London were being represented at the Youth Pentathlon in Hull. Ellie Larsson-Brown has improved in leaps and bounds over recent months and fully deserved her inclusion in the line-up. She is definitely one to watch over the next few years and certainly has the talent to make a real name for herself in the Ladies game.

MENS SUPER LEAGUE

As we enter the Christmas break, Division One of the Mens Super League is evenly poised. With 9 games left to play, reigning Champs Welling A hold sway on 55 points, with Woolwich Ferry only one point behind. It looks set to be a real ding dong battle with every point being vital and it should go right down to the wire. Plumstead are third on 45. Romford A have fallen away and now lie fourth (43). Wood Green (42) are next. Lewisham (37) and Bethnal Green (36) fighting to avoid the relegation trap door, and Bermondsey (22) already look set to spend next year in the lower tier.

Division Two sees Woolwich (62) effectively a game ahead of their rivals, with a commanding seven point lead over Romford B (55). Welling B are still in with a shout of promotion on 51 points. Chadwell Heath (44) have hit some form in recent weeks and occupy fourth. Following them are Clapton (39), Greenwich (34) and Southwark (28). Vauxhall are now being cast adrift with 20 points and look like they will be claiming the wooden spoon.

The averages across both divisions sees Jamie Peetoom (Greenwich) as the Christmas Number One. Tommy Sanwell (Plumstead), George Kilington (Wood Green), Aaron Beeney (Bethnal Green), Paul Amos (Woolwich Ferry), John Costigan (Romford A), Bradley Halls (Woolwich Ferry), Dan Day (Romford A), Scott Marsh (Welling A) and Kevin Smith (Plumstead) round out the festive top ten.

LADIES SUPER LEAGUE

Edmonton look favourites to retain the Ladies league crown, their total of 48 points giving them a healthy nine point cushion over The Nobodies (38). Wanderers (35) and Booshes (33) are still in the hunt for second spot. Ninjas have 30, whilst Clapton are one off the bottom (18). Hustlers are tail-end Charlie on 8 points.

Casey Gallagher (Wanderers) heads into the New Year on top of the averages charts, with team mate Steph Stutley next. After that comes Mandy Solomons (Edmonton), Shaz Deboo Costello (Nobodies), Juliane Birchall (Ninjas), Donna Gleed and Tara Deamer (both Edmonton), Debs Watling (Booshes), Joanne Deamer (Edmonton) and Ellie Larsson-Brown (Nobodies) sitting in tenth.

The Pairs competition has also taken place. Mandy Solomons and Tara Deamer (Edmonton) took the honours with a 5-2 win over Shaz Deboo Costello and Ellie Larsson-Brown (Nobodies). The losing semi finalists were the tandems of Lynne Biondini and Carly Townsend (Wanderers), along with Pattie Rogers and Eileen Waving (Hustlers).

By the time you read this, the seasonal festivities should be in full swing. I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas, and hope everyone has a very happy and peaceful New Year.