



London began life in the top flight after a 16 year absence with a tricky looking opener away to Hampshire.

LADIES B

HAMPSHIRE 1-5 LONDON

Joanne Senior (14.38)

1-3

Lynne Biondini (16.05)

(0-1)

The first point of the new UKDA Elite Premiership campaign went to the visitors, courtesy of a solid display from Biondini. The first leg took a bit of time to get going, as both ladies eased their way into the contest. The better scoring came from Biondini, and this led to her having the first darts at the double. She had the luxury of being able to miss the outer ring on a couple of attempts with her opponent unable to make any real inroads before taking out the leg winner for the early lead. The second leg was fairly even, and indeed the Londoner had a solitary opportunity to break throw before the match was squared. Leg three was much more conclusive. Biondini really kicked on midway through the leg to give herself daylight and once at the business end she clinically took out the 48 remaining to go one leg away from the win. She repeated the dose in the fourth, making full use of a sluggish opening six darts from Senior with some consistent scoring. A ton from the Hampshire thrower merely made the leg look closer than it actually was, and again Biondini was full of composure as she bagged a well-deserved point to set London on their way.

Marie Agozzino (14.63)

0-3

Joanne Deamer (16.52)

(0-2)

Deamer doubled the London lead with a straight legs victory. It was Agozzino who had first use of the oche, and steady scoring brought her to the double first. A 121 in her third visit kept Deamer in close enough order to be able to capitalise on any slackness at the outer segments from her opponent. Agozzino had numerous chances, and was left to regret the many missed opportunities when Deamer took hers at the first time of asking for the opening leg break. The Hampshire thrower led off leg two with a ton, but Deamer was full of confidence and the scoring really clicked into gear. A 125 set her up for the double, but unlike her opponent in the previous leg had more than enough in hand to shrug off missed darts before taking out the double to go within touching distance. Leg three saw Deamer carry on as before, cracking home the first maximum of the weekend and although match darts came and went the early leg domination ensured that the winning line would be crossed sooner rather than later.

Corrine Hammond (20.88)

3-0

Tammy Mackenzie (18.81)

(1-2)

One of the main talking points after the opening weekend was regarding the situation where some Counties had taken advantage of a scenario created by the fact that with the county system now being under the auspices of a new governing body, they could play one or two well established A players in the B to aid their points tally. London decided not to (which I think will stand them in

good stead for the second round of matches) but their hosts exercised the option with Hammond playing here. The opening leg was a real nip and tuck affair. Mackenzie stayed with Hammond in the scoring stakes and deservedly created a chance to take the opener on throw, following two good visits to set up the potential out shot. Seven darts were missed, but Hammond wasn't fluent on the outer segments either before she found the dart needed to go ahead. Mackenzie started her quest to get the immediate break back in determined manner, firing in two successive tons in to start the leg. Hammond though was responding to the pressure, also producing the big scores and she was able to take out the leg winner to go two nil up. Mackenzie was soon behind to start the third, but fought back well to stay in touch, with scores of 85, 81 and 100 keeping her in with a shout of extending the contest. Hammond though was also maintaining the accuracy on the big trebles before eventually sealing the deal. Although Mackenzie lost in straight legs, the match was in fact far closer than the scoreline may otherwise suggest and a replication of this performance will soon see her raising her arms in a celebration of victory.

Susan Power (15.56) 1-3 Carly Townsend (18.56) (1-3)

London then ended the session in fine fettle, taking the last three points available. Townsend got the ball rolling, claiming the match award in the process. It didn't take long for her to find the lipstick, smacking in a 140 on her second trip to the oche. A ton later on took her well clear in the leg, which she rounded off with the out shot to break throw. She continued the good work in the second, consistent scoring laid the platform and a 123 from her opponent had little impact before Townsend nailed the double to increase her lead. The scoring levels dropped off in leg three. A ton from the home thrower was followed by a poor score in response, and the deficit was halved. That proved to be a mere consolation. Townsend was in total control throughout the fourth leg, a 140 was immediately followed by a ton, and then a 120. Power was little more than a bystander as Townsend took out the leg to complete a fine 16 darter for the win to restore London's two point overall lead.

Nikki Stevens (15.97) 2-3 Nikki Patten (15.32) (1-4)

The last two matches both went the full five leg duration. Having first use of the oche was never more apparent than in the penultimate match, each leg going with the head. The first leg was a lengthy affair, with both players struggling to establish any real rhythm in any department before Patten finally got herself off the mark. Leg two was much better, the scoring improved significantly but Patten couldn't quite force the opening and parity was restored. Leg three seemed initially to be a fairly routine hold of throw for the Londoner. Numerous chances to close out the leg came and went but Stevens was unable to nudge in front as the tension increased. In the end it was Patten who held her nerve best and regained the lead. Leg four was more clear cut, and Patten was then faced with a one leg shootout. Her "never say die" attitude is tailor made for situations like this, and on throw an early ton provided the impetus for the next three visits where she never came back with a score of less than sixty. Stevens was now chasing as Patten set herself up nicely for the clincher. A couple of chances were missed before Patten then took out the match winning dart to secure an important win and keep the momentum going.

Dawn Simmonds (14.06) 2-3 Dee Belcher (14.06) (1-5)

The session concluded with another nail biter. It was Belcher that held sway at the beginning of the contest, taking the first two legs. After some steady scoring to start the match, the double was proving to be elusive. However it was Belcher who took the chance, for an important break of throw. Leg two began at a brisk pace, with a 125 from Belcher's first three darts followed by a ton in response. The scoring remained fairly even and Simmonds once again created chances to potentially break back. The chances were squandered, and Belcher made her pay by taking out the double in brisk order to put herself in the box seat. Belcher began the third leg with a couple of below par visits which opened the door for her opposition. A couple of tons midway through reinforced the advantage which soon led to the deficit being halved. The fourth leg saw Belcher some way behind

at the start, and it looked like it was merely a matter of time before the match became all square with one to play. But as accurate as the Hampshire lady was on the big trebles, when it came to taking out the double she was like a boat which had escaped its moorings and began drifting in the nearby Solent. Belcher inched back into the leg and had a couple of chances there and then before a mightily relieved Simmonds found the double one after missing 16 previous attempts at the outer ring. It was set up for a grandstand finish, and that's exactly what we got. With throw, Simmonds held a narrow edge which enabled her at first pop for the double. An initial miss went unpunished, as Belcher set herself up for a potential out shot. Simmonds failed to find it again, and this proved her undoing. Belcher calmly stepped up to the oche and delivered a knockout blow and a half, as she promptly cleaned up a huge 56 under immense pressure for a vital win to complete an outstanding first session for the London girls.

MENS B HAMPSHIRE 4 LONDON 8

Luke Getty (22.21) 2-4 John Walters (22.05) (0-1)

London began the second session of the day with a win in six legs for one of the two debutants. The opening two legs went as expected with throw, but the first move of the match was made by Getty as he broke to gain the lead. Walters promptly returned the favour to square the match with three to play. Having regained the advantage of throw, Walters produced his most consistent leg, hitting three tons before nailing the outshot to go within one. Walters then started the sixth slowly and despite seeing his opponent bust 84 and then miss the double at his next visit, a strong finish to the leg put Walters back in the frame. He then stepped in for a 58 finish to complete his first win in a London shirt in the sixth leg.

Scott Walters (27.08) 4-0 Liam Hill (22.67) (1-1)

The hosts drew level with a win against an out of sorts Hill. A couple of early tons on throw in the opener yielded its reward although Hill did have a solitary chance to break. From that point on, it was fairly one way traffic as Hill started to chase against the heavier scoring from his opponent. Hill never got going in leg two and was swiftly broken. The third leg was even, but a 112 finish from the Hampshire man left Hill teetering on the edge of a clean sweep defeat. The fourth leg saw another strong burst of scoring that Hill couldn't counter, with him being denied a shot at the outer ring for the third straight leg.

Adrian Wright (21.76) 3-4 Ben Cheeseman (21.43) (1-2)

Any hopes that Hampshire would build on the win they had just gained were soon dashed as London reeled off five straight wins to take command of the overall match. The first of the nap hand came in a tight affair that went the distance. Cheeseman started slowly, being broken in the opening leg and then missing ten darts at the double for the immediate break back. Leg three saw the start of the recovery. A maximum on the opening visit ensured that Cheeseman would get first dig at the outer segments and he got off the mark. The fourth leg saw another slow start from the London thrower, but he was more accurate as the leg wore on and a smart 74 checkout brought him level. Again Cheeseman started a leg in sluggish fashion, but this time the late leg rally was to no avail and he was broken again. He then produced the best leg of the contest in the sixth, two consecutive scores of 140 put him in the ascendancy before hitting the double to force a one leg shootout. Having regained the initiative, a good opening then saw a lull in the scoring by both players as the tension increased. Cheeseman had just enough in reserve to cross the winning line in front.

Dave Bonnett (21.83) 2-4 Matt Edes (22.35) (1-3)

It seemed in the early stages of this encounter that the hosts would reduce the overall arrears, as Bonnett's superior scoring brought him the opening two legs. A 124 at the back end of leg two

Del Ballard (19.79) **0-4** **Matt Wood (27.08)** **(2-7)**

Wood claimed the match award as he swept to the win in minimum time. The Hampshire man held hopes of taking the opener against the head, but they were soon dashed as Wood fired home a great 86 finish to get the early advantage. A superb 12 dart leg doubled the Scouser's lead. An opening 140 was swiftly followed by a maximum and a ton, before the remaining 81 was polished off in some style. Another impressive start left Ballard chasing shadows in leg three, a brilliant 109 set up the double sixteen which Wood nailed with his first attempt. The rout was completed in the next leg. Wood's superior scoring over a now demoralised opponent meant he had ample time to take out the double and top off a quality display of power scoring allied with classy finishing.

Lee Ward (24.34) **4-3** **Scott Artiss (24.92)** **(3-7)**

The hosts got a rare chalk on the board, but the point could easily have gone the other way in a real see-saw encounter. Artiss was sharpest out of the blocks. Three scores of a ton or higher generated the opening for an early break, and he made full use of it by smacking in a fine 75 to take leg one. Both players were hitting the big numbers with regularity, but it was Ward who took the second and third legs. The pendulum of momentum then swung back towards Artiss. He held to square the match at two apiece, and then forced a break in the fifth. A great visit of 136 set up an attempt at the double, which he found with his next three darts to go one away from a win on his return to the London side. The chance presented itself in the penultimate leg. A maximum on his second trip to the oche kept him ahead despite three straight scores of a ton and above to start Ward off. Artiss almost took out a 141 finish for the match but missed darts at the madhouse were his undoing as Ward checked out to set up the one leg finale. Artiss had the throw and led off with a 140, but his opponent was still hitting the tons and three more in the leg saw him take the point via an 81 finish with Artiss not on a double.

Ben Huntington (18.90) **1-4** **John Hind (18.97)** **(3-8)**

The penultimate game of the day saw another win for the visitors, although Hind will be the first to admit that he was far from his best and capable of a lot more. An early 140 helped Hind to the opening leg on throw, although slowly into the leg Huntington was still in the starting stalls by comparison. Leg two was if anything even scrappier, with no real rhythm and plenty of missed darts at the double before Hind nailed it to go two clear. The scoring started to pick up, and the Hampshire man took leg three, but it was to prove the highpoint for him. Hind then had to watch his opponent squander darts at the outer segments before making him pay and go within a leg of victory. He then showed what we all know he can do in leg five. Three red figure scores in successive visits gave him the edge, and despite missing a couple of chances he was able to close out the match.

Darren Barnes (27.58) **4-1** **Steven Beasley (27.14)** **(4-8)**

The session ended with a much needed point for the hosts. Despite the final scoreline, Beasley acquitted himself well on his London debut and was unlucky to run into an opponent in good form. The match began with both players hitting the treble twenty with ease. Leg one saw four tons and two 140s equally shared, and Barnes took the leg by virtue of having the first use of the oche. A maximum in the second leg was the difference as Beasley was broken to go two behind. His play deserved some reward however, and he immediately broke back with some solid scoring to take the third. Having the throw was becoming a bit of a hot potato and Beasley wasn't able to square the match, Barnes leading off with three straight tons and above to kick off to regain the upper hand. Leg five followed a similar pattern, but this time going first proved advantageous and the match concluded to give a small glimmer of hope for Hampshire.

But London had to be very happy with their performance, a commanding 13-5 lead giving them a great platform on which to take into the second day's play.

LADIES A HAMPSHIRE 4 LONDON 2

Abi Jurd (21.33) 1-3 Juliane Birchall (22.35) (0-1)

The ladies served up some great action to start proceedings. Birchall got things off to the best possible start. After easing her way into the opening leg, a good mid leg burst of scoring meant she was first to have an attempt at the outer ring. After a couple of missed chances, she found her range and took the early lead. There was little to choose in leg two, before Jurd fired in an 80 finish to square things up. Jurd had the early advantage in the third, but Birchall upped the ante at the business end, hitting a 140 followed by a ton before only needing one dart to knock over the double 18 that she had left. That good play carried over to start of the fourth, where Birchall quickly stole the darts by firing home 127 and 125 in her first two visits which put her well in control and enabled her to repeat the feat of the leg previous by nailing the double 18 with her first dart of the three for her second consecutive 19 dart leg and extend the London lead still further.

Pennie Lewis (20.59) 3-0 Mandy Solomons (19.39) (1-1)

This was a match where the outcome was really determined by the events of the second leg. Lewis began the opener slightly better, and despite being pressurised by a ton from Solomons she was able to hold throw for the lead. It was Solomons who had the better of the scoring in leg two. But the outer ring was proving elusive for her, and Lewis also found it equally as difficult to find, before taking the outshot to go one away. Solomons shrugged off the disappointment and started the third leg in good order, but her opponent found two red figure scores to regain the advantage and closed the game out with Solomons just out of range to be able to have a crack at the double and try to extend the contest.

Jane Monaghan (23.31) 2-3 Steph Stutley (22.55) (1-2)

Stutley took the match award in a cracking game where having first use of the oche to start each leg was to prove all important in the final outcome. Although Monaghan hit a ton and a 125 in the opener, Stutley also was finding her scoring boots. An early 140 kept her just enough in front to take out tops to get off the mark. There was little to choose in the second, and in fact had Stutley not missed six darts at the outer segments in a tense situation with Monaghan also failing to hit the double, the lead could easily have been extended instead of the match being tied at one apiece. Leg three continued in the same vein, but this time Monaghan missed the break darts and Stutley cleaned up to regain the lead. The fourth leg was more clear cut. Stutley was still scoring well, but a two tons and a 140 from Monaghan ensured that the game would go the distance. The finale began with the Hampshire lady in the ascendancy. She had a chance to get the break when it mattered most, but had to look on as Stutley cracked home a brilliant 65 finish to deal the killer blow for a great win.

Sue Lowther (22.10) 3-0 Casey Gallagher (22.94) (2-2)

Hampshire finished the session on the front foot, as they took the final three points available. Both ladies hit the ground running, quickly finding the big trebles with frequency. With Gallagher poised to have a crack at 44 after a brilliant set up of 134 following a ton on her previous visit, Lowther stepped up and took out 77 for a hard earned hold of throw. It was a similar story in the second. Gallagher again set herself up with a fine visit, and missed darts at the double were her undoing as Lowther again showed her competence at the outer ring to go within one. The woes continued in leg three. Both ladies again scored well but the game shot was harder to acquire. In the end it was Lowther who completed the straight legs win in a game where the score line could easily have been reversed.

Tracy North (17.34)

3-1

Deb Watling (16.68)

(3-2)

The hosts continued to chip away at the London lead with this win in four legs. The first two legs went against the head. It was North who drew first blood, despite starting the match with two tons the leg evened out with both players not quite finding their range on the double segments. Leg two saw Watling strike back. Her scoring was more consistent and she got the immediate break back with a great 68 checkout. She had a chance to go ahead in leg three, but a mixed bag of scores from North, some poor ones mixed with three red figure ones kept her in touch. Again there was a keenly contested duel at the double before North kept the break sequence going. The fourth leg was more clear cut. Two straight tons kicked off the leg for the home thrower, whilst Watling's scoring deserted her. North was able to shrug off missed match darts to close the game out.

Corrine Hammond (24.37)

3-1

Shaz Deboo Costello (18.34) (4-2)

The ladies concluded their matches with Hammond registering her second victory of the weekend. The opening two legs were traded on throw. Both ladies eased their way into the match, but it was Hammond who took the opener with Costello waiting in the wings after a fine 91 set-up shot put the pressure on the Aussie. A ton led off the second for the Londoner, and this time it was Hammond who missed darts for the break which were to prove costly as Costello cleaned up to bring herself level. The final two legs were a different story. Hammond upped the ante in the scoring stakes, and try as she might, Costello wasn't able to keep pace which meant her opponent was able to take the third and fourth in some comfort.

The sectional win for Hampshire wasn't as big as they would have hoped for, and as a consequence London were still well in command, needing only four points from the final twelve matches to go back to the capital with the win and three bonus points.

MEN'S A

HAMPSHIRE 4 LONDON 8

Steve Musson (22.03)

3-4

Nick Cocks (22.97)

(0-1)

London made short work of the final task at hand, securing the win at the earliest opportunity with the perfect start to the session, taking the first five games. They began with a hard fought game that went the full duration. Cocks began brightly, firing in three tons en route to an opening leg hold of throw. Musson squared the affair, and legs three and four were both breaks of throw. Musson edged ahead, before Cocks restored parity off the back of a maximum. A great set up shot led to a swift resolution of a dominant fourth leg. Musson went back ahead in an equally one sided fifth leg. The fourth consecutive break of throw was to London's favour. Musson ought to have closed out the contest as he missed match darts. Cocks showed his resolve and sent it to a one leg shootout. Having regained the initiative, Cocks continued to find the big trebles, outscoring Musson with ease to seal the deal in relative comfort.

Richard North (28.44)

2-4

Tommy Sanwell (32.91)

(0-2)

Sanwell claimed not only the match award, but the highest average in the Elite Premiership with a sublime display. After a couple of sighters in the opening leg, Sanwell was soon in the groove. Three consecutive ton plusses (the last just missing out on a 167 finish) saw him clean up in his next visit to break the throw. A pair of back to back 140s, matched the two that North hit himself in leg two, but Sanwell utilised the advantage of throw to go two clear. The third leg began with two more 140's, and Sanwell was now in full cry, breaking once more to look in total control at three nil up. North is a classy operator though, and he fired right back. Sanwell was still finding the treble twenty at will, but North produced two cracking finishes of 92 and 95 respectively to take the fourth and fifth legs. The

already superb play from both was ramped up in leg six. Sanwell shrugged off an opening visit of 41 to lead off the leg by firing in a maximum on his next two visits. North had no answer to the barrage he was facing, and could only look on as Sanwell crowned a sensational performance by smacking home a 100 finish to complete a brilliant 11 dart leg and take the match.

Graham Chalk (23.55) 2-4 Dan Day (25.30) (0-3)

London remained unbeaten in the final session with another win in six legs. A maximum in his second throw of the contest allowed Day to totally dominate the opening leg, and he didn't have to wait long to break throw. Chalk had one chance to hold in leg two, but couldn't take the high out shot as Day calmly stepped in to increase his lead. He had the opportunity to extend it still further, but Chalk started the third well and was able to retrieve the break, and he repeated the dose to comfortably win the next and leave it all square with three to play. Day then got back on track, taking the fifth without any hassle. The Londoner began leg six with three perfect darts, and that proved the springboard to be able to take the leg as he pleased and ensure that London would leave the South Coast with a draw at the very least.

Andy Mitchell (20.79) 0-4 Scott Marsh (26.72) (0-4)

With nine matches still to be played, it was only a matter of when, rather than if, the visitors would get the single point needed for the overall win and the three bonus points. That was achieved in the next game as Marsh swept to a facile victory in minimum time. After three range finding visits, Marsh knocked in two ton plusses in succession which set up the early break of throw. He then won the second in a canter, and showed he was no slouch at the business end either as he smacked home an 80 finish. Mitchell was now having real trouble keeping pace, as Marsh continued to outscore him. Leg three was concluded with a 56 finish, and Marsh asserted his superiority in the next. Two red figure scores set him up for an attempt at the 164 finish, which he almost took out. The Londoners victory celebration was merely postponed until the next visit with Mitchell well in arrears.

Chas Barstow (28.78) 3-4 Lee Cocks (27.81) (0-5)

All that was at stake now was the margin of the overall victory, and how long London could keep the winning streak going. They secured their fifth successive point in a real humdinger. Cocks was taking to the oche in his first match as the new London Men's team manager, and at one point it seemed like he was going to mark the occasion with a defeat. Although Cocks hit two tons in the opener, Barstow had struck the first maximum of the contest which enabled him to break the throw with some ease. Cocks returned the favour with an equally easy break to take the second. A couple of 140's set him on the right road, and parity was restored due to a fine 64 checkout. The pattern of breaks continued, Barstow brilliantly set up the opportunity with a 145 before knocking over 65 to regain the lead. The fourth leg finally saw a hold of throw, but even that only just came about as Cocks narrowly missed out on his attempt at a 122 finish to draw level. Cocks did manage to hold on to the fifth following a good start, but Barstow also just missed the big out shot as Cocks had done in the previous leg. Barstow would have thought that leading off with his second maximum to begin leg six would have brought about the first point of the session for the hosts, but Cocks was having none of it. He banged in two consecutive 140s and on his next trip to the oche smashed home the 76 finish to send the thriller all the way. The Londoner now had the advantage of throw and two tons early doors got him the lead he needed. Barstow did have match darts, but Cocks dealt the hammer blow with another 76 finish to take the win in a cracking encounter.

James Nicholson (27.14)

4-3

David Wawrzewski (25.03) (1-5)

Hampshire finally got off the mark in the final stanza, but had to wait until the final leg before doing so. Three tons were good enough for Nicholson to take the opening leg on throw. He could have doubled his lead by breaking in the second, but just missed the big out shot and Wawrzewski promptly cleaned up. The "Polish Power" then stood front and centre in leg three. An opening 135 was soon followed by a 140. Wawrzewski then took the lead with a brilliant 106 out shot to secure the break of throw. His scoring then went for a walk in legs four and five, while Nicholson kept finding the trebles to take both without any pressure applied to him. The fortunes were reversed in leg six. This time it was the home thrower finding the big scores hard to find, and Wawrzewski was now regaining his accuracy. A 123 followed the ton which immediately preceded it and he took out the game shot at the next time of asking to set up the winner take all decider. The Londoner did all that could have been asked, an opening 140 was backed up with another 123 and a 140 in consecutive throws. Even though Nicholson had hit two 140s of his own, Wawrzewski looked favourite to take the win. Nicholson then pulled a rabbit of the hat, as he took out the 80 finish with Wawrzewski ready to apply the knockout punch of his own.

Gary Stafford (25.22)

4-2

Jason Gallagher (23.77) (2-5)

It was now London's turn to go on a mini losing streak, as Stafford took the second of three straight points for Hampshire with this win in six legs. Gallagher was being outscored on his return to the London ranks, and soon found himself three nil behind, although he did have one chance in the third leg to get himself up and running. Leg four was more like it, as Gallagher led off with a maximum and a ton. A poor visit was swiftly cast aside, a 123 set up a two dart combo and he duly obliged by taking out a nice 70 finish. The fifth leg saw both struggle for rhythm, but Gallagher once again showed his proficiency at the outer segments, and a 62 outshot brought him back into contention. The sixth leg saw better play from both, each hitting three scores in the red figures. But it was Stafford who led off the leg, and that enabled him to close the game out.

Mike Gillett (27.61)

4-1

Will Blackwell (22.66) (3-5)

London lost their third game on the spin with this win in five legs. Blackwell threw steadily in the opener, but couldn't find the big trebles. Gillett could, and two 140s saw were enough for the hold of throw to start the contest. Blackwell did find his accuracy in the second, but missed darts at the outer ring were punished and Gillett doubled the lead. The Hampshire man had a chance for another break to go three clear. Blackwell kept in touch and after his opponent had missed the chance to break, he stepped in with a smart 64 to halve the deficit. A slow start was to prove Blackwell's undoing in the fourth, and he had no answer to a quality leg which Gillett produced in the fifth, and ultimately final leg of the match. A ton was sandwiched between a couple of 140's before he completed the 12 darter by taking out the 121 finish with Blackwell a long way adrift.

Mike Symes (23.76)

0-4

Conan Whitehead (25.69) (3-6)

The mini revival was soon over, as London rounded off a great weekend by taking three of the last four points. Whitehead got London back on track, only needing the minimum four legs to cross the winning line. After a sighter to begin the opening leg with, Whitehead promptly fired in two consecutive maximums. The double was proving a lot harder to find, which nearly let Symes in before The Barbarian hit it for the early lead. Symes scored well enough to think he would draw level, however Whitehead was also hitting the big scores as well, and a 66 outshot soon had him two ahead. Leg three was more straightforward, although Symes did pull back after a sluggish start he had no answer to a sparkling 92 finish which left him on the brink of defeat. That came in the fourth, a couple of decent scores midway through the leg saw Whitehead cross the line with plenty in reserve.

Kev Woodward (25.05) 4-3 Lewis McGurn (23.48) (4-6)

The destination of the point in the tenth match wouldn't be known until the full complement of legs had been used. It was McGurn who started the better, taking the opening two legs although the second of them could easily have gone the other way. He had a chance to break and go three clear, but restored the two leg lead in the fourth as the 140's kept coming at regular intervals. From that point on the scoring power reduced when he needed it most, and Woodward suddenly found that he couldn't miss when approaching the double. He reeled off three legs on the trot, taking out 56, 60 and a match ending 92 whilst not allowing McGurn a dart at the outer ring to complete the comeback.

Paul Winter (23.25) 0-4 Ben West (31.81) (4-7)

That was to prove the swansong for Hampshire, as they didn't win a leg in either of the final two matches of the weekend. West romped to his win in a one-sided contest. He eased to a hold in the opener, then turned on the afterburners in leg two. A 140 in his second visit was followed by a maximum, before he checked out a great 82 to register a second 11 dart leg on the day for the visitors. Winter had no respite, as West kept hammering home the big scores to go three in front, leaving his opponent trailing far behind as he had done before. The Hampshire thrower did start to find some trebles of his own in the fourth, but it was to no avail. West struck consecutive maximums before rounding off a fine display with the double to give him a clean sweep over his beleaguered opposition.

Sam Head (21.46) 0-4 Gene Hill (22.02) (4-8)

The action concluded with Hill on the front foot, getting a break of throw as a fine finish of 72 set him on his way. A 121 led off leg two, and that kept him far enough ahead to finish off the leg in his own good time. Head to try to recover at the back end of the third, but a tardy start was all Hill needed to push on, setting up the double attempt with a 124 to which he duly obliged on his next visit. Head was now merely looking for consolation, and he wasn't getting any. Hill cracked home a maximum to leave the finish and despite ending up with just three remaining he coolly found the single and double one necessary to complete the job.

The resounding victory for London was well deserved and a great way to begin life back at the top table of County darts. It puts them in confident mood as they look to build on it when Devon visit the capital on the weekend of 2nd and 3rd October.