

COUNTY VETERANS 1st TEAM – 2nd WEEKEND 2024/25

Leicestershire played the final 4 matches in the Veterans Premier Division over the weekend of 1st / 2nd February 2025 at Sycamore Table Tennis Academy in Nottingham and were again represented by Chris Rogers, Abraham Conteh, Mat Hobday and Karen Smith.

The first match was against current champions **Nottinghamshire**, and resulted in an **7-3 defeat**. Only Karen registered a success in the singles matches beating Sarah Short 3-0. This was added to with doubles success for Chris & Karen in the Mixed and Chris and Abraham in the Men's.

Middlesex were the next opponents and hopes of a positive result were high, but these were dashed as Leicestershire lost 3 matches deuce in the 5th having had match points in all 3. The second of these put Leicestershire 5-2 behind before Abraham won a deuce in the 5th match, and Chris won his second singles of the match to make it 5-4. Karen & Matt fought valiantly in the final mixed doubles to try and salvage a draw, but another match point was lost as they went down 12-10 in the 5th, leaving the final result, a **6-4 loss**.

Sunday arrived with relegation a real possibility, but with matches against fellow strugglers Sussex and Derbyshire it was still in Leicestershire's hands.

Sussex started well taking the first 2 matches, although Mat was unlucky to lose in 5 from 2-0 up. Leicestershire bounced back taking the next 5 sets, 4 fairly comfortably (Chris & Karen in singles and Mixed Doubles, Chris & Abraham in the Mens Doubles) and Abraham then recovered from 2-1 down to win another deuce in the 5th match.

Disappointingly though the last 3 sets all went to Sussex, Matt losing 14-12 in the 4th, Chris 11-7 in the 5th and the mixed lost in four, so the match finished in a **5-5 draw**.

The final match against **Derbyshire** would determine which of the 2 Counties would be relegated, alongside Sussex. Leicestershire's failure to secure an additional point against Middlesex or Sussex meant that their superior sets difference over Derbyshire did not come into play – Leicestershire needed to win to stay in the Premier Division for the 20th successive season, Derbyshire needed only a draw to survive relegation.

Leicestershire opened a 2-0 lead with Chris winning in 4 before Mat battled his way to a great 11-8 in the 5th win over Stuart McIntyre. Abraham succumbed to Unicorn player Robin Pearce but Chris and Karen won a 5 set mixed doubles (including another Unicorn player Gary Knights), before Mat again come up trumps with a 3-0 win over Michael George, to put Leicestershire 4-1 ahead. Derbyshire immediately fought back and soon the match was level at 4-4. Chris then beat Pearce 3-0 to ensure the fate of both Counties would be decided by the last mixed doubles, with Karen and Mat taking the table for Leicestershire. An agonising first game where game points were saved and lost went to Derbyshire 17-15. The 2nd game was similar but with Leicestershire winning 14-12. Karen and Mat then heaped the pressure on their opponents with some great tactical doubles play and won the last 2 games 11-7, 11-8 to clinch the **6-4 victory** required to retain Premier Division status next season.

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Final Table

	Team	P	W	D	L	SF	SA	Pts
1	Yorkshire 1	7	7	0	0	55	15	14
2	Nottinghamshire 1	7	6	0	1	53	17	12
3	Hertfordshire 1	7	5	0	2	43	27	10
4	Middlesex 1	7	3	1	3	32	38	7
5	Kent 1	7	1	3	3	29	41	5
6	Leicestershire 1	7	1	2	4	29	41	4
7	Derbyshire 1	7	1	1	5	20	50	3
8	Sussex 1	7	0	1	6	19	51	1