

<https://www.lta.org.uk/major-tennis-events/british-major-events/battle-of-the-brits-premier-league-of-tennis/news/watson-and-matusevich-crowned-battle-of-the-brits-premier-league-of-tennis-champions/>

Watson and Matusevich crowned Battle of the Brits Premier League of Tennis champions

-  23/12/2020
-  News



Heather Watson and Anton Matusevich came out on top in the inaugural staging of the Battle of the Brits Premier League of Tennis as they topped the women's and men's standings respectively.

The four-day event held at the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton saw a group of Britain's leading players go head to head in a series of entertaining contests and it was Watson who shined brightest winning all four matches she played.

In the men's event rising stars Matusevich and Jack Draper shared top spot with seven points apiece, and it was a head-to-head between the two today which ultimately decided who triumphed in the event.

Matusevich's easy power proved to be decisive at the end of the first set as he broke Draper three times in a row. Draper did put up some resistance getting one of the breaks back, but it was not enough. It was a tighter start of the second set for the now 19-year-old, who celebrated his birthday yesterday with a win over Jay Clarke. He held Matusevich off twice before his

persistence paid off with two straight breaks of his own, on his way to levelling the match.

[See the full results and final table here](#)

Momentum shifted throughout the match tie-break but in the end Matusevich held firm on his own serve to share the top honours, as Draper picks up a point for winning one set on the way to a defeat.

Elsewhere Cameron Norrie made up for his slow start against Draper, and a tough loss against the resurgent Andy Murray to take advantage of a slightly less aggressive Dan Evans.

The British No. 1 was pipped to a break at the tail end of the first set but found himself on the back foot when he lost the opening game at the start of the second set. Norrie broke late again – showing what we saw in the summer with impressive movement throughout the match, before closing it out on a single match point.

Another player to have picked up some good match-time was Eden Silva who joined Watson at the top of the table at the start of the day, with a very solid win over Katy Dunne, winning three out of her four matches.

Jodie Burrage, who had been the star of the domestic circuit over the summer, closed out this pre-season sharpening tournament with a win in a feisty encounter with Naomi Broady, stepping in for Emma Raducanu for the last day of play.

There was also a win for Aidan McHugh, who beat reserve Jack Pinnington-Jones after Liam Broady pulled out with an injury.

That just left Watson to close out the proceedings in a tight affair with Fran Jones. The first set was a battle of nerves more than wills with five straight breaks of serve, before Jones held first and looked to have the upper hand over the British No. 2.

Watson broke to level for 5-5 and in the tie-break built up too strong a lead for Jones to respond. Momentum was firmly on Watson's side as she broke Jones in the opening game of the second set.

Jones has shown that she has formidable weapons in her ground-strokes and has potential but even the smallest lapse of intensity against a top player will be telling, as Watson roared out into a 4-1 lead. Jones, struggling a little physically, hung tight but Watson concluded the week with four wins from

four and along with everyone else has benefitted with the chance to get match-tightness ahead of the new season.

Murray, Watson and Draper top the tables going into the final day

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Andy Murray joined Jack Draper at the top of the Premier League table on the men's side with a second win, this time over British No. 3 Cameron Norrie. Looking to be moving well, and coming through another long match, Murray was quick to take the initiative and break Norrie in the opening game and kept hold of the advantage to take the first set.

Norrie, who made a few uncharacteristic errors in his match against Draper, steadied the ship, coming back from an early break in the second set to give Murray some pause for thought. He broke back and kept the pressure on, even having a set point before going into a tie-break.

Norrie played a much-improved match from yesterday but the momentum from a win already in the tournament saw Murray clinch another three points to move up the table to share the top spot with the now 19-year-old Draper on his birthday. Draper had battled through a gruelling match against Norrie, and at times during that had looked fatigued, but pulled up well for a commanding win over Jay Clarke.

Heather Watson also tops the Premier League of Tennis tables, as she closed out a long day of action on Court Three, taken the distance by Emma

Raducanu in her biggest test so far. Raducanu's aggressive game caught Watson on the hop, and despite being able to reel off three games in a row to get things back on an even keel in the first set, Raducanu powered her way to another break courtesy of Watson errors to take the first set.

It looked as though the pattern would repeat in the second set, with an early break for Raducanu but Watson's patience and point construction started to pay off as the dreaded double-faults returned to Raducanu's game. Watson took her chance and broke Raducanu twice to take it into a decider.

From there experience really told as she powered to a commanding lead, and although there were a couple of points of respite for the 18-year-old, Watson secured her place on the top of the table with another two points.

At the start of the day, in an epic battle on Court Three, Francesca Jones edged out one of the domestic summer's star performers, Jodie Burrage. From the start Jones prevented Burrage from getting into any rhythm in her game, and with not that much separating them in the rankings, the encounter was taut throughout.

Trading breaks at the start, Burrage's aggressive play saw her push time and again to break Jones again, but the higher ranked player just kept Burrage at bay, and her own perseverance paid off with a break towards the end of the set, before taking the lead.

It was a competitive start to the second set, and the pair went on to trade four breaks of serve before battling their way through to a tie-break. Burrage looked to be on the March, bringing up three set points, but just found herself error-strewn at the end as Jones hung on to get her first win of the tournament.

It was encouraging to see how Jack Draper performed after his gruelling encounter with Norrie on Monday, where at times he looked to be flagging with the pace in the second set. He confidently dispatched Jay Clarke, perhaps also with the benefit of having had plenty of match-time this week.

Dan Evans was in fine form and added to his league table points tally by powering to a straight sets win over Liam Broady.

There was also a first win of the tournament for Katy Dunne. At times she has struggled to get her serve working but was in command in the first set against Alicia Barnett. She found herself taken the distance though as Barnett came back to force a decider, but Dunne took control in the match tie-break to get her first points on the board.

There were wins as well for Eden Silva and Anton Matusevich, who came in for Jan Choinski, and handled the heavy weight of shot from James Ward well to claim a decent scalp in terms of points.

<https://www.lta.org.uk/major-tennis-events/british-major-events/battle-of-the-brits-premier-league-of-tennis/news/wins-for-evans-and-watson-on-day-two-of-battle-of-the-brits/>

Wins for Evans and Watson on Day Two of Battle of the Brits

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-  News



British No. 1 Dan Evans clinched his first win of the Battle of the Brits Premier League of Tennis while there were also victories for Heather Watson and rising stars Jack Draper and Emma Raducanu in Roehampton.

Evans faced Jan Choinski, who relished being included in the Team Tennis event in the summer, and the German-born Brit gave as good as he got in the first set. Despite Evans getting an early break, Choinski held his nerve and hustled his way through saving three set points and breaking Evans.

It is a measure of the improvement that Evans has made to his game while marching confidently back up the rankings that he responded immediately with a break to love, before going on to take the first set.

Even though the second set, on paper, looked like a trouncing, there was plenty for Evans to ponder as he continues to sharpen up his game ahead of the new season, and Choinski fought until the last ball and should feel he can take some positives from that encounter.

Emma Raducanu may be only 18 but already has an impressive easy power. A brutal first serve, heavy hitting off the ground, and aggressive returning instincts were all at the fore in her first set against Katy Dunne. Once more Dunne seemed to struggle with adjusting to her serve in the first set, as Raducanu dictated play effortlessly to breeze through the first set.

The second set saw the double-fault jitters blight Raducanu's arm giving Dunne a chance to make more of a chance to get into the match. Six straight breaks of serve came and went before Raducanu steadied the ship and got the crucial break to hold firm for a straight sets win.

The pick of the matches of Court 1 was a match-up between two of the star performers during the domestic restart after the first period of lockdown. Jodie Burrage had a remarkable run of wins during the British Tour, Progress Tour, Battle of the Brits Team Tennis and UK Tour in the summer, while Watson proved to be pivotal in the Team Tennis across singles, doubles, and mixed doubles.

Watson, who looked sharp and match -tight ripped through the first set for the loss of only one game. Burrage was quick to regroup, breaking Watson at the start of the second set, although the British No. 2 broke back immediately.

[See the full results from Day Two here.](#)

A break for Watson put her back in the driving seat in this more competitive second set, with a battle royal as Watson saw her chance to clinch the match disappear as she was broken serving for it. Despite a determined resistance, Burrage was broken for Watson to get a second win on the board.

Jack Draper learned every ounce of the word gruelling in a physical encounter with Cameron Norrie. Norrie has a well-rounded big-picture game and while Draper was doing a great job of staying very present with the World No. 71, it was taking its toll on the youngster, but he got his second win, having had a chance to get used to the courts here, and while Norrie was just struggling to find his range, Draper won a tight tussle in the first set tie-break.

Norrie's experience of grinding out the long matches came into play. Even after a spirited break of Norrie's serve, the British No. 3 kept calm and broke, and as Draper started to shake out his legs, there was a sense that Norrie would start to turn the screw.

Impressively, Draper stayed toe-to-toe with the more experienced Norrie, to force a second set tie-break, and gave every ounce to draw uncharacteristic errors from Norrie to claim the match and plenty of positives to take from a top 100 scalp.

Liam Broady again kept the family flag flying with a great comeback against James Ward. Coming from a set down, he stormed through the second set tie-break before coming through a tense match-tie-break to pick up a second win. Sadly, for big sister Naomi, she struggled to impose any of her big hitting game on Beth Grey.

At the start of the day there were wins also for Eden Silva and Aidan McHugh.

<https://www.lta.org.uk/major-tennis-events/british-major-events/battle-of-the-brits-premier-league-of-tennis/news/murray-beats-evans-on-day-one-of-battle-of-the-brits/>

Murray beats Evans on Day One of Battle of the Brits Premier League of Tennis



20/12/2020



News



The Battle of the Brits Premier League of Tennis brought some much-needed cheer to the tennis-watching population, as the popular event bringing together Britain's elite tennis players made a comeback in the run-up to Christmas.

The highlight of Sunday was the rematch between the current British No. 1 Dan Evans and Andy Murray. From the get-go, it was evident that the three-time Slam champion had been honing his serve. But all eyes would be on his movement, especially against a player like Evans who relies on his ability to move his opponents around.

Certainly, in the early exchanges there looked to be nothing wrong with his movement, as he scrambled around the court, but found himself tested early on by Evans, coming from 0-40 down to hang on to his serve.

Murray had to carry out the same Houdini act to save three break points as he saved himself again, but just could not carry that momentum through to break Evans for the set. But with a final flurry in the tie-break Murray closed out the first set, much to Evans' frustration.

Murray held on to that momentum as he broke Evans in the first game of the second set on his fifth break point chance. While Evans stayed toe-to-toe with Murray the former World No.1 had to work for his win, taking five match-points in all to just remind everyone of how much of a competitor he is.

In the summer Heather Watson was on top of her pre-season restart game and looked to be blossoming in the Battle of the Brits Team Tennis, but that form had not quite translated when it came to the restart.

Having struggled with an injury, she returned to action in the ITF Dubai event, reaching the quarter-final of the singles and the semi-finals of the doubles, and that match-sharpness stood her in great stead with a comprehensive, straight sets win over Katy Dunne.

[See the full results from Day One here.](#)

There were other notable battles. Beth Grey and Freya Christie have gone the distance in their two previous encounters, and it looked as though Christie might just have enough to get over the line, before Grey mounted a great come-back in the second set and in the match tie-break, coming from 2-5 down to extend her lead over Christie 3-0 in their head-to-head.

Siblings Naomi and Liam Brody had kicked off the day's play, and it looked like they would both make it a family clean sweep but Brody found herself struggling to make good on her earlier momentum as Alicia Barnett, who had been key to the organisation and running of the Progress Women's Tour earlier in the year, mounted a spirited fightback to grab the opening win.

Liam Brody did manage to salvage some pride for the family name, in a tight match against Jack Draper, coming out on top in the battle of the lefties.

The final match to finish saw a gutsy performance from Emma Raducanu, whose powerful serving and heavy ground-strokes makes this indoor surface ideal. Up against Eden Silva, initially there were few opportunities for Silva to put her doubles prowess to the fore, as she was effectively pinned to the baseline.

But as she started to work her way forward, she delivered a blow to Raducanu's hopes of a straight sets win, saving two match points and breaking the 18-year-old and after another brace of breaks, forced a second set tie-break. After trading mini-breaks, Raducanu got the mini-

break that counted, and this time made no mistake on her third match point, which proved to be the charm.

There were also wins for Battle of the Brits Team Tennis alumni Anton Matusевич over James Ward, and Jan Choinski over Aidan McHugh.

Play starts tomorrow at 10:00.

