

## Johns Trophy vs Leicestershire @ Potton Bowls Club – Saturday 10th July 2021

It is tempting to dress up a comprehensive defeat as a positive and I am very much in the camp of constructive optimism (what is that!). That being said, a 141- 95 loss, where only one rink was successful, doesn't shout unlucky so before I go into the report of the game, a couple of reflections.

Slow starts have cost us in the past and this again, was our downfall today. To be 20 shots down after four ends and 28 shots down a third of the way through the match makes it extremely difficult, if not practically impossible, to get back into any game against a very good opponent. Not all rinks were suffering, two were winning and one was drawing at that time but we are a team, not rinks, and it meant starting to look for shots earlier than is ideal. Speaking to Mich, who was at the game, highlighted the importance of the front end as the foundation for success and this was Leicestershire's strength. Not all struggled and those that did find the going hard, were up against girls who were on their game from the outset. I feel front end coaching may be the priority going forward.

On to the game. Mavis's rink lost by one in a nip and tuck game and could have won had they been allowed to play the 21<sup>st</sup> end – getting a 46 to tie was thought to be beyond them! Good rink with lots of interaction. Lesley's rink did struggle and all the players will know that they can play better – an unfortunate day at the office. Dymphna's rink was our highest winning rink and the team only lost 7 of the 21 ends. Her smile said it all at the end of the game – the lemon drizzle cake wasn't bad either! Marcia's rink showed remarkable battling qualities against a very good opposing rink. Betty had an outstanding game as lead and the whole game was peppered with good bowling. Hayley's rink gelled well and were unlucky to lose. Chasing shots towards the end of their game saw them lose their 18-10 lead at 16 ends but the rink showed enormous promise and would give any four a run for their money. Alison's rink played on rink one with Jo leading against Jamie-Lea Winch, who has a great chance of representing England in next year's Commonwealth Games. Tough opponents, playing well on a rink that proved had to put up saving bowls with any confidence.

All in all, we were outplayed by deserving winners and it would be no surprise to see them carry on the good work at Leamington. Leicestershire are a tough and experienced team with probably many more games at this level under their belts than us. We can, and will, learn and be better for this.

An enormous thank you to Potton BC for hosting Hertfordshire – I think we reciprocated with Bedfordshire playing at Sawbridgeworth. The tea and biscuits and for some, pot plants, were very welcome.

Preliminaries were held before the game and Lyn Boniface, Pauline Taylor, Cheryl Sage, Jo Hollister and Natalie Chalcraft were awarded their Johns flash by Herts Ladies President Betty Ottaway-Stewart.

Finally, Saturday 28 August 2021 will be an end of season Johns trial and whilst I have your availability from the early season nomination form, the idea of this is to encourage those that are playing well now and still in County and Area competitions to nominate. If you haven't already, please email either me, Janet or Jan as we would love to see you. I think this might also be used as the first coaching session so maybe 4 rinks trialling and 2 rinks being coached and then changing that for the second session. We may even play in hot sunshine!

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