



Hertfordshire Bowls

Johns Trophy 2019

Johns Trophy vs Essex Regional Final

At Bishop's Stortford BC on Saturday 13th July at 13.30hrs

Before I launch into the report, I want to correct an omission from the Norfolk game. Megan MacKinnon gained her Johns flash for this game and she should be very proud of herself to gain this whilst still in her teens. These are not handed out lightly, they are earned, so well done Megan and I apologise for not mentioning it earlier.

On to the game. Spoiler Alert – we lost.....but, over the season, I cannot praise the girls highly enough for their indomitable spirit, their work ethic, their refusal to give up and their teamwork. The latter is the thing that has been noticeable and it has grown as the season has gone on with rink members looking out for each other. Essex were the better team today and deserved to take the spoils – Good Luck to them at Leamington – but I saw enough building blocks in 2019 to be very excited about 2020. If the team will have me, I would be delighted to continue as Johns/Walker Manager next year.

The supporters flocked into Bishop's Stortford and parking overflowed into the residential road. It was certainly set-up for a classic encounter with winner take all but the Herts challenge was slow to start and after that it was us playing catch-up. Essex took an early 15ish shot lead and then we never really managed to bridge that gap. At the fifteenth end, four rinks were either winning or losing by only one shot which does show how competitive the game could have been. My litmus test of how many 4's and above did the rinks gain and lost ended up 3-6 so whilst the score may not look so good, over 6 rinks, it shows that no-one threw in the towel.

Alison's rink, led for long periods, never by much, but lost the lead on the 17th end. A Herts three on the last end meant a loss by only one. Mavis had, in many players eyes, the best Essex skip against her so to be 9-8 up at 12 ends was magnificent. An Essex three on the last end was unrepresentative of how competitive the rink had been. Dymphna's rink started slowly and found themselves 0-9 after five ends. Steady improvement saw them take the lead on the 14th end but it remained close and ended up all square on the 19th end. As they were the last to finish and the game could not be won, that game ended there. Pat's rink had against them several junior internationals and it was a testament to the whole rink that they were never overawed or overwhelmed and were even leading after seventeen ends! In the context of the game, who they were playing and looking to the future, losing by three was a promising result. Rachel's starting rink was shuffled around and, for the third game running, played against a back end that really raised their game. Only two behind at halfway gave a degree of optimism with all eight playing well. Essex then won four of the next five ends and this proved the difference. Sue's rink showed their fighting spirit going from 1-9 to 6-9 but were never allowed a sniff after that. This was never

for want of trying but the opposition, on the day, bowled superbly. Not much you can do about that, chalk it down to experience and move on. Another day and it may well have been different.

Marcia gained her Johns flash after the match (only just out of her teens). Well done Marcia.

I think this game highlights that we still have a way to go to compete with the super teams but Herts can and will continue to improve. I would like to see some organised coaching for the team as it will help to improve the skills that are there. If it is good enough for international players, then it must be good enough for us. Watch this space.

Alan Spicer

Johns/Walker Team Manager

Joan Welch

Sarah Best

Becky Maynard

Sue Maynard

Lost 9-29

Sarah Marshall

Lesley Moylette

Lyn Boniface

Mavis Hendry

LOST 14-22

Betty Ottaway

Pauline Taylor

Carol Brown

Dymphna Whybrow

DREW 15-15

Megan MacKinnon

Marion Smedley

Valerie Challacombe

Pat Hilson

LOST 18-21

Ann Dix

Marcia Dunstone

Devon Cooper

Rachel Tremlett

LOST 13-21

Joanne Hollister

Natalie Chalcraft

Jess Eley

Alison Hall

LOST 14-15