



Hertfordshire Bowls

Johns Trophy 2022

Johns Trophy vs Suffolk Preliminary Round

Falcon Bowling Club, Chelmsford, CM3 3FB - Saturday 4th June 2022 at 13:30hrs

Setting off in pouring rain at 11am at an alleged heavy green made me have very slight worries for the girls. So from being supremely confident, this had drifted to only super confident as I approached Stanstead Airport.....and then the sun came out!

On arrival, the Club President told me it was heavy – it really didn't look it – but the total faith had returned so roll on the start although the wind was so like Bishop's Stortford BC.

As per usual, Herts were rich in supporter numbers and probably outnumbered their Suffolk counterparts by at least 2:1. Thank you one and all for continuing to come, you really do make a difference.

Before I launch into the rink details, my litmus test of how many 4's and above did the rinks gain and lose, ended up 6-3 to Herts which was a fair reflection of the game. One rink did drop a 7 but still won so it just goes to show that dropping big is NOT the end of the game!

In rink order, Marcia's rink were exchanging shots throughout, with Suffolk edging it at 12-10 after 12 ends. Then something happened (guesses on a postcard). Herts won all the remaining ends to end up being the highest winning rink and unrestrained jubilation. "We are the Champions" is rumoured to have been played on the joyful drive home! Mavis had a total new front end with both players debuting in the Johns although you wouldn't know it. They played as a team against a strong Suffolk 4, exchanging the lead in the first 4 ends until our girls hit a 5 to go 12-5 up after 6. Then possibly a bit of inexperience set in and end 14 saw Suffolk leading 21-14. Digging in, the girls gained a magnificent 3 on the last end to tie their game at 24 all. Hayley's rink was definitely a game of swings and roundabouts with a comfortable lead of 11-3 at 9 ends, then losing the next 5 ends to be 14-11 down but roaring back to win 5 out of the last 7 ends and win 24-17.

Janet's rink also had 2 debutants and was up against an old Herts Johns stalwart in Sue BB and as hard as they tried, they ended up losing 12-20. On a positive note, they did not drop a 4 or higher, and this proved key in restricting another strong Suffolk 4 and thereby, making a significant contribution to the overall score. The final debutant was on Lyn's rink and this game was massively significant and showed the character of the players. Comfortable at 16-2 up after 12 ends, a change of jack length turned the game on its head, with the girls losing the next 8 ends, including a 5 on the 20th end meant the score was 16 all. How easy would it be to hide and lose the last end badly but, you guessed it, a 2 meant a win of 18-16 and pressure easing on those rinks still to finish. Alison's rink, a multi 'highest winning rink' winner in 2019, had a very tough outside rink and

it was no surprise to see the lead changing hands on multiple occasions. A dropped 4 on the 20th end hurt but winning the last end with a single, meant only a 17-20 loss and a huge contribution to the final result.

Sarah Best was presented with a Johns flash after the match by President Rose Varney. Well done Sarah.

Great win against what looked a strong Suffolk 24 and couple that with a tricky green and gusty winds meant anyone with an affinity to Hertfordshire went home happy. The game was played in the right spirit which is important and I look forward to renewing rivalry in the coming years.

Leicestershire in 2 weeks' time, and they have proved, over the last 2 completed years, to be very strong and we will need to be at our very best to be competitive. No reason why we won't be and this win has set us up for a titanic tussle. This game is on 18 June at a green yet to be identified. It has to be roughly mid-way between us and Leics (and free on Saturday afternoon) so is likely to be somewhere around Bedford meaning another long journey for some. Despite winning and the maxim 'Never change a winning team', it is likely that there will be one or two tweaks for a fortnight's time.

A final word about our hosts, Falcon BC. Their President, Ernie welcomed us (he even beat me there), put all the equipment out and put it away, handed over the green and received it back. It was a pleasure to have him on the Top Table. The catering was beyond superlative. A really good beef Sunday roast (on Saturday!) followed by a variety of gateau and cream was very well received by all the players. Adjustments were made for dietary issues and it was delivered speedily. Anyone coming here in the future can be guaranteed to be well fed!

One last thing, thank you for all the players and travelling reserves for staying to enjoy the meal and formalities. In the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend, I'm sure many could have found other things to attend so it was refreshing to know everyone stayed behind. What a magnificent TEAM.

Alan Spicer
Johns/Walker Team Manager

Betty Stewart
Sarah Best
Anne Hudson
Marcia Dunstone
Won 25-12

Rhianna Russell
Val Challacombe
Jennie Redford
Hayley Robinson
Won 24-17

Jean Munt
Jackie Wright
Lesley Moylette
Mavis Hendry
Drew 24-24

Diane Jewell
Lesley Tutt
Julie Homer
Janet Carter
Lost 12-20

Shirley Edwards
Tessa Miles
Jennifer McEvoy
Lyn Boniface
Won 18-16

Joanne Hollister
Natalie Chalcraft
Jess Weir
Alison Hall
Lost 17-20

Overall: Herts 120 Suffolk 109