

**Match Report**  
**Eastern Counties League**  
**Hertfordshire v Essex**

**Result, Essex 86 (0pts) Hertfordshire 124 (22pts)**

**Hertfordshire men kicked off their season with the first of five Eastern Counties League matches by travelling to Braintree, Essex. With the Middleton Cup having reverted to round robin and to try and reduce the number of games in the schedule the traditional MC trial had been abandoned. The ECL matches will act as trials, these matches are played in the same format as the MC with a total of 22 points available. Perfect practice.**

**ECL debuts were given to Andy Costin (Hertford), Paul Fuller (Herts), Dylan Martin (Garston), Colin Milner (Rye Pk) and Ian Snowdon (Royston).**

**Prior to the game the County were pleased to present Middleton Cup Flashes to Stewart Parkhouse (WGC) and Phil Russell (W&D). Huge congratulations to both on their achievement.**

**And so, to the game, grey skies and rain made conditions unpleasant, however this didn't stop the team from getting off to a fast start with 5 rinks up at the 5 end stage and the other drawing. Despite an absolute deluge at halfway the team kept their concentration and focus with still 5 rinks winning and only Scott's rink a few behind. This soon changed when Scott trailed the jack on the 12<sup>th</sup> end for a 5, a 5&4 followed on the next 2 ends to give them a comfortable lead and they never looked back.**

**At 18 ends the game was secure with a near 40 shot lead and with the 10pts for a win 'in the bag' the rinks could concentrate on securing their 2pts. 3 Rinks were tight but each managed the last few ends perfectly to all secure wins, Neil drawing shot with his first bowl to consolidate their 2 shot advantage. Craig's rink having been pegged back packed the head on the last end allowing Essex a single shot and thus winning by 2. This left the Executive rink the last to finish, a tight game throughout they went into the last end all square, Mike's second wood was a few inches short directly in front and stayed shot throughout the end, however there was a nervous ending when although convinced they were holding the umpire was called and the resulting measure was much tighter than first thought, 3 hrs 10mins and it came down to half an inch !!! Congratulations to the Exec rink making it a clean sweep for Hertfordshire.**

**A great team performance and once again great game management to secure the close rinks.**

**Roger Evans**  
**Manager**

