



Hertfordshire Bowls

Johns Trophy 2022

Johns Trophy vs Leicestershire at Abington BC on Saturday 18th June at 13.30hrs

This is a slightly different report to the one written on Saturday evening as I have had time to reflect on what was a losing and ultimately disappointing result. Going into this match with an extreme wave of optimism proved almost correct, something that most independents would be surprised at, as Leicestershire had beaten Hertfordshire over the last two completed years, by 43 points in 2019 and by 46 points last year. We gave them an almighty scare and they may not take as lightly ever again.

The ruling by Bowls England that there should be no advantage to the home (challenger) team and that all games must be played on a neutral green was odd and may (stress the word may) have made the difference given the narrowness of Leicestershire's victory.

I think the litmus test I use in all games, spoke volumes. This 126 end game was won by Herts 66 ends to 60. The 4s and over shots, however, was 1 to 5 in favour of Leics so their winning was understandable if not the narrow winning score of 106 to 98. Herts made the early running in the rain but Leics were never that far behind and took over the lead from about halfway. They were, however, never out of reach and with two full ends to complete, Leics lead was only 4 shots. Really intelligent bowling by the Leics rink made it very difficult to get a score and they won the last ends by 2 on each occasion.

In rink order, Marcia's rink started slowly, 0-5 after 3 ends, found their feet and led 10-5 at 9 ends, had another relapse to 12-14 down at 14 ends and then battled hard to finally lose by 2 shots. Janet's rink had it tough, bowling against Leics live wire Pa Walker and although they did win 8 ends, they were all singles. The pleasing point though, was they won the last 3 ends when the match was still delicately balanced and Herts were still in a great chance of winning. Mavis's team stormed into a lead of 11-3 at 7 ends and the only time they were behind was after the first end (0-2). Leics moved the jack with some success towards the end of the game and this finished in an honourable draw. Rachel's rink was superb, leading at 12 ends by 20-2. Leics never gave up though and some incredible saves (5 down to holding 1 after the last wood, was just one example) meant that the final score of 23-16 didn't really do justice to fine bowling by our four. Alison's rink went down by 2 but 5-5 at 6 ends, 8-9 at 11 ends, 11-18 at 17 ends, showed their usual battling qualities of this experienced rink. Finally, Hayley's rink. On a typically tricky outside rink, Herts were bowling well but couldn't quite get the rubs. They were behind from the opening end and only finally took the lead for the first time on end 17 (13-12). They then managed the game well to run out winners by 3.

Lesley Tutt was awarded her Johns flash by County President Rose Varney after the match.

Lots of positives to take out of this game, some really good team compatibility has been found, the girls have shown they can win ends, they have the mental strength to battle and the horrendously slow start, experienced in previous years, has all but been eliminated. The five newbies also played their part and I hope that shows that any competent bowler has a chance to be part of this exciting Johns squad. This is something that can be built on next year, possibly by the current Selection Team or another.

Thank you to our hosts, Abington Bowling Club and their two Presidents Jonathan and Diane. It is their centenary year and the club was presented a Hertfordshire Rose to plant by Jan Holland.

And finally, thank you to all the ladies who played, turned up as reserves (even the non-travelling ones), trialled and supported. You all played your hearts out and I couldn't fault anyone's desire to bowl well. I am sorry it didn't work out this year. Also thank you to the supporters who come, rain or shine, to give their time and voice. You really are appreciated by Jan and I and the whole team.

Alan Spicer

Johns/Walker Team Manager

Betty Stewart

Sarah Best

Anne Hudson

Marcia Dunstone

LOST 16-18

Diane Jewell

Jackie Wright

Lesley Moylette

Mavis Hendry

DREW 18-18

Shirley Edwards

Jennifer McEvoy

Lyn Boniface

Janet Carter

LOST 8-22

Rhianna Russell

Natalie Chalcraft

Jennie Redford

Hayley Robinson

WON 16-13

Devon Cooper

Lesley Tutt

Val Challacombe

Rachel Tremlett

WON 23-16

Joanne Hollister

Julie Homer

Jess Weir

Alison Hall

LOST 17-19

OVERALL 98-106