

# Middleton Cup Report

## Hertfordshire 123 Leicestershire 121

What a day, Hertfordshire have qualified for the Middleton Cup semi finals at Leamington. After many years of trying and a few quarter final losses it finally all came together on Saturday at St Neots BC.

Playing Middleton Cup winners of 2018 was always going to be tough and so it proved, there was never more than a few shots between the teams throughout the match and the drama and excitement came down to the last few ends.

The 2 teams sparred, trading 1, 2, and 3's here and there, always keeping the score tight and that's what went on for the majority of the game. With 10 total ends left the team dropped a 5 & 4 simultaneously putting us 10 behind with a total of 9 ends left, a difficult position but certainly not insurmountable. Martin and Bryn were playing their last ends and both conceded a few shots

Scott's Rink had 1 to play, Tom 1 and Glenn's as is customary a few ends behind. Glenn started the ball rolling with a 6, The Leicester skip finally buckling under the constant pressure applied by Glenn's rink. Next Scott and Tom were finishing.

Scott also picked up a 6, the whole rink packing the head with a great series of bowls.

Next up Tom's last end, 1 and a measure down, after much discussion and aware of the overall situation it was decided to fire and kill the end and start again.

A 1 bowl target and a perfect strike for the kill.

The benefit of this was to become obvious in the replayed end. Leicester who had been under pressure on Tom's rink all day but had somehow escaped conceding a big count took the mat up, as the end built our chances looked good despite being 1 down, Leicester had bowls in the ditch and short, James played their shot bowl out to perfection and moved the Jack nearer the ditch at the same time. The Leicester Skip who had an outstanding game proceeded to draw shot, Tom bettered it leaving 1 bowl each. Leicester now made a tactical error in trying to ditch the jack, they missed and this left them with 1 bowl in the head. No discussion was needed and bang Tom took it clean out, 7 to us,

So in Summary, Hertfordshire's last end on Tom's rink was 7, Scott's last end was a 6.

This meant Glenn who had 2 ends left was protecting a 5 shot lead. It was also on Rink 6, ideal for viewing, before we go into the last 2 ends there is one point I would like to make, the whole of the Hertfordshire team had remained and all stood together on the green watching.

Glenn's 20th end was well managed conceding a 2 but never in any danger of more. This left 3 to defend, the whole of the watching Herts team moved to the other end to watch.

So the last end, the Leicester lead puts a bowl an inch in front. Ross's second bowl 6 inches behind and directly behind at that, just about perfect. The Leicester 2 bowled no sort of bowls and Paddy put additional woods in the head. This left Leicester no choice but to try and kill the end.

Phil ignored the head and covered the back, Glen did the same with his first, with his last bowl he left a very good blocker. This left the Leicester Skip Joe Dawson 1 bowl, when he fires he has one of the heaviest firing shots you will see but it did him no good this time and he missed.

Cue celebrations....

**My thanks go to all the players through out the year, it has been a great team effort and the players have shown Great Spirit, heart and determination when things have been a bit sticky. The greatest example of this is already mentioned in this report; the ' Team ' were on the green and surrounds supporting each other.**

**Thanks also to my assistant Manager Tony Keeling, Tony unfortunately is unwell at the moment and was unable to enjoy the moment, we wish him a speedy recovery. Finally to the two match officers, Graham Searle and Phil Havord for doing the match day admin allowing to me to focus on other matters and to all the Hertfordshire supporters (you do make a difference). The overriding theme is ' Team' and as a team we have achieved much. Leamington will be an awesome experience and we hope many of the bowlers in Hertfordshire will come and support us and enjoy that experience.**



**Roger Evans  
Manager**