 

10th August to 27th August 2023 – Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

**Day 1 Review**

The first big shock of the Championships came even before a bowl had even been bowled.

Opening morning, players and spectators alike, woke to find a golden globe in a clear blue sky with promises that the mercury in thermometers might nudge towards the mid 20’s. Untold delights given recent weeks!

The focus for Middlesex was on the South Western reaches of the County with players from Cambridge Park and Ashford taking to the Greens.

First up, at 0930, in the Ladies fours were Middlesex “A” comprising Tina Cooper, Nadine Mullins, Cathy Taylor and Ann Halliday from Cambridge Park. Still containing 3 members of the 2017 National fours Champions they opened on rink E2 against Cherry Rolf, Renee Moody, Beth Gelhard and Bertie Woodburn from Camphill, Isle of Wight.

The Middlesex ladies made a solid start and early on the led 6-3, 8 ends in and approaching half way they led 8-3. Things started to turn at that point though and the Islanders began to find their range. 14 ends gone and it was back all square, 11 all. Sadly that was as good as it got for Ann’s quartet as they never scored again, eventually succumbing 11-18.

Middlesex “B” were on rink B5. Elaine Putnam, Vicki Smith, Lisa Wolstenholme and Kerry Payne from Ashford faced Lynda Gibbs, Tracy Hibberd, Min Wright and Kath Patrick from Milton Park, Hampshire. The Ashford Ladies made a steady start leading 3-2 at 3 ends. From that point though there was no stopping them as they stormed to an impressive victory. 10-4 up at 7 ends they extended that to 16-5 at 10. 11 shots up, 18-7, at 13 ends they were in a tremendous position to see out the final ends and they did just that eventually shaking hands after 17 ends, 21-10 victors. A great start to their campaign.

Elsewhere in the first round 2 ties went to an extra end whilst Annalisa Dunham’s Lincolnshire four rattled up 30 shots and Katherine Rednall’s Norfolk four, 27. Heaviest faller, other than our own former champions, probably Sue Davies, Amy Walters and their Worcestershire four.

Whilst the ladies had a break before their 2nd rd attention turned to the Men’s Singles 1st rd.

Middlesex were being represented by Matt Larman and Ashley Tanner both from Ashford BC.

Both Ashford players had been drawn on A green which made it easier for the Supporters to make base camp and cheer them on. Matt faced former International Perry Martin now of Boscombe Cliff, Hampshire. On Rink A6, Perry got off to a good start and led 6-2. Clearly in good form he did not take his foot off of Matt’s throat and rapidly he was 14-3 up. Matt rallied but he was up against it and soon it was 18-6 before Perry finished a clinical job 21-7.

Ashley meanwhile was on rink A2 against Barry Hopkins of Darlington Railway Athletic, Durham. Early on it was a tight game. Scores came through of 3-3 and 9-9 before Ashley nudged in front 12-9. The game ebbed and flowed and they were still at it when all the other games had finished. 17-18 down Ashley knew it was going to be a tight finish but sadly Barry got what he needed to progress 21-17.

A great shame for the 2 Ashford lads who gave of their best but on the day it wasn’t to be.

Elsewhere in round 1 Shaun McCaughan of Kent won through 21-7. Sam Tolchard of Kings, Devon, probably the favourite, was level at 7-7 against Vinnie O’Neill of Yorkshire but Vinnie never scored again as Sam also won 21-7. Darren Griffith, from Shanklin, Isle of Wight perhaps surprisingly lost 5-21.

So, singles session over it was up sticks and head to green D5 where the Ashford Ladies would play their 2nd rd tie. They faced June Brown, Penny Callaghan, Sandra Hambridge and Jeanette Scott of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. Jeanette has also qualified in the Ladies 2 woods and Penny was part of the National mixed fours champions in 2019. The Gloucestershire Ladies had enjoyed a lie in and a bye in round 1 so were fresh and ready to rumble!

The game was extremely tight at the start. Singles in the first 4 ends saw the sides tied at 2 all. 4 ends later and it was still singles all the way but Gloucestershire had a 3-5 lead. Then the nip and tuck gave way to a couple of scores, sadly though all against Ashford and 3 ends later it was 3-13. Back to singles and it was 5-14 at 14 ends and Ashford faced a tough finish. As well as they played they could not narrow the gap and eventually the sides shook hands with Gloucestershire progressing 18-8. A great effort from the Ashford Ladies across a long day.

In other 2nd rd games the Camphill Ladies walked straight into an onslaught from Kirsty Richard’s Warwickshire 4 losing 6-29. Lorraine Kuhlers strong Oxfordshire quartet progressed 25-16 but there was defeat for the fours of Amy Pharaoh, Lincolnshire and Katherine Rednall, Norfolk.

**Day 2 preview**

Day 2 sees no Middlesex involvement but plenty of action for those present none the less.

Ladies Fours

0930hrs sees the 3rd rd. The Cheltenham Ladies take on Rugby Thornfield, from Warwickshire while arguably the tie of the round sees Hayley Kenny, Michelle Squires, Serena Madgewick and Rebecca Smith of Clockhouse, Essex take on Abbie Ward, Jo Millership, Helen Slimm and Kirsty Richards of Whitenash, Warwickshire. The 3rd rd victors will play in the quarters at 1430.

Men’s Singles

It’s an 0930 start for the 2nd rd of the Singles as well. Matt Larman’s conqueror Perry Martin plays in one of the ties of the round when he faces Tom McGuiness of Gerrards Cross, Bucks. Tom won his 1st rd tie 21-16. Barry Hopkin’s who downed Ashley Tanner takes on Martin Heitzman from Spartan and Lakeside, Sussex. Martin won his 1st rd tie 21-7. Interestingly (or not) both Martin and Tom beat players from the same club, Carnon Downs in Cornwall. Andy Walters, champion in 2013 and runner up last year takes on Under 18 starlet Carlos Lali of Tilehurst, Berkshire in what promises to be an intriguing tie. 2nd rd winners will be straight back onto the green at 12 noon for the 3rd rd.

Family Pairs – 12 noon.

The last 16 play on E green for the right to play in the quarters at 1530hrs. There are some excellent pairs left but interestingly only 2 of the remaining 32 players are female.

Diane Clare partners Harry Duffield and the Kent pairing take on the Pearce’s of Somerset

Hayley Halford partners Harry Halford and the Surrey pairing take on the Ashby’s of Warwickshire.

Middlesex interest ended in the last 32 when the Adam’s family lost to the Reid’s from Gerrards Cross, Bucks. They now take on the Syke’s from Durham.

Men’s National Club 2 fours – 1430 – No rinks allocated at time of typing

Sadly Middlesex interest in this comp ended at the last 32 stage when Ladygate lost to Garston of Hert’s. Garston themselves then lost to Berkshire’s Reading “A” in the last 16 so at Leamington we are down to the last 8.

The quarter final line up shows a list of former champions as follows:-

Shanklin “A” from the Isle of Wight face 2021 Champions Reading “A”

2015 winners Newmarket Avenue from Cambridgeshire face Kings from Devon. Kings were champions in 2016 and 2017 plus were runners up in 2019.

New Lount from Leicestershire face Chipstead from Surrey

2013 Champions Worcester from Worcestershire play 2009 runners up Gosforth from Northumberland

Tony Allcock Trophy – Senior Mixed 2 fours – 1430 – again no rinks allocated at time of typing

Bush Hill Park BC were so close to making the last 8 and a trip to Leamington but they lost out by only 3 in the last 16 to Henlow Park BC from Bedfordshire. The line up for the last 8 guarantees there will be a new name on the trophy in 2023

Cove from Hampshire play Old Coulsdon from Surrey

Henlow Park play 2014 Runners Up Norfolk from Norfolk

York Railway Bowls and Social Club from Yorkshire face Leicester from Leicestershire!

Cam Mills from Gloucestershire face Torquay “A”

More tomorrow