 

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

**Day 4 Review**

Well it was a day of vastly mixed fortunes for Middlesex’s entries.

The morning saw the men starting out in the Pairs and the arrival of the rain. The first 2 hours or so of the prelim games were played in constant heavy drizzle.

Middlesex “A”, Chris Harris and Tony Waller from Ladygate, were on rink A6 against Chris Cheesley & Mel Biggs of Westlecot, Wiltshire. The Middlesex pairing started off well and with Chris dominating at lead they built up what looked a healthy lead. At 15 ends they were 17-9 up, then it all went very wrong. Holding shot on the 16th end Tony drew in for 2nd but in doing so exposed the Jack, Mel Biggs took full advantage and trailed it for 4. Tony drew with his last bowl but was short having misheard the call and thinking he was only 2 down and not wanting to do more damage. On the next end the head was building badly and Tony fired with his last bowl only succeeding in removing his own nearest wood and dropping 6. 17-9 to 17-19 in a heartbeat. The damage could not be repaired on the final end and they were out 17-20.

Middlesex “B” were out on E5, more on that rink later. Norman Worley and Glen Adam’s from Paddington were playing Michael Newton and Anthony Roff from Iver Heath. Bucks. Norman and Glen lead from the off and they too opened up a healthy lead on what we will learn was a tricky rink. The Paddington boy’s though, made no mistake and closed the game out 19-10 to progress comfortably.

Elsewhere in the prelim round there were no major shocks. Neil Corbyn, runner up in the family pairs yesterday was dumped out 4-21 by the strong Gosforth pairing of Josh Minto and Chris Yeomans. Also going out were Jon Philpott and Howard Watts of Oxfordshire and Eon and Tristan Morton of Hunts.

Andy Walters, playing on the streamed rink A1 and his partner Dan Box from Welford on Avon were taken to an extra end by the young Lancashire pairing of Lloyd Milligan and Lewis Rimmer before coming through 13-12. Also through were pairs including the likes of Robert Newman, Perry Martin, Jamie Walker, Ed Morris and father and son Tom and John McGuiness.

Before round 1 for the men it would be the Ladies triples.

Unsurprisingly as the sun shines on the righteous the weather had improved for the start of the triples.

Middlesex “A” were Karen Ryan, Megan Hunt and Sue Butcher from West Ealing. They were up against Sue Woollams, Lesley Dearlove & Helen Walker from Thirsk, Yorkshire. The Middlesex ladies got off to the perfect start scoring a 6 on the first end and before long they were 14-1 up. They never let up against a Yorkshire side that were struggling for line, length and consistency and eventually cruised home 26-7. A great performance.

Middlesex “B” were out on E5. Brenda Burles, Janet Walby and Terri Watkinson from Broomfield also got off to the perfect start scoring 6 against their Northant’s opponents Celia Morris Hilary Sharpe and Billie Swift from Kingsthorpe. The next 2 ends however saw a pair of fours dropped and at 4 ends they were 6-9 down.

Keen to see if the rink was playing tricks given the high scoring we moved behind the head to watch the bowls and it soon became evident that the river side of the green was almost unplayable with the woods just drifting away no matter what line you played. It then transpired that in the morning game involving Middlesex and Bucks on the same rink the Bucks boys had complained the rink was one handed!

The triples game swung to and fro but it seemed every time we went to check in on what was happening Billie Swift would draw shot! So we were soon told to clear off. As the game moved into it’s later stages Broomfield scored a 2 and a 3 to move 14-13 in front. They then lost a 3 and a 4, sadly, which put them up against it. Despite their best efforts they were unable to recover that position and eventually went out 15-24. A score line that was harsh on their efforts.

Elsewhere in the triples there was drama on the streaming rink when the wind blew one of the Camera towers over. Thankfully it missed the players as it could have done serious damage given that the players could not lift it off the green! With the green damaged and the players not willing to continue until all the camera towers were lowered and secured there was a delay on A1. When play did resume Katherine Rednall’s Norfolk triple moved through.

The big shock came on A2 with the Somerset trio of Olivia Starr, Laura Holden and Stef Branfield getting thumped 8-24 by Gillian Greenbank, Ros Taylor and Liz Wooding of the Avenue Coventry club, Warwickshire. Annalisa Dunham’s Lincolnshire trio also went out, this time 13-14.

Through though are Lorraine Kuhler’s Oxford triple, Harriett Steven’s Kings triple, Rebecca Wigfield’s Desbrough Town and Rebecca Smith of Essex.

To sum up the sometimes harsh nature of bowls Sally Gilbert, Helen Moore and Lynn Orlando from Berkshire, single shot runners up in the National Fours yesterday, found themselves on E1 this afternoon and out round 1.

With the triples complete for the day the Men’s Pairs resumed with the 1st rd.

Norman and Glen were scheduled to be on B4 but found themselves on A1 and what a game it proved to be for those watching the stream (or Howie Shearings facebook feed!). They were playing Simon Barnard and James Avery from the Taunton Vivary Club, Somerset. They had progressed through their prelim 17-14.

This year James has also qualified in the 2 woods and the fours but historically James won the pairs with a previous partner in 2015.

The game started strongly in Somerset’s favour and they led 7-16 at 13 ends but then Norman and Glen fought back. 3 on the 14th end and then 5 on the 15th brought the game back into the balance but then Somerset produced a solid end to score 4 and move 5 ahead with 2 to play. Norman and Glen showed their class though as they secured a 2nd 5 in 3 ends to take the game into the last end all square.

The shot changed hand repeatedly but with one bowl to come Middlesex held 2, James rattled the head, the jack moved but Middlesex still held and the Paddington boys were through 21-20. Superb fightback

Elsewhere Chris and Tony’s conquerors were not given as many gifts by their 1st rd opposition as they exited to Simon Jones and Robert Newman. Steve Gunnell and Ed Morris got though 11-9 in an incredibly tight game which according to BE was also played on A1! Perry Martin exacted singles revenge on Tom McGuiness by putting him out of the pairs whilst Phil Hackett and Jamie Walker progressed. Josh Minto and Chris Yeomans though lost 12-13 on an extra end.

Day 5 preview

The West Ealing Ladies play their 2nd rd game at 0930 in the morning on D4 although that is not yet confirmed on the BE Website! They play Christine Mitchell, Julie Jones and Alison Fail from the Purton Club, Wiltshire who got through round 1 15-10. The Wiltshire Ladies won the National triples title in 2017! Christine was runner up in the National Singles 2021.

Victory would see the Ladies play again at 1330.

Also at 0930 on A6 Norman and Glen play their 2nd rd game. They play Elliot Guthrie and Jack Emmerson from Newark Northern, Nottinghamshire. The Nottinghamshire pair got through their 2 games today 25-14 and 15-13. This season the pair have also qualified in the fours and Jack is in the 2 woods.

Historically Jack was runner up in the 2022 National 2 woods and in 2016 he was runner up in the National Junior Singles

Victory would see Norman and Glen in the quarter finals at 1330.

Last but not in any way least tomorrow sees the start of the Junior Pairs. Robbie Carter (Poplar) and Ollie Shearing (North Greenwich) start on C5 at 1330hrs. Theu play Daniel Stanley and Harry Mycock of Lincolnshire. This season Harry has also qualified in the Junior Singles and the fours and he will be part of Lincolnshire’s Middleton Cup team on the Championships final day.

Victory for our young stars will see the playing on Tuesday at 0930hrs

More late tomorrow evening

