

MIDDLESEX STAY IN MIDDLETON HUNT AS ISLANDERS GET HAMMERED!

Middlesex retained a chance of winning their Middleton Cup Group following Saturday 16th June's 2nd round of group games.

The County secured a vital 28 shot win over the Isle of Wight pocketing 20 pts with their 5 rink wins. The Islanders for their part are now out but could play a part in deciding who wins the group if they get their act together for their final game.

This match was played at Ashford BC and thanks must go to their volunteers who produced a lovely range of lunch time snacks for the arriving players. The day itself, in keeping with this so far glorious summer, was bright and warm. The green, a bit pushy and unusually for Ashford's normally good green, bumpy.

It's the same for both sides though and the early skirmishes were tight. Middlesex led 32-29 at 5 ends and were ahead on 3 rinks. The 2nd five ends went better for Middlesex and they led 67-50 at 10 ends and had moved ahead on 4 rinks with 1 more drawing.

Middlesex maintained that lead over the next 5 ends to go into the later stages of the game 97-79 ahead and up on 5 rinks. Now whether the Islanders heads dropped at this point or the effects of their rehydration policy started to take hold we will probably never know but Middlesex won ends 16-18, 24-10 across the green to lead 121-89. Middlesex still led on 5 rinks, although 2 of those were tight, the only losing rink was Tony Waller's who was getting LeLeux'ed. The curse of the returning player!!

From that point Middlesex coasted home to win 138-110 and almost more importantly they held their lead of the 5 winning rinks.

Those winning rinks were Ashley Tanner, Rob Hackwell (both Ashford), Norman Worley (Hendon) & Nick Edwards (Bounds Green) who won 19-13; John Hooper (Holtwhites), Antony Lam (North London), Craig Hill (West Ealing) & Tommy Brooks (Poplar) who won 25-23; Martin Tasker- Poland (Harefield Hospital), Chris Dunkley (Poplar), Jason Rowlands (Rosedale Park) & Perry Cook (Polar) who won 29-17; Glen Adams (Hendon), John Carey, Barry Wheeler (both West Ealing) & John Sweeney (Hendon) who won 32-11 and last but by no means least Dave Pitt (Masonians), Alan Harman (Bounds Green), Paul Cater (West Ealing) & Phil Sutcliffe (Brentham) who won 20-18.

The remaining 4 players headed off to lick their wounds and swear vengeance against Hampshire in the final game!!

In the days other match Buckinghamshire beat Hampshire 138-107 to secure another 19pts. So after 2 games Bucks head the group with 37 points, Middlesex sit 2nd with 24 and Hampshire 3rd with 23.

In the groups final games Bucks travel to the Island and Middlesex host Hampshire. So maths time, any Bucks win, an 11 all tie or even a 10-12 loss would see them through. If Bucks lost 9-13 however Middlesex could go through with a whitewash 22-0 win and a 40 shot swing, easy then. An 8-14 Bucks loss would open the door for Hampshire who with a 22-0 win and a 44 shot swing would then themselves go through, Middlesex would not need a shot swing if they won 22-0 in this scenario. Of course if neither Middlesex or Hampshire secure a big enough win then Bucks task gets ever easier. Not going to do any more permutations as it gets messy!!

So July 7th Middlesex host Hampshire at Ladygate BC in a game starting at 1400hrs, will the Islanders help and open the door for either of the sides or will Buckinghamshire slam it shut and power to their 3rd straight win. Time will tell, preview to come in due course.