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2019 Home Counties League

Middlesex v Sussex

Hendon BC – Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – 1030hrs

**SWEENEY REVELS IN HOME COMFORTS AS SUSSEX GET COOK'D**

Middlesex bounced back in style, from their defeat at Surrey, to beat early league leaders Sussex by 38 shots in the Home Counties League last weekend. Team Manager Darren Gosnell expressed himself “delighted” at the performance and noted that the display of a couple of players had given him plenty to think about ahead of the Middleton Cup side getting announced.

On a pleasant morning at Hendon BC Middlesex made the perfect start, sprinting out to a 30-18 lead at 5 ends. Hendon’s John Sweeney skipped his rink to a 12-1 start setting the tone for a dominant display over his beleaguered opposition.

At 10 ends Middlesex were 68 to 34 in front and ahead on all 6 rinks, Sussex’s players only mustering 16 shots across the cumulative 30 ends. The next 5 ends were more even with Middlesex extending their lead by 2 to 100-64. Perry Cook’s rink had now joined in with a dominant display, scoring 20 shots to 2 between ends 6 and 15, to lead 25-3.

Middlesex lost ground slightly as the game moved towards its conclusion and focus turned towards rink wins and points gained. At 18 ends the lead was 33 (115-82) and Middlesex led on 4 rinks. Of the remaining 2 both were sufficiently behind to make it look unlikely they would recover in the remaining 3 ends so the focus returned to ensuring the 2 closer rinks stayed in front.

Glen Adams’s rink lost the last 3 ends 1-2 but retained a 4 shot win and Craig Hill’s rink split the last 3 ends 2-2 to retain their 3 shot win. The final margin was 132-94 with 4 rink wins gaining Middlesex 18 points to Sussex’s 4.

Top rink for Middlesex was Ray Fortune (Poplar), Dave Norton (Hendon), Colin Pink (Broomfield) and Perry Cook (Poplar) who won 33-8 narrowly pipping Terry Guilder (Holtwhites), Dave Thomas (Hendon), Antonio Bracaliello (Broomfield) and John Sweeney (Hendon) who only won by 24, 32-8!

The other winning rinks were Kyle Flatt (Ladygate), George Harper (Hendon), Charlie Butcher (Poplar) and Glen Adams (Hendon) 21-17 and John Crabb & Howie Shearing (North Greenwich), Russell Rooks (Rosedale Park) and Craig Hill (West Ealing) 16-13.

In the days other games Kent beat Surrey by 6 shots, 17-5 and Berkshire beat Oxfordshire by 23, 18-4. That leaves Sussex still at the top of the table with 40 points, Buckinghamshire 2<sup>nd</sup> on 32 and Middlesex 5<sup>th</sup> with 22, ahead of Kent!

The Home Counties League now takes a break for the opening skirmishes in the Middleton Cup before returning on June 29<sup>th</sup> when Middlesex host Buckinghamshire at Ladygate. Preview in due course.