



v

2022 HOME COUNTIES LEAGUE GROUP GAME 2

HAMPSHIRE 136 (20) V MIDDLESEX 99 (2)

For the 2nd season running Middlesex travelled south to face Hampshire at Bannister Park BC, Eastleigh and for the 2nd season running Hampshire sent us home with little to show for our efforts but an empty Petrol tank!

This was a classic tale of after the Lord Mayors show following last weeks 20-2 victory over Bucks. Confidence was high and the spirit, off the green, seemed to be good. Prior to the game Team Manager Ray Fortune gave his rallying call reminding players of the need to keep it tight early and then kick for home in the closing stages. Perhaps it was the lack of effective pre match catering that would ultimately bring the side down!!?

Prior to the start President Brian Hearn welcomed Kevin Dwyer (Ladygate) for his first Middlesex Home Counties game and presented John Morgan (Bush Hill Park) with his full Middlesex County flash.

With Hampshire ladies playing a John's trial match on the other green and events relating to the Bowls Big Weekend also taking place there was plenty of action for those gathered to watch and enjoy.

The game started relatively evenly with only 3 shots between 4 of the rinks at 5 ends. Sadly, the quartet against Kyle Flatt (Ladygate), Ken Pheasant (Bush Hill Park), Andy Bennett (Ashford) and Paul Cater (West Ealing) came out of the traps all guns blazing and shot out to an early 10-1 lead. This meant Hampshire led 32-18 at this early stage.

Middlesex stayed in the game for the next 5 ends but were still only winning on 2 rinks. Paul Reynolds (Ladygate), Mark Laws (Ealing Central), Steve Skinner and Tony Waller (both Ladygate) lost 11 unanswered shots and Ollie Shearing (North Greenwich), Andrew Griggs (Poplar), Roger Watkinson (Broomfield) and Tom Brooks (Poplar) shed 10. Much more positively Paul Wisher (West Ealing), Ian Ellis (Finchley), Jack Fisher and Jason Rowlands (both Rosedale) won their session 8-1 to open up a 12-3 lead on their rink.

So 45-64 down at 10 ends it was a key time to push on and get level but sadly for Middlesex it was Hampshire who kicked on to lead 62-99 at 15 ends. Jason Rowland's rink stayed ahead but John Morgan (Bush Hill Park), Kevin Liffen (Cambridge Park), Steve Boyle (Bush Hill Park) and Matt Larman (Ashford) had slowly been reeled in by their opposition. Kevin Dwyer (Ladygate), Brian Hearn (Hendon), Rob Hackwell and Mark Smith (both Ashford) were holding their own and only trailed by 2, 11-13.

Despite Tony Waller's rink scoring 14 shots over the next 3 ends to actually convert 7-20 down to 21-20 up the overall score was getting worse at 18 ends with Hampshire now 41 in front.

So could Middlesex pick up a couple of rink wins and limit the damage, well no. Tony lost 2 singles to lose by 1 and no one else was able to recover from the mid game slump. Thank fully Jason Rowlands' foursome fended off a fight back and won 21-14 to claim our only points and obviously top rink.

So, 22 points from 2 games, Hampshire now have 38. In the days other game Kent beat Bucks 16-6 at Gerrards Cross.

In group 1 Surrey beat Sussex 21-1 but Oxford beat Berkshire 17-5 to lead the way with 36 points.

Middlesex's last game will be home to Kent on July 2nd at Broomfield, details in due course

Postscript

We are aware of the suggestion Hampshire may have played an illegible player but until this is confirmed and the League react the report is based upon what is true as of now!