



# **SOUTH DERBYSHIRE CROWN GREEN**

## **BOWLING ASSOCIATION**

President: [C.Robinson](#). Chairman: [C.Jackson](#). Secretary: [J.McNeilly](#). Treasurer: [N.Desmond](#). Fixture Sec: [P.Harper](#).

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### **SECRETARY & COMPETITION SECRETARY REPORT 2019**

Ladies & Gentlemen,

I will try to keep this report as brief as I can, but there has again been much to celebrate and much to reflect upon during the 2019 season. The positives far outweigh the negatives from my point of view and we have much to look forward to in the coming season, for which planning and preparation is already well under way.

Participation in our three main leagues is still encouraging, although slightly down on the 2018 figures with a decrease of just over 6%. Having said that, 1191 players played in our leagues and, of those, just over two thirds of players played at least ten games. For the second season running, Jim Slater from Rolls Royce topped the playing charts with 50 games during the season in our association alone.

The Monday & Tuesday leagues continue to grow and provide an added opportunity to bowl, especially to those that are unable to play in the afternoon for a variety of reasons, whether that be school, work or age. Although some of the leagues are still a little unbalanced, it is encouraging to see some clubs providing opportunities to the younger bowlers and those who are new to the game and giving them a chance to develop.

A big positive this season has been the huge reduction in unplayed games or walkovers, down from 79 in 2018 to just 35 this season. I would like to think that the little bit of flexibility in player eligibility together with the later date of confirming team entries has helped with this. Team drop outs after the league construction and fixture publication halved from 8 to 4, although we would like to see this at zero as it does cause us some headaches.

I spoke last year about the number of clubs lost in our area and the general decline in the sport, not just here, but nationally. This continues to be of some concern as I sadly have to report that Rowditch Bowls Club has now closed its' doors. When a club as big as this in our area cannot continue to function, it really should make us sit up and take notice. Thankfully, it looks as though the players from Rowditch have found a new home to be able to continue to play together, and we wish them well with that. Denby have also given notice that they no longer wish to play in our leagues, but on a positive note, we can welcome back Mickleover RBL to the Friday league and other clubs have already notified me that they wish to enter additional teams in all of our leagues for next season.

Can I just remind everyone that confirmed entries for the leagues are now required by 15<sup>th</sup> February at the latest to either myself or Peter Harper. You can do that this evening or by dropping an email across to either of us. Even if your teams are unchanged from last season, confirmation would still be much appreciated.



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Moving on to events on the green. The season began with some greens in a really poor state after the previous scorching summer, causing some issues for clubs and the fixture secretary. I just hope that everyone has a decent surface to play on in April.

The David Wain Insurance Friday League saw Belvedere retain the Premier League title with Stretton Anglesey pushing them hard. They always seemed to have the edge but sealed the title with a league double over Rolls Royce, a good victory away at Alvaston & Boulton and a solid home win against Stretton Anglesey. Steve Adams of Belvedere won the league averages losing just two games all season.

Winshill comfortably won Division 1 and make a swift return to the Premier Division. They were always out in front from the beginning of the season and never really in danger of being caught. Stretton Anglesey A were runners up, just pipping Washlands in their head to head last game of the season. Tom Brown of Winshill had a good season and topped the averages losing just two games.

Rolleston took the honours in Division 2 which rounded off a great season for their club having also enjoyed success this year in the Burton League. Belper Pottery took the runners up spot after a close battle with both Tutbury and King Newton. Andy Roberts won the division averages which was probably as much a surprise to him as it was to everyone else!! Well done Andy.

Unfortunately, Division 3 was disrupted this year with two teams dropping out early in the season meaning that the league only consisted of 8 teams. Sadly, this has a detrimental effect on all teams in the league and leaves unwanted blank nights in the calendar. However, South Wingfield dominated the league from start to finish winning it comfortably from Horsley A. It highlights the dominance and depth of the current South Wingfield squad when they occupy 6 of the top 10 places in the divisional averages, headed by Martin Stone-Payne.

Ashbourne and Stretton battled it out for the Division 4 title and it went down to the final game between the two clubs at Stretton before it was decided. Ashbourne managed to secure enough points to take the honours and win the league by 2 points. Jeff Howard of Stretton won the divisional averages from Mark Jennings of Ashbourne on aggregate, both having a 13-1 record.

Our sincere thanks to David Wain Insurance for coming forward to sponsor the league this season and I am very pleased to report that David has this week confirmed continued sponsorship for next season.

The Monday and Tuesday leagues ran for their second season. As I have already mentioned, there is still a lack balance in some of the leagues, but hopefully this will improve. Our thanks to Alvaston & Boulton for their continued sponsorship of the Monday League in memory of Harold Fellows.

Division 1 was again won by Alvaston & Boulton but it was a very tight affair. The difference in format from the Friday League really showed how important each and every point is. Alvaston & Boulton actually had only the fourth best win to loss ratio in the league, but the fact that they lost a



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lot of close games meant that they won the league by just 7 shots from Rolls Royce. Out of the 112 games they played, they actually only lost 2 games to single figures.

Derby Coop were very strong in Division 2 and took the title ahead of Newhall. Kings Newton won Division 3 ahead of Rolls Royce 2, whilst Alvaston & Boulton A took Division 4 in a similar fashion to their first team, again showing the value of playing for every point. Belper Pottery finished runners up ahead of Washlands A on points difference, having finished level with them on aggregate. Chaddesden Park and Derby Coop had their own battle to come out on top of Division 5 which Chaddesden Park just edged. It was particularly pleasing at the end of the season to see Stretton win their first game on the final night of the season. A team which comprises of youngsters and despite several hammerings, they stuck at it and hopefully will be encouraged to continue and grow next year. I'm sure they will have enjoyed that win just as much as those that won much bigger prizes during the season.

The Tuesday league saw Belper Pottery build on their success of winning Division 2 last year to come straight into Division 1 and win the title, losing just one game along the way. Alvaston & Boulton took the runners up spot. Holbrook won Division 2 ahead of Little Eaton and I for one look forward to visiting a few different greens next season. South Wingfield just edged Division 3 by two points from Tutbury and again it was nice to see the development and success of their youngsters.

The Tuesday league has been sponsored anonymously for the last two years, but I am very pleased to say that the Bridge Inn at Duffield have kindly agreed to sponsor the league next season and our thanks go to Darren Smart and his team there.

The Dickie Cup entry was slightly disappointing with just 35 teams out of a possible 46 entering. The committee has now agreed that once fixtures are randomly drawn, the neutral venues will as far as possible be fair to both sides and travelling will be kept down. I hope that this encourages more teams to enter next season.

Some notable early casualties were Rolls Royce and Stretton Anglesey who both lost their first games. In the second round Belvedere got the better of their second team and Rowditch overcame a 40 shot handicap to just edge out Etwall in the closest game of the round.

In the quarter finals, Rolleston had a convincing win over Washlands to add to their excellent season. Netherseal brushed aside their Premier Division rivals Littleover whilst Alvaston & Boulton won another all Premier Division clash with Rowditch. The performance of the round came from Stretton Anglesey A who comfortably accounted for Belvedere at Marehay.

The semi-finals were both played on two excellent greens at Belper Pottery. Netherseal were simply too strong on the night for Rolleston, only losing one end. Big wins for Andy Fearn, Darren Staley and Dan Petcher helped them to reach the final for the second year running. In the other semi-final, Stretton Anglesey A again played very solidly to take care of Alvaston & Boulton by 20 shots.



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The final was again held at Kings Newton which I'm sure you'll all agree is a terrific venue. The club has again sponsored the Dickie Cup and the green and hospitality on the night was second to none. Sincere thanks to them for their efforts.

The first four ends of the final were shared 2-2 and Netherseal had failed to claw back any of the handicap. However, two big wins in the middle from Dan Petcher and Richard Staley to 5 & 8 together with wins for Rob Sweet and Matt Milsom put Netherseal in the driving seat and it was left to Matt Fearn and Darren Staley to ensure the victory, making up for the disappointing defeat in the final the year before. The final score 203-176.

The South Derbyshire Merit again saw a pleasing entry of 42. The four heats produced a good quality last eight, including junior bowler Louie Furniss who qualified on Marehay. Chaddesden Park hosted the finals night on a magnificent surface on the Willow green.

In the quarter finals, three times previous winner Keith Widdowson rolled back the years against his club mate Dave Chambers to win narrowly 21-19. Gareth Nash had a great start and never really looked back to beat Richard Gill 21-14. James Southern played very well to beat Dan Hartley 21-18 and Tom Brown beat Louie Furniss 21-11.

In the semi-finals, Gareth was finding some marks very much to his liking and lead very well as he again got into a big lead against Keith, eventually winning 21-13. Tom also played very well to beat James 21-12.

In the final, Gareth was simply on fire and never gave Tom any real chances as he recorded a comfortable 21-6 victory to deservedly take the title for the first time. All eight players qualified for the Derbyshire County Final at Stretton, together with David May who came back from the dead to beat Andy Milsom 21-20 in the playoff for the one remaining place at the County final.

Ironically it was David that took the honours at the County final, again not knowing when he is beaten, defeating Dan Petcher in an enthralling final 21-20 to take his second Derbyshire Merit title.

My thanks here to Russ Mosley who again refereed both the Merit & Dickie Cup finals, offering his services at a very early stage which is one less thing to have to worry about.

The Charity Cup was also held at Chaddesden Park and again a decent entry of 38 players. The last eight included the winners of best junior player George Hines, best lady player, Hannah McDonald and the best player from Division 2 or below, Josh Hall. The semi-finals saw Adam Hartley defeat Mark Stone 21-12 and Rikki Higgs defeat Dan Hartley 21-17. In the final, Adam showed his class to run out the winner 21-11 to lift the trophy for the first time.

The Ray Hanson Doubles was held this year at Rykneld with a slight increased entry of 26 pairs, including 12 ladies which was nice to see. Some very strong pairs amongst the field gradually fell by the wayside as the competition progressed. Had a bookmaker been in attendance he would have had a great day as greenside favourites disappeared one by one. The semi-finals saw the Belvedere pair of Gary Daghish and Dale Spedding overcome Norman Lymer and his partner



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Sharon Griffin 21-16 and the giant killing Allestree pair of Philip Meacham and Gary Stevenson comfortably defeat the home pairing of Mark and Tracey Wilson 21-8. The final was a close affair, but the value of 'being up when you are down' was there for all to see as Philip and Gary got home 21-18 to deservedly take the title.

Sadly, as many of you know, Ray Hanson recently passed away. We have tried to move the competition around the greens in our area, but next season we hope to take it back to Chaddesden Park which would be a fitting tribute to Ray and his competition.

This year saw the inaugural running of the Darren Smith Memorial Trophy for junior players. Fittingly, the competition was held at Rolls Royce and our thanks to the club and in particular the Smith family for their support and attendance on the day. 18 of our finest young players took part and it was great to watch not only the quality of bowls but the sportsmanship on the day. The semi-finals saw Jack Desmond and Josh Furniss have a titanic battle in a game that could have gone either way, with Jack eventually coming out on top 21-19. The other semi-final was an all-female battle between Rebecca Sherriff and Sophie Oxtoby. These two are surely destined for great things in the game and are a match for most on their day. Rebecca took the honours on this occasion 21-9. The final was simply a wonderful game of bowls. Darren himself would have been proud of the way Rebecca played the corners on Royces. When Jack got hold of the block he used his green knowledge well down the edges and lead well to put Rebecca under pressure. It was a fitting end to a great day of bowls. In the end Jack pinched the trophy 21-20 but the winner on the day was definitely the game of bowls.

Junior bowls in our area is strong and players from our area account for well over half of the Derbyshire County side. This season the junior side continued to develop under the guidance of James Southern and Ben Ryder and comfortably won the BCGBA Junior Division 1 title, ensuring an immediate return to the Premier Division next season. Tougher encounters await next season, but I'm sure that they will give an excellent account of themselves. This year also saw David Brown step down from his role with the junior side. David has been a stalwart over many years in keeping the team functioning and I know he was delighted to go out on a high this year.

The Champion of Champions saw a last-minute change of venue from Chaddesden Park to Littleover due to the weather and concern over the playing surface. It was certainly not a day for bowls as the forecasted rain duly arrived. Premier Division winners Belvedere had beaten Ashbourne in an earlier preliminary game, but were comfortably beaten by a determined Winshill side in the first semi-final. In the other game, Division 3 winners South Wingfield won 6 of the 10 games against Division 2 winners Rolleston to progress to the final.

The final saw Winshill on top early as they went strong up front and won all of the first four games, with Steve Crockett being the pick with a 21-9 win. That cut the handicap to just two points. However South Wingfield always felt as though they still had a chance and after the next four games were shared, the aggregate was still in their favour by 3. The last two games were close, but Winshill needed a run from one of their players. It never came and tight wins for Martin Stone-Payne and Tim Blount saw South Wingfield home by 9 shots to round off a tremendous season.



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A word of thanks here to Littleover for getting us out of a very large hole with the last minute change of venue and to Peter Wheeldon together with Malcolm & Beverley North for acting as referees on the day in appalling conditions.

The Floodlit League this season was a little shorter due to smaller leagues and the decision to do away with the Floodlit Cup. However, it has still drawn criticism from some that it is too congested. Next season we will do our utmost to make it a maximum of two games a week. Things were also not helped by the weather as several nights were badly affected by rain and some games simply could not be played, meaning that average points had to be awarded. This is very unfortunate, but one thing even I can't control is the weather, although I'm sure some people think that I can! After the dust had settled and the water had disappeared, Division 1 was again won by Marehay who seem to have a liking for the Floodlit league. Littleover 3 won Division 2 after a close battle with Derby Coop. Belper Pottery dominated Division 3 winning all their matches and Hazelwood comfortably won Division 4. Belper Meadows entered the league for the first time and obviously enjoyed the experience, comfortably winning Division 5.

Finally, on the playing front, some notable performances from players and teams from our area over the last year. Congratulations to Aiden Richardson from Derby Coop on winning his second Junior County Merit. Owen Sherriff from Washlands on winning the Brian Walker Shield for the best overall performance in the junior county side. Also, to Darren Carter from Stretton Anglesey on winning the AW Ball Cup which is the equivalent in the senior county side. Congratulations also to Marehay who won the County Repechage Trophy and to Paul Stretton of Belvedere on winning the BCGBA Veterans Merit.

As some of you are aware, having done the role of Secretary for two years, my preferred option is to now stand down. This is due to a number of reasons which I have discussed at length with Calvin and my family. I believe that the Association is very much heading in the right direction and the work of the committee, particularly your Chairman, certainly has the interest of all bowlers as its' priority. Thanks to the committee, club secretaries and sponsors for your support over the last twelve months and I wish you all well for the coming season.