

Last season was a tentative step, back into the world of competitive bowls. I was very aware of the fact that the contact players had with their family and friends had been lost in the worst of the pandemic, and was comfortable with players not being available because of those needs.

Now we are back and firing and I honestly believe that the best of Hertfordshire can give any County not just a run for their money, but have a real chance of winning.

The 2021 format, much to my displeasure, has been retained for this year meaning that the Johns is a straight knock out. Seeing no merit in having half the team away and half at home, I have secured, as a neutral green, The Falcon club in Chelmsford. I believe that, for many years, this green was used by Essex for their finals day and was told by their County Secretary that this was the best green she bowled on 2021. No excuses there then! Falcon also have an indoor green, play can be viewed under cover and they do great food, so I am leaning towards a sit down meal afterwards.

We have drawn a home venue for the Walker Cup and we are following the Amy Rose Team in picking Royston as our home base for this competition – they play the week before if you can come and support them – I'm sure they will be grateful.

This message is going out towards the end of February meaning the closing date for nominating will be Saturday 2nd April 2022. I urge everyone to think seriously about nominating because now is the time to enjoy competitive bowls and be part of a golden age for Hertfordshire. The Amy Rose Team showed, last year, that we have the depth and I cannot emphasise enough that age, young or old – and those in between - are no barriers if you are good enough and are sound team players.

The 2021 changes and are retained for the 2022 season. Briefly these are:-

- The later trials are going to be on 14th & 21st May and are going to be held on two different greens
- There will be at least one training session in the season but details have not yet been finalised
- Squad number retained at 28 named players
- For Walker Cup selection, whilst desirable, it is not compulsory to be in the Johns squad

The Logistics

Like last year, the final squad will consist of 28 players with 2 reserves to be called in if any of the 28 squad cannot attend a particular game. Being one of these two reserves means that it is unlikely you would play, even if called in, but the necessity of having four reserves travelling to all matches is invaluable bearing in mind the possibility of illness (both before and during the game), travel issues or personal circumstances. Please indicate on the nomination form if you are willing to fulfil this vital role should you not be selected in the 28 woman squad. Squad selection will never please everyone – for those not selected I would want them to be disappointed as it shows they believe in themselves! – but the team will be selected based on the trials, past recent form and the ability to be a fully supportive team/squad member.

The details shown on the nomination form are what is currently known and it will be appreciated if you can indicate your availability for those games shown.

Alan Spicer
Johns Trophy / Walker Cup Manager

