

Hertfordshire, Eastern Counties League Champions 2023

Match Report Eastern Counties League Hertfordshire v Bedfordshire

Hertfordshire 129 (20pts) Bedfordshire 92 (2pts)

Hertfordshire entered their last game of the season and the last ECL game of the 2023 competition with a chance to win overall, the Executive Rink also had a chance for their own league.

Needing a minimum of 19pts and a 2-shot difference we knew exactly what was needed. The Exec needed a win.

The weather forecast for Saturday was dire, heavy rain and gale force winds, but no different to the opening match way back on May 6th against Essex. The weather true to forecast decided to give a deluge right at the start and there was always the risk of abandonment which would not have been in our favour.

Luckily the weather held off and the match was played in its entirety with actually very little disruption.

The team started well and were up by a few at 5 ends, with only the Exec rink and Paul's behind. At 10 ends it was pretty much as you were but the overall lead had increased mainly due to Martyn's rink being 16-4 up.

With the overall score looking secure the focus switched to winning individual rinks to gain the extra points and a few were close. A strong finish saw Paul's rink go from 6-10 to finish 24-13, Craigs rink from 10-11 to finish 22-12, with Dave's Rink winning 21-15, Martyn's 27-11. This left the Exec rink who were behind and Mike Parsons (who had stepped in to fill Garry's place last minute) the last to finish. We needed 1 pt from the two.

The Exec rink sadly faded late on and with it their chance of their own league. Mike was last to finish and at 18 ends thanks to a 4 was 20-12 up. However, a loose 19th end saw them drop a 4 making us all somewhat nervous. End 20 and a couple down saw Mike draw 2 outstanding shots to give a 6 shot lead going into the last. With no heroics and plenty of bowls in the head and cover, we were happy to drop a 2 and secure the points needed.

5 Games played, 30 individual rinks and we won by 1 pt overall.

A huge thank you to all the players over the course of the campaign, a mix of youth, experience, and new players, all have played their part in the success.

Once again, I would like to thank the Assistant Manager Tony Keeling for his support, the match officer Graham Searle aided by and able substitute

**at times, Phil Havord. Having someone to do the mundane business of paperwork and finance certainly makes things easier.
Thanks also to all the supporters who have braved mostly inclement weather.**

May I also take this opportunity to wish all our semi-finalists' good luck this week and a successful Leamington to all qualifiers.

**Roger Evans
Manager**