



British Wheelchair Bowls Association

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ENGLISH TRIUMPH IN THE VALLEYS – BUT ONLY JUST

This year's annual Home Countries Wheelchair Bowls Championships were held in Wales by hosts the Welsh Paraplegic and Tetraplegic Sports Association. The Championships were put together with the help of the Presenting Partner 'Mon Motors Group' and was supported by Disability Sport Wales and Village Hotels. The venue was the picturesque Sully IBC overlooking the Severn estuary.

The absence of Northern Ireland for a second successive year meant the Championships were a tri-nations with England defending the title they snatched in 2009 at the last minute in Stoke Mandeville.

The English made just two changes which saw the return of Jane Blackburn and debutant Mike Diston coming in for Roger Wilton. The Welsh had a couple of returnees too: notably, Gareth Stokes and Ray Simpson. The Scots came with the minimum number of bowlers and gave a debut to Rosemary Lenton who has had success with wheelchair curling north of the border. Given the size of their team all the Scots bowlers would be busy.

To set the scene for you: The event is played by 'para' bowlers who play with conventional woods and play singles, pairs and triples; and by 'tetra' bowlers who play singles and pairs but with smaller woods over a shorter distance. Tetras do this as they have more limited hand movement than paras. Play takes place over two days on a 'Ryder Cup' format – two points for win and one for a draw.

England got off to a poor start in the first session taking only two points out of a possible eight, though two of these defeats were by only one shot. Wales took four points. The Scots, however, had the best start with a very welcome three wins out of four. But to underline the competitive nature of the event all these three wins were achieved by a one point margin.

The second session did not see any great improvement for the English with just another single win. There was similarly poor session for the Scots who could not maintain their earlier momentum and also took only one win. There were smiles all around for the Welsh though who took four wins out of five to take them to twelve points and see England languishing on only four and in danger of being cast adrift.

So the final session of the day would be important. Wales stumbled to just one win and the Scottish hiccup continued as they failed to register a single point. England must have played their get-out-of-jail card as they took four wins out of four to drag themselves back into contention.

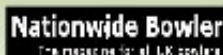
At the end of Day One the scores were: -

Wales 14 points

England 12 points

Scotland 8 points

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The first session on Day Two saw no great turnaround in joy for Scotland who notched up just one win. Indeed, the Welsh were similarly downbeat as they only scored one win. But once again the English had a 100% session with three wins to take them into the lead.

The penultimate session was a mixed bag of results but resulted in England consolidating their position in the lead on 22 points followed by Wales on 18 and Scotland on 14; so it was England's to lose...maybe? The final session could turn results to either a Welsh win or England retaining their title.

In that final session, Scotland bagged a couple of wins. Wales grabbed two wins by a very significant shot difference to take them to 22 points and threaten England's hold on the Championship Trophy. So the last two matches to come to a conclusion would determine the overall result. These matches, both pairs, were Anglo-Welsh head-to-heads. In the first of these, England had a comfortable win by sixteen shots but a win for the Welsh in the final match would see points parity between the two teams and it would be down to shot difference – and this was very close indeed...calculators at the ready! In this final match, the English pair of Val Bradley and Paul Brown held on in the tightest of games by just two shots so securing the title for the English.

England Team Captain Lea Davis received the trophy on behalf of his team mates. The trophy had been newly commemorated in memory of the much-loved Scots bowler James Smith who died within the last year. James' mother and step-father presented the prizes on behalf of the organisers.

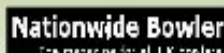
Final Scores at the end of Day Two: -

England 26 points

Wales 22 points

Scotland 18 points

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Home Counties Teams

ENGLAND

Ian Blackmore
Percy Powell
George Ridgeon
Mike Diston
Val Bradley
Tony Down
Lea Davis – Captain
Paul Brown
Allan Care
Jane Blackburn

SCOTLAND

Arthur Black – Captain
Willie Harrison
Bill Masterton
Jim Sellar
Bob Martin
Rosemary Lenton
Andy Divers
Graham McClounnan

WALES

Kevin Woolmore – Captain
Barbara Woolmore
Dave Powell
Howard Dare
Brenda Penny
Adrian Foley
Jim Munkley
Chris Gibson
Gareth Stokes
Ray Simpson

Tournament Director

Penny Tyler

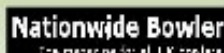
Umpire

Peter Eykyn

Markers

Provided by Sully Indoor Bowls Club

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