

Brixham Bowling Club Report.

After a long winter break, Brixham Bowling Club is back in business. The season started with a morning 'Try It' session for members of the local community followed by an opening day competition in the afternoon for members. The morning session was well attended despite the chilly windy conditions (at least the sun shone). 30 people turned up to find out more about the game. Our team of coaches were very busy but their efforts were rewarded as 20 new members were signed up. The afternoon session was opened by veteran bowler Philip Davies rolling the first wood of the year to formally open the season. Anyone passing the green early on in the afternoon were probably wondering what the game was all about as woods flew off in all directions – anywhere but near the jack, as players battled against the elements and tried to cast off the winter rust and find their line and length. Eventually the standard of bowling improved and a good afternoon was had by all.

And so to the serious stuff. The Men's B team played the club's first competitive game of the season. Last year they finished bottom of the league. New captains Peter Howlett and David Borrett were determined to start the season positively in their first match at home against Torbay Country Bowling Club. After a long selection meeting they put together 4 teams of 4 taking account of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the squad choosing who were the best player motivators and canny bowlers to skipper the teams. They certainly got the chemistry right as everyone went out firing on all cylinders as all 4 teams won their rinks and beat the Country Club by an aggregate score of 102 to 51 shots to take all 14 points on offer. The post match celebrations went on well into the night in the bar. It took over a month for the team to reach 14 points last season. Can they repeat this success? – watch out for our next report!

The Ladies A team started the season with an away match at Babbacombe. This was an exciting game that went to the wire. At the half way point the 3 Brixham teams were struggling 10 shots down with 9 ends to go. After tea they began to fight their way back into the match. Two rinks had finished with Mo Thomas' team winning their match by 2 shots and Jenny Moore's team losing by two shots - scores level with Dot Langford's team locked on 15-15 with one end to go. Everyone gathered round to watch the dramatic end to the match. With four bonus points going to the winning overall aggregate score, there was much at stake! Each bowler was to bowl 3 woods. Mo Penhaligon got her first wood nestling on the jack – perfect, but the opposing number 1 moved the jack and then got shot with her last wood – advantage Babbacombe! Thelma Bunney bowled next for Brixham and managed to move the shot wood to put Brixham 1 up. Now for the skips! Cometh the hour cometh the woman. A superb piece of bowling by Dot Langford secured another shot with her three woods to put Brixham 2 up to take the match with an overall score of 50 - 48 and secure 8 points to Babbacombe's 2. Spare a thought for Babbacombe's gallant losers who were so close. Bowls can be a cruel game.

And so to the Men's A team. Could they make it 3 victories to make it the perfect start to the season? Their evening home match against Paignton Torbay proved to be just as dramatic as the ladies game, being decided on the last wood on the last green. The men play a 4 v 4 team 21 wood match with each player bowling 2 woods. Remarkably, after 11 ends they were also 10 shots down, losing on 3 greens. In the second half of the match and in the fading light they began to chisel away at the Paignton lead. David Hayden's team won their game by one shot thanks to his brilliant last wood on the last green. Chris Dawes' team won their match while Ken Penhaligon's team lost. Mike Friend's team were 1 shot up with just one end to go with his team needing to win by 4 shots to tie the match and share the 6 bonus points with Paignton. His team was 2 shots up as he lined up his last wood. It was very dark. Everyone was watching with baited breath. Could he move the jack or an opponent's wood to secure the 2 shots needed? The wood rolled towards the jack. Its progress was painfully slow. The wood got into the cluster. There was a long inspection to see if his wood had done the trick. Out came the tape measure. He had taken the shot score up to 3 to win his match but Brixham had lost the match overall by just one. Despite winning on 3 of the 4 greens, Brixham had lost by 8 points to 6 thanks to Paignton securing the bonus points. Yes bowls can be a cruel game but it works both ways.

It has been a great start to the season. All that is needed now is some bright, warm and dry weather!