

TWO BRIXHAM BOWLING CLUB TEAMS TAKE PART IN THE UNBADGED DEVON COUNTY FINALS AT CULLOMPTON.

The Unbadged County Bowls Championship finals day was held at Culm Vale Bowling Club in Cullompton. The tournament is open to all bowlers in Devon who have not achieved County badge status. Over the season competitors play 6 knockout matches to reach finals day. Competition is intense and the standard of bowling is very high. 2 Brixham Bowling Club Teams reached finals day, one in the men's pairs and one in the men's triples – a great achievement for the club.

Playing conditions were perfect, a warm day with a bright sun in a cloudless sky. The bowling green was looking good, beautifully prepared, smooth dry and running fast. A good sized crowd was there to cheer on their teams. The semi-final matches were scheduled for the morning with the winners playing the finals after lunch.

Representing Brixham in the 18 end Men's Triples were John Boyt (lead), Bryan Coad (two) and David Moseby (skip) Their semi-final game against Great Torrington was a real nail biter. Great Torrington got off to a flyer, racing to an 11 shot lead after 9 ends. Brixham were struggling to get to grips with the pace of the green. However, after a team huddle they began to work their way back into the match pulling back to 13-11 down after 14 ends. The turning point came in the 15th end when they picked up 3 shots to go into the lead for the first time. Torrington drew level in the 16th only to go one down again (15-14) with the last end to play. With 4 woods bowled by both sides on the final end Torrington were two up. Coad curled his second wood through a narrow gap to knock the jack on to 2 Brixham woods to swing the game back into Brixham's favour. With Moseby placing a wood close to the jack, Brixham took the match 18 -14 after nearly 3 hours on the green.

Meanwhile on rink number 6, Paul Harris and David Farley were taking on Ivybridge in a 21 end 2 woods pairs match. They were unstoppable as they built up a huge early lead with both players playing brilliantly. Harris as lead found his line and length immediately putting pressure on the opposition regularly by surrounding the jack with both woods while Farley matched his partner's play by covering any dangerous shots bowled by the opposing skip. They romped into the final winning 30 shots to 8.

Over lunch both Brixham teams were looking forward to their first appearance of playing in a County final. With the heat and another long session in the afternoon, the matches were going to be a test of the concentration and stamina of the finalists. Both finals turned out to be very tense and closely fought matches. The path of the 18 end triples final against Crediton was almost the complete opposite to Brixham's semi-final match as Moseby, Boyt and Coad raced into an 11-1 lead after 7 ends. It was Crediton's turn to fight their way back into the game as they got back to 13-9 down after 14 ends. In the 15th end they picked up 4 shots to draw level – a huge blow to the Brixham team. After over 5 and a half hours bowling during the day, the younger Crediton players with momentum on their side were looking the fresher of the 2 teams. Brixham hauled themselves up for one last supreme effort to take the title. They went ahead in the 16th end but Crediton drew level on the 17th. With the score tied at 14-14, everything now depended on who could hold their nerve or produce that bit of brilliance to see their team home.

Excellent bowling by John Boyt and Bryan Coad saw Brixham 2 up with just the skips to bowl. There was the narrowest of gaps between the 2 Brixham woods covering the jack but Crediton had woods behind waiting for a knock on. Michael Tapp, the Crediton skip with his penultimate wood of the day produced the shot of the day, bowling the perfect line and weight to get into the gap and knock the jack behind one of his woods - Crediton 1 up with just Moseby to bowl. His task was almost impossible with so many woods blocking his way. Crediton won the match 15-14. Well done to Crediton and congratulations to Brixham for entertaining an increasingly excited and noisy crowd with a match of great quality and tension worthy of a County final

In the pairs final on the next door green, David Farley and Paul Harris found it difficult to reproduce the quality of bowling of the morning session as Madeira from Exmouth raced into a 13-2 lead after 10 ends. With the match running away from them they started to up their game and produce a remarkable fight back. They won 6 of the next 7 ends to pull back to within one shot of Madeira – 14-13 down. Perhaps it was the realisation that they had a chance of taking the match which made them tense up combined with the draining conditions which got to them. David Mansell and Graham Clarkson playing some brilliant shots took the final 5 ends to win the match 21-13.

At one point during the afternoon, it looked as though Brixham would win both trophies but credit to all 4 finalists they provided great entertainment and quality bowling in the 2 closely contested finals. Although disappointed, Brixham can look back with pride at what they achieved after several months of endeavour.

LATE NEWS

Congratulations to Linda Oakden and Sally Hoare, who was substituting for the indisposed Thelma Bunney. They won their Devon County Over 70's quarter final 21-12 against Joan Raddon and Audrey Stone from Pincers Bowling Club in Exeter. They play their semi-final match at home at 10.30am on Thursday 16th September.

In a closely fought match against the old enemy Brixham St Mary, we lost the match by the narrowest of margins. Both teams won 3 matches but the Rose Bowl went to St Mary who won by one shot 105-104.

All Brixham players were last night analysing their game to see where they could have made the difference and scored that extra one point!!!

Many thanks to all of the ladies involved in the catering. They did us proud. It helped to cheer us up after the match.