

INDOOR BOWLING CLUB SEASON'S REVIEW AND PRIZEGIVING DINNER

As the club commences its 2019/20 season, club secretary Derek Coates looks back at the previous season and what's ahead in the club's events.

Last season was once again another successful year as far as the "friendly" competitions were concerned. Out of the five matches played the club won four and lost one by a small margin! Of course its not all about winning. The club and our competitors enjoy the friendliness and craic at each match - if that spirit was to be lost there wouldn't be any matches!!

Unfortunately with an ever increasing competition schedule over the years and some of our members not wishing to play so many competitions we have come to a mutual agreement with clubs to reduce the number of matches down to five or six. This together with our in-club competitions should make for a less hectic calendar in the future. The club also agreed to have our nights commence at 7.15 to allow for an earlier finish to the evening.

Our club competitions as usual were spread throughout the season with the "Finals" night at the end. Unfortunately the season had a surprising number of our more elderly members deciding to stopped playing. To this end the club has lost some very experienced bowlers and great personalities. We wish them well for the future.

Although a little depleted in entries the five competitions were still hotly contested.

The **Ladies Singles** semi-final match between Agnes Officer and Sadie McLellan saw Sadie storming ahead to a 4-1 lead after four ends. Then Agnes started reeling her in to take a 6-5 lead going in to the final end. In the end Sadie held it together to take two shots to win by 7-6. A great match which meant Sadie would meet Roberta Munnis in the Final.

Unfortunately for health reasons Sadie couldn't play the final and asked Agnes to take her place. The final over 11 ends saw Agnes taking the odd end by two or three shots but it was the much more experienced Roberta with the help of two full house ends winning by 14-8.

The **Gents Singles** had a much fuller entry with the semi-finals being filled by Derek Coates with wins over Harry Browne and Gilbert McClure. Derek would meet young Sam Rodgers who had a very close match with the club's top player Martin Bleakley. Sam continued to hold a short lead until Marty took two shots in the penultimate end to make it 5-5 going into the final 9th end. Sam took a single shot to beat Marty 6-5. An excellent result for the young chap by beating such a strong opponent.

The other semi-finalists were Tom McLellan who defeated Tommy Quigley 13-2 and Stanley Officer who beat Alan Long 9-7.

The first semi between Derek and Sam saw the club secretary take the game to Sam and by the 7th end they were tied at 6-6. Unfortunately for Derek the penultimate end saw Sam grab three shots and although Derek pulled one back at the final end it was Sam's win 9-7.

In the second semi Stanley Officer took a 4-1 lead against Tom McLellan after four ends. Tom came back and was leading 7-5 going into the final end. For some unknown reason the experienced Tom was throwing "melons" to let Stanley take a full house and ending up a 9-7 shock winner!!

After his two good wins in the early rounds it was clear Sam Rodgers was up for the Final. He started off taking a 6-2 lead after five ends but chairman Stanley took a surprising three shots at the 6th end to be only 5-6 down. Could there be a turn around? It wasn't to be as Sam galloped away (like Roy Rodgers!!) to a 14-5 win

As in recent years the **Pairs Competition** partnerships are made up of a balanced draw - ie a weaker player with a strong player were possible.

The first semi was filled by Martin Bleakley and brother-in-law Alan Long. They came through a tough match in the previous round against Sam Rodgers and Gilbert McClure. Sam and Gilbert led all the way to a 8-5 score after 7th end but with some doubtful tactical decisions by the S & G team giving four shots away in the final three ends saw Martin and Alan take the win and into the semi against Tom McLellan and Tommy Quigley which they won easily 13-2.

The second semi was between Harry Brown/St Stanley Officer and Roberta Munnis/Agnes Officer. Roberta and Agnes destroyed Derek Coates and Gilbert Lemon 10-2 in the previous round!

Although Harry and Stanley led all the way they were pushed in the last few ends to be 7-7 going into the final end. A single shot was enough to put Harry and Stanley into the final. The final started off with Martin/Alan taking a 9-4 lead after five ends and even with a three in the penultimate end and a four in the final end Harry/Stanley came good too late and it was a 12-10 win for the Bleakley/Long clan!

The **Handicap Singles** had almost a full members support for this interesting competition. Although most competitors agreed that each handicap was fair there were some surprisingly wide final scores. None more so than the Agnes and Stanley Officer's match. The husband and wife duo started with identical handicap but that's where it ended. The match was over after 7 of 9 ends when Stanley was 13-0 up! I'm not saying who the best player is in that relationship but I bet there was some banter at home!!

The first semi-finalists were Sam Rodgers (-3) against Martin Bleakley (-5). The match of the competition as expected was close until the last three ends when Sam picked up 4 shots to win by 8-3 and into the final. The second semi between Tom McLellan (+1) and Harry Browne (-3) was a fairly one sided affair with Harry well off form and not helped by giving Tom a four point handicap advantage. Tom ended up winning 10-5.

The final between Sam (-3) and Tom (+1) started badly for Tom by giving away a full house at the first end! Unfortunately the match went downhill from then on with Tom only picking up one shot. The match ended early at the seventh end 14-5.

The season long **Rinks Trophy** went to Harry Browne (93) from Roberta Munnis (91) and Alan Long (88)

The season's trophies were handed out at the club's annual dinner at the Stables Restaurant Groomsport where we were joined by our Rector Simon Doogan. Simon said thanks to the various officials and helpers within the club who keep it going and organising the "friendly" inter-club matches. He also congratulated all the winners.

The club started this season (2019/20) on 11th September with our AGM. All the posts were filled with the same persons. It was also discussed at the meeting that although we should have membership this year of around twenty we still need to recruit new members. So I will finish up my report by appealing to you out there to call on club night or give me a call. It is not all about competitions - its also about the craic and friendship and keeping the club going for another 60 years.