

Federation of Crown Green Bowls

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Over-Sixties Supreme Championship

The two teams at the top of the North West (Fox Lane) Sixty-Plus League and the top two in the Yorkshire League met at Hare Hill Park in Littleborough to play a round-robin of matches to decide the Supreme Champion Team of 2016. Representing the North West were Preston and Rochdale with Halifax "A" and Worth Valley from the Yorkshire League joining them in this Battle of the Roses.

The first phase of matches on the two excellent Greens at Hare Hill paired Preston with Worth Valley and Rochdale with Halifax. There were two winners each from the first four jacks for both Preston and Worth Valley but with Worth Valley holding a nine chalk aggregate lead at the half-way stage. Three winners for Preston followed but a killer blow came from Worth Valley's Paul Hillam (Craven) with a 21 – 4 top score result meant that the Yorkshire side tied the match 5 – 5 having won only three of the eight games, aggregate score 145 – 135 to Worth Valley. The top scorer for Preston was Gordon Butler (New Longton) with 21 – 13. Rochdale were in a strong position after their first four jacks brought three wins to establish a seventeen chalk aggregate lead against Halifax. Wins were equally shared with Halifax in the second four jacks with Rodney Collins (Norden BC) top scoring for Rochdale with 21 – 9, a score-line matched by Michael Skwarek (Ripponden) for Halifax. The final result Rochdale 7(144) – Halifax 3 (134).

Phase two of the round-robin of matches brought the two Yorkshire teams into opposition and it was Worth Valley, winning three of the first four jacks against Halifax and sharing wins in the second four who took the honours with a 7 -3 (152 – 135) result. Team captain Derek Seed (Settle) was best for Worth Valley with 21 – 10 and Malcom Griffiths (Ripponden) top scored for Halifax 21 – 12. Meanwhile Rochdale and Preston were also doing battle with Rochdale always in the ascendancy finishing with six winners for an 8 – 2 (153 – 118) final result. Howard Warren (Whitworth F&CC) with a 21 – 7 result was the better of two single figure winners for Rochdale and Chris Pickup (Brownedge) with 21 – 10 the best for Preston.

The scores at this stage were Rochdale 15, Worth Valley 12, Preston 7 and Halifax 6 meaning that the third and final phase of matches paired the top two and the bottom two. Rochdale and Worth Valley were playing for the Supreme Championship with Preston playing Halifax to decide the holders of the wooden spoon. Last year's winners Halifax finally found some form at the end of the day having six winners and defeating Preston 8 – 2 (155 – 135). The joint best for Halifax were the trio of captain Michael Skwarek (Ripponden), Trevor Heeley (Rastrick) and Philip Holroyd (Hill Crest) all with 21 - 10 whilst for Preston Dave Hargreaves (Brownedge) won to nine. In the Championship match Rochdale with the first two players off the Green had the match and the Championship virtually won with Brian Oakes (Whitworth F&CC) and Rodney Collins winning to six and nine respectively. Thereafter Worth Valley won five of the next six games to tie the match 5 – 5 with the aggregate points going to Rochdale (147 – 137) by virtue of those early two big single figure wins. Best of the five Worth Valley winners was Dave Rankin (Keighley BC) with 21 – 13.

The Supreme Champions for 2016 were Rochdale with 20 points, Worth Valley totalled 17, Halifax 14 and Preston 9.

Appreciation for the Hare Hill Park members who kept the players fed and watered throughout a long day was expressed long and loud by Federation Officials, players and spectators alike.

The outstanding individuals from each team were Howard Warren for Rochdale, Barry Turnbull (Worth Valley), Michael Skwarek (Halifax) and Chris Pickup (Preston). Barry Turnbull winning all three from the three played.

Brian Holgate, Press Officer.

