

Federation of Crown Green Bowls

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Press Release 1704.

30 April 2017.

Federation Focus - April

The National League opened its seventeenth Season with twenty eight teams and almost seven hundred players taking part and next month the seven teams with byes in April will join the fray bringing another one hundred and sixty six players into the action. Surely the National League is the ultimate Crown Green Bowling League, unless someone out there knows different.

In **Division One** Halifax & District having gone through 2016 undefeated fell at the first hurdle this year losing heavily to newly promoted Barnsley & Wath with their home team, playing at Hove Edge WM, having only three winners against a powerful visiting squad fielding eight players selected for the South Yorkshire County team to play Cumbria in the BCGBA May fixture. Gareth Coates (Akroydon Victoria) with a 21 -12 result top scored for Halifax whilst for Barnsley anchor man Paul Bailey (Dearne Sports) had their best result winning to five. Over at Dodworth Miners Welfare the two teams shared the individual wins evenly with Barnsley taking the aggregate points and hence the overall aggregate four points. A winning run of five consecutive individual wins in the middle of the match gave hope to Halifax that an away win was in the offing but a 21 – 0 whitewash by homester Darren Atkinson pricked that particular bubble. Best for Halifax was Danny Radcliffe with his 21 – 5 score-line. Final result Barnsley 23 – Halifax 9 (428 - 358). The other match in this Division resulted in a big win for Leeds & District “A” over Middleton & District by the same score 23 – 9 (441 – 400). Playing at Pudsey Littlemoor Graham Frankland (Tadcaster) with 21 – 10 was the best of eight home winners and Charley Roberts (Nimble Nook) best of the visitors four winners with 21 – 17. At Whitefield BC Middleton were looking good for the home aggregate points with their last two on the Green but both were to lose and the two aggregate points went to Leeds by just one chalk (200 – 199). Paul Heap (Sringbank) top scored (21 – 8) for Middleton and Chris Firth (Kippax) was best for Leeds with the same 21 – 8 score-line. The May fixtures match Leeds “A” with Halifax and Barnsley meet Bury who had the bye in April.

In **Division Two** Airedale and Wharfedale were within one point of retaining their First Division status last year and for their first match this Season faced Colne Valley promoted as Champions of Division Three eight months ago. Playing their home leg at Guiseley BC Airedale will have considered seven individual winners a little below par but they added the two points for home aggregate to record a 9 – 5 (216 – 195) result. Homester Joe Stockdale was the best home winner with 21 – 6 and Josh Brown (Kirkheaton Cons) with a 21 – 7 result top scored for the visitors. Meanwhile over at Golgar Liberal Club the Airedale away team prospered to the extent of having seven winners with David Upton(Myrtle Park) and

Luke Teale (Guiseley) both winning to single figures, three and eight respectively, whilst Ashley Daykin (Thongsbridge) at number twelve was best for Colne Valley winning to thirteen. An away aggregate win for Airedale by thirty-three chinks saw them finish with a significant 22 -10 (437 – 383) winning start to the Season, possibly their first step on the way back to Division One. Also in this Division Nuneaton made good use of the tricky Bedworth home Green against Fylde “A” winning eleven of the individual games with half the home team winning to single figures the best being homester Roger Taylor with a 21 – 2 result whilst John Bottomley (Park Club) was the only winner for Fylde (21 - `19). A massive home leg aggregate win of ninety-nine chinks for Nuneaton which more than cancelled out a good win for Fylde at South Shore BC. Jack Wood (St Annes) and Dave Parkinson (Old Rawcliffe) both won to eight for Fylde being the best of nine home winners whilst Joe Callan (Attleborough) was the best for Nuneaton with 21 - 10. Final result Nuneaton 20 Fylde “A” 12 (439 – 386). Colne Valley next meet Nuneaton whilst Fylde “A” take on Wallasey.

In **Division Three** promoted Liverpool/St Helens faced the demoted Rochdale team who as recently as 2013 were competing in Division One. The overall aggregate win for Rochdale by just four chinks (417 – 413) tells the story of the match and it was the last four results both home and away that turned the match for Rochdale as they had three winners out of four at each venue. At Norden anchorman Barry Collinge (Syke) with a 21 – 7 result was the best of Rochdale’s nine home winners and Cliff Massey (Formby RBL) was tops for the visitors with 21 – 11. Over at Mossley Hill the Liverpool/St Helens home squad registered eight winners but fell short by just those four chinks of matching Rochdale’s home result. Alan Catterall (Gardeners Arms) and Phil Aspinall (Eccleston) both won to single figures, six and eight respectively, for the home team, and John Halliwell (Whitworth) was the highest scoring Rochdale player. The four points for the overall aggregate gave Rochdale a 19 – 13 victory but five more chinks from somewhere could have turned the result to 17 – 15 to Liverpool/St Helens. Also in Division Three Mid-Cheshire were meeting North Yorkshire with the home teams dominating. At Meadowbank the Mid-Cheshire home players had ten winners, four of them to single figures, the best Jamie Hulse (Wharton Cons) with 21 – 5 and tops for the visitors was Adam Varley (Black Swan) whilst North Yorkshire had nine winners at Low Harrogate but none to a single figure score-line, the best being Chris Sunter 21 – 10 with visitor Phil Burndred (Alasager) top scorer of the leg with a 21 – 9 result. The May fixtures bring together Liverpool/St Helens and Mid-Cheshire with North Yorkshire meeting South Lancashire.

In **Division Four** two long established affiliates, Ormskirk and Furness, were in contention with Ormskirk choosing Aughton Institute for their home match and Furness electing for Red River. The result of the match could not have been closer with both teams having six winners both home and away and with just one single chink overall 427 – 426 in Ormskirk’s favour giving them the extra four points for an 18 – 14 final result. At Aughton Institute Brian Owen (Railway Rebels) was best for the home team with 21 – 8 and Jamie Boardman (Post Office) the tops for the visitors with his 21 – 9 result. Over in Barrow Adam Millar (Salthouse) set the early pace for Furness with his top scoring 21 – 7 result whilst Andy Howie (Burscough RBL) gave a mid match boost to the visitors with his 21 – 6 win. At the end Furness will have rued the three 20 21 results they suffered. Also in this Division Dudley & District playing at Coombs Wood Stewart & Lloyds Pavilion reeled off seven consecutive individual winners against East Lancashire after losing the first game and later

added two more to record an 11 – 3 (231 – 169) home win with three single figure wins including Marc Wilson (The George) marginally the best with 21 – 5. Best of the visitors three winners was Alan Lord (Olive Park) with his 21 – 9 result. Over in Blackburn at East Lancashire CC another very tight match ensued with Dudley picking up their away aggregate points by just one chalk (208 – 207) which gave them all eight aggregate points and a dominant 22 – 10 final result. Best of the home winners in Blackburn was Steve Clough (Darwen) with 21 -9 whilst for Dudley Matt Price (Bell Inn) won to eight. Next up for Ormskirk are Dudley & District with East Lancashire taking on South Lakes.

In **Division Five** Bolton and Bradford, both promoted teams who were the two winners in last year's playoffs for the two regionalised Division Six Leagues, met in the first match of 2017 with Bolton choosing the Kings Head as their home venue and Bradford selecting Asa Briggs. The match was dominated by the Bradford home team who had ten individual winners, eight of them to single figures, with Tony Throup (Wyke) top scoring with his 21 – 2 result whilst Ken Shaw (Railway) and John Southern (Dobbies) were the two successful Bolton players winning to sixteen and eighteen respectively. Over in Bolton individual wins were equally shared with Stuart Unsworth (Hilltops) best for Bolton (21 – 13 and Ashley Southwell (Asa Briggs) and Chris Wilson (Clayton) both winning to single figures for Bradford. Bradford took all eight aggregate points in the match for a massive 24 – 8 (465 – 315) victory. Also in this Division Mon Menai met Leeds "B" with the Welsh side winning a match which was closely contested at both venues. At Caernafon wins were equally shared with first jack Barry Harris (Beaumaris) getting the home side off to a terrific start with his 21 – 4 result challenged by visitor Andy Limbert (Roundhay) playing at three who won to nine. Over in Leeds at Thorner the home side went one better winning seven games to Menai's five with anchor man Adam Hawkins (Magnets) winning to nine a score matched for Menai by John Short (Bangor City). The narrow home aggregate win of seven chinks by Leeds was bettered by Menai's twenty one so the four overall aggregate points went to the North Wales side resulting in a 17 – 15 (434 – 420) win. Mon Menai next meet Bolton and Leeds "B" meet rejoining affiliates Warrington

In **Division Six "A"** Doncaster "A" played Burton in another closely contested match with both the away teams in the ascendant. In Doncaster at Westfield Park the visitors won eight of the twelve games with three of those being to single figures by Nick Ford and Owen Sherriff both from the Washlands club and Sandra Stretton (Stapenhill) whilst Ross Taylor (Armthorpe Welfare) for Doncaster was the home team's top scorer with 21 – 7. In Burton at the Winhill club Doncaster had seven winners with Ryan Lysons (Woodlands Park) and Katie Morgan (Westfield Park) leading the way with wins to five and seven respectively and Adam Dickenson) best for Burton with 21 – 12. Both visiting teams won the aggregate two points Doncaster by thirty-five and Burton by twenty-nine so Doncaster picked up the four points for overall aggregate by just six chinks (409 – 403) for a 17 – 15 match win. Also in this Division the UK Police team played Cheshire Parks with the latter team making their very first appearance in the National League. A comfortable win (19 – 13) for the Police could have been so much better as they missed out on their away leg aggregate by the smallest possible margin (213 – 214). The Police team played their home leg at Holbrook Miners Welfare and made good use of the tricky Green having eight winners, five to single figures, of which Tony Batchelder (Derbyshire) conceded only the one chalk to his opponent. Cheshire Parks set off well enough with three winners from the first five jacks when Dave

Bandy (Victoria) had the best result for the visitors (21 – 11) but this was shortly followed by six consecutive winners for the Police which determined the outcome of the whole match. Over in Stockport at Great Moor S&SC Cheshire Parks had a creditable seven winners and won their home aggregate points by that one chalk. Again Cheshire Parks started well winning three of the first four jacks with Gary Whitaker (Victoria BC) and Darren Sargeant (The Crown) their best winners of the afternoon both with 21 – 12 score-lines. Best of five winners for UK Police was Andy Chadwick (West Yorkshire) with his single figure win (21 – 9). The upcoming matches are UK Police against Doncaster “A” and Burton v Airedale “B”.

In **Division Six “B”** Southport met Doncaster “B” with the South Yorkshire team returning to action after missing 2016. At Scarisbeck BC, where Southport played their home leg, the West Lancashire team registered nine winners with Fergal Wright (Hesketh Arms) best with his single figure 21 – 8 result whilst Barry Machin (Rossington Welfare) top scored for Doncaster (21 – 13). At Parklands in Doncaster Southport won seven of the twelve games and collected the aggregate points with ten chinks to spare to complete a clean sweep of all eight aggregate points and finish with an impressive 24 – 8 (455 – 400) match result. Best for Doncaster was Paddy Moyles (Bawtry) with 21 -11 whilst Dave Pritchard top scored for Southport by the same margin. Also in this Division Rochdale Ladies met Fylde “B” with Rochdale playing their home leg at Royle BC and Fylde using Marton Institute. At Royle the ladies facing an all male team with a wealth of experience had just three winners with Susan Kitson (Broadfield) winning to fourteen and the pair from Syke, Joyce Jones and Ann Burgess restricting their opponents to fifteen and nineteen respectively whilst Paul Dawson (Cleveleys WM) and Jim Sealey (Marton Inst.) both won to six for Fylde. Over in Blackpool at the Marton Institute Fylde had eleven consecutive winners before Cath Holt (Chesham) broke the mould at number twelve jack winning to seventeen. Top scorers for Fylde were Phil McVitie (South Shore) and Margaret Warburton (Blackpool Subs) who won to two and nine respectively. The May fixtures match Southport with Rochdale Ladies and Fylde “B” meet near neighbours Preston.

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