

National Championships (Friday 9th November – Monday 12th November 2018)

Potters Leisure Resort

The team chose to represent Hertfordshire was as follows;

A	B	C
1. Stuart Palmer	1. Audrey Joy	1. Marilyn Cook
2. Mick Cook	2. Gill Barraclough	2. Dave Wallis
3. Jack Smalley	3. Dave Smith	3. Sandra Gammage
4. Jason Ellis	4. Margaret Forrest	4. Neil Tuckey

D	E	F
1. Harry Wilson	1. Jackie Harden	1. Stuart Palmer
2. Jacqui Harris	2. Roy Harden	2. Mick Cook
3. Paul Ellis	3. Paul Harris	3. Rebecca Hearn
4. Pete Cook	4. David Danby	4. Craig Hearn

During the weekend A,B & C would play at the same time and D,E & F would do likewise.

Saturday

Session 1

Where there is an unequal number of teams, each county has to take a turn in sitting a session out, with the first session being the one we would miss. Suffolk and Sunderland took maximum points to take the earl lead.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	3	6
Sunderland	3	6
Bedfordshire	3	4
Cambridgeshire	3	4
Durham	3	2
Northumberland	3	2
Essex	3	0
Norfolk	3	0
Hertfordshire	0	0

Session 2

Teams to D-F would play our first fixture of the weekend with three games against Durham. After missing the first session we would be playing catch up all day. Therefore, it was important that we got off to a strong start. F got off to a flying start and never looked back as they eased away to a dominant 15-2 win. The match for E was close to begin with, but they got better as the game went on and secured an 11-5 win. Team D struggled at the start of their match and fell 6-2 behind. They only dropped one further shot from there on though and secured a 12-7 win. A fantastic start to the weekend, now over to A-C to try and carry on the perfect start.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	6	11
Cambridgeshire	6	8
Sunderland	6	7
Essex	6	6
Hertfordshire	3	6
Bedfordshire	3	4
Durham	6	2
Norfolk	6	2
Northumberland	6	2

Session 3

Teams A-C would start their weekend with the toughest possible match with games against Suffolk. All three games were close and looked like they could go either way. Unfortunately it was only C who could secure points, with a 9-6 win. A lost their match 8-5 and B suffered a narrow 8-7 loss. Despite the two losses we could take confidence from the fact that we had performed well against the tournament favourites. We were also as high as 4th place and had games in hand on everybody with the exception of Essex and Bedfordshire.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	9	15
Cambridgeshire	9	14
Sunderland	9	9
Hertfordshire	6	8
Norfolk	9	7
Northumberland	9	6
Essex	6	6
Bedfordshire	6	4
Durham	9	3

Session 4

It would be northern opposition again for D-F in the form of Sunderland. F continued their strong start and secured a good 12-7 win. Team D held match lie, but the Sunderland skip played the perfect draw with his last wood to take shot and secure a deserved 6-6 draw. Team E were involved in a low scoring game and just come out on the wrong side of a 6-4 loss. Suffolk had opened a commanding 7 point lead, having only dropped three points. We were still in touch with the chasing pack, still with those games in hand.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	12	21
Cambridgeshire	12	14
Sunderland	12	12
Hertfordshire	9	11
Norfolk	12	11
Northumberland	9	10
Essex	12	8
Bedfordshire	9	6
Durham	9	3

Session 5

Norfolk would be the opponents for A-C's second match. Team's A and B never looked like doing anything but securing comfortable wins, which they did 12-2 and 11-2 respectively. Team B were unfortunate to lose their second straight game by a single shot 10-9. We had moved up into 3rd place and still had games in hand on the top two.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	15	25
Sunderland	15	16
Hertfordshire	12	15
Cambridgeshire	12	14
Essex	12	14
Norfolk	15	13
Northumberland	15	10
Bedfordshire	12	8
Durham	12	5

Session 6

Cambridgeshire would be the first southern opponents for D-F. All three games were close, it was only F that were able to secure points with a narrow 8-7 win. Team D were beaten 9-6 and E suffered a low scoring 7-6 loss. The two defeats in that session meant we slipped down to 5th place but were still only a single point behind second placed Cambridgeshire. Suffolk's lead was already starting to look insurmountable.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	18	31
Cambridgeshire	15	18
Essex	15	18
Sunderland	18	17
Hertfordshire	15	17
Norfolk	18	15
Durham	15	10
Northumberland	15	10
Bedfordshire	18	8

Session 7

Northumberland would be the opposition for A-C in the 7th session of the day. Team C continued their winning form with a commanding 14-2 win. Team A's score was closer at 9-4 but they always looked reasonably in control. Team B come up against a good Northumberland team who bowled well, defeat always looked likely, the game eventually lost 10-1.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	21	37
Essex	18	24
Norfolk	21	21
Hertfordshire	18	21
Cambridgeshire	18	18
Sunderland	18	17
Northumberland	18	12
Durham	18	10
Bedfordshire	18	8

Session 8

D-F Would finish their day with matches against Essex. In arguably our best session of the day, three important wins were secured. D & F were largely in control from start to finish and wins of 13-5 and 15-4 were secured. Team E's game was closer, they managed to secure the perfect session for us with an 8-6 win. Those three wins lifted us up in to second place, 10 points behind Suffolk.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	21	37
Hertfordshire	21	27
Norfolk	24	25
Essex	21	24
Cambridgeshire	21	23
Sunderland	21	19
Bedfordshire	21	13
Northumberland	21	13
Durham	21	11

Session 9

The final session of the day would see A-C play against Bedfordshire. Team C completed their impressive first day with another commanding win, this time 15-4. Team completed a very satisfactory first day win a 7-3 win. Unfortunately team B lost their fourth game of the day (three of them by a single shot).

Those two wins left us in 2nd spot overnight. 10 points behind Suffolk and 4 points clear of Cambridgeshire. We were in this position overnight last year and drifted away to finish 4th. It was important that we did not make the same mistakes again this time round.

Standings after Day 1

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	24	41
Hertfordshire	24	31
Cambridgeshire	24	27
Essex	24	26
Norfolk	24	25
Sunderland	24	21
Northumberland	24	16
Bedfordshire	24	15
Durham	24	14

Sunday

Session 10

As we did on the Saturday, we would sit out the first session of the day. Unfortunately for us the three teams directly below us Cambs, Essex and Norfolk picked up six, five and six points respectively. Which meant they all moved above us in the standings. Norfolk's three wins come at the expense of Suffolk which suddenly breathed a bit of life back into the competition.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	27	41
Cambridgeshire	27	33
Essex	27	31
Norfolk	27	31
Hertfordshire	24	31
Sunderland	27	22
Durham	27	18
Northumberland	27	17
Bedfordshire	27	16

Session 11

Teams A-C would get the day underway with three matches against Durham. The winning machine known as Team C continued their on their merry way with another impressive win (11-4). Team A secured their fourth straight win a narrow 7-6 success. Team B dropped six shots mid-way through their game which ultimately cost them the game as they lost 9-7. We were in 4th place after these results. Only behind Cambs and Norfolk on shots, but importantly with three games in hand. Suffolk, continued their slow start to the day as they lost two games to Sunderland. We now only trailed by eight points, with three games in hand.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	30	43
Cambridgeshire	30	35
Norfolk	30	35
Hertfordshire	27	35
Essex	30	33
Sunderland	30	26
Durham	30	20
Northumberland	30	20
Bedfordshire	27	17

Session 12

Defending champions Suffolk would be the first opponents of the day for D-F. This suddenly took on even more importance after Suffolk had left the door ajar. If we could win this session we would be in with a very good chance of actually winning the event. Team D started well and led their game 4-1. Unfortunately, they never scored another shot till the final end as some poor middle ends cost them and the game was lost 12-6. Team F lost 9-8 and you would think the game was close. However, that score completely flattered them and they picked up four shots on the final end to make the score look respectable. Team E did manage to pick up a point, but it was only the one with a 6-6 draw.

That session re-established Suffolk's lead at the top. They lead Cambs. by seven points. We know trailed by 12 points but did still have those games in hand.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	33	48
Cambridgeshire	33	41
Norfolk	33	39
Hertfordshire	30	36
Essex	30	33
Sunderland	33	28
Durham	33	24
Northumberland	33	22
Bedfordshire	30	17

Session 13

Three matches against Sunderland were next up for A-C. An immediate response was needed after the previous session and that is exactly what we got. Team C were pushed a little more in this game but still come out on top with a 10-5 win. Team A won again, this time 9-7. Team B finally broke their duck with a hard-fought 13-9 win. Cambs. took two wins from the three games against Suffolk. The gap between those two was now down to five points. We trailed by eight points with three games in hand.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	36	50
Cambridgeshire	36	45
Hertfordshire	33	42
Norfolk	36	41
Essex	33	39
Northumberland	36	28
Sunderland	36	28
Durham	33	22
Bedfordshire	33	17

Session 14

D-F next faced Norfolk. F were in cruise control in their game and piled on the shots as they won 19-2. Team D played well in their match and beat a strong Norfolk four 10-5. Team E secured a second straight 6-0 session with a good 7-4 win.

Suffolk lost one of their matches to Northumberland. Which meant we were now only six points behind still with those three games in hand. Cambs. and Essex were also still in the hunt for one of the top two positions on 45 and 43 points respectively.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	39	54
Hertfordshire	36	48
Cambridgeshire	36	45
Essex	36	43
Norfolk	39	41
Northumberland	39	30
Sunderland	39	28
Durham	36	24
Bedfordshire	36	23

Session 15

A-C's penultimate opponents of the weekend would be Cambridgeshire. This was a vitally important session against Cambs. It would put the winner in pole position to finish second and give them the chance to challenge Suffolk. All three games were close and looked like they could go either way, team A were a little fortunate to secure a 7-6 win. Team B after taking so long to find their first win got another with a good 10-6 win. The winning machine (Team C) malfunctioned for the first time as they lost 10-6.

Those two wins opened up a five point lead over Cambs. and Essex. Suffolk won all three of their games to open up an eight point cushion, we still had those games in hand.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	42	60
Hertfordshire	39	52
Cambridgeshire	39	47
Essex	39	47
Norfolk	42	43
Sunderland	42	31
Northumberland	39	30
Durham	39	27
Bedfordshire	39	23

Session 16

Three matches with Northumberland next for D-F. All three games were close, but we looked in strong position playing the final end to take three important wins. Team E secured the first points with an 11-8 win. Team E held a draw in their game, Craig still had a wood to bowl. He went over to check the Suffolk scores before bowling his final wood. They had won all three games, deciding he needed to go for the win. Unfortunately, he was unable to get it but still took a 5-5 draw. Team D were 6-6 playing the last end, and held match lie. The Northumberland skip played a cracking last bowl to push the jack to the back of the carpet into a near impossible position. Pete had to try and catch a short wood on the outside to push it in to the shot wood, he connected with the intended wood but it just didn't catch the shot wood full enough and slid by. With it went the match an 8-6 loss.

With those dropped points we now trailed Suffolk by eleven points, we did still have three games in hand.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	45	66
Hertfordshire	42	55
Cambridgeshire	42	53
Norfolk	45	49
Essex	42	47
Northumberland	42	33
Sunderland	42	31
Durham	42	27
Bedfordshire	42	23

Session 17

A-C would finish their weekend with matches against Essex. Suffolk would sit this session out. They had superior shots to us, we therefore would need to win this session 6-0 to take in in to the final session. In all honestly that never looked too likely. Team A were outplayed in their match and lost 12-4. Team B also fell to defeat in their match 9-4. Team C secured a vital two points with a close 6-5 win.

	Pl	Pts
Suffolk	45	66
Hertfordshire	45	57
Cambridgeshire	45	57
Norfolk	48	53
Essex	45	51
Northumberland	45	39
Sunderland	45	33
Durham	45	29
Bedfordshire	45	23

Session 18

With the title now gone, we had to concentrate on making sure we finished second. Cambridgeshire had pulled level on points with us, we had superior shots though. Therefore, three wins in the final session for D-F against Bedfordshire would secure second place.

Although the scores in all three games were reasonably close, none of the wins was ever in too much doubt. D won their game 10-6 and F won their game 11-6. Cambs. had already lost one of their games so second place was secured, E completed the job anyway with an 8-6 win.

Final Standings

	Sat	Sun	Total
Suffolk	41	31	72
Hertfordshire	31	32	63
Cambridgeshire	27	34	61
Norfolk	25	28	53
Essex	26	25	51
Northumberland	16	29	45
Sunderland	21	14	35
Durham	14	15	29
Bedfordshire	15	8	23

A fantastic second place finish was achieved. Our previous best was last year's 4th place (54 points). We had improved by two positions and 9 points. Our progress as a county continues to amaze. There was a point on Sunday when we honestly started to believe that we could win the event. Ultimately the 9-3 match loss to Suffolk proved costly. When you look at how close the scores were in those games, it is not inconceivable that we could have turned some of those matches around. Congratulations to Suffolk who won the event for the 6th straight year, a fantastic achievement.

The performances of each of the Hertfordshire teams is shown below.

Team	Beds	Cambs	Durham	Essex	Norfolk	N'land	Suffolk	S'land	PI	Pts	F	A
A	7 - 3	7 - 6	7 - 6	4 - 12	12 - 2	9 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 7	8	12	60	48
B	5 - 6	10 - 6	7 - 9	4 - 9	9 - 10	1 - 10	7 - 8	13 - 9	8	4	56	67
C	15 - 4	6 - 10	11 - 4	6 - 5	11 - 2	14 - 2	9 - 6	10 - 5	8	14	82	38
D	10 - 6	6 - 9	12 - 7	13 - 5	10 - 5	6 - 8	6 - 12	6 - 6	8	9	69	58
E	8 - 6	6 - 7	11 - 5	8 - 6	7 - 4	11 - 8	6 - 6	4 - 6	8	11	61	48
F	11 - 6	8 - 7	15 - 2	15 - 4	19 - 2	5 - 5	8 - 9	12 - 7	8	13	93	42
Pts	10 - 2	6 - 6	10 - 2	8 - 4	10 - 2	7 - 5	3 - 9	9 - 3				