

# *South Yorkshire County Crown Green Bowling Association*

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Senior County review 2017

Our opponents for the opening game of 2017 was Cumbria, we chose Crookesmoor Rec for our first match, winning by a massive 96 points with 10 winners out of 12, what a perfect home start to our campaign, well done to everyone.

North Scale BC on Walney Island was the away teams destination, situated off the watery side of the Cumbrian coast and what a mammoth journey that turned out to be, I bet if we had set off for London we could have been there and back quicker, that's the joys of playing away ha ha.

Well we got there eventually and our lads took it in their stride, five winners and seven scoring heavy winning the game by four points, a brilliant all round team performance. The British Crown Green - Man of the Match was won by Barry Connolly winning his game 21-5, I must say when you watch Baz play as he did that day he makes it look so easy, well done our man.

Onward to our next game with our first match played, winning by 100-points. That was the first three-figure win for our County of South Yorkshire; what a result it was putting us on the front foot for the rest of our campaign.

Second up in June was Lancashire and Meersbrook BC our choice, again our home side did the business with a brilliant 46 point winning margin. 8 winners to 4, with Richard Atkin winning The British Crown Green - Man of the Match, with a superb 21-2 card, well, what can you say about this guy, at the moment he puts a County shirt on and batters everyone, well done Richard.

Wigan Subscription BC was next for our away side and what a green it was, again our lads for a second time played their hearts out, but only ended up with two winners, which I kid you not could easily have been ten winners; you had to be there to believe it. An almighty battering on paper you could say with just two winners, but only losing by 30 chalk's secured a 16-point overall game winning margin, it was an absolute brilliant result, and The British Crown Green - Man of the Match was presented to Andrew Whitaker, a great big well done Bliv lad. So with the trophy in his grasp and all smiles we set off for home with the second win of the season, yeah!

Onto the third game of our group against Merseyside, if we could win this we would be through to the Semi's, another milestone and 12 years since our last Semi appearance. It was agreed to go to Hollinsend Park, I'm sure that raised a few eyebrows, but again with this squad staying in Sheffield was the right thing to do, so using Hollinsend Park would be yet another stepping stone to finding enough greens to get us through 5 games per season.

To the game itself and what a result we had, a 50 point winning margin, 9 winners to 3, another wonderful team performance, with eight of our home players winning all three games in the group stages. To top it off Chris Kelly also winning The British Crown Green - Man of the Match with a 21-4 winning card, another brilliant performance Chris, as always!

Just to put another point across, the County has used Hollinsend Park before and that was 27 years ago in 1990 when our telly's were in black and white. then we won by 5 and drew the game overall, although let me say through the mists of time, there are still two players in our squads now that played on that day.

One played at home, t'uther played away and both won, who are they? Answers on a post card please, oh sorry I forgot, that is what we used to do in 1990, maybe a text or voicemail will do, thanks.

The notorious Wheatsheaf Hotel was awaiting our away team, into the lion's den we went and what a green it was, all the stories I have heard about it are true, especially the natives who were armed with 20 or 30 air horns. Therefore, when LB went on to the green to start the match you could not hear yourself think never mind talk or shout to each other, which lasted for ages until they started to run out of air canisters. I must say I have never laughed so much in a County match before, with all the noise and banter coming from both sides it was brilliant.

Once again, our away lad's fort for every chalk, winning 4 games to 8 finishing with a deficit of 33 points, so with the 50 point advantage at home we won overall by 17 chalks and the British Crown Green - Man of the Match award was presented to David Poole, a great big well done Dave. With all smiles, again we settled down on the coach homeward bound with the third win of the season.

Onto the Semi-Final and the Potteries, Meersbrook Park would be our choice of green, unfortunately, just six winners apiece saw us lose our home game by 15 points, and it was so out of character from our home lads, especially the way they have played in our previous group games, so mystifying. However, every one of our players can hold their heads up high, make no mistake they have been awesome this year.

Our away lads travelled to the Birches Head Hotel and with three winners to nine and a 62-point deficit, meant we had lost by 77 points overall, everyone home and away were truly devastated, it just wasn't our day, but roll on until the next time when it will be our turn.

We did have one ray of sunshine at the away match when our man Kevin Nixon stepped up to snaffle The British Crown Green - Man of the Match award; he played awesome, a well-deserved winner, well done Kev, hopefully you will be able to squeeze it in your cabinet with all your other trophies.

Although, with the disappointment of our semi we must remember and enjoy, the four matches we have played in this campaign we have won three and our players have given us six, yes six British Crown Green - Man of the Match award winners out of the eight on offer, which was quite pleasing, to say the least.

In addition I'm pleased to announce that Ryan Clark is our South Yorkshire's Player of the year for 2017 and will receive our South Yorkshire 'Les and Ivy Hill Trophy' at our County AGM in January, well done Ryan winning all four of your games, Class!!

Before I close, I would like to put on record my thanks to our clubs Crookesmoor, Meersbrook BC, Hollinsend and Meersbrook Park and their members for all their efforts throughout the season and once again making it a memorable year for us all.

Not forgetting my committee who have given up their time to make it a season to remember, also to Chris and Richard who have worked their socks off to make sure everything ran smoothly at home, it has once again been a real pleasure.

Note; from my review last year 2016.....

'Roll on next season, onwards and upwards to a group containing Cumbria, Lancashire and Merseyside, I feel we are in a better position now more than ever, green wise and player wise to be able to challenge for qualification to the semi-finals, the rest would be history.'

Well, next year we have Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Yorkshire, two of our nearest and dearest neighbours, so let us all enjoy the challenge for qualification to the semi-finals once again.

Regards Alan