 

10th August to 27th August 2023 – Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

Well here we are again, the night before the National Championships.

What can we expect? Quality Bowls, dramatic finishes, shock results, patchy weather and probably plenty of complaining about all the rule changes!!

Yes, Bowls England are changing things up again, 3 sessions on most days, staggered timings all over the place. Competitions that run over 4 days, time limits on games. All things supposedly designed to improve things from a players prospective but all things that won’t improve things from a players prospective according to most players!

There do look to be some good things for spectators though. Improved streaming for those that can’t get to Leamington, as many as 50 games to be streamed primarily from A1 rink. An improved live scoring system via [www.bowlsenglandcomps.com/upcomingmatches](http://www.bowlsenglandcomps.com/upcomingmatches) which will be good for those waiting for results. One hopes that with evening sessions the Bowls England staff will work late enough to post results or this blog may become a patchwork quilt of postings!

Hopefully we will produce a daily write up of events and action including occasionally some photos. The plan is to post, on facebook and the website, a word document rather than writing direct into facebook, hopefully that will allow us to do some different things. I hope to be present for a number of events but don’t tell my employers. In the meantime I have a network of spies and information sources that I can plagiarise if I get lazy.

What can we expect from Middlesex this year. Great things I predict! I have a strong fancy for a couple of title challenges but I won’t name names as I’ll get the blame if they crash and burn.

Finally before we get into previewing the action please let me know if you see or hear of something interesting or something specific that you want covered. Many hands make light work as they say and I can’t be everywhere and see everything!

**Day 1 preview**

Well what better way to get things started than with Tina Cooper, Nadine Mullins, Cathy Taylor and Ann Halliday in the Ladies fours. Playing as Middlesex “A” the ladies from Cambridge Park get their challenge under way on Rink E2 at 0930hrs against Cherry Rolf, Renee Moody, Beth Gelhard and Berite Woodburn from the Camphill Club, Isle of Wight.

For those that don’t know Camphill it is a small club based within the walls of Camphill Prison so let’s hope the players are not inmates on day release as they may miss curfew!! Cherry Rolf has also qualified in the Main Singles.

Victory would see them play again at 1630hrs on Rink B6 against Warwickshire “B” who have a bye.

Middlesex “B”, Elaine Putnam, Vicky Smith, Lisa Wolstenholme and Kerry Payne from Ashford BC get their campaign under way on rink B5, also at 0930hrs.

They face Hampshire “B” Lynda Gibbs, Tracy Hibberd, Min Wright and Kath Patrick from Milton Park Ladies BC.

Victory for the Ashford ladies would see them move to D5 for their 1630 game and it would be against Gloucestershire “A” who also got a bye!

Once the Ladies Fours have finished their 1st rd games the Men’s singles start and there are two intriguing ties for our lads.

Middlesex “A” is Matt Larman from Ashford. At 1330 on rink A6 he takes on Hampshire “B” Perry Martin from Boscombe Cliff BC. Perry has had a good year for his first in Hampshire, the former Kent player has qualified in the Pairs, Triples and Fours alongside his Singles berth. Perry is both a former Junior and Senior International and in 2015 was runner up in the National Junior Singles. In 2016 he won the National Champion of Champions title.

Further along A Green on Rink 2 Middlesex “B”, Ashley Tanner also from Ashford will be getting his campaign under way, also at 1330hrs. Ashley takes on Durham “B” Barry Hopkins from the Darlington Railway BC. Barry has also qualified in the Pairs and the Fours.

Victory for both our lads would see them progress to 2nd rd ties on Friday Morning.

So, the scene is set. The Keyboard has been cleaned and notes scattered all over the lounge (Mrs not impressed!)

Ready or not, it’s time.

GO MIDDLESEX