



English Indoor Bowling Association Ltd

The National Governing Body for Indoor Level Green Bowls in England

**PRESS RELEASE ON BEHALF OF THE ENGLISH INDOOR BOWLING ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL INDOOR BOWLS CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS AT MELTON MOWBRAY**

23-31 March, 2018

FREE RESULTS AND ROUND-UP SERVICE

DAY NINE

Saturday, 31 March

**NATIONAL SINGLES TITLES 'GO NORTH'
BIRD AND GOWER ARE JUST CHAMPION**

as Whitlock and Cooper are denied



Winners of the Atherley Trophy - Lincolnshire - with EIBA President Margaret Allen



National Men's Indoor Singles champion - Jack Bird from Scarborough



National Women's Indoor Singles champion - Janice Gower from Blackpool Newton Hall - with EIBA President Margaret Allen

MEN'S SINGLES

Jack Bird, a 21-year-old apprentice motor mechanic from Scarborough may have felt he had a point to prove, but, if he did, he kept quiet about it as he rolled his bowls impressively close to the jack, and made off with the national men's indoor singles title.

Having made his international debut for England's Under 25 side in 2016, he was dropped this winter, and is understandably keen to get back in to the team for the 2018-2019 season - and he certainly dropped a hint to the selectors with his performance at Melton.

Things did not look good for Bird when he dropped a full house of four shots, and trailed Swindon Westlecot's 22-year-old Mikey Titcombe, 6-0 after two ends in this morning's semi finals, but he kept his head, fought back, and won the game, 21-18.

In the final, against Torquay United's Ryan Whitlock, the score was 4-4 after eight ends, but the young Yorkshire star took control, powering into a 17-5 lead after 18 ends, and, although he dropped a full house on the 18th end, he got home, 21-10.

Earlier, Whitlock had shown a clean pair of heels to Hartlepool's Paul Hartley, but, to his disappointment, the impeccable drawing he had shown in that 21-8 win, deserted him in the final, and he admitted forlornly, "I just didn't turn up!"

By his own admission, Whitlock has not been in top form for a while - though he came through a tough area to qualify for these championships. "I was so pleased to play so well against Graham Shadwell in the quarter finals, and struck really good form in the semi final against Paul," he explained.

"It was frustrating that I played so badly in the final," he added. "To be honest, I'm more disappointed about that than I am about losing, so at present I am experiencing a mixture of pride and disappointment."

WOMEN'S SINGLES

If Bird was pleased to drop a hint to the national selectors, the same applies to Janice Gower, from the Blackpool Newton Hall club, which is celebrating its second national title following the success of club members Jonathan Goodall and Mark Dawes in the men's pairs on Thursday.

Gower, who has been a regular in the English women's team since 2009, was named as reserve for the recent international series in Paisley, and her services were not called on during the series. Despite England's emphatic success in Scotland, where they won the British women's team title, Gower must harbour hopes of a recall for the 2018-2019 season.

Winning the national women's indoor singles title qualifies her for a crack at the British title at the Falcon club in Chelmsford next March - so, whatever happens, she will be pulling on the England shirt once again.

"I am being coached by David Gourlay, who has helped me a great deal with my approach to big games," said Gower after edging home, 21-20, against 16-year-old sensation Devon Cooper, who, incredibly, occupied the runners up spot for the second year running - after losing both finals by the same 21-20 scoreline.

Cooper is the youngster who broke all records in 2016, when she partnered her Riverain (Hitchin) clubmate Rachel Tremlett to the national women's pairs title - at the age of 14. With Tremlett being just three years old, they were, by a distance, the youngest pair ever to win the title.

Gower, who is 45, opened up a big lead in the final, and was 9-2 ahead after only seven ends, but, after stretching her lead to 16-8 after 15, she was kept in check as the youngster found her touch and piled in the shots.

It was 17-14 to Gower after 19 ends, and 20-15 after 22, but the game was far from over, as Cooper drew level with a double and a treble, and drew perfectly on the 25th end in an attempt to break the deadlock.

Gower retrieved the shot, but Cooper replied successfully, before the Lancastrian skilfully rested the shot bowl with her third delivery, leaving the youngster with just one bullet left. On target, her brave bowl made contact with the shot, but glanced off it, leaving Gower victorious, 21-20.

In the semi finals, Gower was always in front against Taunton Deane's Kirsty Hembrow, but was relieved to get home, 21-16, while Cooper showed her courage as well as skill as she turned a 7-15 deficit into a 21-19 victory over Julie Leake, who plays at the Dolphin club in Poole.

ATHERLEY TROPHY

Lincolnshire lifted the coveted Atherley Trophy for the eighth time in 28 years since the national women's inter-county team championship was introduced, when they outplayed the 2013 champions Dorset, 126-101, in the final at Melton Mowbray today.

Dorset arrived at Melton, hot-foot from Leicestershire, where they had dispatched Sussex in a re-arranged semi final that had been postponed twice because of the weather.

But they started slowly and never recovered against the county that has won the title more often than any other. On this occasion, the old sporting cliché, 'a game of two halves' really does apply - in more ways than one.

The winners stamped their authority at the eastern end of the stadium, where the rinks skipped by Gloria Haney, Chelsea Tomlin and Jill Edson overwhelmed their Dorset opponents, scoring piling up 83 shots and conceding only 37 over the 21 ends.

At the west end, the Dorset quartettes skipped by Sue Dadson, Joan Halliwell and Lyn Howard salvaged some pride for the Jurassic county, returning three winning cards and a shots credit of 21 shots between them.

And, while the first half of the game belonged emphatically to Lincolnshire's Imps, Dorset had the better of the second half - and there were worried expressions on the faces of the eventual winners towards the end of the contest.

Astonishingly, no fewer than six of Lincolnshire's winning team were in the side that won the Atherley Trophy for the county for the first time 25 years ago in 1993. They were Jill Edson, Gloria Haney, Penny Strong, Pat Thompson, Olive Wells and Di Wilson-Rogers.

TODAY'S RESULTS (SATURDAY)...

MEN'S SINGLES:-

Semi finals:

Jack Bird (Scarborough) bt Mikey Titcombe (Westlecot) 21-18;
Ryan Whitlock (Torquay United) bt Paul Hartley (Hartlepool) 21-8.

Final: Bird bt Whitlock 21-10.

WOMEN'S SINGLES:-

Semi finals:

Janice Gower (Blackpool NH) bt Kirsty Hembrow (Taunton Deane) 21-15;
Devon Cooper (Riverain) bt Julie Leake (Dolphin) 21-20.

Final: Gower bt Cooper 21-20.

WOMEN'S INTER-COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP (ATHERLEY TROPHY):-

Final - Lincolnshire bt Dorset 126-101 - Rink scores (Lincs names first):

Jenna Earl, Sheila Plaskitt, Louise Catchpole, Penny Strong 14, Jean Arnaud, Ngaio Mapes, Julie Leake, Joan Halliwell 22;
Mary Johnson, Jean Thompson, Di Wilson-Rogers, Olive Wells 13, Julie Hudson, Liz Messer, Jenny Osborne, Sue Dadson 22;
Gloria Davies, Betty Deaton, Lesley Holmes, Lyn Mountain 16, Kath Desmond, Margaret Hooper, Margaret Crawford, Lyn Howard 20;
Lauren Finbow, Sylvia Wade, Jane Saunders, Gloria Haney 29, Pamela Daters, Pat Cornick, Sandie Smith, Barbara Lacey 11;
Sue Hoyles, Val Bowker, Ruby Hill, Chelsea Tomlin 31, Sue Maggs, Di Lunn, Pam Lawford, Janet Emerson 9;
Pat Thompson, Jean Morris, Rhoda Wing, Jill Edson 23, Sally Williams, Sue Pinnell, Jill Evans, Penny Cresswell 17.

***The next phase of the
EIBA national championships
is scheduled to be staged at
Nottingham Indoor Bowls Club
from 7-16 April, 2018,
when we will be providing a similar service.***