



English Indoor Bowling Association Ltd

The National Governing Body for Indoor Level Green Bowls in England

CO-OP FUNERALCARE TEST MATCHES 2016

WOMEN'S TEST MATCH - ENGLAND v SCOTLAND

at New Earswick Indoor Bowls Club

13/14 October, 2016

DAY TWO

ENGLAND - EVENTUALLY!

Scots fight back with spirit to make it a great Test Match



Rishi Persad interviews England team manager Edna Bessell after England won the Test.

Pressure and tension are words that are often used (perhaps overused) by sports commentators to describe what competitors experience in the unforgiving cockpit of international sport - and the pressure certainly cranked up at the New Earswick club in York yesterday, when England eventually defeated Scotland in a tense Co-op Funeralcare women's Test Match that was covered by ITV4.

England took a 4-1 overnight lead into the singles session, in which six top English players face half-a-dozen of Scotland's finest, and the margin increased to 5-1 when Bex Field won a fascinating opening encounter with Claire Johnston. But Leanne Furry grabbed a lifeline for the Scots when she beat English champion Annie Dunham, and Margaret Letham edged Scotland closer with a win, on a tiebreak, over Amy Stanton.

Blantyre's Claire Walker, whose fiance Stewart Anderson will be lining up with the likes of Darren Burnett, Alex Marshall and Paul Foster next week in a Men's Test Match at the same venue, lost the first set against Wendy King, but bounced back to win, 3-7, 8-1, 1-0, and with the scores standing at 5-4 to England, the atmosphere was electric when King's Swale clubmate Sandy Hazell took to the green to take on Whiteinch star Lorna Cameron.

Cameron put up resistance, and Hazell had to dig deep, but the England team, well marshalled by team manager Edna Bessell, celebrated when Hazell chalked up a 7-3, 9-5 straight sets victory.

SINGLES



Claire Johnston and Bex Field got the day off to a great start at the New Earswick club

Game 1 - Bex Field (Eng) bt Claire Johnston (Scot) 12-2, 5-5.

Forget the one-sided first set - this was an entertaining clash between two top exponents - and it could have gone either way. Johnston was never at the races in the first set, partly because she failed to find her touch, but mainly because Field played brilliantly.

"I can't remember playing so well in an England shirt," said the 27-year-old Norfolk star, who was 12-0 ahead after four ends. "I came out with a game-plan in mind, and stuck to it, but, as I expected, Claire came back at me strongly in the second set."

Johnston, who plays at the Auchinleck club, and will be representing Scotland in the world outdoor championships in Christchurch next month, showed courage as well as skill in the second set, and looked poised to take Field into a tiebreak when she led 5-3, and held a good shot on the seventh end.

Field drove accurately, putting the jack in the open, and Johnston's attempt to save sailed by and into the ditch, leaving Field with two shots to tie the set and win the match.

Game 2 - Annie Dunham (Eng) lost to Leanne Furye (Sco) 2-8, 2-6.

Dunham, the English champion, from Spalding, inexplicably failed to recapture the majestic form she showed in the pairs on Thursday, and was outplayed by Arbroath's 36-year-old Leanne Furye, who looked composed, and turned on a brilliant display of drawing bowls.

Insisting that there was no panic in the Scottish camp, Furye said, "We never give up, and are just playing it one game at a time." She allowed Dunham to score on only three ends - a double on the fifth end of the first set, and singles on the third and fifth ends of the second set.

Thanks to Furye's success, Scotland were still in the hunt, but the 5-2 scoreline still looked a bit daunting. They would have to continue playing it one game at a time!

Game 3 - Amy Stanton (Eng) lost to Margaret Letham (Sco) 6-5, 3-9, 0-1.

Amy Stanton who learnt to play bowls in Somerset, but who now works for Bowls England in Royal Leamington Spa, and plays out of the Welford-on-Avon club, looked on course to put the Test Match to bed when she established a 5-1 lead after five ends of the first set.

The vastly experienced Margaret Letham hit back with a full house of four shots to draw level at 5-5, and seemed to have things sewn up in the last end of the set - until Stanton stood her ground and drew the winner with her last bowl.

As Letham, who plays for Blantyre, tightened her grip, Stanton's control wavered, and there was no arguing with the way she won the second set, 9-3, and took the vital single on the sudden death shoot-out. At 5-3, Scotland were back in with a realistic chance.

Game 4 - Wendy King (England) lost to Claire Walker (Scotland) 7-3, 1-8, 0-1.

Swale's Wendy King looked as if she was going to be the one to see England home to victory in this Test Match when she notched up a comfortable first set win over Claire Walker, but the 24-year-old Scot, a Blantyre clubmate of Margaret Letham and Caroline Brown dug in her heels.

Finding form, Walker won the second set at a canter, then proceeded to play a perfect shot with her third bowl on the tiebreak, and returned a 3-7, 8-1, 1-0 scorecard. The overall scoreboard now read England 5, Scotland 4.

Was the pressure on England cranking up now? - You bet it was!

Game 5 - Sandy Hazell (England) bt Lorna Cameron (Scotland) 7-3, 9-5.

In fact, there was actually a lot of pressure on both teams, and it showed when Sandy Hazell, who won the English singles title in 1996, faced 33-year-old Whiteinch star Lorna Cameron - an encounter that was like the curate's egg - full of good bits, but with a lot of loose bowls, too.

Hazell doesn't play a lot of singles these days, concentrating more on team events, but her vast experience told in the end, as she won in straight sets, 7-3, 9-4, and the England team bench responded with high fives and loud celebrations.

Game 6 - Ellen Falkner (Eng) lost to Caroline Brown (Sco) 0-8.

England now led, 6-4, so this was a dead rubber - but Ellen Falker and Caroline Brown gallantly took to the green to give a five-end exhibition that turned into a four-end match when Brown opened up an 8-0 lead, meaning that England had won by the narrowest of margins, 6-5.

THURSDAY'S RESULTS

TRIPLES

Amy Stanton, Sandy Hazell, Wendy King (Eng) lost to Claire Walker, Margaret Letham, Caroline Brown (Scot) 9-8, 7-6, 0-1;

Bex Field, Annie Dunham, Ellen Falkner (Eng) bt Leanne Furry, Lorna Cameron, Claire Johnston (Scot) 8-6, 6-6.

PAIRS

Field & Falkner (Eng) bt Walker & Letham (Sco) 7-2, 9-1;

Stanton & Dunham (Eng) bt Cameron & Johnston (Sco) 7-1, 7-2;

Hazell & King (Eng) bt Furrye & Brown (Sco) 8-7, 4-5, 1-0.



WINNERS - ENGLAND



RUNNERS UP - SCOTLAND

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