



English Indoor Bowling Association Ltd

The National Governing Body for Indoor Level Green Bowls in England

CO-OP FUNERALCARE TEST MATCHES 2016

MEN'S TEST MATCH - ENGLAND v SCOTLAND

at New Earswick Indoor Bowls Club

20/21 October, 2016

SCOTS IMPRESS

BUT ENGLAND'S MEN KEEP THEIR HOPES ALIVE



Clash of the Titans - England's men faced Auld Enemies Scotland at New Earswick indoor bowls club in York today (THU)

The news that Yorkshire will host the world road cycling championships next year has lifted the county's spirits, but, in sporting terms, today's (THU) bowls clash between England and Scotland at the impressive New Earswick club, near York, also represented a major coup for the county. Last week, England's women let a big lead almost evaporate, but were delighted to beat their Scottish rivals, 6-5, and everyone was looking forward to watching some of the world's top men in action. All twelve competitors have proved themselves in international competition, but the likes of England's Nick Brett, Rob Paxton and Mervyn King, and Scotland's Stewart Anderson, Paul Foster and Alex Marshall bestride the world of bowls like a Shakespearean Colossus. Last year, England squeaked home, 6-5, when King defeated Marshall in the final game - and there was a lot of speculation as to who would 'pass the Test' this year.

At first it seemed as if the high-flying Scottish side would walk away with the honours. They won both triples encounters, and took the first of the pairs clashes, and the worried faces among the English supporters suggested they were contemplating a 5-0 scenario by the end of the day. Rob Paxton and Nick Brett came to the rescue, though, after winning the first set at a canter, they were forced into a tiebreak before claiming England's first point. And, to the host country's great relief, the day ended with a straight sets win for Mervyn King and Jamie Walker, so that, although Scotland have a 3-2 advantage, there's everything to play for tomorrow (FRI), when we expect to be entertained by six mouth-watering singles encounters.

TRIPLES

Game 1...

***Mervyn King, Rob Paxton, Nick Brett (Eng) lost to
Ronnie Duncan, Scott Kennedy, Colin Walker (Scot) 6-1, 4-7, 0-1***

This was as competitive a match as you could wish to see, with the initiative changing hands continually. Kennedy, a worthy replacement for Darren Burnett, who stayed home in Scotland because of a family bereavement, teamed up with the 2016 WBT world indoor pairs runners up Duncan and Walker.

England made a crisp start, and, dropping a measly single on the third end, fully deserved to win the first set, 6-1, but, in the case of a 1-1 tie in sets, the fate of each match is decided on a sudden death, one-send tiebreak.

The Scots led, 4-2, in the second set, and held three shots, when Brett played a brilliant conversion shot to score a double, bringing England level at 4-4, but Walker relied on the next end, claiming a vital single with a miraculous delivery, and the Scots added two singles to win the set, 7-4, and the match moved into tiebreak territory.

Again, the skips starred, Brett setting up a match lie with a perfect delivery - but timing is everything, and Walker replied with a memorable and decisive delivery that took the honours.

Game 2...

***Mark Dawes, Jamie Walker, Jamie Chestney (Eng) lost to
Stewart Anderson, Paul Foster, Alex Marshall (Scot) 3-7, 3-7***

Talk about a star trio - Anderson, Foster and Marshall have amassed eleven world indoor singles titles between them. What's more, they played up to their reputations, turning on a brilliant display of power bowls that made their opponents, Dawes, Walker and Chestney actually look slightly under par. However, one ITV4 commentator suggested that, the way they played, the England trio might have beaten most triples.

England matched Scotland for the first few ends, but, as the Scots got better, the English challenge faded, though at the halfway stage of both sets it looked as if either side could come out on top. Scotland led 4-3 after five ends in the first set, and got home with a single and a double, and the scores were tied at 3-3 after five ends of the second set, when Marshall's men sealed victory with a single and a treble.

PAIRS

Game 3...

***Mark Dawes & Jamie Chestney (Eng) lost to
Paul Foster & Alex Marshall (Sco) 6-7, 7-5, 0-1***

Dawes upped his game, and Chestney battled with skill and courage - and, although they played well, neither Foster and Marshall reached the heights they had achieved in the triples. The England duo had the better of both sets, but dropped a cheap full house on the fifth end of the first set, which cost them dear.

They controlled the second set, opening up a 5-1 lead after three ends, and pressed home to a 7-5 victory - but cruelly lost the game on a tense one-end tiebreak.

Game 4...

Rob Paxton & Nick Brett (Eng) bt

Ronnie Duncan & Colin Walker (Sco) 8-3, 3-7, 1-0

Paxton and Brett looked determined to halt the tartan march, and, after scoring the first five shots against the 2016 world pairs runners up, won the first set comfortably, 8-3, the three Scottish shots coming against the run of play on one end - the fourth!

Another treble to - this one of the sixth end - broke a 3-3 deadlock, and gave Duncan and Walker the chance to contest a tiebreak - but they were denied by two brilliant bowls from Brett, the world indoor singles champion and world number one.

Game 5...

Mervyn King & Jamie Walker (Eng) bt

Scott Kennedy & Stewart Anderson (Sco) 6-4, 7-1

With England's backs still up against the wall, King, who has appeared in four world indoor singles finals losing in the final to Paul Foster in 1998, and winning the title in 2006), laid the foundation for a vital victory, though Kennedy, deputising for Darren Burnett, never gave up.

King and Walker looked comfortably together, with Walker exploiting King's good work, and occasionally coming to the rescue with some accurate heavy bowls. Anderson, at skip, was often in trouble, and faced some tricky situations. Although he did his best, he was unable to make the most of the shot he prefers, and is so good at - the draw shot.

DRAW FOR TODAYS (FRI) SINGLES

Note - Scotland have to win three of the six matches to take the title.

England have to win four

Rob Paxton v Stewart Anderson

Nick Brett v Alex Marshall

Jamie Chestney v Ronnie Duncan

Mark Dawes v Paul Foster

Jamie Walker v Colin Walker

Mervyn King v Scott Kennedy

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