



On The Line!

Newsletter of Hertfordshire Schools Badminton Association

April 2018

Welcome to the third edition of On The Line for the 2017/18 season.

Junior Club Information & Reports

All Saints Junior BC

Doug Clark

History

Neil Blake started this club in 1978 and has a team of three coaches we play at Ware Drill Hall on a Wednesday evening starting at 6pm for the younger beginners at 7pm the older and more experienced players are coached all our coaching is tailored to the individuals needs as with all badminton club both junior and senior for that matter there will be a range of ability s and needs(i.e. we find the less able often have to work harder than the more gifted students) all are just as important to us as we hope they will carry on to play badminton through out there lives.

Neil used to run teams in the local junior league but this folded and now we hope through the East Herts CBN to get more contact with other clubs in East Herts and of course in the rest of Herts to perhaps play them as it is good for the players to gain experience against other players.

We currently have about 20 juniors on our books and are looking to increase the numbers by school connections we are working with the CBN on this.

The club also has a senior section and is as with many clubs suffering from a lack of members (the junior club cannot supply them all!) so it will be looking to recruit some new blood as we have not been able to play in the local leagues this season.

As to the future All Saints Junior BC we continue to get many young people playing and then progressing through the county system or through University badminton.

For and behalf All Saints Junior BC

Website: allsaintsbc.co.uk

Contact Details: j259r@hotmail.co.uk

Dane End Junior Badminton Club

Brian Jackson

The club meet in Little Munden Memorial Hall, Dane End which is just big enough to accommodate one court; the net is screwed into the wall! There is a small back room where we can erect a net and practice net shots, low serves and returns. The catchment area for the club is Dane End and the surrounding villages and hamlets. Many of the youngsters are very active and I have to compete with many other sports for my players. As a result, the badminton club is rather small. Having said that, we have some very talented young players; some of whom are now in the county squads.

Currently, there are two sessions; one for beginners and the other for more competent players. As soon as players in the first group can play to a reasonable standard, I move them into the second group. At the moment there are not enough players to enable a team to play in a league so we play games with sides of as similar ability as possible. The club is part of the East Herts Community Badminton Network and we participate in the CBN activities.

Contact Details: Brian Jackson - fullmasher@freeuk.com

Aylesbury Junior League

Liz Bateman

Matches are played Sunday morning, various dates between September and April, at Aylesbury Grammar School. Teams are based on ability rather than age or gender. Each team consists of 6 players who play 1 singles and 2 doubles (with same partner) each to make up 12 games. Teams win 1 point for each game won and 2 bonus points for an overall win. The team with the most points wins the division.

Range of clubs involved in the league; Gadebridge (Hemel Hempstead/Berkhamsted), Affinity (Berkhamsted/Aylesbury), Wednesday (Aylesbury), Phoenix (Aylesbury), Abbey (St Albans), Wendover and Milton Keynes.

Gadebridge entered 4 teams this season with A, B and C teams captained by junior players. Captains are responsible for all aspects of organising a team; checking availability with parents, confirming a team, collecting match fees, completing match result sheet.

A team – 2nd Division 1

B team – 1st Division 2

C team – 2nd Division 2

D team – 4th Division 3

Captains Reports:

Captaining the A team this season was definitely an eye opening experience to say the least. I now understand how Liz must feel when she is desperately trying to fill seriously depleted teams the night before a match (definitively very stressful). Despite all this, being the captain this year has been so rewarding and I am so grateful that I was given the opportunity to do it.

In terms of the league, we fought hard in every match and managed to beat the league winners Phoenix A 7-5, but unfortunately we lost to Abbey A and Milton Keynes A towards the end of the season. Although we did not win the league, I think we all did Gadebridge very proud!

Thank you to every single player, particularly those who played up from the B and C teams, for making my last year at Gadebridge thoroughly enjoyable and for giving 100% in every match, you were all fabulous!

Carla Davison

I'm Olivia Thompson. I've been a member of the Gadebridge badminton club for 5 years; this has been my first season as a captain for the c team. I've really enjoyed organising my team throughout the season, contacting parents and making sure everyone turns up at the right time and place! All the team have worked so hard this year always turning up with great enthusiasm to play and even if we lose it doesn't get them down, they will come out next match determined to do their best. I'd like to give a special mention to both Ollie and Connor who have played in everyone of the C team's matches. Connor has improved over the last year significantly being a great asset to the team, always motivating others keeping the team spirit high. Ollie, always making everyone laugh; he has played very well this season winning the majority of his matches. Often forgetting his match fees but can be forgiven with his hard work and enthusiasm throughout

the season. I would like to thank all the team members and the substitutes from other teams helping us out when we don't have enough players. I look forward to playing badminton again with everyone next season.

AYLESBURY AND DISTRICT JUNIOR BADMINTON LEAGUE

LEAGUE TABLES 2017/2018

DIVISION 1	P	W	L	D	F	A	POINTS
PHOENIX 'A'	4	3	1	0	34	14	40
GADEBRIDGE 'A'	4	3	1	0	32	16	38
ABBEY A	4	2	1	1	26	22	30
MILTON KEYNES A	4	0	2	2	17	31	17
WEDNESDAY 'A'	4	0	3	1	11	37	11
DIVISION 2	P	W	L	D	F	A	POINTS
GADEBRIDGE B	6	5	1	0	60	12	70
GADEBRIDGE 'C'	6	5	1	0	47	25	57
AFFINITY A	6	4	2	0	48	24	56
MILTON KEYNES B * 12 POINTS AWARDED ABBEY B UNABLE TO FIELD TEAM	6	4	2	0	49	23	55
PHOENIX 'B'* 12 POINTS AWARDED ABBEY B UNABLE TO FIELD TEAM	6	2	4	0	29	43	31
WEDNESDAY 'B'	6	1	5	0	18	54	20
ABBEY B	6	0	6	0	1	71	1
DIVISION 3	P	W	L	D	F	A	POINTS
MILTON KEYNES C	7	7	0	0	72	12	86
WENDOVER A	7	4	3	0	49	35	57
AFFINITY C	7	4	2	1	48	34	56
GADEBRIDGE 'D'	7	3	3	1	43	39	49
WEDNESDAY 'C'	7	3	2	2	41	43	47
MILTON KEYNES D	7	1	4	2	29	55	31
AFFINITY D	7	1	6	0	26	58	28
AFFINITY B	7	1	4	2	26	58	28

RESULTS FROM PLAYED ON 25TH MARCH

PHOENIX B 11 V 1 WEDNESDAY B

GADEBRIDGE B 4 V 8 MILTON KEYNES B

AFFINITY C 2 V 10 MILTON KEYNES C

WENDOVER A 4 V 8 AFFINITY B

Abbey Junior badminton League



Schools and Further Education Information & Reports

Report of National Inter-schools County Championships and Primary Schools PE Conference

National Inter-schools County Championships, 5th December

The Hertfordshire rounds of the national Inter-secondary-schools championships engage some 50 (60%) schools amounting to some 800 children in their local 12 School Games Partnerships round. At the finals organised by Tanya Angus, Herts School Games Manager, 5th December, at Herts Sports Village there were 98 boys and 77 girls participating.

School Games Area	Girls U14	Boys U14	Girls U16	Boys U16
A10	No entry	John Warner	No entry	John Warner
Birchwood	No Entry	TBHS	No Entry	TBHS
Dacorum	John F Kennedy	John F Kennedy	John F Kennedy	Ashlyns
Harpenden	Sir John Lawes	Roundwood Park	Sir John Lawes	St. Georges
Hertford & Ware	Presdales	Chauncy	Presdales	Richard Hale
North East Herts	Freman college	Freman college	Freman college	Freman college
North Herts	The Priory	Hitchin Boys	Knights Templar	Hitchin Boys
St Albans	St Georges	Verulam	St Georges	St Albans Boys
Stevenage	No entry	John Henry Newman	Thomas Alleyne Academy	John Henry Newman
Three Rivers & Watford	Rickmansworth	Rickmansworth	Royal Masonic School	Parmiters
Watford & Hertsmere	No Entry	Habs	Watford Girls	Habs
Welwyn Hatfield	Queenswood	Monks Walk	Queenswood	Monks Walk

There were some excellent matches with everyone going for as many points as possible. Many participants that we don't see at the HSBA tournaments made a strong performance.

Top 4 places

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	4 th Place
U14 Boys	Habs Boys	Hitchin Boys	Roundwood	Monks Walk
U16 Boys	Richard Hale	Parmiters	Ashlyns	Habs Boys
U14 girls	Presdales	Sir John Lawes	Queenswood	St Georges
U16 Girls	Watford Grammar	Knights Templar	Sir John Lawes	Queenswood

Medals were presented by Aleisha Challands, BE Relationships Manager (seen in photos below)

U14 Boys Gold – Haberdasher’s Aske’s



U16 Boys Gold – Richard Hale



U14 Girls Gold, Silver and Bronze, Presdales, Sir John Lawes, Queenswood



U16 Girls Gold - Watford Girls Grammar



Sixteen leaders and eight staff from schools helped, as did, 9 HBA-HSBA helpers: Arun Gothandaraman, Dave and Gill Bartlett, Doug Clark, Nick Goode, Brian Jackson, Barbara Lewczynska, Mike Newlove, Jim Robson. Many schools took HSBA membership forms with statements of benefits.

Twelve schools responded to a survey by Aleisha on the importance and design of the organisation of the tournament.

The winning schools go onto the regional round in March.

Hertfordshire and Youth Sports Trust Primary PE Conference at HSV 16th January



Aleisha presents Marika with winner’s racket

More than 250 Hertfordshire primary school PE teachers attended the conference which had presentations from nationally important speakers in education. The new junior coaching resource ‘Racket Pack’ was presented by Aleisha Challands our Badminton England Relationship Manager with the help of Brian Jackson, HBA Coaching Coordinator, Dave Bartlett, HBA Development Coordinator.

Many teachers visited our stand and 10 left their details requesting more information. Several showed interest in affiliating to HSBA and the HSBA Primary Schools Tournament. Marika from Sandridge primary school won the draw for the Ashaway racket.

Inter Further Education Games 2018



Winners (Herts Regional College) and competitors for badminton at Inter FE Games 2018.

Primary Schools Team Tournament – Sunday March 4th 2018 Barbara Lewczynska

This event is always the highlight, and the loudest of the badminton year, preceded once again by our wonderful team of coaches, who coached 42 youngsters for over an hour before the tournament. Big thanks to the following Hazel Levin's, Doug Clarke, Ken Winchester, Brian Jackson, Dave Bartlett, John Stobo, and Jim Robson; you are all a credit to the badminton community.

Whilst there were fewer schools than last year represented, there were as many teams, because most of the schools entered multiple teams, and it was great to see a nearly even number of boys and girls team. Three schools dominated the competition, but it has to be said that all the youngsters played their hearts out and had a great time. The following table is a round up of the final results.

HSBA Primary Schools Tournament – March 4th 2018 – Final Rankings

Rank	Girls	Boys	Mixed	Total rank
1	Ladbrooke A	Ladbrooke A	Ladbrooke A	2
2	Bengeo A	Bengeo A	Bengeo A	4
3	Applecroft A	Applecroft B	Applecroft (Girls A & Boys B)	6
4	Templewood	Bengeo C	Bengeo C	10
5	St Johns	Applecroft A	Templewood	11
6	Bengeo C	St Johns	St Johns	11
7	Bengeo B	Templewood A	Applecroft	15
8	Much Hadham	Commonswood	Bengeo B	17
9	Commonswood	Much Hadham	Commonswood	
10	Applecroft B	Bengeo B	Much Hadham	
11	Ladbrooke B	Templewood B	Ladbrooke B	23
12		Ladbrooke B		

Finally a big thank you to those who helped run the tournament on the day; Graham Clark (very patiently) on the desk, and Margaret and Ronni Goode who (even more patiently) helped the teams fill in their team sheets, and talked them through the tournament procedures.

Senior School Tournament Points

2017 / 2018

U18 Boys

1	Monks Walk	75
2	John Henry Newman	71
3	Ashlyns	56
4=	Richard Hale	50
4=	Simon Balle	50
6	Hitchin Boys	45
7	Watford Boys Grammar	40
8	John F Kennedy	29
9	Hemel Hempstead	24
10	St George's	19
11=	Barnwell	16
11=	Verulam	16
13	Haberdashers' Aske's	14
14	Parmiters	12
15=	Freman College	4
15=	Westfield Academy	4
17	Goffs	3

U18 Girls

1	Queenswood	79
2	Hemel Hempstead	75
3	Presdales	65
4	Freman College	52
5	St Albans Girls High	32
6	Royal Masonic	20
7	Watford Girls Grammar	16
8=	Goffs	13
8=	Parmiters	13

(Out of county school - Woodhouse College, 46)

(Out of county school - Woodhouse College, Finchley 38 / Queen Elizabeth Boys Barnet 28)

U15 Boys

1	Watford Boys Grammar	95
2=	Haberdashers' Aske's	70
2=	Richard Hale	70
4	Hemel Hempstead	61
5	John F Kennedy	53
6	Ralph Sadleir	44
7	Parmiters	39
8	Dame Alice Owen	33
9	John Henry Newman	30
10	Fearnhill	22
11	Stanborough	14
12	Verulam	13
13	Highfield	11
14=	Hitchin Boys	8
14=	St Albans	8
16	Roundwood Park	7
17	Queens	4

U15 Girls

1	Queenswood	109
2	Sir John Lawes	66
3	Presdales	56
4	Dame Alice Owen	50
5	Hitchin Girls	36
6	St Albans Girls High	26
7	Watford Girls Grammar	17
8=	Queens	13
8=	Rickmansworth	13
10	Goffs	8
11	Haberdashers' Aske's Girls	6
12=	Beaumont	4
12=	Parmiters	4
15	St George's	3

(Out of County School - Dr Challoner's High, 70)

(Junior/Out of County Schools - Queen Elizabeth Boys Barnet 18)

U13 Boys

1	Haberdashers' Aske's	164
2	Monks Walk	64
3	Aldwickbury	58
4	Watford Boys Grammar	54
5	Ralph Sadleir	34
6	Stanborough	27
7	St Michael's	19
8	Hitchin Boys	11
9	Parmiters	6
10	Sherrardswood	3

U13 Girls

1	Hitchin Girls	127
2	Queenswood	107
3	Stanborough	65
4	Sir John Lawes	46
5	Heath Mount	36
6	Monks Walk	25
7=	John Henry Newman	16
7=	Loreto College	16
8	St Albans Girls High	12
9	Parmiters	4

(Junior/Out of County Schools - Chesham Common 58/ (Girls Junior / Out of County School - Lordship Farm Duncombe 20/Ladbroke JMI 16/ Nascot Wood 16/ 20/Chalfont Valley 6)
St John's Lemsford 16/St John's Digswell 13/ Sacred Heart 13/Chater Junior 6/Templewood 6)

U15 County Championship – Sunday February 25th 2018**Barbara Lewczynska**

After a slow start with entries, we eventually ended up with 24 entries in the boy's singles and 9 in the girls. The boys main event seeding's went very much according to plan, with Thomas Sweetnam (Hemel Hempstead), Charlie Windebank (Ralph Sadleir), Harry Goode (Richard Hale), and Zack Bobrowski (JFK), all ending up in the semi finals, which both proved to be close. In the event Harry and Zack ended up in the final, with Zack just pipping Harry to the post 15-13. The plate event final was won by Will Davis (Hitchin Boys), beating Sajinth Thayaparan (Fearnhill).

In the Girls Main Singles Paankhuri Bhatia (Dr Challoners) beat Sydney Hall (Presdales), with the Plate being won by Lucy Savage (St John Laws).

Most of the entrants managed to double up in the mixed and the doubles events, which gave us the following results.

	Winner	Runner up	Semi Finalists
U15 GS Main	Paankhuri Bhatia	Sydney Hall (Presdales)	Katie Savage (St John Laws) Shiami Thayaparan (Fearnhill)
U15 GS Plate	Lucy Savage	Khiloni Dhodia (Habs)	Seelan Sweeta (Watford Grammar) Yu Xuan Teh (Parmiters)
U15 BS Main	Zack Bobrowski (JFK)	Harry Goode (Richard Hale)	Charlie Windebank (Ralph Sadleir) Thomas Sweetnam (Hemel)
U15 BS Plate	Will Davis	Sajinth Thayaparan	Jay Madan (Habs) Ben Peacock (Roundwood Park)
U15 GD Main	Lavigne Leung Paankhuri Bhatia	Sydney Hall/Lucy Savage	Maia Di Gesaro/Shiami Thayaparan (3 rd) Raya Patel/Imogen Vallandares (St Albans Girls HS) (4 th)
U15 BD Main	Harry Goode (RH) Thomas Sweetnam	James Joseph Charlie Windebank (RS)	Nitin Santhosh (Owens) Sajinth Thayaparan
U15 XD Main	Harry Goode Lavigne Leung (Owens)	Thomas Sweetnam Paankhuri Bhatia	Zack Bobrowski/Sydney Hall Lucy Savage/Edward Chen (Watford Gr)
U15 XD Plate	Charlie Windebank (RS) Maia Di Gesaro (Queenswood)	James Joseph (Parmiters) Katie Savage	Adiveer Baweja (Habs) Shiami Thayaparan

U11 County Championships – Sunday 11th March 2018**Barbara Lewczynska**

This competition, the last in the season, came hot on the heels of the Primary Schools tournament. We had a really healthy entry of both 22 in the boys and girls sections. Many thanks to Natalie Barton, for encouraging so many of the St Helens girls to enter. Both singles events had 5 boxes to start with, and well done to two of the St Helen's girls (Ana Chato and Hanaan Merali) for making it into the main event where the competition was tough. The final was a close run event between Isabelle Lee and Jess Burden, with Jess just coming in at 15-13. In the plate event Anna Stewart (Templewood) beat Aamena Dhanji St Helens 15-12. In the boy's event, a confident Jaxon Clarke (Duncombe) beat Akshith Katuri (Hartsfield) 15-7, with the plate event won by Jeff Ani Joseph (St Vincent)

	Winner	Runner up	Semi Finalists
U11 GS Main	Jess Burden (Hadrian Academy)	Isabelle Lee (Ladbrooke)	Maggie Moylan (Creswick) Mia Harvey-Hill (Fairfields)
U11 GS Plate	Anna Stewart	Aamena Dhanji	Aditi Dhelaria Aayushi Dhelaria (The Ryde School)
U11 BS Main	Jaxon Clarke	Akshith Katuri	Christopher Clarke (St Catherines) Suhail Merali (Nascot Wood)
U11 BS Plate	Jeff Ani Joseph	Freddie Burns (St Johns Lemsford)	William Sutterby (Applecroft) James Reyers (Elangeni)

Unusually there were many more girls' entries for the doubles than boys, thanks mainly due to St Helens. LONG MAY THIS LAST!!!!!!!!!!!!!! The boys played in one box of five, the girls with two.

	Winner	Runner up	Semi Finalists
U11 GD Main	Maggie Moylan Saghana Thayaparan (Ashwell)	Isabelle Lee/ Mia Harvey Hill	Jess Burden/Diya Prakesh (Cunningham) Anna Stewart/Charlotte Yianni (Ladbroke)
U11 GD Plate	Ana Chatoo Hanaan Merali (St Helens)	Aditi and Aayushi Dhelaria	Aamena Dhanji/Megan Patel (St Helens) Mae Evison/Georgia Yoxall (Bengeo)
U11 BD Main	Jaxon Clarke Akshith Katuri	Suhail Merali Abid-Hassan Ravji (Chater)	Christopher Clark Ankit Gupta (Applecroft)

County Squad Information & Reports

Amelia Dixon

RIO ... An Unexpected Journey

20:00, the night before RIO and the Herts team already suffered a bit of bad luck, the 06.00 train from Stevenage to York had been cancelled due to a fire in Nottingham. We arrived very early at Stevenage train station but no trains in sight. A very tired badminton squad realised that a drive to Peterborough to catch a train was inevitable. We thank our parents for driving the team and coaches to Peterborough station and soon we were on our way to York.

Feeling as pumped as possible the twelve players from Herts ventured out onto court for their first game against Yorkshire. This was going to be a battle. Each point in every match was a fight for all the Herts players; unfortunately it was a loss for the team. Another tough match that Herts faced was versus Surrey, the previous winners of RIO the year before. Already knowing this team from previous shires leagues all players had to step up their game. Sadly, this was another loss for Herts. The third match of the day was against Lothian, the only Scottish team at the tournament. After a long, tiring day team Herts served, smashed and cheered their way to victory. This gave a positive ending to a very long day.

It was not time for bed just yet though.... the greatly anticipated disco was a chance for the Herts team to dance the night away and further increase the lactic acid in their legs for the day ahead.

Another early start for the Herts team, more on court action had to be done. The first match was against Warwick, a team with very strong players and a high reputation at RIO but had nothing on the Herts squad that day. Victorious with a comfortable win, Herts started off the day well! This gave a boost and a feeling of enthusiasm to the team. Nottingham was next to take on Herts. These games brought incredibly close and intense matches for both teams. Coaches were working hard at giving the team tactics and improvements for the best chance of winning individual games. With this help and support Herts were able to beat Nott's - many sighs of relief were needed. The final match for Herts was against Leicester, which was going to be a close one. Legs were tiring and arms aching but Herts took on this tricky challenge. Pulling out all the stops the Herts team managed to guarantee a third win of the day!

Well done Herts! Due to a successful second day Herts managed to get 5th place out of the whole tournament.

Onwards and upwards in continuing the achievement at future RIO tournaments.

U18 Inter Counties Tournament (ICT) 2018 Report

Phil Westwood

What can I say? Where to begin? ICT worked its magic once again.

Fewer teams this year, mostly amongst the lower-rated counties, claiming financial pressures on parents. But also Ulster who were returning after a three year absence, dropped out a week before the date. When they do come, they regularly finish in the top 10. Participation has been falling since 40 counties took part as recently as 2012. Terrible cliché, but a lot of people don't know what they are missing and a shame for so many youngsters, and indeed their parents, to miss out.

However, it did simplify the draw with 32 counties neatly split into eight boxes.

For Herts the start and the finish were, to be honest, not that exciting. They did what was expected, and the match results were no surprise. So for a change I'll focus on just two games; pivotal games that perfectly illustrate the magic and essence of this wonderful format and the fine line between rising and falling.

First, though, the opening day. Herts, who, in recent years, have a habit of starting slowly against the lesser teams, kicked-off with morale-boosting 10-0 wins over Devon and Cumbria. Unfortunately the *fourth* team in the group was *second seed* Surrey. Herts came away with a hugely creditable 4-6 defeat. We didn't know then that no other county, bar the eventual first and second placed teams, would better that result throughout the competition. Day one safely negotiated and Herts was in the top sixteen.

Day two dawned; the day where reality usually bites, and it did. Herts played Essex and Kent losing both 3-7. Neither was a walk-over, but the stronger teams won. And Kent would indeed finish *second*, so no shame there, it was a great effort all round. But a top eight finish was now out of reach.

After a well earned break, the team returned (at 8:45pm!!!) to face Shropshire, in the days' final match, for a place in the 9-12 group.

County strengths naturally vary from year to year, but, apart from the top few, most bob around within a range of perhaps eight or so places. To give a little perspective, then... since 1976, when the competition step-changed in size to over thirty counties, Shropshire has been firmly established in the lower half of the draw; apart from four results in the 20's, they perennially finish below 30. Last year 33rd. But on day one they had surprised both Berkshire and Sussex (and I suspect the seeding committee), taking them both to 5-5 and scraping wins on count-back, to come second in their group and achieve their first ever top-half placing. Herts, and the vocal support on the balcony, squared up to Shropshire, then, not knowing quite what to expect. Cameron/Molly got Herts on the board with a comfortable win, but Thomas/Paankhuri narrowly lost theirs. 1-1 then, after the Mixed. Tommy, Abbie and Paankhuri all duly brought home their Singles, whilst Zack put up an epic fight only to lose the third end to 11. But every game, indeed every point, counts - as we would discover on the third day - so a superb effort. 4-2 to Herts and on to the Doubles.

Harry/Thomas gained a rapid win at MD2. Herts up 5-2, but there are still three games to go, side by side on court. Olivia/Amelia and Cameron/Zack have both *lost* the first end, and Molly/Abbie, after a 15-3 first, set have *lost* their second. No one can breathe.

But the balance was slowly shifting; probably due to fitness. Herts just had to hang in there. The girls both turned theirs around, dominating their final sets to win 3 and 4. The boys leveled with a 15-10 in the second. In the third the rallies were punishing, and that was just for the spectators. Cameron/Zack gradually opened a slim lead and brought it home to win 15-11, to chalk up an 8-2 match win that on paper looks like a breeze but was fought all the way.

A cameo moment, which for me best sums up the atmosphere of this event, came after Kent had beaten Essex to win the group. Kent grouped-up for a team photo. A disembodied voice echoed out, in the fast-emptying hall: "We love you Kent." This was followed a fraction later by another: "No we don't!" provoking merriment all round.

End of Day Two; Herts could now come no lower than twelfth.

To Saturday and after that very late finish, an early start, and we have landed with the two most local teams each with significant voluble support.

First up Notts. After the Mixed and singles Herts was 2-4 down. And when Harry/Thomas agonizingly close, lost 12-15, 16-18, the boot was well and truly on the other foot; this time it was Herts that was 2-5 down, and needing all three remaining games to have a chance.

Molly/Abbie duly obliged, solidly reeling in WD1. 3-5, can we escape? Olivia/Amelia had us on the edge of our seats but topped out with wins to 12 and 11. Well done girls. Match now 4-5!!

Meanwhile, Cameron/Zack had lost their first to 11, but had recovered to nick the second to 13. Game on. And what a game.

Behind the scenes the calculators were out. What few watching knew was that Herts needed, not just to win, but to win by *3 clear points* to take the match. The game was so tight; it was nip and tuck all the way, such that that winning margin looked out of the question.

Then, at 8-8, something changed. Nerves or what; who knows? Notts could not win a point and the score mounted rapidly towards the magic number. Yet still, five more points for Notts and it would be all over, even if Herts won. Come on Herts, no mistakes, steady, steady. Then, astonishingly, Cameron and Zack had won 15-8. Coach David's arm was held up with five fingers splayed, as he mouthed 'Five points!' It was 5 rubbers all, 11 games all and Herts had it by 290 points to 285.

If points, too, had been level the decider would have been the results of the five first pairs' matches, and Herts had that 4-1, so justice done, I think.

The previous day we had seen, in the Shropshire match, how 2-5 down can turn into 2-8 down; but here Herts had recovered from 2-5 down to steal a win. It's never over until it's over. Wonderful and a tribute to that fighting spirit. Truly a team victory. Herts were now assured of no lower than 11th.

That match, being so close, overran, so with a very short break the team had to take a deep breath and reassemble to take on Leicestershire.

Four of the Mixed and Singles went to three, all games hotly contested right through, after which the match stood at 3-3. Lightning couldn't strike twice... could it?

The boys' doubles were then shared, one apiece, taking the match to 4-4. Now it was the girls' turn. Molly/Abbie took their game comfortably for a 5-4 match lead. All eyes turned to last game. Olivia/Amelia had lost their first end badly. But Herts never say die, they recovered to edge the second game 16-14. The final game seemed endless but the Leics girls slipped ahead at the end to snatch it 15-12, and to level the match. Another 5-5!!! Would you believe it?

Then the wait. The hall was subdued. Teams milling around. At last Tony Bristow left the control table and intoned: "Herts won by three games."

Elation on one side and disappointment on the other, but handshakes all round. We were up to 10th.

The team could now head off to the disco knowing they had just Staffs to play on Sunday. And Staffs had lost to both Notts and Leicestershire. 9th place beckoned.

And so it proved. After the previous games this was an anti-climax, but nonetheless welcome for that. Herts won comfortably 8-2, with only one game going to three ends, to top the group and secure that well-deserved 9th place; confounding their seeding once again as Herts often do. Either the committee gets it wrong or this competition brings it out of them and Herts play above themselves. After seventeen years of observing this competition, I can absolutely say it is the latter. Wonderful result for the team and for Herts

It would be unfair to single out anyone; it was a balanced team and all played their part. But two things must be said: the improvement in those players returning - and who, sadly I am sure, will take their leave this year - was remarkable, and the younger players, whose first ICT this was, showed amazing poise, fortitude and team spirit, midst the incessant noise and pressure. No histrionics, no throwing in the towel; the harder it got the harder they fought. No crowing in victory and gracious in defeat. And believe me, none of those are givens. A credit to the county.

Congratulations to the coaches – Becky, Kelly and David - and all the players (and dare I say, the ever-present small band of intrepid supporters?) for a fine team performance.

County Trial Dates

John Stobo

Trials will be held on Sunday 24th June at Birchwood Leisure Centre, Longmead, Hatfield, AL10 0AN at the following times:

U12's – Players born in 2008 or later: 1100-1300 hours
U14's – Players born in 2006 or 2007: 1300-1530 hours
U16's – Players born in 2004 or 2005: 1530-1800 hours
U18's – Players born in 2002 or 2003: 0900-1100 hours

Download forms from HSBA website, right click <http://hsba.org.uk/>

Birchwood Summer Court Hire

Mike Newlove

From the 1st of May until the 31st August HSBA have reserved all courts on a Sunday from 9-6 for the use of all badminton players whether from schools, clubs, county or leisure. The cost will be £5.00 per court payable to HSBA.

Courts need to be booked via Birchwood Leisure Centre booking system - 01707 270772

Courts are not available on the following dates:

10th June – Afternoon booked

24th June – All day booking, county trials

Committee vacancy – Newsletter Editor

Please see the job description attached and if you would like to take on this role, please contact Mike Newlove or I will offer to help and ease the new newsletter editor into the role.

Reports & Information for the next newsletter

Please send to the newsletter editor - publicity@hsba.org.uk by Monday 23rd July 2018

Many Thanks