

Pitcher and Le Quesne Open 2024 – Sun Bowls Club

Now in its 4th successful year, the Pitcher and Le Quesne Open took place recently at the Sun Bowls Club at First Tower. The aim of the event was to do something a little different and to showcase bowls in a different light. The competition was based on the highly successful Australian Bowls Premier League. Each game consisted of 2 sets of 5 ends and in the event of a draw, a tie-break end was played. The format for the sets was 3 wood pairs, which became 2 wood triples in the tie-break. During the sets play, a team member could be substituted at some point in each set meaning that all 3 team members played a part in each game. Added to that was the chance to nominate a 'powerplay' end where the shots scored – if any - were doubled.

20 teams of 3 players drawn in to 4 groups of 5 teams competed over the round-robin group stage, with the top 2 teams in each group going through to the quarterfinals and the knock-out stage.

Spot prizes were available over the 2 days of competition, including one for the best team outfit. Other spot prizes were on offer for scoring a 'hot-shot' (all 6 woods counting) and also a 'powerplay' score of 8 shots or more. Team outfits were many and varied - as were the team names - and certainly added to the carnival atmosphere on the green, as did the music being played in the background.

Before all that excitement got under way, a 'one wood mega bowl shootout' was held on the Friday night. With a guaranteed prize of £100 for the winner, players were entered in to a random draw and quite literally had one wood to beat their opponent by getting closest to the jack and therefore progressing to the next round. 29 players took up the challenge with the eventual winner being Club Captain Kevin Andrieux, retaining his mega bowl title from last year, who beat Jamie Lawson from Atherley Bowls Club in Southampton in the final.

The main competition got under way on Saturday morning. All teams had entered the spirit of 'fancy dress' in different ways and so the green was a wash of colour and excitement as the group stages got under way.

By the end of the final group game on Sunday morning, the top 2 teams in each group had been decided and they progressed through to the knockout stages. 'Be Prepared', 'United Nations', 'Shazza's Bad Boy Band', 'Wick Wam Bam', 'Bowlers of Azkaban', 'The Untamed Mavericks', 'Cops and Robbers' and 'Ain't Got a Scooby' were the successful teams.

In spite of the 'carnival' atmosphere on the green, the bowls was very serious and there was some outstanding play to enthral and entertain the many spectators. The final between the teams led by brothers Greg and Ross Davis was no exception and it was a very close contest from the outset.

In the end, it was Greg's team of 'Cops and Robbers', with Cathy Le Sueur and Jamie Lawson from Atherley Bowls Club in Southampton, who triumphed over brother Ross and his 'Ain't Got a Scooby' team (Abbey Andrieux and Pat Lawson, also of Atherley Bowls

Club). The 3rd and 4th place play-off saw 'The Untamed Mavericks' (Kevin Le Long, Megan Kivlin and Rachel MacDonald) overcome the 'United Nations' team of Stewart McGinnie, Tony Morton and Denise Pallot.

At the presentation ceremony, Sun Bowls President Peter Davis thanked all those who had contributed in any way towards a successful weekend. Special mention was paid to the many Sun Bowls Club volunteers who had willingly offered their help in a variety of roles, as well as the organising committee for masterminding another enjoyable event. The players and spectators got recognition for the part that they played. Peter also acknowledged the generous sponsorship of Pitcher and Le Quesne Funeral Services, without whom, the Sun Open would not be possible.