

## MENS O55 Report Nov 2010

An unusual weekend play off for a place in last 4 to compete for national champions against Surrey, Middlesex and Hertfordshire. Our squad Mark Lewis, Paul Reader, Barry Featherstone, Robin Young, Jeff Burden, Dave Harris, Alex Johnstone and Paul Cornborough. Our first game against reigning champions Surrey was tough on their home courts, at Lakeside Wimbledon. An excellent venue and very well organised. We lost 5-0(20-1) with only Mark Lewis at 1 string getting a game

But in the eve things started to look up. In our second game against Middx who had beaten Herts 5-0. Alex Johnstone with a fine commanding win at 5 string, hardly making a mistake winning 3-0. Jeff Burden at 4 had a tough task against a very informed Chriss Goodbourne. Jeff using his usual court craft of long boasts and tight drops but Chriss had the edge and Jeff lost 3-0. At no 3 our current o60 England no1 Barry Featherstone was up against a great shot maker in Holland Cherlin after a long drawn out 1st game Holland won 10-8. Barry's tenacity and tireless running restricted Holland to only another 6 points in the remaining 3 games Barry 3-1. Paul Reader at 2 completely dominated old adversary Stuart Hardy never letting him settle with aggressive tight drives and hard cross-courts winning 3-0 at 1 string. Mark Lewis came up against the very dour WORLD no 1 Mark Cowley. Mark Lewis's superb retrieving and change of pace couldn't match Cowley's power hitting and accuracy and he seemed to be on a mission after a luck lustre performance against Herts. We came through 3-2(14-7). Surrey beat Herts 4-1 so after first day we were 3rd and still in the running as were all teams Surrey being obvious favs

On Sunday Mark and Jeff were unavailable so we brought in very strong no3 in Robin Young and the redoubtable Paul Cornborough at 5. Paul had to play a very fit Herts no5. Paul's court awareness and great racket skills (albeit with a slight lack of fitness) saw him through a super 3-2 win in 50 mins at 4 string. Herts brought in new player who wouldn't have looked out of place at 2 string a formidable opponent and Alex was not allowed to play to his strengths and he lost 3-0. On the other court Robin Young was engaged in an epic battle with Herts no3 a tall ranging retriever much the same as Robin. So fine boasts lobs and drops made both of them extend themselves and Robin finally succumbed 3-1 a nerve racking edge of the seat game considering the circumstances. So it was down to the usual indimitables Paul and Barry. Herts no1 Cooper who ran Cowley very close in his first match was no match for Paul's intensity and mental strength Paul cruising to 3-0 that left us 2-2 with Barry to go on still thinking we could qualify (no pressure!!!!) up against a rejuvenated Herts no2 a long drawn out nail biting war of attrition with Barry's use of a very tight and deceptive drop shot finally winning the day 3-2

But with a sting in the tail Against recent form (Surrey beat us )( we beat Middx) but Middx beat Surrey. So Surrey 2 wins Middx 2 wins Hants 2 wins Herts 3 losses Surrey and Middx go through with most points us and Herts go to regional playoffs to stay in premiership. All squad members played and gave of their best but eventually we came up a bit short

Dave Harris