

Middleton Cup v Warwickshire 1st June

Match Report:

Good afternoon, everyone,

Saturdays Middleton cup game was a hard fought contest, with one of the strongest line ups for Warwickshire that I have seen over the last few seasons. With this in mind, we had a team on paper to more than match them.

Rink 1, Skipped by Steve Poyner (D, Summers. N, William. W, White) made great strides early doors, managing to run up a 15 shot lead over 7 ends. But this lead started to be eroded away once Warwickshire's front end, found the weight and line of the green. With them losing 15 shots over the next 7 ends this enabled Warwickshire to get to within 2 shots of them. On the 15 end, Steve's rink managed to pick up a 2 to go 19 v 15 up. But they struggled to hold on to this lead with Mark Irelands rink picking up a couple of 3s over the next 2 ends, which put Warwickshire in front for the first time on this rink. The next four ends were shared but with us only taking 2 shots compared to their 4 shots, meant we just missed the points for that rink.

Rink 2, Skipped by John Oliver (A, Millward. N, Clarke. P, Sturman). It was great to see John and Andy Millward back playing together, a pairing that has always done well over the years. Saturday was not any different, Phil Sturman leading out for his Middleton Cup game, who led well against the experienced Keith Avery of Warwickshire. This contest on this rink was great to watch, never more than a 3 shot difference. Which swung back and forth over the 21 ends. Going into the last end of their game, we were 3 shots up. The experience of the Warwickshire skip Graham Ashby meant this could end up a result for either team, we were holding a great 3 before the Warwickshire skip went to the head, who proceeded to trail the jack into the ditch. giving them shot, John fell short of the 4th bowl. This gave Graham a chance to remove the Worcester bowl to draw the rink. Fortunately, he pulled the wood tight giving our rink the win and 2 points.

Rink 3, Skipped by Richard Moule (J, Smith. C, Barton J, Collins). An early 5 for the Warwickshire rink see them take a 6 v 1 lead, only for our boys to reply with 6 shots scored over the next 3 ends. Giving Mouley and his crew a shot lead at the 6th end. Only to drop 4 shots over the next 3 ends. But our rink managed to pull back to within 1 shot at ten ends, 10 v 11, but the Warwickshire rink managed to score on 4 of the next 5 ends pulling away to an 11 v 18 lead.

Mouley managed to convert on the 16 end to pick up a 3, trying to get them back into the game. Making it a 4 shot difference in the rink. But the following end was to be a massive turn around for the Warwickshire skip Chip Millership, picking up a 5 making the rink score 14 v 23 at 17 ends. Richard and his rink did manage to secure shots by winning 3 of the final 4 ends. But the Warwickshire skip manage to contain the damage of shots to a minimum.

Rink 4, Skipped by Matt Cuthbert (D, Hemming. C, Sherriff, T, Mayall). Starting of this rink did not look to good with losing 10 shots in 3 ends, a bit of bad look on the second end gave Warwickshire a 5. But Matt and the boys rallied hard to try and get the deficit lowered. managing to half the lead to 5 at 5 ends. We managed to string a run together of 5 ends, this made the score 9 v 10 at 8 ends. only to lose a 3 and a 1 on the following ends. Going 9 v 14 down, but this lead was short lived for Dan Box (Warwickshire skip) with us managing to pull a 5 out the bag, to go 14 apiece. then managing to secure a single on the following end. To take the lead yet again 15 v 14, but the Warwickshire skip manage to get a single on the next end. back to all square. This is when our lads made their move managing to score 7 shots over the next three ends. taking a lead of 22 v 15. Warwickshire managed to score on three of the next five ends but Slim and his rink managed to hold on to the lead 25 v 21, secure a needed 2 points for the team.

Rink 5, Skipped by Andy Wills (H, Griffiths. R, Dawson. R Bourne) On paper this was going to be a feast of bowls and to be fair neither side disappointed. The rink was up against Worcestershire born Andy Walters present international player. Our rink was on its first outing out together, but they all seemed to gel well. Rob Bourne and Rob Dawson lead out well from start to finish, both players relished the challenges. This gave both Andy Wills and Harvey a great base to work from. Managing to win the first couple of ends only to drop a 4 on the 3rd end. To respond by winning the next four

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ends. to go 8 v 4 up, only to see the lead pegged back to 1. We then picked a 3 up only to drop another 4 fabricated by the skill of the Warwickshire skip. This took the rink score to 11 v 11 at 10 ends, Wills managed to then secure 4 shots over the next 4 ends, taking a slim lead 15 v 11. This was responded by the Warwickshire rink picking up a 2. Score 15 v 13 at 14 ends over the next 7 ends the spoils were shared 3 ends to 4. But the final deficit did not change with Worcester running out 20 v 18 winners and our final 2 points secured.

Rink 6, Skipped by Rob Stanley (G, Weaver. M, Sandoz. D, Wilde). Today was not our day on this rink, with all players not performing to their usual standards. They were under the cosh from the outset. Warwickshire's rink was full of young talent, at lead Mark Smith (under 25 international) Jordan Ward (under 25 trialist), this duo did a lot of the damage from the very first end. They both seemed to fall on the line and weight straight away, and they did not let up at any stage of the game. Giving our lads an uphill task. If Warwickshire's front end did not do the full damage, then the three and the Skip Adam Smith put that to bed. With the experience of Stanner at skip the rink managed to score on 9 of the 21 ends but the score line was limited by Warwickshire, due to how they were managing to pack the heads full of their bowls.

Final outcome, we managed to pick up 6 points out of the possible 22 available. We are in the same situation as Warwickshire were last season. So, we can still achieve group glory, we just need to believe and trust in each other for this to happen.

Thanks to all reserves and supporters that attended.

Regards
Griff