

Federation of Crown Green Bowls

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As the Season nears its climax no team in all of the seven Divisions have yet been able to put the Championship beyond the reach of their nearest challengers and in several Divisions the teams in contention are to meet in the August fixtures. In Division Three North Yorkshire and Rochdale meet in the final match and are separated by a single point, Bradford have a five point lead over second placed Leeds "B" in Division Five and they also are due to meet as also are the next two teams, Mon Menai and Warrington and with just fourteen points covering all four a big win from any of them could have a dramatic effect.

In **Division One** with top of the table Barnsley having the bye in July Leeds "A" registered a 23 – 9 result against Bury to establish a nineteen point gap over their South Yorkshire rivals but have completed their fixtures leaving Barnsley the not so straight forward task of taking twenty points out of Middleton in August to claim the Championship. At Crossgates in Leeds the home team were slow to achieve any sort of superiority over the visitors from Bury with the aggregate scores level after five jacks and a lead of only two after eight jacks. Three winners from the last four games including a match winning 21 – 7 result from local player James Wilcox led Leeds to a win in the home leg by twenty-eight chinks 231 - 203 and a points win by 10 -4. Joint top scorers for Bury were Paul Atherden and Clive Chapman both Tottington Conservative players with 21 – 14 results. Over in Greater Manchester at Tottington Conservative Club Bury had three winners from the first five jacks but faded to notch only two more wins as Leeds finished the stronger with four wins from the last five to win the leg by eighteen chinks for an overall result Leeds 23 (457) – Bury 9 (411). Individually Chris Evans (Prestwich Cons) won to eleven for Bury and Chris Firth (Kippax) and Mark Hughes (Crossgates) both won to twelve for the visitors. In the other match in this Division Middleton & District played Halifax & District with the Greater Manchester team choosing North Chadderton for their home venue. Due to recent rain the Green was not at its fiery best and Halifax were able to take an early lead and share individual winners over the first eight jacks and hold a fourteen chinks lead at that stage and despite Middleton having the last three winners the visitors hung on to record a worthy away result 7 – 7 (213 – 201). Crucial to the Halifax result was the 21 – 9 win by Danny Radcliffe (Hove Edge WM) and the outstanding performance of Richard Hobson (Brighouse Sports) who led his opponent 14 – 1 at one stage, using his favourite Green edge mark, before registering a 21 – 6 final result. Best for Middleton were Darren Wardle (Tonge) and Paul Heap (Springbank) who both won to twelve. Over at Brighouse Sports the leg was perfectly balanced with six winners each, the aggregate was level at 211 – 211, aggregate points shared and the Halifax leg resulted in a 7 – 7 tie with Halifax picking up the four points for the overall aggregate score with the final overall result a 18 – 14 win for Halifax (425 – 413). Adrian Kenyon (Elland C&BC) top scored for Halifax with 21 – 9 and Anthony Walker (Dukenfield Centre) was best for Middleton 21 – 8. Final matches Middleton v Barnsley and Halifax v Bury.

Only one match was played in **Division Two** as Colne Valley and Wallasey have rearranged their match to 13 August. There were twelve individual winners for each team when Airedale and Wharfedale "A" and Nuneaton met with the four overall aggregate points going to the Yorkshire team due to a strong finish in their home leg at Rufford Park giving Airedale an 18 – 14 (446 – 423) result. At Rufford situated close to Leeds/Bradford airport Nuneaton were in contention for the first half of the match until Airedale won all the games from jacks eight to twelve with anchor man Chris Hight (Farsley) winning to nine and matching the first four result of Dean Carter (Tarnfield). Best for Nuneaton was Natty Tonks (Griff & Coton) with 21 – 15 early in the leg. Meanwhile over at Baddesley the Nuneaton home team also had a devastating run of six consecutive winners from jacks four to nine but it wasn't enough to match Airedale's home margin of victory. Dave Lee (Haunchwood) led the way for Nuneaton with 21 – 11 whilst Chris Daysh top scored for Airedale with 21 – 15. August fixtures match Airedale "A" with bottom team Fylde "A" and Nuneaton meet Wallasey. **Stop Press.** Played on 13 August Colne Valley beat Wallasey 23 – 9 (442 – 363).

With North Yorkshire having the bye in July it gave Rochdale the opportunity to leapfrog them into top place in **Division Three** and the two teams are due to meet in the August final fixture with the new leaders just one point clear. Rochdale chose Whitworth FC&BC for their home leg with Mid Cheshire which brought them nine winners, including three to single figures and a large aggregate points margin (245 – 178). Tim Holt (Sykes) won to six and local player Neil Slater and Adam Higgins (Healey) both won to nine whilst for Mid Cheshire Robert Mellor (Middlewich C & C) top scored with 21 17. Over at Rudheath Private Mid Cheshire also picked up the home leg aggregate two points with seven winners which included two wins to six by Dave Hamlett Jnr. and Jamie Hulse (both Wharton Cons) but a comfortable aggregate score (222 – 200) fell well short of gaining the overall aggregate. Best for Rochdale was Steve Leach (Syke) with his 21 - 11 result. Final score Rochdale 20 (445) - Mid Cheshire 12 (400). Also in this Division Liverpool/St Helens and South Lancashire shared the thirty-two match points available with the South Lancashire team taking the overall aggregate four points whilst winning only ten of the twenty-four individual games. At Aigburth St. Michaels in Liverpool the home team had seven winners but only managed a modest sixteen chinks aggregate win despite Martin Keatley (Mossley Hill), their best winner, restricting his opponent to four. Best for South Lancashire was Ian Dennis (Golbourne S&S) with 21 – 8. At Leigh BC the South Lancashire team had the worst possible start losing all of the first five jacks to trail by fourteen chinks but recovered quickly to win the next three and go in front by twenty-six and eventually win their home leg by thirty-two and snatch the overall aggregate points. Stuart Hodson (Gardeners) won to four for the home team and Tex Allen (Eccleston) was the highest scoring visitor winning to fourteen. The August fixtures with Liverpool/St Helens having completed all their matches mean that any of the four remaining teams could win the title particularly if the top two cancel each other out as only ten points cover all four with Mid Cheshire and South Lancashire the second fixture.

In **Division Four** with leaders Ormskirk having now completed their fixtures the three teams below them all have a chance to become Champions when Furness play East Lancashire and Dudley meet bottom team South Lakes in August. In July Dudley made the long trip to Lindal BC to meet Furness and maybe they were travel weary as they managed only two winners to go down 12 – 2 (231- 158). For Furness Paul Bennett (King Alfred) won to three and home member Paul Thompson won to nine whilst Ian Carr (Combs Wood S&L Pavilion) was a 21 – 10 early winner for Dudley. Over in Warley at the George Hotel the Dudley team were also in dominant form winning their home leg by sixty-seven chinks and failing by only seven chinks to gain the overall aggregate points which may yet prove crucial to their Championship hopes. Three of Dudley's nine winners won to single figures, Chris Lambert (Cradley S&S) and Adam Hopwood (Royal Oak) both to eight and local Marc Wilson to four whilst for Furness Jamie Boardman (Post Office - Barrow) won 21 – 11. Final score:- 19 – 13 (396 – 390) in favour of Furness. Also in this Division Ormskirk would complete their fixtures with a convincing win over South Lakes 21 – 11 (447 – 385) with nine winners at home and six away. Ormskirk played their home leg at Aughton Town and achieved an impressive home aggregate win by sixty-seven chinks with Railway Rebels players dominating the scoring, Danny Finch winning to 7, Dave Fenny to nine and Ian Grady to six all in the first half of the match and with Richard Ashcroft (Galgate Rec.) best for South Lakes with 21 - 10. Meanwhile over at Lune Road in Lancaster the South Lakes team shared the individual wins and picked up the home leg aggregate but with a margin of only thirteen chinks with Tom Hunter (Bowling Green) having their best result (21 – 6)and Tim Dickenson (Burscough C&B) winning to four for Ormskirk.

Warrington doubled their points total with a stunning win over Bolton in **Division Five** by 25 – 7 (472 355) to give them a chance of retaining their status in the Division for next season and at the same time consigning Bolton to relegation. Warrington playing their home leg at Burtonwood had ten winners on their way to a massive aggregate win by eighty-eight chinks with three single figure winners, Steve Jackson (King & Queen) to eight, Danny Woodward (Culceth Sports) to five and Damian Morrison (King & Queen) to seven whilst Ken Shaw (Railway) and Barry Howarth (Bar Lane) were the two Bolton winners with 21 – 17 and 21 – 19 respectively. At Over Hulton Con Club the Bolton home team had five winners with Ray Sale (Lostock BC) having their best score (21 – 9) and Danny Roberts (Alford Sports) best for Warrington with 21 – 8. Also in this Division Bradford established themselves at the top with a narrow win over Mon Menai and now have a five point margin over Leeds "B" who had a bye in the July fixture list with Bradford and Leeds due to meet in August. Mon Menai started well on their visit to play Bradford at Wibsey Park with three winners from the first four jacks and were only one chalk in arrears after eight jacks only for Bradford to win six individual games in a row and clinch a close fought home leg by a modest twelve chinks. Best for Bradford were Mathew Jacques (Shipleigh Club) with 21 – 9 and Andy Denton (Asa Briggs) who won to five whilst Menai also had two winners to single figures, in John Short (Bangor City) and Geraint Booth (Llanfairpwll) with 21 – 7 and 21 – 9 respectively. Over in Bangor at the City Club the leg was also tight with six winners to each team and Menai taking their home aggregate point by just four chinks. Helfin Jones (Beaumaris) top scored for Menai 21 – 6 and best for Bradford was Chris Ellis (Spen Victoria) with his 21 – 15 winning result. Only eight chinks separated the teams at the end of the match (431 – 423) to give Bradford the overall aggregate points and thus a comfortable

looking 19 – 13 win but comfortable it was not. August fixtures pair the top two in the Division and teams three and four (Mon Menai and Warrington) and mathematically any one of the teams could win it with Bradford the slight favourites.

Cheshire Parks met Doncaster “A” in **Division Six-A** and it was the South Yorkshire team who took most of the honours having nine winners both at home and away for a most convincing 26 – 6 (482 – 369) final result. At Cheadle Con Club the best of the three home winners for the Cheshire side was Adam Smith (Great Moor S&S) with 21 – 7 and for Doncaster Natasha Jackson (Yorkshire Main) won to eight. Over in Doncaster at Brodsworth Welfare Terry Hill and Mathew Griffiths, both from Westfield Park, won to single figures, seven and nine respectively whilst Ben Scott (Great Moor S&S) was best for the visitors winning to eight. The other match in this Division matched UK Police with Airedale & Wharfedale “B” and although not as one sided did result in a comfortable win for Airedale 23 – 9 (452 - 390). The Police team played their home leg at Rykneld BC near Derby where the individual wins were shared equally with Kevin Penny (Derbyshire Police) best for the home team with his 21 – 7 result. Incidentally Kevin also happens to be the Federation Chairman. For Airedale Ken Lee (Rufford Park) top scored with 21- 6. Over in North West Leeds the Airedale team played their home leg at Guiseley and fell just one game short of a clean sweep winning eleven of the twelve games being foiled by Graham Jackson (West Yorkshire Police) who won to nineteen. Best for Airedale were Guy Green (Myrtle Park) 21 – 6 and Andy Howie (Shipley Club) 21 – 8. In the August fixtures Airedale and Doncaster will meet in a Championship title match and Burton will play Cheshire Parks.

Southport now lead **Division Six-B** by nine points but their race is run and they are almost certain to be overtaken by second placed Fylde “B” when the August fixtures are completed. Southport’s July fixture was a derby match with near neighbours Preston with Southport playing their home leg at Ainsdale and they started poorly with only one winner from their first four jacks only to then spark into life with six winners in a row to win the leg 9 – 5 but with a low aggregate win (217 – 202). Best for Southport was John Green (Crowlands) with 21 – 8 whilst for Preston Steve Edwards (Frenchwood) was the best of their five winners with his 21 – 11 result. Over at Lostock Cons Preston registered nine winners and won the leg with a seventy-one chalks aggregate score to give them the overall aggregate points and a final 20 – 12 result (429 – 373). Best for Preston were Phil Snape (Farrington Cons) and Gary Drake (Eagle & Child) winning to five and one respectively whilst for Southport Chris Thompson (Croston Subs) won comfortably 21 – 9. Also in this Division Doncaster “B” met Rochdale Ladies with the South Yorkshire teams home leg at Armthorpe Welfare. Doncaster won all the first four jacks only for Rochdale to win three of the next four and also the last two but the die was cast by the Doncaster front four and their thirty-two chalks winning start. Top scoring for Doncaster was number one Paul Raleigh (Wickersley Village) who conceded only one chalk followed by Margaret Smith (Bawtry) and Adrian Fox (Pilkington Rec.) who both won to seven whilst two of the Rochdale Ladies, Niki Mellor (Thistleyfields) and Cath Holt (Chesham) both won to thirteen. At New Street in Littleborough the leg was close fought with only three chalks in the aggregate at the end with the visitors the winners (208 – 211). For Rochdale Margaret Taylor (Buersil Park) had the best result 21 - 8 and Steve Crooks (Adwick St Lawrence) for Doncaster won to twelve. Final result an overall win for Doncaster 21 – 10 (437 393). The August fixtures pair Doncaster “B” with Fylde “B” and Rochdale Ladies play Preston which will leave one outstanding fixture, that between Doncaster “B” and Preston which will now be played on Sunday 3rd September.

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