

The 6th Sportsmanship Games - Leeds 2000

By Adrian Rankin

To say that the Sportsmanship Games is just another tournament on the hectic tenpin bowling calendar would be like saying the Rolls Royce, or even the Reliant Robin are just cars.

The Sportsmanship games are unique, not only for the bowlers, but for everyone watching too. What's the attraction? The enormous cash prizes on offer or the world class international field? Or maybe it's that absolutely everyone is completely focussed on the game in hand. Nope, none of that. The Games offer medals for the winners of all the categories, and attract bowlers of absolutely all standards. But this year twenty eight teams of six arrived at AMF Leeds at the end of July to have fun, bowl a few games (well, twelve each, actually), have a bit of fun, meet old friends and have a drink, and did I mention fun?

To an outsider, it looks like one big family reunion as everyone appears to know everyone else – indeed many teams have bowled at each Games since its inception by Diane Joyce in 1995. Everyone is happy, everyone is pleased to be here, and everyone is going to enjoy themselves at the mid tournament party at the team's hotel on Saturday night.

In true games style, the first hour of Saturday was somewhat different. The bowl's morning cleaners had said goodbye to the mechanics and left, carefully locking all the doors and *setting the burglar alarm behind them*. So saw the advance guard of bowlers arriving to a wailing alarm as it was activated by the mechanics trying to work inside. The night before saw a bit of a storm in Leeds, so of course the roof leaked, leaving a big puddle half way down lane three. And you thought the gutters were only for wayward balls!

Crisis averted, the tournament got underway. Diane welcomed one and all as the house lights dimmed, the Xtreme lane bumpers flashed their little red lights and the music was cranked up. "Are you here for pleasure, or are you Going for Gold?" Good grief, this is no tournament; it's a carnival! Maybe not true, but it does sum up the atmosphere. As the lights came back on the Singles Event got underway and the sounds of cheers and aaah's rang out as someone rolled a double here or missed a spare there.

The Singles took care of the morning's action, and like all the events here, they are split in to Scratch and Handicap sections. Equality is paramount too, so the Men and Ladies compete together. Obviously no one can win a medal for both sections, so when the dust had settled it left Simon Taylor and Kevin Furness both looking forward to gold, a grand double for the Aylesbury Aces.

The highlight of the afternoon Doubles was the superb series by the Happy Hedgehogs pairing Laura Ivory and Andy Fraser. Their combined scratch total of 1370, and with handicap 1457, were both games record, but Laura's 650 (games of 266, 193, 191) was a personal best which broke the AMF Leeds Junior Girls House Record by some 24 pins. Andy's 720 series was not to be sneezed at either.

It is traditional, nay obligatory, to go to the night-time party. This year's was in the team's Hilton hotel. After some people (i.e. me) realised the Beamish Red was £2.80 a pint and switched to John Smith's, things picked up. Proceedings opened with the medal ceremony for the day's winners, and followed up with the grand raffle. I'm led to believe that everyone danced in to the wee small hours and that a good time was had by all.

There were some frail figures on Sunday morning, although Jack Bayley was not one of them, despite winning a bottle of wine in the previous night's raffle. Jack's legendary capacity was not put to the full test this weekend as he was on his best behaviour: well Sunday was Jack and Linda's 25th wedding anniversary and Linda's birthday as well.

On to the Trios, and it was Keighley's Likely Lads who stole the show. The 'A' team of Stuart Hopkinson, Ian Smith and Oliver Didur bowled a total of 1833 pins, thanks in no small measure to Oliver's 736 series. Oliver beat his dad, Michael who managed a mere 715 series, however age triumphed as the 'B' team, also including John Lawless and Mark Anderson, knocked up another Games Record of 1950 pins.

Wilma Sustins won the "6th Man" Handicap section. It was her final game that may have had something to do with it – a personal best 234 game. We knew something was up – the cheering from behind lane ten was louder than normal. Wilma was banging them in, strike, double, turkey, four bagger – a fine way to end her tournament.

Finally, up came the Fives, and with it Swindon's chance to shine, eclipsing the rays of the Likely Lads, as the Swindon Men averaged between them almost 196 pins a game in their total of 2937.

And so, after 323,642 pins had met their maker, the weekend's bowling was done. Everyone tucked in to one of Joanne Hopper's famous buffets while they waited for the final scores to be added up on the abacus. Speeches were made, people received their medals, and most people could even manage to work their cameras and take photos.

Come the final presentation there was one last award – for the Good Sport of the Tournament. This is voted for by the bowlers and goes to somebody who has stood out as being happier, more pleasant and overall more of a jolly good fellow than anybody else. In a tournament like this, that is no mean achievement, so it was especially pleasing to see it go to Stuart Japp from the Welsh contingent.

With apologies to anyone I've missed out and with thanks to Diane Joyce for organising and running the tournament, the manager and staff of AMF Leeds for hosting the event – especially all the Wimpy snack bar people who worked so hard to give everyone their dinners, and most of all to you, the bowlers, for making the event run so smoothly and so well. See you next year in Sheffield!

SPORTSMANSHIP GAMES 2000 - RESULTS

SCRATCH SINGLES

- 1 Simon Taylor Aylesbury Aces 675
- 2 Sean Cunningham Black Knights 648
- 3 Brian Sims Happy Hedgehog 605

HANDICAP SINGLES

(Simon Taylor Aylesbury Aces 765)

- 1 Kevin Furness Aylesbury Aces 691 (last game 199)
- 2 Gill Perkin Sudbury Spinners 691 (last game 185)
- 3 Carol Snell Six Pack 687

SCRATCH DOUBLES

- 1 Laura Ivory & Andy Fraser Happy Hedgehog C 1370
(John Lawless & Mark Anderson Likely Lads B 1251)
- 2 Ian Smith & Oliver Didur Likely Lads C 1236
- 3 Michael Didur & Stuart Hopkinson Likely Lads A 1214

HANDICAP DOUBLES

(Laura Ivory & Andy Fraser Happy Hedgehog C 1457)

- 1 John Lawless & Mark Anderson Likely Lads B 1323
(Ian Smith & Oliver Didur Likely Lads C 1320)
- 2 Mark Daniels & James Vukmirovic New Age Outlaws C 1309

3 Terry Hemsall & David Pratt Swindon Men C 1307

SCRATCH TRIOS

1 John Lawless, Michael Didur & Mark Anderson Likely Lads B 1950

2 Stuart Hopkinson, Ian Smith & Michael Didur Likely Lads A 1833

3 Bryan Parker, Sean Cunningham & Colin Clark Black Knights A 1792

HANDICAP TRIOS

(John Lawless, Michael Didur & Mark Anderson Likely Lads B 2058)

1 Stan Kay, Martyn Page & Terry Hemsall Swindon Men B 2008

2 Gary Lee, Geoff Rens & David Leyland Pin Action B 1975

(Stuart Hopkinson, Ian Smith & Michael Didur Likely Lads A 1965)

3 John Edwards, Phil Kelly & Mark Daniels New Age Outlaws A 1950

SCRATCH 6th MAN SINGLES

1 Michael Shaw Mad Hatters 615

2 David Pratt Swindon Men 573

3 Stan Cocker In the Mood 541

HANDICAP 6th MAN SINGLES

(Michael Shaw Mad Hatters 693)

1 Wilma Sustins Kama Sutra 678 (last game 234)

2 Lyn Jones Friends 678 (last game 189)

3 Phil Walton Straight & Curvy 670

SCRATCH FIVES

1 Billy Ross, Stan Kay, Martyn Page, Steve Murray & Terry Hemsall Swindon Men 2937

2 John Lawless, Michael Didur, Stuart Hopkinson, Ian Smith & Mark Anderson Likely Lads 2787

(Ian Tucker, Trish Tucker, Mark Doughty, Maggie Deacon & Pete Sampson Kama Sutra 2784)

3 Geoff Ashcroft, John Cooper, Christine Kelly, Brian Tilley & Jill Owen Nuts & Bolts 2713

HANDICAP FIVES

(Billy Ross, Stan Kay, Martyn Page, Steve Murray & Terry Hemsall Swindon Men 3309)

1 John Edwards, Phil Kelly, Rob Hammond, Suzi Hammond & Mark Daniels New Age Outlaws 3285

2 Ian Tucker, Trish Tucker, Mark Doughty, Maggie Deacon & Pete Sampson Kama Sutra 3216

3 Derek Beddow, Mark Rice, Mary Hawkins, Colin Wildblood & Rena Wildblood Cadfael 3086

SCRATCH ALL EVENTS, TEAM

1 Likely Lads 13876

(Swindon Men 13357)

2 Happy Hedgehog 12496

3 Pin Action 12433

HANDICAP ALL EVENTS, TEAM

1 Swindon Men 15133

2 Aylesbury Aces 15068

(Likely Lads 14836)

3 New Age Outlaws 14813

SCRATCH ALL EVENTS, INDIVIDUAL

1 Steve Murray Swindon Men 2535

2 Oliver Didur Likely Lads 2516

3 Andy Fraser Happy Hedgehog 2480

HANDICAP ALL EVENTS, INDIVIDUAL

1 Mark Daniels New Age Outlaws 2812

(Steve Murray Swindon Men 2811)

(Oliver Didur Likely Lads 2708)

2 Steve Senior Stockport Rams 2653

3 Rob Hammond New Age Outlaws 2626