



Clacton & District: Pumas keep hopes alive

Author: Paul Stimpson

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After defeat in their first Group match in the Clacton & District League's **Handicap Doubles Challenge**, Nomads Pumas kept their qualification hopes alive with a convincing 9-0 victory in **Group A** against Windsor Magpies.

In what is proving to be the tightest of all the eight groups, Alan Dockerill, Lionel Goddard and John Bowers displayed their aptitude at this format of the game with a formidable all-round performance. And although three matches went the distance, the only one which ended close in three was the 2-1 (14-12, 14-16, 11-7) victory for Dockerill and Bowers (+1) over Dave Sweetland and Malcolm Caley (-5).

Windsor Robins are the current group leaders, this week taking the final three encounters of the evening against Brotherhood C to secure a second 6-3 win. Four matches went the distance, the Robins winning three of them. The only one they lost was the 2-1 (13-11, 9-11, 11-9) win for Russell Hillier and Tricia Salter (-13) against Mick Coker and Oleksandra Klymenko (+2). Coker was the Robins' most successful player, winning five of his six matches.

So whilst the Robins are odds-on to qualify for the knockout stage, the final group match between the Pumas and Brotherhood C looks likely to be a winner-takes-all encounter.

In **Group B** Windsor Kestrels chalked up a 6-3 victory against Brotherhood B, winning three of the four matches which went the distance. The closest was the 2-1 (11-6, 9-11, 11-9) win for Graham Bunce and Debra Found (+1) over Paul Alden and Fred Gallone (-3). Overall, Found won five, Kayley Rodriguez four and Bunce three.

There was a second 5-4 win in the competition for Windsor Hawks, this against Windsor Buzzards. In a closely-fought tie, the two teams shared the four matches which went to three. John Barton of the Hawks and Ray Chillingworth of the Buzzards each won four of their matches.

These results mean both the Hawks and Kestrels qualify for the knockout stages – provided they turn up for their final match, which just happens to be between the two Windsor teams, an encounter which will determine first and second placings.

Walton E in **Group C** are another team which replicated the score-line from their first match, this time a 7-2 win over a Windsor Eagles' team playing with stiff handicaps. Mark Gale was Walton's star unbeaten player, although he was involved in two tight encounters. With Jason Gale (+2), the pair beat Mel Rampton and Martyn Green (-5) 2-1 (11-8, 16-18, 11-7), and with Paul Woolnough (+2), the duo beat Rampton and Gary Cattermole (-6) 11-6, 14-16, 11-5.

Nomads Lions were forced to field a guest player and so it was little surprise that Brotherhood E finished 8-1 winners. Like Walton E, Brotherhood E are well-placed to qualify for the knockout stage.

In **Group D**, Windsor Penguins and Brotherhood G were both heavy winners and both look favourites to qualify, with the two teams due to meet in the final group match.

Brotherhood G were 9-0 winners over a Nomads Ocelots' side using a guest whilst the Penguins defeated Nomads Jaguars 8-1. An undefeated Jackie Bunce starred in the latter match, the Jaguars only point coming from the closest match of the evening, Mike Vilka and Kevin Hume (-3) edging out Alan Charman and Paul Dale (+1) 2-1 (5-11, 11-4, 12-10).

Brotherhood F and Nomads Bobcats are heading **Group E** and this week both enjoyed 6-3 victories.

Maci Harvey won five out of six as Brotherhood F defeated fellow-Division Three side Nomads Lynx, all her wins coming from matches which went to a deciding set. The narrowest victory was the 11-9 in the third victory with Zak Coates (0) against Norman Jacobs and James Horsler (0).

Andrew North, a late call-up for the Bobcats against Nomads Leopards, was his team's top player, and another to take five out of his six matches. Eric Lemke and reserve Harry Hawkes supported well, with four and three wins respectively. Dave Wright was the Leopards' most successful player with three victories.

In the first of a trio of Groups with only three teams, Walton A won the last four matches of the evening, three of them going the distance, to record a 7-2 victory over Brotherhood D in **Group F**. Gary Young and Gavin Price each won five matches, and Daniel Young four.

But, despite their defeat, Brotherhood are guaranteed a place in the last 16, the other spot depending on the final group match between Walton A and Brotherhood A.

Lawford have qualified for the next Round as **Group G** winners – and done it by scarcely raising a bat in anger. After Nomads Panthers conceded their first match, Lawford recorded a 6-3 win against a Walton C team fielding only two players.

In **Group H**, Windsor Harriers lost the first two matches of the evening against Windsor Merlins but went on win 6-3 to confirm their position as group winners. Ferdy Rodriguez, Isabel Barton and Jenny Higgins all shared four wins. However, well done to Viv Rodriguez and Janet Cowie (+2) for an excellent 2-1 (11-9, 6-11, 11-1). victory against former ladies' doubles champions Barton and Higgins (-11)

The winner of the Merlins v Walton D fixture will determine the second qualifying position.

* The League now takes its regular two-week break over the holiday period where players can enjoy a well-earned rest and turn their attention to matters other than bats and balls, trophy ambitions and survival worries. The season resumes on 6th January with the final group matches of the Handicap Doubles Challenge, with the following week seeing Round One ties in the Handicap Knock-Out Cup.

So, from the Management Committee to all players, supporters and followers of the League, may we say Merry Christmas!

RESULTS

Handicap Doubles Challenge

Group A

Brotherhood C 3 Windsor Robins 6

Nomads Pumas 9 Windsor Magpies 0

Group B

Windsor Kestrels 6 Brotherhood B 3
 Windsor Hawks 5 Windsor Buzzards 4

Group C

Windsor Eagles 2 Walton E 7
 Nomads Lions 1 Brotherhood E 8

Group D

Nomads Jaguars 1 Windsor Penguins 8
 Brotherhood G 9 Nomads Ocelots 0

Group E

Nomads Lynx 3 Brotherhood F 6
 Nomads Leopards 3 Nomads Bobcats 6

Group F

Walton A 7 Brotherhood D 2

Group G

Lawford 6 Walton C 3

Group H

Windsor Harriers 6 Windsor Merlins 3

TABLES

GROUP A	P	W	L	Conc	F	A	Pts
Robins	2	2	0	0	12	6	4
Pumas	2	1	1	0	12	6	3
Brotherhood C	2	1	1	0	8	10	3
Magpies	2	0	2	0	4	14	2

GROUP B	P	W	L	Conc	F	A	Pts
Kestrels	2	2	0	0	14	4	4
Hawks	2	2	0	0	10	8	4
Brotherhood B	2	0	2	0	7	11	2
Buzzards	2	0	2	0	5	13	2

GROUP C	P	W	L	Conc	F	A	Pts
Walton E	2	2	0	0	14	4	4
Brotherhood E	2	2	0	0	14	4	4
Eagles	2	0	2	0	5	13	2
Lions	2	0	2	0	3	15	2

GROUP D	P	W	L	Conc	F	A	Pts
Brotherhood G	2	2	0	0	16	2	4
Penguins	2	2	0	0	14	4	4
Ocelots	2	0	2	0	3	15	2
Jaguars	2	0	2	0	3	15	2

GROUP E	P	W	L	Conc	F	A	Pts
Bobcats	2	2	0	0	14	4	4
Brotherhood F	2	2	0	0	11	7	4
Leopards	2	0	2	0	7	11	2
Lynx	2	0	2	0	4	14	2

GROUP F	P	W	L	Conc	F	A	Pts
Brotherhood D	2	1	1	0	11	7	3
Walton A	1	1	0	0	7	2	2
Brotherhood A	1	0	0	1	0	9	0

GROUP G	P	W	L	Conc	F	A	Pts
Lawford	2	2	0	0	15	3	4
Walton C	1	0	1	0	3	6	0
Panthers	1	0	0	1	0	9	0

GROUP H	P	W	L	Conc	F	A	Pts
Harriers	2	2	0	0	11	7	4
Walton D	1	0	1	0	4	5	1
Merlins	1	0	1	0	3	6	1

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