

Oxford continue to impress at NCL

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Oxford A in battle for 2nd place, B team promoted



Reece Chamdal flying the Oxford flag

The Oxford cadets kept up their determined efforts in the 2nd round of matches at Cippenham on Sunday. The A team were no match for Division 1 leaders, Sussex Alliance Boys, losing 0-9, with only Reece Chamdal making any impression on this top class trio. Undeterred they then engaged in a ding-dong struggle with Crusaders, just edging it 5-4, mainly thanks to a magnificent maximum from Reece, with Josh Selby and Joe McKenna-Jones each contributing one win: in fact the match stood at 4-4, with Reece needing to beat Oscar Williamson to clinch it, which he did in fine style, just getting the better of his more powerful opponent. This left them neck and neck with Wembley & Harrow in 2nd place, which they maintained in their final encounter with Cippenham, another very close match: Angus Whittam and Oliver Hardman of the home club strove manfully to support Ben Naylor-Smith, whose excellent maximum in the end proved to be in vain, as Oxford came home 6-3. All in all another very fine effort by the youthful Oxford A team trio, all of whom will still be eligible next year, two the year after, and one (Reece) for another three seasons after this!

The B team was without their top player from last time, Edward Beccle, through illness, but John Ho came in to make his debut and, along with Vicky Coll, piloted the team past closest rivals, Chiltern C (6-3), and Chiltern B (5-4) to secure the top spot in Division 3 and thus gain promotion. So in the final match of the day, now playing in Division 2, they faced up to Reading A, just demoted from Division 1: John and Vicky won two each in a 4-5 defeat. John's only defeat of the day came against Chris Johnson, in which he recovered from 2-10 in the 5th to 9-10, only to lose the next point! Harry Maldonado and another debutant, Jack Smith, won one match each in Div 3. John and Vicky gave a very good account of themselves, but will definitely need Edward back in the team to cope with the overall standard in Div 2. The original idea of entering this team was to give the likes of Harry, Jack, Ryan Hambridge, Ciaran Walsh, Matt Hughes and Luke Plowman a gentle baptism in the lowest division (4), but for a variety of reasons it has not worked out that way!

Written by John Birkin (December 1, 2013)

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