

Brook leads Kidlington Girls to NJL victories

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Kristelle Brook maintained a 100% record with 17/17

Forum girls in command; boys battling for silver

National Junior League 7/12/13

The three Kidlington Forum teams got just reward for their exemplary commitment and fine team spirit in the second round of National Junior League (South) matches played at Cippenham on Saturday. The girls defeated Lingfield Notre Dame B (9-0), then took on a strong Cippenham A side in what they knew would be a decisive match for their whole campaign. Kristelle Brook was put under intense pressure by both Megan Ashfield and Rosalind Lane, but came through some shaky patches to win both these matches in the decider, also beating Jemma Walker easily to maintain her 100% record. Chloe Yau and Vicky Coll applied themselves wonderfully well to get the better of both Megan and Rosalind, while both losing to Jemma: so a match which had looked as though it would be a very close call was won 7-2. In the final match of the day Ellenborough, whose title challenge was fading, were also beaten 7-2, with Kristelle again in peerless control. These results have left our girls in a commanding position at the top of the table.

The Boys' A team lost Luke Jobling to illness, but Kavan Warrender was promoted from the Bs, which did not weaken the team. They built on their solid start from round one with a 9-0 victory over Kingfisher, then took on league leaders Chiltern A, losing 2-7: Kavan came within a whisker of overturning the league's top player, Harry Collins, having led 2-0 and then missing two easy high smashes in going down 9-11 in the 5th; this was nevertheless a superlative performance. They kept up their impetus in the final fixture against Twickenham Brunswick A, reversing their defeat from last time round by sprinting into a 5-0 lead: 6-3 was the final score, a useful win over our main rivals for 2nd place. Overall Simon Price won 6/9, Jonah Stott 6/9 and Kavan Warrender 5/9, a very commendable team effort and a far cry from last season, when Simon and Jonah were unable to make the grade in the top division.

The Boys' B team, playing in Division 2, brought in John Ho (13) for his debut in NJL. Fabian Audifferen captained

the side, which also included Josh Selby (12). They began the day with a deficit of two points to make up on league leaders Twickenham Brunswick B, and kept up the pressure in their first match v Chiltern B: Josh got them off to a flying start by beating Joe Gerrans 3-1, Fabian flummoxed them all with his anti-loop rubber, and John weighed in with two fine wins in a 7-2 victory. With Twickenham going down to Graham Spicer, they now had the chance of winning the division and gaining promotion, if they could beat Twickenham: they really made a big effort here, trying to seize the opportunity they had been given: in fact it went to 4-3, with Josh and John then playing the last two matches simultaneously and needing one win out of the two to clinch it. Josh kept up his fine level of performance by beating Finlay Feil 3-0, while John also won, defeating John Barman 3-1. As often happens, the next match (first match after promotion to Division 1) was an anti-climax, with Fabian and Josh running out of energy in a 3-6 loss to Reading A. Overall Fabian won 6/9, Josh 6/9 and John 4/9.

As it always does, win or lose, this NJL session provided an excellent day's competition and our thanks go to the organiser, Mike Atkinson, who often has to make frantic efforts to improve efficiency and get all matches started as promptly as possible. He skilfully deployed the extra tables which became available during the day, and I'm sure if it hadn't been for his supreme vigilance, we would all have gone home up to an hour later.

John Birkin (December 12, 2013)

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