

Leicestershire TTA: Pearson inspires as junior team reaches final

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There are not many competitions in which a team can lose every single game yet still win the match, but the Leicestershire County Association's **Rose Johnson Challenge Bowl** is one such, as the very young Knighton Park fifth team showed at the semi-final stage.

This quartet of juniors played together in the Leicester League's Division Five, gaining promotion in second place, and were up against very experienced opponents in their own club's third team. They were given 144 points as a handicap over the 16 games of this event where every point counts.

Man of the match from the fifth team's point of view was Dan Pearson, who went down twice at 21-20 (only one point for a deuce) to Jack Rogers and Rayan Kotecha and then scored a very creditable 17 against George McClurkin, a Division One player.

As the third team closed in at the end Pearson had the task of scoring at least eight points against Shirley Pickering, the club coach, in the final game to ensure victory, losing (but winning) in the end 12-21 in a very fine individual performance.

He had excellent support from Oscar White, Adam Green and Max Huggins as the third team kept very much on target throughout with McClurkin the most successful of the latter squad with an overall plus return of 51. The final score was 341-336.

It will be an all-Knighton Park final as the other semi was won by their second team 317-279 against Electricity, for whom Harry White (+48) and Andy Wright (+37) did well.

But KP started with an 84 points advantage and Aga Hirt, a Polish girl new to the league this season, has come on in leaps and bounds lately and, although only winning one game at 21-7 against Keaton Bayliss, showed excellent form against her vastly more experienced opponents to hold her own.

Nikki Farrall was KP's most successful player at +5 and was supported by John Bowness (-2) and Pat Evans (-37), the latter also beating Bayliss. Charlie Bateman (+9) was the Sparks' fourth player.

John Bowness (publicity officer)

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