

Essex Over 45 Team Report for 2015/16 Season

The fixtures in the Masters County Championships South & East Division East were again not able to provide a stern test for the team, with only 6 rubbers dropped in the 3 matches played before Christmas, qualification for the play-offs was all but assured by beating Cambridgeshire twice. In the matches in the New Year, Hertfordshire showed that they could put out a competitive team and we enjoyed a narrow 7-5 win with much more competitive games. The same could not be said for home & away games versus Suffolk, but opportunities were taken to rotate the squad and involve a few more players.

The playing squad was: Amanda Austin, Donna Tubb, Lesley Pallett, Tracy Hutchinson & Marion Neale; Trevor Rogers, Andy Bailey, Dave Wood, Ian Smith & Paul Belcher. We were indebted through the season for help from the O50s squad with Sue Crompton, June Hammond, Pam Lee & Bir Singh plus Jacqui Twitchell & Kulvinder Dohal who both happily helped out when asked to do so.

The New Year the Masters County Challenge took us and the O60s to Milton Keynes, and we were up for celebrating win, lose or draw. Relatively straightforward wins were recorded against Cheshire, Warwickshire & Middlesex on the Saturday meant all to play for on the Sunday, after a significant celebration at the BE function. The team were suitably attired in honour of Lesley's birthday.



This over-celebration may have affected the results on the Sunday, with draws against Surrey and ultimately Hertfordshire cost us a chance of winning. In between there was a good win against West of Scotland, and the win of the weekend belonged to the birthday girl with Donna who beat a strong Herts ladies pair. So we ended up 2nd again!

Back to the League play-offs at Hatfield, with an expected tough match against Surrey who had won through a harder looking South East Division South. The Surrey team on the day were a lot below full strength and we took full advantage, just dropping 2 men's in a match that was more comfortable than we expected.

The finals at Stoke Mandeville put us against Hampshire in the semi-final, an opposition that we had not played against before. The opening men's & ladies were all won, with the only loss coming in the reverse men's. Another comfortable win achieved 11-1. Cheshire beat West of Scotland in the other semi. Hampshire then beat WoS in the 3rd/4th play-off and we prepared to play Cheshire again. The match got off to a fiery start as Andy & Trevor lost 23-25, 22-24 to Adrian Hancox & Chris Wright, as Chris threw rackets into the netting and around the net-post, yet Andy received a warning from Heather, the referee. 2nd men's was won as were the opening ladies. Ian & Paul then lost against the top men's pair. The ladies halved their reverse matches, with Amanda & Tracy remaining unbeaten, whilst Donna & Lesley lost narrowly. So 5-3 up going into the mixed, and Marion & Ian looked to have the toughest assignment. Lesley & Andy comfortably won at top, then Marion & Ian played excellently to beat Kay Vickers & Chris Wright to mid-teens in both sets. The final was won. 3rd & 4th pairs were guilty of easing off having already won and the score line of 7-5 somewhat flattered Cheshire, but the title was retained.



ESSEX O45 County Champions for a 4th successive season & Runners-Up in the County Challenge.

Again with thanks to my all the squad for another great season! – Trevor ☺
Trevor Rogers O45 Captain