



HOOK RAVENS v ODIHAM X
JAM LEAGUE CUP
4th DECEMBER 2025

I need to have surfing lessons as the Ravens are riding along on the crest of a wave and the bowling sun is most definitely in the sky. I usually save the result to the end of the report but the pride for my squad is so high I can't keep the 10-0 win against Odiham X a secret. This was the second time we have played them at Hook this season and the match was expected to be a close one after the Ravens won the first match 41-37. That match was in the JAM League but today the cup brought the teams together. The first match was played in cold conditions but the heating has since been fixed, so Odiham were hopeful of a warmer result at the end!

Mat 1 had Ken Hawkins (or was it Mick) at Lead, Brenda Grout at Second and Stan Goddard at Skip. They started brightly and entertained the largest crowd of the season (5 supporters) with some wonderful shots. After 4 ends they were 9-0 up but then Odiham mounted a fight back and they took the next 3 ends but only amassed 4 points. That fight back ended after a wonder shot by Brenda. Odiham were holding 5 or 6 shots but Brenda drew a shot right onto the jack and Hook held out to take the end. The quote of the day was from the opposition who were heard to say 'It's such a frustrating game'. Odiham would go on to only take another 2 ends out of the remaining 11. Ken felt he was not having his best game and outwardly became more and more downbeat about not finding his range. The body language and verbal support from his colleagues was nothing short of superb and it was supported by moving the jack to a length that suited his game. His game soon picked up again and it was nice to see the laughter when Stan proclaimed on end end after his companions had finished bowling that there was 6 bowls still on the mat! The line was delivered perfectly and it was well received by the team. The performance was great from all 3 under relentless pressure from Odiham that the score does not reflect but the icing on the cake was reserved for the 18th end. Bowl after bowl was delivered around the Jack and all of them were Hook bowls. Despite the frantic efforts of Odiham to smash them out of the way, those bowls remained steadfast and the final count of 7 to the Ravens was a great reward and their 27-6 win backed up the heroics going on at Mat 3.

Dave Wilson at Lead, Martyn Kee at Second and Liz Wilson at Skip were the trio to back up Mat 1's excellent work. Mat 3 was like a multi-coloured swap shop with only two players using black bowls and the rest using so many different colours. Martyn Kee switched back to his trusty green bowls as he was not really happy with how his previous bowls had gone. They started so well with a 4 off the first end but Odiham countered quickly by taking the next 2 with 1 off each but the third end very nearly ended so differently. Liz played what looked initially like a safe attempt at pushing the jack away from Odiham possession but if indoor mats were mown like the outside lawn, we would all be cheering the work of whoever used the mower. Her bowl made better contact with the jack than anticipated and the jack headed straight to the side of the mat and stood on the edge like a lemming deciding when to jump! Phew, it stayed there and Odiham only took 1 shot rather than the 2 that were very nearly given to them. This stirred the Ravens and they took the next 4 ends for a total of 11 points and a 15-2 lead. Odiham were shell shocked. Like their teammates on Mat 1, Odiham attempted a comeback but it only lasted 2 ends with 4 points added to their tally. Their comeback ended with a bump after Martyn delivered a shot that he instantly berated himself for. When the shot had a double wick and ended up as shot he changed his mind and said he meant it! The positive vibe between all the players was highlighted when Martyn was giving advice to Liz and told her to do anything on the forehand but do not hit the pink bowl. Liz laughed and pointed out that she was now duty bound to hit the pink bowl. I am pleased to say that she missed it but actually added another shot to the count. By now the score was mounting up and with Mat 1 finishing slightly ahead and the match result already known, the

team on Mat 3 decided that they would battle on and prevent Odiham from reaching double figures on their mat. After 14 ends the score was 25-8 and the task was not going to be an easy one. The Three Amigos fought for every point and Odiham were only able to take 1 more point on the 15th end and Hook won the Mat 31-9.

An impressive 58-15 win put the Ravens at the top of their Cup Group at the halfway stage of the cup competition. I have made no secret of my desire to instil an approach of positivity to the squad when they play. It has been growing match by match and today it seemed so natural and I hope it added to their confidence when play was tough. There is a long way to go in the season but The Ravens have definitely shown they are amongst the best in the competitions they are in. Next week we switch our focus back to the league when we play Alencon 25, a new team to the league. Although Alencon are the home team, the match will be played at Hook as the Alencon venue is not available. If anyone wants to come and watch a day of bowls feel free to come along. The Ravens will start their match at 1100 and the Hawks will play the other Alencon team at 1400. Come along and smash the new attendance record. Bring your positivity with you and cheer on the Ravens in their top of the table clash (Actually 2nd v 3rd) and then stay to support the Hawks as they take on one of the top teams in the league. Stay warm, Stay safe and Go Ravens