



HOOK RAVENS v ODIHAM 'D'  
JAM LEAGUE  
27th November 2025

What a cruel but exciting game short mat bowls can be. I have received word from Alton Towers that they are suing us because our matches are providing more, and better, ups and downs than the Nemesis Roller Coaster! This top of the table clash against the second Odiham side we have played in the league drew our largest crowd of the season as at one stage we had 3 supporters sat on the sideline alongside Captain Chris.

The match started on a high as Odiham could not field a lady on one of the mats and the prematch draw saw that become Mat 3. That gave Martyn Kee at Lead, Marilyn Murphy at Second and Paul Crook at Skip a 5 point head start. Mat 3 proved to be like it was in seasons gone by with lines not making sense and having a great impact on play. Strangely this seemed to affect the Ravens more than Odiham and Paul Crook spent more time fighting fires than being able search out point winning shots. It looked like Martyn and Marilyn were a little out of sorts and the harder they tried, the more frustrated they got. Now this is where my ethic of playing with a smile on your face was starting to fade and the point advantage had been wiped out after the 8th end. Then things started to change and it was all down to the positive language used firstly by Paul and then Marilyn and then Martyn. The body language changed, the belief began seeping into play and the need to stay in then lead meant more focus. Our opponents continued to believe they could take the mat and the match but they also remained great sports and the match that became tenser and tenser was always played with smiles on faces after the 8th end. Hook held the lead until the 14th end when Odiham had taken their 3rd end on the trot. This is when a lot of teams would have collapsed but not the Ravens. I have no idea what happened but things just seemed to click. All 3 players were now in the groove and more shots found their target, confidence is a huge part of bowls and the Ravens were now full of it. The 3 Amigos took the final 4 ends for a total of 9 points and they rolled out 21-13 winners. This match was 2-3 ends ahead of Mat 1 after they had a couple of ends with lengthy time taken over some very tight measures. As well as being a very entertaining match, Mat 3 also provided one of the quotes of the season from the Odiham second. In his excitement on the 14th end he checked the head and announced to his skip that after the recent delivery they were holding a couple but they might even have 2! You can imagine the banter between all the players after that. Perhaps that was the reason those were the final 2 points Odiham got on that mat.

Mat 1 with Ken Hawkins at Lead, Jackie Nurser at Second and Albert Johnson at Skip was another close match. The Ravens looked to be in command after they moved to a 6-1 lead after 5 ends. Odiham took 3 shots on then 6th end to close the gap and then ends alternated between both sides until the score after the 11th end was 11-9 to the Ravens. The 12th end was then a disaster for the Ravens. No matter what the ravens tried, drawing, firing, praying, cursing, nothing went their way. Odiham took 8 shots off this end and the overall lead they were holding disappeared. At one stage Hook were 7 shots ahead of Odiham but now the tide had turned and Odiham were now 4 points ahead overall. The Ravens dusted themselves down and kept in the match and then the cruelty of the game reared its head again as what were tight ends on the 16th and 17th ends somehow swung to 3 shots to Odiham on each and the match was effectively over. That is until Hook seemed to be holding 3 which would have meant the overall result was shared and that would have been a fair result. The Odiham Skip wasn't finished though and he managed to reduce the score and despite Albert's best efforts Hook could only take 1 off that final end.

So, a 35-37 overall score to Odiham meant the visitors departed with a 4-6 win and they moved to the top of the table on points difference. What can Hook take away from this narrow defeat?

Positivity is key. Even when it is not going quite right, keep plugging away and keep believing. Talk to your teammates with a positive tone and find the things that are going right. That is what has got us to joint top of the table. This was another tough one to watch as it was so exciting and some unbelievable shots were played by both sides. Be proud that you could play with such weight on your shoulders and please take the positives out of the game rather than the bits that did not quite go right. I will end the report with an apology to Mat 1 as I said to them it was the end they lost 8 points that probably cost them the match. They knew that. They did not do it on purpose, nobody ever does. What I say now and should have said then was well done on fighting on and getting us so close to that overall victory. Next week we take on the other Odiham team back at Hook but in the League Cup. Come along and support your Ravens as they seek to get the same outcome as the last time we played them in the season. Thank you as ever to the team, the squad and the supporters.  
Captain Chris