



HOOK RAVENS v ODIHAM
JAM LEAGUE
30TH OCTOBER 2025

This is one day before Halloween so the scary run of the game today should not have come as a surprise! We welcomed our nearest rivals from Odiham who sent their 'OX' team, a team we will be playing a lot this season. Hook won the toss and decided to take the mat. In previous write ups I have focused on Matt 1 first but my job is to build up the tension that the match built up so I will start with Mat 3.

The Ravens went into the match unbeaten in the league and Hannah Goddard at Lead, Stan Goddard at Second and Albert Johnson as Skip knew that they would have to be on form to beat their opponents. The match got off to the worst possible start with Odiham taking the first 4 ends and a 7-0 lead. The first end was the worst of the four and the next 3 were very close ends but the Odiham skip was being incredibly accurate while the Ravens struggled to find the true pace of Mat 3. Suddenly it all clicked as all 3 Ravens put pressure upon pressure on the shell shocked Odiham triple. A fantastic 5 for Hook led to the Odiham trio losing all the confidence they had built up and very soon their game plan looked like the Walls of Jericho! 5 ends on the trot saw Hook win point after point and a great 14-7 lead. In the beginning Odiham watched Hook put in some great shots and then put their own bowls on top of them to grab the points. Now Hook were doing the great shots and they were surfing on the crest of the wave of confidence.

Then came one of the great lessons of bowls - don't get too greedy! Albert sent a delivery that went horribly wrong and took his side from 3 shots up to 1 shot down. The crest of the wave was over and it looked like Hook had been wiped out. Albert told Chris the Captain that he should not have played the shot he did and he would have to make up for it. He had lost the previous night and was determined it wasn't going to be a slippery slope of doom. You can imagine the surprise of Chris the Captain and Albert's partners when he was holding 3 and had the final bowl he said he was going to go for it! Surprise from the far end of the mat, Chris put his hands before his eyes as Albert sent his shot down. Two weeks ago we saw Stan play a shot that seemed to go in slow motion, well this one was doing pigeon steps! Then suddenly the bowl veered off the side of the mat and no harm was done. Albert simply winked and smiled at Chris to indicate he was never actually going to make the same mistake twice and he saw another 3 points added to the Hook score. Odiham did try to mount a revival but the Ravens were simply too strong and they went on to win 21-14.

Whilst Mat 3 relaxed after their well earned victory they would soon become aware of how important the points they scored would be for the overall result.

Mat 1 with Ken Hawkins as Lead, Jackie Nurser at Second and Martyn Kee as Skip got off to a much tighter start than the other mat. 1 shot to Hook off the first end followed by a tied end set the scene for a tough match. Then it all went horribly wrong! 4 ends of unbelievable bowls by all 3 of the away side saw them race into a 12-2 lead. A cheeky 1 shot more to Hook was punished by another 3 dominant ends to Odiham and a 16-2 lead. Chris went and tried to keep spirits up in the team by telling them if they can't get all the points back for a win they should try to stay in touch as the overall lead of Odiham had been reduced from a 15 point lead on the two mats to just 8.

The 11th end saw some great play from all 3 and the Odiham facade started to crack like the dam in the Dambusters. A little at first and then a trickle followed by complete implosion. 2 shots to Hook and Martyn Kee gave a little fist pump of belief and this was seen and reacted to by his

team mates. The 12th end was magnificent. Earlier in the match the odium Number 2 tried to claim a simple 6 and wanted to move on but Jackie stood her ground and made them count the shots. The fact that it was a 6 was irrelevant but the scene occurred again but with roles reversed for the points. Odiham again wanted to concede a reasonable 4 shots but Jackie again stood her ground and a measure was taken. That measure resulted in a magnificent 7 to Hook and the score was suddenly 11-16. The fight was well and truly on and within another 2 ends it was 16 all!

Another great lesson in bowls was learned on the levelling end as Martyn gave guidance to Jackie about the shot she should take. Her reply was full of perfectly normal language that indicated that she was not at all sure she should try the shot as it will likely end up off the side of the mat. Martyn persevered and gave her that little bit of confidence she needed. The shot was executed perfectly and it went to show that confidence is a huge part of the ability to complete difficult shots. Always believe.

The 15th, 16th and 17th ends became like a see-saw with the lead changing hands until they were tied again, this time at 19 points all. The Ravens went into the final end holding an 8 point overall lead and had the opportunity for their first 10 point win of the season. The standard of play from both sides under such pressure was to be applauded. It came down to the final shot but the pressure was off as although Odiham held 4 shots they could not reach the 9 points needed so Martyn was trying to smooth the icing on the cake. Sadly he was just wide.

A 41-37 win snatched from the jaws of defeat at the halfway point was the final lesson of the day. Never give up, see the bigger picture and believe. The unbeaten league run continues with a 6-4 win. Sadly the other Odiham team (Team 'D') won their match 10-0 and as the only other unbeaten side in the division they go two points clear at the top.

Next week the Ravens are back on the road in the league as they visit Crondall.

Thank you to Dave Poulter who was the main supporter today.

Go Ravens