



MARNELL V HOOK RAVENS
JAM LEAGUE
16TH OCTOBER 2025

I think it was Busted who sang that great song 'What I go to School for' and I'm going to make my own version called 'What I go to Bowls for'! Week 1 was like the great stormy sea of short mat, Week 2 was more like the gentle rolling seas off Portland Bill. It had ups and downs and then more ups again. Both Marnell and your Hook Ravens started the season with home 6-4 wins and both were keen to add to the winning start.

Team 1 consisting of Jane Tatnall at lead, Marilyn Murphy at second and Albert Johnson at skip flew out of the blocks and after 3 ends were 8-0 up. They then dominated the match until they found a different number to get stuck on - 21! After 10 ends the score was 21-5 and then Marnell started their attempt at a mini revival. The Ravens trio were helped, indeed buoyed, by the 6 they took off 8th end but they soon knew how the opposition felt when Marnell took 6 off the 12th. Nerves could have set in but the Ravens constantly harried the Marnell side and eventually, after losing 4 ends on the trot, the patience and skill paid off. A very well played 4 off the 14th end saw the Marnell shoulders slumped and their belief of the come back of all come backs disappear. Mat 1 ended victorious by 29 points to 16.

Mat 2 was always a much closer affair for Jackie Nurser at lead, Brenda Grout at second and Stan Goddard at skip. The lead changed hands several times during the match and it looked to be all over as the Ravens worked hard for a 13-6 lead after 10 ends. At this point the Hook squad were 34-11 up overall. Then, as with last week, the opposition seemed to gel and they certainly had the luck of the God of Wicks and they began their come back. The wick comment might be a little unfair as their second and skip played some great shots and they all had the greater percentage per shot to get a good result. Shot by shot, point by points and end by end Marnell clawed their way back and finally on the 15th end they went 15-13 up. Ends were then shared on the 16th and 17th (Marnell elected to take the one shot rather than a risky 2) and the teams entered a tense final end with Marnell leading 16-14. The final head was incredibly tight and the shot changed hands a couple of times but with the skips having one shot each left the Ravens were holding 1 shot. Chris watching on the sidelines, still recovering from a knee injury, knew Hook had won the match. The Marnell skip sent his final bowl toward the jack and it finished oh so close to scuppering the Ravens point. Stan took his time, he knew the reward for a good shot but like Prince Andrew there was not a bead of sweat on his brow. He took his stance, commanding and one final glance. The crowd held their breath as his bowl left his hand. It looked good. The pace on the mat had been unpredictable at times but the bowl passed the block almost in slow motion. I am sure that Vangelis wrote the 'Chariots of Fire' music for this moment. The bowl slowed and crept and almost grew feet to reach that perfect point and when it thought it had done enough it stopped. All eyes turned to Brenda and the elated Hook team sprung into the air cheering as she conformed the shot secured the second point and a 16-16 draw for the mat. This meant an 8-2 overall victory for the Ravens and a 2 wins out of 2 start to the season.

A great match with great bowls played by all 6 Ravens players who once again had a couple of players playing out of their preferred position. It was great to see how they stepped up during the periods where doubt might have crept in and the smiles on their faces only disappearing when concentrating and not when under pressure. As good as the bowls were it would be remiss of me not to mention Hook's newest super hero - Bowls Woman! On Mat 1 a bowl delivery struck the block as it passed. Marilyn took a fraction of a second to recognise this but still had time to put

on her super hero cape and dive into the head feet first too prevent any damage. How on earth she did not make contact with any of the other bowls is one of those mysteries that only caped crusaders know how to explain.

Next week the Ravens will host the other Marnell team in the JAM League Cup. I will be on holiday and Liz Wilson will be captain for the day and I won't make her do a write up like this. Keep your eyes peeled for the score though .

Go Ravens