

Senior County Championship report

Captains: Gail Emms, Andy Walden, Liz Austin

Herts 1

This was my 1st season as manager and Hertfordshire 1st team are relegated. Not sure if this is a reflection on my managerial skills (!) but it is definitely not the efforts of the players that played on the 3 premier A weekends. It is, however, a reflection that the county league does not and cannot get the top players that could represent it to be able to play. In one weekend, there were representatives from Herts 3rd team and we as a county were not alone in the predicament for getting players to the event.

I couldn't ask for more from the players. I was proud that Herts 1st team were a great group to be a part of and I am only sorry that the system let us down as a full 1st team turnout would have ensured our survival in the top league. Congratulations to Ryan McArthy for 1st Team Player of the Year - deserved as he had to run around me in mixed doubles! Looking forward to the next debacle of trying to get players all on the same weekend...!!

Herts 2

The 2nd team had a great season, finishing second and securing promotion to the new format Division 1.

Having lost twice to the eventual winners, Worcestershire, and once to Cambridgeshire, we set up a final game shoot-out with Cambs to decide who would take the second place. When the pressure was on, the team stepped up, winning 9-6.

We reaped the benefit of having a more settled team than in previous years, especially on the men's side - with the 4 core team members - Andy, Dave, James and Doug - playing most of the games. Of course, we still had plenty of subs at times, with all of the 3rd team playing up for us at least once, so thank you and congratulations to all who played.

Special mention should go to Charity, who took the 2nd team player of the year award. Not only did she play in 7 of our 8 matches, but also played singles, doubles and mixed in them more often than not, and still came out with an 85% win record, losing just four all season.

And so, on to the next challenge! With the newly-introduced format to next season's ICC, we will be playing not only against our fellow top-finishing teams in the regional divisions, but those from the national divisions as well...including our own 1st team. Bring them on!!!

Herts 3

The 3rd team have had one of their best seasons in a long time, finishing in third place. Not only was there not a relegation battle in sight (a rarity in recent years!) but we only missed coming second by 2 rubbers. We were also 1 of only 2 teams to beat runaway winners Middlesex. Phew, what a season!

3rd team player of the season was awarded to Ben Vranjkovic, for willingly throwing himself into whatever singles, doubles and mixed games were thrown his way and for winning the most games of the men. While all the players contributed to the excellent result, mention should be made of the two regular ladies doubles pairs: Caroline Hale and Liz Austin were unbeaten all season winning 12 out of 12 and Cayleigh Bambrick and Charlotte Willis won 9 out of 14.

Caroline Hale was very deservedly awarded overall Herts Player of the Season, for winning 21 games out of 22 for the 3rd team and 4 out of 7 for the 2nd team. A win ratio like that is pretty hard to beat!

Well done and thank you to all the third team players, including those who stood in at short notice, for ensuring we get a shot at the new division 2 next year!