

Having just returned from almost 18 days at Leamington I wanted to congratulate the players who represented Hampshire throughout those days.

It was an honour and a privilege to watch them all receive their championship badges which will be a lasting memory to them of their achievement in getting so far.

How smart they all looked as they lined up to play. Some teams and individuals wearing the new and striking navy, red and white shirt with navy below the waist and others wearing the white shirt which still stands out amongst the rest.

Although the daily results posted on the Bowls Hampshire so often spoke of defeat, they did not represent the sheer grit and determination of some of our players who fought hard and never gave up and in some cases almost pulled off amazing victories over tough opposition.

I was proud of the way the majority of our players conducted themselves both on and off the green, remembering that win or lose, respect for one's opponents, markers and umpires is essential.

This was most evident in the final game I watched when our ladies from Alton Social became National Champions in the Senior Fours. Lesley Johnson, Alice Attwood, Hazel Marke and Margaret Holden exemplified all that is good about bowls.

Throughout the knockout rounds they had played with determination, never letting their heads drop even when 2-10 down against Yorkshire.

The final demonstrated the true spirit of good sportsmanship - both teams desperate to win but still able to recognise a good shot from the opposition and to stay positive and upbeat when the chips were down.

This was a final worthy of being televised. Bowls England could have used it as an example of how to play bowls, to be competitive and committed to winning whilst maintaining a positive demeanour on the green.

The bowling community of Hampshire can be very proud of the team. It was one of the best moments of my presidency - congratulations Margaret, Hazel, Alice and Lesley -

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS 2024

Sue Lewis Parkes
Bowls Hampshire Ladies' President