

Devon Colts end of season report (25/04/2022)

Heidi and I have just finished our first indoor season as the Devon Colts Managers. Our transition from being known as Bowls Mum and Dad, to team managers has been a seamless one. This has been down to the backing that we have received from those present here this evening, the parents and of course the players themselves. From the very first get together in October we wanted to build a Family environment, where the players could just relax and play their own natural game. We didn't want to fill their heads with too much information, as we thought that most of them have been around the squad for a few years and they know what they are doing. We have to admit that the older players bought into this idea very quickly and they helped the new players bond and gel quickly into the environment we were trying to create.

The entire season has been a complete success and we have received praise from the various clubs and their players.

We had to introduce the new code of conduct for this year and we have had no instances at all of any player transgressing to our knowledge.

We have lots of memories of this season but I think for Heidi and I, one of the highlights has to be taking our squad to play against Plymouth at the life centre our home city, for us as parents of Tyler and Connor, this is where our bowls journey as a family started approximately eight years ago.

If someone had told us then, as nervous parents watching our boys play bowls for the first time, that one day we would return to the same venue as Devon Colts managers, we would not have believed it.

The other main highlight has to be taking our under 18s mixed two rink triple squad to Nottingham for the national semi-final/final.

The squad themselves created history this season and I think the shot on the very last end and from the very last wood, will be talked about for years to come in the match against Dorset by participants and spectators alike!

We also believe the game before that against Somerset will be talked about for years to come but for another reason. We would like to thank members who submitted emails/appeals towards this decision that was made by EIBA.

We certainly learnt a lot about our squad at Nottingham, and for all but one of them it was their first big game outside of the county of Devon. We thank the Committee for the financial help when it came to travelling expenses, accommodation etc. We would also like to thank Plymouth Life Centre Indoor bowls club (Mike Sampson), for their very generous contribution that they made towards players expenses which we shared equally between the squad who travelled.

As I say we learned a lot that day from the occasion, although we were on the end of quite a heavy defeat against Kent, the players never dropped their heads and the empty feeling we all felt as a group we can use as motivation to make sure that doesn't happen again. We also realised that day as a squad, we are not vocal enough, compared to our peers.

From this October that is the one thing we are going to be working on. We need to have a stronger presence on the green, we need to get them talking and more involved in the discussions in their game. From watching the other three semi-final teams that is how they interacted and encouraged each other on the green.

Speaking to the Kent manager and their President, they gave us some pointers and information as to how they do things. They told us that they had received a lottery grant and gained other funding towards specialist coaching for their under 18's and under 25's. We think this is also something that Devon should try and adopt if we are to be more successful going forward when it comes to national competitions. The phrase was there is a money out there you can apply for it, it is yours. This is something that needs to be explored.

Our fixture list going forward for next season is pretty full but we would like if at all possible to get the players together more than the one occasion we do at the start of the season for team bonding/training days, we believe this would be a great help.

Finally we would like to say a big thank you to all the clubs that we have played against and all the venues that we have visited in this last season. We would also like to give a special word of thanks to those clubs that either waived their rink fees/food entirely or contributed back to the Colts.

To the other clubs, if at all possible, can the colts be charged one set fee rather than different for under 18s and over 18s?

Once again Heidi and I thank you for all your help and the faith you have shown in us.

Adam & Heidi Fielder
Devon Colts joint Team Managers