

PERFORMANCE MANAGER'S REPORT TO
THE SBA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Saturday 13 November 2021

I start off this report on a positive note for the Performance Teams as we qualified for the 2021 National Finals at Leamington Spa in three out of the 4 teams, narrowly missing out on the White Rose team.

Initially at the start of the season, all trials and matches for the teams listed below adhered to the Government's guidelines for COVID. Some teams had temperature checks on arrival at venues, lateral flow tests and player/s complied with self isolation after a positive test was recorded. So safety was paramount within these teams throughout the season.

- JOHNS TROPHY & MIDDLETON CUP

Unfortunately we did not reach the National Finals in the Johns or Middleton Cup. As Brian Pocock, our Middleton Cup Assistant Match Secretary, stood down at the beginning of the season, we brought on board Ed Hopegood from Bristol to take over this position for the remainder of the season. We are now in the process of booking venues for trials and squad days for 2022. The Johns Trophy team going to Clevedon Bowls Club and the Middleton Cup have dates fixed but, at the time of this report, the venue is yet to be announced. With Bowls England late in announcing the dates for the Middleton & Johns games for 2022 it has proved difficult for clubs to host the trials in 2022 until the programme has been announced. The format for 2022 will again be on a knockout basis.

My grateful thanks to Dave Alder for his sponsorship of the Middleton Cup.

- WALKER CUP

Unfortunately with the clash of dates by Bowls England with the Amy Rose and Walker Cup teams this year, we had a much depleted Walker team with some of the senior juniors opting to play in the Amy Rose team. However, we fielded what was thought to be the best team available, and after winning at the Regional Finals, the team qualified for the National Championships at Leamington Spa in September. We were drawn against a very strong Kent team and with our depleted team due to Covid, and players not available, we unfortunately lost! Disappointing but bring on next year!!

- BALCOMB TROPHY

A magnificent win by our team against Devon in the early round, and beating Wiltshire in the Regional Finals they then qualified for the National Finals at Leamington Spa. We had high hopes for this team as they had the potential for a positive result. However, this was not to be on the day and lost to a strong Hampshire team. One positive to this result was that ALL PLAYERS then supported the Amy Rose final!!!

- AMY ROSE TEAM

Again, following a win at the Regional Finals these girls/ladies were excited to be performing at the National Championships at Leamington Spa in September. Because of the clash of the Walker Cup and Amy Rose teams this year, we lost two of our strong players to the Walker Cup. However, 3 other players opted to strengthen the A.R. team and as it was Kirsty Hembrow's last year she opted to play for the A.R. team.

WELL - what I can I say that hasn't already been voiced and highlighted on Facebook, SBA website and Bowls England. Winning the extra end against Norfolk in the semi-finals they then progressed to the Final against Hertfordshire. What amazing bowls played by these young girls - they were a credit to Somerset and their management team.

In the Final they well deserved their success. The atmosphere and vocal support around the green from spectators, and the Balcomb players as well, lead to one of the best exciting finals I have seen for a very long time. Thankyou to all the spectators who travelled to Leamington Spa to support this team.

- PRESENTATION luncheon

Following an anonymous and very generous donation to the 2021 NATIONAL AMY ROSE CHAMPIONS, I arranged for the Amy Rose winning squad to attend the SBA annual luncheon on a separate table with their NATIONAL TROPHY in the centre!!

- WHITE ROSE TROPHY

Unfortunately this team lost at the Regional Finals, but hopefully they will do better next year.

- U18 SINGLES COMPETITION

Our grateful thanks go to the organisers, again assisted by Brian Cracknell together with his helpers and markers, for organising another successful event at Ashcombe Park B.C. Also thanks to Ashcombe Park for allowing us to use their green and the generous donation from Terry Phillips.

- Both Junior Managers, Celia Whitmarsh and Matt Hamilton, are now standing down, but I am in the process of finding their replacements for 2022. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking both Celia and Matt for their dedication, encouragement and support with these juniors during their term of office. As I mentioned above, these juniors are a credit to Somerset.

I cannot close my report without congratulating Stef Branfield on her magnificent achievements at the National Championships at Leamington Spa in September. She played at a high level throughout her events and well deserved her accolade of winning 2 National Singles titles and narrowly missing out on the Champion of Champions title in one year. Well done Stef.

Edna Bessell MBE
SBA Performance Manager.

13.11.21