



## MEN'S COUNTY WEEK 2017

Report by Rich Irwin, Captain

### Team

Richard Irwin  
Adam Glynn  
Joe Dodridge  
Harry Butler  
James Whike  
Matthew Coombes  
Ben Pritchard  
Ben Battey  
Freddie Powell

### Monday v North of Scotland - Lost 6-3

First up was the favourites of the division. Without the Murray brothers but still with Jonny O Mara who had just been in the 2nd round of doubles at Wimbledon, Dorset knew it was going to be a challenge. It was made visible how close the week was going to be after just the first round of matches of the week where Irwin/Glynn had to come through 5-7 7-5 7-6 to put Dorset 2-1 up following Ben Battey gaining his first ever County week win alongside Ben Pritchard. As Irwin/Glynn faced O Mara, the 2nd round of matches slipped away from Dorset as Scotland turned the tie around winning all 3 and putting themselves 4-2 up whilst Butler/Whike failed to take the Scottish 3rd pair. Coombes came in for Whike for the last round to try and turn it around but the damage was done. Irwin/Glynn took a consolation win whilst Pritchard/Battey were outclassed by the Wimbledon player.

### Tuesday v Berkshire - Won 7-2

Having had the toughest team on the first day, Dorset knew they could now push on for the week and they did that straightaway. Berkshire had pulled off a surprising win against Bucks on Day 1 due to a poor team selection but Dorset proved far too strong. The arrival of Dodridge helped immensely and partnering with Butler, Dorset had another pair alongside Irwin/Glynn who won 3 on the day. Pritchard and Battey started the day but Whike was brought in to replace the younger Ben at the end of the day and got the 7th rubber to establish a convincing win.

### Wednesday v Northamptonshire - Lost 3-6

As it stood, Dorset knew this was a pivotal day and a win would have seen them looking up the table, while a loss would have seen them looking below and it turned out to be the latter. The rain fell all day so the match was moved indoors and changed to No-Ad scoring and a 3rd set Tie-Break making it more of a lottery. A strong performance from Dodridge/Butler taking their winning streak to 4 set Dorset on their way only for Whike/Pritchard to fall short and followed by heartbreak for Irwin/Glynn against Northants number 1 pair as they blew 3 match points from 9-6 in the 3rd set tie-break to lose 11-9 and fall 2-1 down. The 2nd round followed a similar suit where the number 1 pair proved too

strong for Whike/Pritchard, Irwin/Glynn got Dorset back on track but another 3rd set tie-break that broke the Dodridge/Butler streak and put Dorset 4-2 down going in to the last round. Irwin/Glynn held the Dogs in the tie to go 4-3, but the number 1 pair completed a clean sweep comprehensively dispatching Dodridge/Butler while the misery was rubbed in as Pritchard/Whike lost in a 3rd set tie-break leaving Dorset 0-3 when it came to the tie-breaks on the day.

#### **Thursday v Buckinghamshire - Lost 5-4**

Having surprisingly lost to Berkshire on Day 1, Bucks were now looking at their strongest and at a time when you didn't want to face them. Their pairs were much stronger both together and in depth throughout their team. Irwin/Glynn and Dodridge/Butler remained while the debutants of Battey/Powell were given their chance to try and save the day. Again, each individual match was fought out but again Dorset lost the crunch matches where Irwin/Glynn although favourites for the match up, couldn't replicate the intensity of the Bucks number 1, and likewise Dodridge/Butler were overcome by the Bucks number 2 pair leaving Dorset in that painful 2-4 position. Battey/Powell came so close to making the tie 3-3 but some tight play from their opponents snatched victory and with it, the lead. In the last round, Dodridge/Butler pulled off a great performance to beat the Bucks number 1, while Irwin/Glynn got back on track but it was too much to ask for the Dorset debutants who put up a valiant effort but fell short.

#### **Friday v Oxfordshire - Won 6-0**

Suddenly relegation was out of our hands and if Northamptonshire beat Bucks, Dorset were relegated. However, due to the rubbers Dorset had gained, were we to beat Oxford and Northamptonshire lost, Dorset would be safe. Oxfordshire had already been relegated and were already on the journey home as matches started on Friday so Dorset with the pairs of Glynn/Whike, Dodridge/Butler and Coombes/Pritchard swiftly took a 3-0 lead. A quick turn around and Powell in to replace Whike equalled the same result as Dorset achieved the win in double quick time and did what they needed to do. The question was whether it was enough... Unfortunately as we drove home, news came through that Northamptonshire had indeed beaten Bucks 5-3 meaning relegation was now confirmed.

A hard week in West Worthing and a sad end to what could have been a very promising week! Dorset ended up getting relegated in 5th place but with a better rubber count than 3rd and 4th position and only 1 different from 2nd place!!