



MEN'S WINTER COUNTY CUP 2017

Report by Rich Irwin, Captain

Team

Richard Irwin
Ben Battey
Matthew Coombes
Adam Glynn
Sam Glynn
Darius Perkins
Toby Samuel
Alex White

Friday - Dorset beat Hampshire 5-4

Given the amount of withdrawals the team had to face in the last week leading up to the event, it was only on Thursday that we finally managed to ensure we had the 6 available for the match on Friday and it didn't start well for the Dorset Dogs.

After 5 singles, the match looked all but done as Hampshire led 4-1 with Adam Glynn in a dog fight for the number 1 singles. As he so often does, Glynn pulled himself through the match and kept Dorset in the tie at 2-4 but needing to win all 3 doubles against an experienced Hampshire team. Meanwhile Dorset had a team of 3 pairs who had never played together at County Cup (2 pairs of which had never played with one another before).

However, the experience of Matt Coombes and the debutant Darius Perkins came through in a match tie-break from out of nowhere to give Dorset hope, while on the next court, Captain Irwin and the youngster Toby Samuel started to steam roll their way through Hampshire. On the far court Glynn and Battey were up too but struggling in the 2nd set.

Irwin and Samuel came through unscathed with a dominant performance and left the courts to join their team mates on the balcony as Hampshire drew the final match level at a set all taking it to a deciding 10 point tie break.

Hampshire started the tie-break strong and led for the duration but as they so often do, Dorset hung in there and stayed within touching distance with Hampshire getting their first match point at 9-8. Again, Glynn under pressure found a big return which forced a volley miss from the opposition and after another great return from Battey, it was Battey who had the chance to seal the great escape. And he did just that, a big first serve under immense pressure and Dorset from absolutely nowhere, had clinched the tie 5-4!

Saturday - Dorset beat Derbyshire 5-1

Following the high of Friday's comeback, Dorset faced an experienced Derbyshire team who still sit in Division 1 of Summer County Cup and would always prove to be difficult opponents. Alex White came in for the veteran Matt Coombes to strengthen Dorset higher up the order and like the previous day's comeback, Dorset were on a roll. Wins from Perkins, Samuel and Irwin led Dorset to a phenomenal 3-0 lead going in to the second round of singles and when Ben Battey produced an excellent performance again to push the lead further, it was down to the spearhead Glynn to seal the win which despite a few nervous moments, he did just that! An unreachable lead for the Dogs meant from nowhere, not only were they avoiding relegation, but were set up for a promotion tie v South Wales on the last day who had also won both days.

Sunday - South Wales beat Dorset 6-0

Unfortunately, the high had to end and so it did on Sunday against a South Wales team who proved too strong for all teams over the course of the weekend. In all ties, South Wales had already won after the 6 singles matches so as expected, they deserved the title and the promotion after a week where they outplayed all counties including a battling Dorset.

Some fantastic performances across the whole weekend for Dorset and considering the difficulties leading up to it, a fantastic achievement for Dorset to hang in there and remain in the division after last year's shock promotion. Great to have 4 new faces join the team this year and show that they are more than capable of remaining there next year!