



# *Suffolk* **Carpet Bowls** *Association*

SCBA Website is [www.carpetbowls.org/suffolk](http://www.carpetbowls.org/suffolk)

The Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of the  
Suffolk Carpet Bowls Association  
Held at Needham Market Community Centre on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm.

Those present: Neil West(NW) Chairman, Keith Jolly(KJ) Treasurer,  
Keith Hull (KH), Mick Watkins(MW), Andy Gilder(AG),  
Jane Sago(JS), Richard Sago(RS), Carol West(CW), Freda Wright(FW).

**1. Apologies for absence:** Neil Jolly (NJ), Sally Goodrich (SG), Jim Goodrich (JG)

**2. Approval of previous Minutes:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2014 were approved with a correction in section 9 replacing 68 with 78 and were duly signed.

**3. Matters Arising:**

Smoking Rule - members discussed if the use of e-cigarettes should be treated the same as tobacco for the purposes of rules relating to smoking. AG said the company he works for treat e-cigarettes as ordinary ones as the vapors from e-cigarettes can be just as offensive as smoke. After some discussion it was proposed MW, seconded NW that the rules relating to smoking shall also apply to e-cigarettes. All agreed.

**4. Chairmans Report:** NW gave his report as follows:

Shortly after our last meeting we heard that Keith was interested in joining us. Rather than waiting until this meeting to co-opt Keith I decided to do the job by the powers of email. I'm pleased to say that I had positive responses from all members with no abstentions, so I'm pleased to formal announce Keith's election to the committee.

Since the last meeting we've held two closed championships. The fours here at Needham Market & the Triples yesterday at East Bergholt. While entry numbers were somewhat down on last year, both tournaments provided good competitive bowls. Entry forms for the Pairs and Singles competitions are on the website and I guess will be distributed to clubs with the minutes of this meeting.

Neil Jolly's left a report to be read out under the county captain's section, I don't want to steal his thunder but...The county squad hosted a successful Charity Team Bowl at Littleport in October. Raising money for the air ambulance and securing victory over the other eastern county teams. Earlier in the month Carol and I popped up to Potters to watch the second day of the National Championships. The quality of competition was extremely impressive. It was

an absolute pleasure to watch. The whole squad should be very proud of their achievement. With the new season about to start and a couple of new squad members on board there's every chance of continued success.

**5. Secretary's Report:** FW had nothing to report.

NW said he'd been asked by Offton and Willisham to have the date of their forthcoming competition on March 8th 2015 added to the SCBA calendar.

NW said he'd been forwarded an email from Peter Cook from Hertfordshire about a facility run by the BBC called 'Get Inspired'. It is a website that individual clubs can register as a partner. This allows the club to advertise their club and post activities and forthcoming events. Peter has set up a page for a club currently looking to recruit new members <http://www.bbc.co.uk/thingstodo/activity/indoor-carpet-bowls-all-equipment-provided-02> and will provide feedback to ECBA on how successful it is.

**6. Treasurer's Report:** KJ produced a current statement of accounts. He stated that the account did not include proceeds from the raffle on November 16th. There has been expenditure on squad uniforms. Uniform items for new squad members is paid for from SCBA Funds, replacement uniforms will be funded by the new sponsorship. KJ said that he's investigating a new insurance company for next year. The Triples Championship was the only event where we pay for the hire of carpets this year. JV asked about the costs shown for trophy purchase being so low. KJ explained that there would be further expenditure on trophies during the season.

**7. Match Secretary's Report:** NW spoke in JG's absence saying that the league was running smoothly. JV asked about the correspondence since the last meeting in relation to a former Whatfield player moving to Somersham. NW confirmed that a request had been received from Somersham asking for permission for a former Whatfield player to join them, the player having moved house from Whatfield to Somersham. Following correspondence with both clubs and comment from a number of the committee, it was agreed to allow the move.

NW said that JG had spoken to him about the uneven number of clubs in the East Divisions and said that JG would discuss in more detail at the next meeting.

**8. C.P.O. Report:** AG reported that there had been no changes therefore nothing to report.

**9. Committee Roles:** It was proposed NW, seconded MW that JV be elected to the role of Vice Chairman. This was agreed unanimously.

**10. County Captains Report:** NW read NJ's report as follows:

It's been a busy couple of months for the Suffolk squad:

At the end of September the SCBA hosted the ECCBA Teambowl at Littleport. Our chosen charity (in memory of Graham Robinson) was the East Anglian Air Ambulance & the day raised £415. On the carpets it was also a very successful day for the team, as we led from start to finish, winning the event comfortably with 87 points, Essex second with 75 & Cambridgeshire third with 65.

Then in October the squad ran their final fundraising event, the Chairmans Triples at Needham. Forty triples took part, from Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Essex &

Cambridgeshire. After an enjoyable days bowling it was Jackie & David O'Brien & Andy Pooley from Great Blakenham who beat a Hertfordshire triple in the final.

We then had the trials, well attended & following which the squad for the 2014/15 season was selected.

Most recently was the Nationals weekend at Potters, where we were successful in retaining both the Inter-League & National trophies. Firstly on the Friday night, as Eastern Counties league winner, we faced Sunderland (Northern league winner) in a one-off match, which we won comfortably 10-2. The National event started on Saturday morning & the team got better as the day progressed & after the last session we hit the top finishing day one with 38 points, five ahead of Cambridgeshire & Durham. Sunday morning got off to a great start thrashing Cambridgeshire in all three games & we never looked back from there, losing only three games from twenty four all day, winning the event with two sessions to spare. We finished with 79 points, fourteen ahead of second place Cambridgeshire. It was a great all round team performance.

Looking ahead our first league match is away to Essex on Sunday 23 November at Braintree Leisure Centre, followed by another away trip to Barton-le-Clay to face Bedfordshire on Sunday 14 December.

**11. ECBA Report:** MW reported that some of the mats at the National Championships were in poor condition. This had been discussed with Potters and would be sorted out for next year. MW said that progress was being made to have Carpet Bowls registered with Sport England. The next ECBA meeting is in January 2015.

**12. ECCBA Report:** NW read NJ's report:

I attended the last ECCBA meeting on 16 October. Suffolk were congratulated on winning the Teambowl & thanked for providing carpets/ equipment & for their organisation of the event. As requested I asked that all counties & their clubs check the ECCBA website calendar before setting dates for competitions, to avoid date clashes where possible. The next ECCBA meeting is Thursday 12 March 2015.

**13. Review of rule deciding league positions:** The question of changing from 'shots for' to 'games won' to decide league positions in the event of a points draw was discussed. NW read comments from NJ. There was comment from various members after which it was agreed that the existing arrangement remains unchanged.

**14. Review of removal of shot penalty rule:** Following the removal of the penalty shot rule as a trial for the 2013/2014 season the committee discussed the results of the trial. Comment have been received from a few clubs both in favour and against the rule change, a similar number of each. After some discussion it was agreed that removal of the shot penalty played a greater part in encouraging smaller clubs to continue and was therefore better for the sport in Suffolk. It was therefore proposed AG, seconded KH that the removal of the shot penalty rule remains.

**15. Forthcoming events:**

The Charity event on January 3rd 2015. JS & RS have everything in hand. Help will be needed on the day, in the morning to lay out equipment, during the day selling various fundraising activities. MW will ask NJ to distribute the entry form by email again.

**16. Any other business:**

- KJ said that the Triples Trophy was in a poor state. He will contact Keith Mills to investigate re-plating. (KJ)

- MW said that the committee meeting dates have been sent to Paul Daniels for inclusion on the website calendar.

- MW said that he had attended Stowmarket Leisure Centre with SG, JG and Peter Jones. The event was not well attended but was an opportunity to forge links with the Stowmarket Bowls club. MW asked SCBA to write to Peter Jones to thank him for his help. (FW)

NW said that he'd not been able to get an estimated cost and availability for the hire of the indoor green. The chairman wanted to respond only to a firm requirement. NW thought it unlikely that the whole green would be made available for hire so would probably not be suitable.

- MW proposed that the Triples Championship be moved to Needham Market Community Centre next year because of the fall in entries again this year. There was some discussion about the need to limit the entry to 40 teams and the possibility of having to exclude entries once this number was reached. It was felt unlikely that the entry was reach 40 so it was agreed to make the move and notify member clubs at the next AGM of the reasons behind the move.

- MW said that he had become aware of a misconception that carpet bowls clubs were folding. He finds it increasingly difficult to obtain secondhand carpet bowls equipment and feels the reason for this is that, while clubs are no longer joining their county association, these clubs are not folding, but continuing to make carpet bowls available to their members albeit not on a competitive basis. MW was aware of a number of villages within the SCBA area that have carpet bowls clubs but are not members of SCBA. He suggested the promotion of the benefits of joining the SCBA to these clubs and the possibility of a reduced cost membership level to encourage them to join. It was agreed to start by compiling a list of such clubs. SCBA club members who are aware of non SCBA Carpet Bowls Clubs are asked to pass their details to MW. (ALL)

- KH asked about the rules relating to players playing in more than one county. MW explained that a player must decide on a county to play for by September 1st and commit to that county for the rest of the season.

- JV asked about the purchase of a vacuum cleaner to care for carpets. FW said she thought she had a spare cleaner which might be suitable. (FW)

- MW said that the cardboard tubes used to roll up the county's mats needed replacing with plastic tubes. KH offered to source suitable tube. It was proposed JV, seconded AG that KH purchase the required plastic tube.

There being no other business to discuss the meeting closed at 20:48

The next meeting will be 7.30pm Monday January 19<sup>th</sup>.2015 at Needham Market Community Centre.

**Contact list amendments:**

**None advised.**

## Essex – v – Suffolk

On Sunday 23 November the Suffolk team started the defence of their ECCBA league title with a tricky away match against Essex at Braintree Leisure Centre.

Suffolk were looking to build on the momentum gained from their success at the Nationals earlier on in the month, but it wouldn't be easy against an Essex team who always play their own mats well.

The Suffolk rinks selected were:

**Suffolk 1 (S1):** Jim Goodrich, Don Allum, David Ford, Paul Daniels

**Suffolk 2 (S2):** Trevor Cain, Ellen Grube, Andy Pooley, Sue Gilder

**Suffolk 3 (S3):** Sam Runnacles, Peter Fellingham, Mick Watkins, Tom Runnacles

**Suffolk 4 (S4):** Peter Runnacles, John Varden, Clint Watling, David Mittell

**Suffolk 5 (S5):** Sally Goodrich, Rita Runnacles, Andy Gilder, Steven Cain

**Suffolk 6 (S6):** Sue Davey, Ralph Sadgrove, Colin Fellingham, Neil Jolly

As anticipated in the first session the Essex team started well and the Suffolk rinks had to hang in there for a few ends until they got to grips with the carpets. When the mat lines and speeds were picked up it was S3 who were first to take control and from the middle ends onwards they dominated their game and ran out comfortable 12-5 winners. The other two games were far closer though and it wasn't until the final bowls were played that the outcomes were decided. However from a Suffolk perspective it was two favourable results, S5 deservedly edging their game 8-7 and S1 securing an honourable 7-7 draw. Five points out of six was just the start Suffolk were hoping for.

The second session started in a similar fashion to the first, with the Suffolk rinks needing a few ends to get used to the mats. It was S4 who were playing the better bowls of the Suffolk rinks and once they had earned themselves a decent lead, they never looked back, winning well by 9-5. Meanwhile S2 were involved in a low scoring game and despite being behind early, they gradually played their way back into the game. Having got a slight lead, this was protected and another win followed, by 7-4. Lastly, S6 were also playing catch up as they were 6-0 down early on but the middle ends saw them turn this around and going into the last end, it was a tied game. On the final end however, the jack was unfortunately knocked off, resulting in an 8-10 loss. Overall another four points for Suffolk and the good start had been maintained.

Looking to follow up their unbeaten starts, S1, 3 and 5 came to the mats in confident mood in the third session. Their confidence was not misplaced as they all got off to good starts. Impressive again were S3, another win always looked on the cards and it was duly delivered by 11-5. It was a similar story for S1, playing really consistent bowls, they also ran out deserved 11-5 winners. S5 were not quite as comfortable though, in a high quality game that always looked like it wouldn't be decided until the last bowl. A brave skips bowl earned S5 a one shot lead going into the last end and they just did enough to secure another shot to win the game 8-6. A maximum six point session for Suffolk and this further extended their overall lead to 15-3.

Having got into their stride at the end of their first game, it was S2 who made the best start in the fourth session. With the whole rink playing consistent drawing bowls, they were relatively untroubled on their way to an 11-5 win. It wasn't quite as comfortable for S4 though, a close game in which they had to play well to stay on top. However they held their nerve during the final ends and delivered another two points with a

hard earned 8-6 win. Finally, a slow start for S6 saw them in trouble from the early ends, which they were simply unable to recover from. Despite a late rally, the game was lost 4-10. However another four points and the overall lead further increased.

The penultimate session saw S3 on top form again and there only ever looked like being one outcome as they steadily increased their lead. A good all round rink performance resulted in a comfortable 13-4 win. Meanwhile S1 were involved in a real see-saw battle, a sluggish start saw them behind early and then an excellent skips conversion shot saw them level the game with six shots on one end. They won the next couple of ends to lead going into the last, then found themselves in trouble but did just enough to secure a valuable point with an entertaining 11-11 draw. The news wasn't as good in the remaining game though, where S5 struggled from the start and the home rink played well in winning 14-4.

In the final session, the outcomes of two of the games were pretty much decided quite early on, when both S2 and S6 got off to flying starts. Playing their best bowls of the day, S6 dominated from start to finish on their way to a one-sided 17-3 win. S6 were also well up after a few ends and despite dropping a few shots, they always stayed far enough ahead to remain in control, finishing with a 15-7 win. That left S2 who were involved in a real battle, but typical of the rink they hung in the game and they were rewarded with a couple of shots on the last end to secure a good point with a 7-7 draw.

The match finished with a Suffolk win 27-9 (shots: 171 - 121).

It had been a great day for Suffolk and just the result they'd hoped for from the first league match of the season. To lose only three games to a decent Essex team on their own mats takes some doing and it had been a good all round team performance from the Suffolk bowlers. Well done to S3 and S4 who won all of their games and to S1 and S2 who were unbeaten.

Suffolk's next challenge is away from home again, this time against Bedfordshire at Barton-le Clay on Sunday 14 December.

Neil Jolly (County Captain)

## **ECCBA Six Counties Charity Teambowl 2014**

On Sunday 28 September 2014 Suffolk CBA hosted the ECCBA Six Counties Charity Teambowl at Littleport.

In memory of Graham Robinson the SCBA's chosen charity was the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

The competition involved the six Eastern Counties, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

Each county were represented by four singles bowlers, four pairs and four triples, each playing one seven end game against each of the other counties.

Suffolk were looking to retain the Teambowl trophy and add it to the league title already won. The team selected to represent Suffolk was:

**S1:** Tom Runnacles (single), Peter Runnacles & Andy Gilder (pair), Ann Hathaway, Ellen Grube & Sue Gilder (triple);

**S2:** Mick Watkins (single), John Varden & Colin Fellingham (pair), Sam Runnacles, Peter Fellingham & Neil Jolly (triple);

**S3:** Paul Daniels (single), Don Allum & David Ford (pair), Sue Davey, Rita Runnacles & Steven Cain (triple);

**S4:** Jim Goodrich (single), Sally Goodrich & Clint Watling (pair), Trevor Cain, Ralph Sadgrove & Andy Pooley (triple);

The first session of the day took on more importance than usual, as on paper the top two teams Suffolk and Cambridgeshire faced each other. It was a session that neither county could afford to lose heavily. The four singles matches as expected were close, and by the end a shared session was a fair outcome. For Suffolk, Mick won 8-5 and Jim by 8-3, with both Tom and Paul only losing their games on the final end. Next on were the pairs and leading from the front were Don and David, without dropping a shot they cruised to a 15-0 win. That was followed up with wins by S1 by 11-5 and S4 by 4-3, due to a fantastic last bowl by Clint. With momentum in their favour the Suffolk triples carried on where the pairs had left off, S1,2 and 3 all got off to great starts and increased their leads winning 13-2, 11-2 and 10-5 respectively. Overall it was just the session Suffolk were hoping for, sixteen points from their main rivals, taking them straight into first place.

Next up were Norfolk, never the easiest of games but confidence within the Suffolk team was high. Again the singles games were close but the picture improved for Suffolk as the ends went by. Mick and Jim won again, by 8-2 and 9-4 respectively, Paul also ground out a 7-4 victory and yet again Tom was unfortunate to lose a last end decider. In the pairs, this time it was John and Colin who got off to the best start and they raced away to a deserved 9-1 win, quickly followed by a 9-6 win for Sally and Clint. Meanwhile Don and David struggled early on but showed great character to bounce back and secure a 6-6 draw. In the triples, there were then two convincing wins for S1 and S4, neither conceding a shot on their way to 10-0 wins. Two further points were scored by S2 when they won their game 8-5. So overall it was seventeen points from Norfolk, keeping Suffolk in top spot, just three points ahead of Essex.

Suffolk faced Hertfordshire next, who in the previous session had drawn twelve each with Cambridgeshire. Again the singles got Suffolk off to a reasonable start, Tom deservedly won his game well by 8-1, Paul won again by 10-3 and Mick picked up a valuable point with a hard earned 6-6 draw. The pairs then had Suffolk's best session of the day, when maximum



points were secured. There were convincing wins for John and Colin (6-1), Don and David (11-2) and best of all Sally and Clint (11-0). However the best game involved Peter and Andy who had to work really hard to win their game 5-4. Not to be outdone, the triples then went on and did exactly the same, another four wins. S1 winning 8-3, S2 by 12-5, S3 by 9-5 and S4 by 10-2. It had been a fantastic session for Suffolk, scoring twenty one points and improving again on the first two sessions. Suffolk remained top, now five points ahead of Essex and fourteen points ahead of Cambridgeshire.

Suffolk's penultimate opponents were Bedfordshire and this time it was Tom who got the team off to a great start, leading from start to finish on his way to a 9-1 win. There were then tight wins for Paul by 6-4 and Jim by 6-5, with Mick losing a final end decider by the odd shot 6-5. The pairs then hit their second consecutive maximum point session, with all of them playing very well. Don and David starred this time winning 12-3 and not far behind were John and Colin (10-4), Sally and Clint (7-3) and Peter and Andy (9-6). Again the triples didn't want to be outshone by the pairs, so they went and did exactly the same, another clean sweep of four wins. Most impressive were S4 winning 13-2 and whilst the other games were closer, the outcomes never seemed in doubt, S1 winning 9-6, S2 by 9-4 and S3 by 6-3. It was Suffolk's best session of the day, scoring twenty two points, which was improved by Essex and Cambridgeshire having played out a close session. The result of which had substantially increased Suffolk's overall lead to fourteen points over Essex and twenty five points over Cambridgeshire.

The final set of games saw first against second and it was Suffolk's competition to lose. In the singles Mick led from the front, racing away to a one-sided 13-2 win and Paul fought hard to earn a valuable point from a low scoring 4-4 drawn game. The other two games were lost by Jim and Tom, but only on the final bowl. In the pairs Don and David hit top form again and a convincing 11-1 win followed. Then a closer 6-3 win for Peter and Andy secured Suffolk the two points they needed to ensure overall victory in the competition. The two other Suffolk pairs unfortunately got off to slow starts, but played well in losing causes. Whilst the triples had nothing to play for, both S2 and S3 picked up wins by 7-4 and 12-2 respectively.

The final points and standings were:

	Pts	Shots +	Shots -
<b>Suffolk</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>260</b>
Essex	75	405	335
Cambridgeshire	65	406	337
Norfolk	45	301	388
Hertfordshire	45	299	415
Bedfordshire	43	291	440

It had been a fantastic all round team performance from Suffolk, leading the competition from the first session to the last. The points had been shared across the team with every bowler playing their part in the overall win. Particular mention should go to Don and David who were unbeaten with four wins and a draw and the S2 triple of Sam Runnacles/ Peter Fellingham/ Neil Jolly who won all five games.

The Suffolk team are now looking forward to defending two trophies at the National Championships at Potters over the weekend of 1st/ 2nd November.

Neil Jolly (County Captain)

## **National County Championships 2014**

Over the weekend of 1 and 2 November the Suffolk team and their supporters were at the Potters Leisure Resort, Hopton-on-sea for the 2014 National County Championships. Suffolk were hoping to retain the trophy they had won at Potters last year.

Nine counties were competing, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Durham, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Northumberland, Sunderland and Suffolk. Each county were represented by six rinks (fours), each rink playing one nine end game against all of the other counties, over a weekend of bowling.

The team selected to represent Suffolk was:

A: Jim Goodrich, John Varden, David Ford, Paul Daniels  
B: Trevor Cain, Ellen Grube, Andy Pooley, Sue Gilder  
C: Sam Runnacles, Peter Fellingham, Mick Watkins, Tom Runnacles  
D: Peter Runnacles, Rita Runnacles, Clint Watling, David Mittell  
E: Don Allum, Ralph Sadgrove, Andy Gilder, Steven Cain  
F: Sally Goodrich, Ann Hathaway, Colin Fellingham, Neil Jolly

The competition started on the Saturday morning and with there being an odd number of counties, it was Suffolk who sat out the first session, during which both Sunderland and Hertfordshire scored the maximum six points.

In the second session Suffolk had a difficult start to the competition, facing their main rivals and last year's runners up Cambridgeshire. As expected all of the games were close, with outcomes uncertain until the final ends. D were playing well but then one bad end cost them, dropping a five saw them on the back foot from which they couldn't recover, losing 8-13. E had the tightest match but were just unable to get a lead towards the end, losing by the odd shot 7-8. It was better news in the other game though, where F led from start to finish on their way to an 11-5 win. Overall a disappointing start, with only two points secured.

The next session saw rinks A, B and C's first outing, their opponents were Bedfordshire. It didn't take the Suffolk rinks long to find their form as they all dominated their games from start to finish. Most impressive were A who scored big in winning 22-5 and B weren't far behind in their 14-4 win. Meanwhile C were doing what they needed to do with a relatively comfortable 9-4 win. A deserved six point maximum session moved Suffolk up to fifth overall, with Sunderland still in the lead.

The fourth session saw rinks D, E and F play Hertfordshire and they needed to bounce back after the Cambridgeshire session. It didn't prove easy though as Hertfordshire were having a good day and playing well. All three games went to the final ends and it was the Suffolk rinks who edged them all. D led the way with an 11-7 win and both E and F were relieved to battle their way to 7-4 wins. A tough session but maximum points again and overall Suffolk were now up to third, behind Durham and Sunderland.

It was second place Durham, who Suffolk faced next in an important session of bowls. This time it was B who led the way and earned the first points with a crucial 12-7 win. Meanwhile A were still playing well but not having it all their own way, a see-saw game saw Durham earn a 7-7 draw with the final bowl. Lastly C unfortunately couldn't add to the points tally, as they went down 5-9. A drawn 3-3 session, which both counties were satisfied with.

Next up for D, E and F were local rivals Essex, who to that point had been having a poor day. The Suffolk rinks were in no mood to show them any sympathy though and it was F who took a lead first and they eased away to a comfortable 9-3 win. Not far behind were D, another win and two points with an 8-5 win. The closest game involved E who were winning most of the way but just let it slip on the last couple of ends. However it was still an important point earned from a hard fought 7-7 draw. The five points moved Suffolk up a place overall to second, two points behind new leaders Durham.

Sunderland were the next opposition and it wasn't long before C had complete control of their game, indeed they didn't concede a shot on their way to a resounding 17-0 win. Meanwhile B were quietly going about their business, playing a controlled game on their way to an 8-3 win. In the other game, unusually A just couldn't get a decent foothold and whilst they improved as the ends went by, it finished with a 9-14 defeat. However the four points scored was enough to close the gap to one behind leaders Durham.

The penultimate session was probably the most comfortable of the day for D, E and F. Three wins always looked on the cards against Northumberland and were duly delivered. F conceded the least number of shots in winning 10-1, E scored the most in winning 14-4 and D also played well to win 12-3. An impressive six point maximum, but still Suffolk were a point behind Durham overall.

The final session on Saturday saw A, B and C face third place Norfolk, who were having a good day. Suffolk were looking to finish the day on a high and that's just what happened, following three excellent performances. The consistency of A returned and they earned a 9-5 win, that was matched by B who secured their fourth consecutive win of the day, winning 9-3. The best match involved C, it was close at the start and then on the seventh end, skip Tom Runnacles last bowl secured four shots, but the debate goes on as to whether he meant it or not!! Either way, it secured a lead they held on to, to win 11-3.

The six point maximum session moved Suffolk into top spot overall for the first time, which they were delighted with. Overall their thirty eight point tally saw them five ahead of both Durham and Cambridgeshire. Could Suffolk stay there?

Sunday morning, as with Saturday, saw Suffolk sit out the first session. Durham took advantage of this, winning all three games to go back into first place and Cambridgeshire scored four points to close within a point of Suffolk.

It was now a crucial session, second versus third, as Cambridgeshire were the opposition. It was C who set the tone for the session, scoring five shots on their first end from which they never looked back, racking up further multiple shot counts in a fantastic 19-5 win. Meanwhile it was a similar story on the other mats as A and B were playing just as well and convincing wins never looked in doubt, A by 13-4 and B by 13-3. By far it had been Suffolk's best session of the weekend, some sublime bowling and sound tactics at the perfect time had moved Suffolk back into top spot, but only a point ahead of Durham.

Suffolk now needed to maintain the momentum and D, E and F did just that and it was Bedfordshire who suffered. E played a great game of bowls and it was only on the last end they conceded anything, winning 22-4. Equally as resounding were F, accurate early bowls followed by tactical blockers on a slow mat secured a 19-1 win. D finished the job, playing just as well as the other rinks in winning 14-5. Overall Suffolk (with a session in hand) had a four point lead over Durham and were ten points ahead of Cambridgeshire.

If Saturday was anything to go by, the games against Hertfordshire would be tricky and so it proved. C were playing confidently though and they won 12-5. A were involved in a real tussle and it took a close measure on the last end for them to secure a hard earned 6-5 win. Lastly B paid for a slow start and ran out of ends in losing 8-10, their first defeat of the weekend though. However four points was enough to further extend Suffolk's overall lead.

Next up was a crucial session of bowls against second place Durham, which could go some way to deciding the title. D started well and looked on for a win but Durham edged back into the game and a last end decider went against Suffolk, losing 8-10. F were involved in the closest game, they had a lead for most of it but it was never clear cut and they just held on to record an important 7-6 win. Meanwhile it was looking a lost cause for E at 7-0 down to a previously unbeaten Durham rink. Then some end winning heroics from skip Steven Cain dragged them back into the game and a tactically superb final end concluded the improbable turn around and a crucial 10-8 win. Suffolk now had a seven point lead over Durham.

It was now essential for A, B and C to maintain momentum against Essex, who were having a better second day. With confidence high Suffolk simply didn't let their opposition into the games and by halfway were in complete control. The consistency of A shone through again, dropping only a single shot to win 14-1. B returned to winning ways with a convincing 11-2 win and after a slow start, C found their form and completed the whitewash with a 13-6 win. Overall the lead was now eight over Durham and a massive fifteen over Cambridgeshire.

Sunderland were next for D, E and F and the first Suffolk points went to F who led from start to finish and 14-1 reflected their dominant display. Not far behind them were E, buoyant from their Durham win, they continued where they left off and deservedly won 15-4. Unfortunately D just didn't get to grips with their slow mat early enough, they were always playing catch up and despite a valiant effort on the latter ends, went down 5-11.

Incredibly, with two sessions to play the four points won against Sunderland were enough for Suffolk to retain the National title.

The Suffolk team however were in no mood to take their foot off the pedal and whilst the penultimate session against Northumberland started slowly, normal order was soon restored. Both A and C recorded comfortable wins, 11-5 and 13-6 respectively. Most impressively B showed real spirit, 7-1 down and 8-5 behind with one end to play, they manufactured a three shot count with skip Sue Gilder's final bowl to earn an 8-8 draw.

The final games of the weekend for D, E and F were against Norfolk. Whilst there was nothing to play for, none of the rinks wanted to end the weekend with a defeat and none of them did. Three more wins, D sneaked a well deserved 6-5 and E and F were more comfortable, 12-2 and 8-4 respectively.

Overall the finishing positions were:

		<b>PTS</b>	<b>Shots+</b>	<b>Shots-</b>
<b>1st</b>	<b>Suffolk</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>248</b>
2nd	Cambridgeshire	65	424	334
3rd	Durham	61	425	294
4th	Norfolk	49	364	354
5th	Hertfordshire	43	349	347
6th	Essex	36	341	388
7th	Sunderland	34	324	416
8th	Northumberland	33	324	446
9th	Bedfordshire	32	275	522

What a weekend it had been for the Suffolk team, retaining both the Inter-County title on the Friday night and then the National Championships.

The team performance on Saturday had been really good, losing only four games from twenty four played secured an overnight lead which was healthy.

However on Sunday the team played even better, losing only three games. The standard was set with the early morning three big wins over Cambridgeshire and the performance level was maintained throughout the day. The early bowlers were accurate and consistent, the threes/ skips attacked and defended at the right times and made sound tactical decisions.

Every bowler contributed to the win and all should be very proud of their efforts and team spirit shown throughout the competition.

Also during the weekend, two awards were given out, Peter Fellingham won the Webber Award (best newcomer) and Sue Gilder won the Players Player, congratulations to them both.

The Suffolk team thank everyone who travelled to Potters and supported them during this long weekend of bowls, it was greatly appreciated.

Neil Jolly (County Captain)