

The 7th Sportsmanship Games - Sheffield 2001

By Daniel Bonfield

The Sportsmanship games is the brainchild of Diane Joyce who 7 years ago set up a tournament for league teams in the Midlands area, writes Danny Bonfield. Every year the tournament grew in popularity until Diane was approached by AMF to run a similar tournament inviting teams nationwide. Diane wanted to make the tournament lightly competitive, with the emphasis on enjoyment. After looking back on her experiences as a league, county and National bowler, she decided that her most enjoyable tournaments had come when she was playing in a team environment and playing for trophies and medals as opposed to cash. As a result this tournament usually gives the every-night league bowler a chance to shine and experience tournament play.

This years tournament was held in AMF Firth Park , Sheffield and as usual there was no need to publicise the tournament as spaces were snapped up with many teams returning from the previous year. In desperation Diane asked me to come and take some photos and offered me a couple of beers for my trouble - of course I was up there like a shot.

The tournament format was 24 teams of six players, all of which played 3 games singles, 3 games doubles, 3 games trios, 3 games 5 man team with the sixth player bowling another 3 games singles. There were prizes for both scratch and handicap as well as individual and team all event winners.

I timed my arrival with the opening of the bar and discovered that with a sportsmanship competitors card you was entitled to cheap to booze. Also incorporated in the entry fee was cheap hotel accommodation, buffet and a ticket to the award party held at the hotel and the chance to win loads of prizes in the raffle.

First off was the singles, and as each squad went on to practise they were greeted by DJ Diane blasting out some tunes to get every one in the mood. The surprise winner of the scratch section was AMF's Steve Mackinder who claims he's only bowled a couple of times in two years, but still managed a 652. The handicap section was won by Ron Swift with a 721.

The next squad to bowl was the doubles. The scratch section was won by Mark Anderson and John Lawless of the Likely Lads who beat team mates Oliver Didur and Carl Luby by 11 pins. The handicap section was won by Pin Action's Geoff Rens and Fred Miller.

It was now time for all the bowlers to head back to the hotel for a bite to eat, freshen up and get their dancing shoes on for the evening presentation. President of the Bowling Proprietors Association Jock Caie was the guest speaker and awarded the winner of the singles and doubles with their medals as well as conducting the draw for the raffle. Jock's speech was interrupted by a fire alarm and the hotel was evacuated, Jock took this opportunity to wet his whistle with a pint and a whisky chaser. After the speech there was one more presentation to make as all the bowlers in the tournament clubbed together to buy a gift for Diane Joyce for all the hard work she had done in organising the tournament. Now it was time for yours truly "Danny snake-hips Bonfield" to do his stuff on the dance floor. There were cries of "Cor, what a mover" as I went through my routine. At least that what I think they were saying !

In the morning many competitors turned up at the bowl with bleary eyes and a thumping headache, one such person was the tournament manager Diane Joyce who arrived a little late and looking a bit fragile.

The first squad one was Trios , the scratch section was won by Breadsall by 4 pins from the Likely lads. The handicap section was won by Ian, Elaine and Russ Carrick from the team Sixpack.

The next event was the was 3 games for the player not taking part in the five man team event. The scratch section was won by the Spice Boy Bob Walker, who is also the centre manager – so the lanesman should expect a nice little bonus. The handicap section was won by Roger Snell from Sixpack.

After a brief break for lane maintenance it was time for the last squad – the five man team event. Before they went onto practise each team was presented with a certificate of participation by centre manager Bob Walker and posed for a team photo. The scratch five man team event was won by Taz Warriors with a new competition record of 2959, this was much aided by substitute Ross Gibson who was dragged out of the pro shop and then bowled a 760 series. The handicap section was won by Pin Action.

While Diane calculated the individual and team all events winners, everyone relaxed and enjoyed the buffet that had been prepared by the Firth Park staff . The individual scratch all events winner was Lee Pulham with 2464 with Steve Mackinder second, and Mark Anderson third. In the handicap section Ian Carrick was the eventual winner with Alan

Dickenson second and Peter Hanson third. The team all event winners went to the Likely Lads who were made up by Mark Anderson, John Lawless, Michael Didur, Stuart Hopkinson, Oliver Didur and Carl Luby. The handicap section was won by the Taz Warriors Ian Mildren, Bryan Parker, Sean Cunningham, Colin Clarke, Karl Booth, Jeff Boocock and Ross Gibson.

During the tournament everyone was asked to vote for the most sporting competitor. This special award went to Trish Tucker who has attended the tournament every year since the start and despite emigrating to Spain next year still intends to return. All the Teams stayed for the presentation even if they hadn't won anything which created a great atmosphere and encapsulated what this tournament is all about SPORTMANSHIP.

Next years tournament will be held at Carlisle and I'm sure will be every bit of a success as the previous 7.