

Sunday 16th July saw another stop on the BTBA Championship Tour, the Nottinghamshire Open at Mansfield Bowl.

Representing Leicestershire were Karl King & Sean Macfarlane. The singles format was 6 games of qualifying, with the top 6 in each of the scratch & handicap sections going through to round 2. Round 2 saw 3 more games with the scores being added to the 6 game qualifying scores. It was then cut to the top 3 in each section for a stepladder final (3rd plays 2nd, winner plays 1st for the title).

The handicap was 100% of the difference between the bowler's highest league/tournament average & 230! Karl entered on a 181 average, giving him a 49 handicap. Sean has had a couple of good tournament results meaning he had a 0 handicap.

Karl & Sean both started strong. 214 scratch (263 with handicap) for Karl & a 250 scratch game for Sean. Both dropped a bit on the second game, Karl 198 (247) & Sean 201. Game 3 saw Karl struggle a bit for a 162 (211), Sean 221. Game 4 Karl dragged himself back up to a 192 (241) & Sean must've thought he was playing at Hollywood with a less than impressive 158! Game 5 saw Karl hit a steady 180 (229) and Sean got the big game he needed to cover his lowly 158 from the previous game, hitting a massive 267! The 6th & final game of qualifying saw Karl smash it with a huge 238 (287), & Sean came somewhat crashing back to Earth with a disappointing 192.

Qualifying saw Karl finish with 1184 scratch (1478 hcap) for 6 games (197.3 average scratch!). This placed Karl in 12th position scratch, awesome achievement. His 1478 placed him 4th in the handicap section, he's going through to round 2!

Sean hit 1289 (214.8 ave.) for his 6 games, this was enough to snag the 6th & final spot for round 2 qualification! Only made it by 7 pins from TWO other bowlers!

Round 2 saw both Karl & Sean take to the lanes for 3 more games, with the totals being added to the scores from initial qualifying. The target was top 3 to make it to the finals. Karl started 14 pins back from 3rd spot in the hcap section, Sean started a massive 71 pins down from 3rd in the scratch section. A lot to do but both feeling good!

Karl started strong with a 195 (244) but others had larger handicaps & managed to hit the max score of 300 (including hcap) so gave him an uphill battle. His second game was a bit lower at 171 (220) and his third game, 173 (222) was unfortunately not enough to see him break into the top 3. Karl scored 1723 scratch for his 9 games (191.4 average) & finished a respectable 5th in the handicap section with 2164 (119 pins down from 3rd). This was Karl's best tournament average & finishing position to date! Smashing it!

Sean had a mountain to climb against a few of the best bowlers in England! The first game of round 2 saw a disappointing game of 187, the lowest of the six bowlers & put him further behind the required 3rd spot! Game 2 was better at 223, but only good enough for 5th of the six... It was all over! He chucked a 203 in the last game but didn't improve on his 6th place qualifying position! Still a good showing, with a total of 1902 for his 9 games (211.3 average) so not too disappointed!

That concludes the Nottinghamshire Open for the 2 bowlers representing Leicestershire! The top 3 from each section battled it out for the respective titles. The eventual winners were Pete Stevenson in the Scratch (averaging 236 for the day) & James White in the Handicap.

Many thanks to Bekki 'Bird Plop' Edens for her support despite no Pom Poms! She took command of Karl's scoresheet for the day & kept morale up. She really had a 'handle' on things from the moment we entered Mansfield!