

## Inter-County Championship 2023

### Warwickshire County Trials

January 2023 saw the trials take place for the Ladies, Mens and youth teams. Leicestershire's lack of a BTBA association means that anyone born & residing in Leicestershire are classed as orphan bowlers and as such, can represent another county. Sean Macfarlane of Leicestershire won the trials, held at Acocks Green, with a score of 1,382 over 6 games (230.33 av.). Sean was selected to represent Warwickshire alongside Jay Goodwin, Sam Rose, Brandon Roberts, Pete Stevenson, Gavin Greaves and Paul Moor.

### Inter-County Championships - Qualification Round

The qualification round determines the finalists each year. The qualifiers are split by region (North, South & Midlands) with every local association in England given the opportunity to put forward teams for representation. Ten teams make the finals: The top 3 qualifiers from each region & the reigning champions receive automatic qualification.

The men's qualifiers were held on the 3rd September 2023. The Northern qualifiers took place at Altrincham and saw the reigning champs, **Yorkshire** joined by **Lancashire, Durham & Lincolnshire**. The Southern qualifiers were held at Dunstable with **Dorset, Essex & Kent** making the finals.

The Central qualifiers saw **Warwickshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire** make it through at Mansfield. 6 games of 5-man qualifying took place with total pinfall determining qualifying positions. Warwickshire men topped the Central qualifiers with a total pinfall of 6,094 (1,015.67 average per game, 203.13 average per person per game).

### Finals – Acocks Green, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> November

The weekend saw the 10 men's & ladies qualifiers bowl for the titles! The format was round robin style, every team plays head-to-head against all qualifiers (9 games in total). The positions are determined by the overall pinfall for each team, including a 100 pin bonus awarded to the winner of each head-to-head match.

Warwickshire were the only team with Leicestershire representation in the form of Sean, so we follow their path in detail here.

#### Game 1: Yorkshire, 2022 Champions!

Sean was selected to bowl this game and helped secure the win with a decent 222 game. The team bowled 1184 scratch (236.8 ave per person), 1284 with win bonus. This put Warwickshire top after game 1 by 17 pins from Dorset!

#### Game 2: Lincolnshire

Warks struggled this game, bowling a lowly 948 as a team (189.6 ave) with no win bonus as Lincs bowled 1008. Sean battled for a 184, bowling just one strike in the first frame and filling the rest with spares for a clean game. Dorset had another good game & now lead Warks by 261 pins.

#### Game 3: Dorset

Sean was dropped for this game but the Warks boys smashed it! 1082 vs 987, with the 100 pin win bonus this cut Dorset's lead on Warks to 76 pins.



#### **Game 4: Northamptonshire**

The same team (no Sean) held no punches, bowling 1201 scratch (240.2 ave), securing the win bonus! Warks ended day 1 on top of the pile by 57 pins from Dorset, happy days!

#### **Game 5: Durham**

Team kept the same after yesterday's amazing 1201 game. Warks ground out the win 1065 to 987. Lead cut to 38 pins over Dorset in 2nd.

#### **Game 6: Essex**

Team kept the same, was a struggle again. Had some luck against us but managed to grind out a 990 to lose to Essex's 1027. Warks now sit 2nd to Dorset, trailing by 209 pins...

#### **Game 7: Kent**

Sean was back in for his 3rd game of the finals! Another great team game of 1179 with Sean scoring another 222. Good enough for the win but still trailing Dorset by 167 pins. Warks are 427 ahead of 3rd so it's a 2-horse race, Dorset or Warks will be the winners with 2 to go!

#### **Game 8: Buckinghamshire**

Warks captain didn't like Sean's ball reaction towards the end of game 7 (2 splits) so chose to drop him for this one. The Warks boys smashed it again with a 1222 scratch (244.4 ave per person!). This was plenty good enough for the win bonus but more importantly, gave Warks a 132 pin lead over Dorset going into the final game!

#### **Game 9: Lancashire**

Same team, Sean's contribution to the finals was over but he was now in full support mode! Warks had a healthy lead but they themselves had overturned higher deficits twice already this weekend so nothing was guaranteed! After 5 frames, Warks were pacing a 950 game whilst Dorset were pacing a 1250 game... Needed something special! Warks started striking, game on! Dorset fell off the pace a bit but still registered 1138 while Warks had 2 bowlers still to bowl their 10th frames. Knowing 1007 would be enough, Warks did it with a frame to spare with the final game score coming in at 1040, leaving Dorset in 2nd just 34 pins behind! 34 pins over 9 games of 5-man team is about as tight as it gets!

#### **WARWICKSHIRE ARE THE MENS COUNTY CHAMPIONS 2023!**

The team scored 9912 scratch overall (1101.33 ave, 220.27 ave per person) for the finals, 10,612 with the 7 win bonuses.

Sean bowled 628 for his 3 games, averaging 209.33

