

# Hazardous Cannons!

## News and reports of matches in the Midland Counties Billiards League.

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### SEASON 2013/14 – REPORT No 5 – MATCHES UP TO 26<sup>th</sup> January 2014

**PREVIOUS RESULTS :-** Worcester 1 Evesham 8; Nuneaton Attack 5 Hartington RBL 4  
Stafford Institute 4 Coventry Parkstone 5; Coventry Parkstone 6 Evesham 3;  
Hartington RBL 8 Stafford Institute 1; Worcester 2 Nuneaton Attack 7;  
Hartington RBL 3 Worcester 6; Stafford Institute 4 Worcester 5; Evesham 6 Nuneaton Attack 3;  
Coventry Parkstone 3 Hartington RBL 6; Evesham 8 Stafford Institute 1; Worcester 7 Coventry  
Parkstone 2; Hartington RBL 5 Evesham 4; Nuneaton Attack 4 Stafford Institute 5; Coventry  
Parkstone 5 Nuneaton Attack 4.

#### 26<sup>th</sup> January

**EVESHAM 6 T.Baylis (+160) 3; D.Powell (+130) 3; N.Parker (+175) 0.**

**WORCESTER 3 J.Smith (+130) 1; G.Mayor (+135) 1; M.Painter (+185) 1.**

(2-1) T.Baylis 338 J.Smith 333(78); D.Powell 346(68) G.Mayor 279; N.Parker 313 M.Painter 380.

(2-1) D.Powell 434 M.Painter 265; N.Parker 335 J.Smith 403(89); T.Baylis 350 G.Mayor 292.

(2-1) N.Parker 306 G.Mayor 403(97); T.Baylis 412 M.Painter 283; D.Powell 331 J.Smith 313(72).

Evesham kept up the momentum of their title challenge and completed an emphatic double over their geographically nearest rivals with this clear victory, in which both Tony Baylis and Dean Powell claimed unbeaten records. A winning score of two games to one plundered in each session put the marauding Vale Vikings in charge, but it was not all plain sailing for the leaders. Leg one saw home captain John Smith spring from the starting blocks to put Tony Baylis under pressure with an early 78, but Baylis responded with a brace of forty+ runs before eventually getting home by a mere five points. Meanwhile Evesham skipper Dean Powell was putting Geoff Mayor to the sword with a nice run of 68, but Mick Painter prevented the clean sweep by finding his only fluent form of the day to down Neil Parker. Of course Parker ended the day without a win, but it is not only how you play yourself that controls results – after finishing second best to Painter, Parker was hit by the other two Worcester players making their best breaks of the season, John Smith’s effort of a sweet 89 was trumped by Geoff Mayor sweeping in a lovely 97, disappointingly ended with a missed cross loser when a century appeared certain. Dean Powell looked imperious in the opening two rounds, and he looked as if another stroll was on the cards as he raced ahead of John Smith, but Smith struck back with his third decent break of the day, only to miss out by eighteen in the end.

#### 26<sup>th</sup> January

**COVENTRY PARKS 2 P.Shelley (+25) 1; D.Egginton (+190) 0; R.Evans (+170) 0; A.Orton (+120) 1;**

**STAFFORD INST 7 C.Ward (+70) 2; J.Cummings (+160) 3; M.Wharne (+170) 2.**

(1-2) P.Shelley 319(74) C.Ward 287(60); D.Egginton 289 J.Cummings 382; R.Evans 241 M.Wharne 298.

(1-2) A.Orton 316 M.Wharne 290; R.Evans 294 C.Ward 410(63,58); P.Shelley 259 J.Cummings 364.

(0-3) A.Orton 266 J.Cummings 391; P.Shelley 299(52,89) M.Wharne 315; D.Egginton 285 C.Ward 437(75).

Struggling Stafford had cast a little sunlight on their season with a first victory in December, but one could hardly have forecast that the follow up would be this stunning whipping of Coventry, at the Parkstone club. Including Chris Ward in the squad has certainly strengthened the Institute’s quality and depth, with Ward duly and comprehensively adding another two scalps to his haul, he also pressed Peter Shelley hard in a game in which both managed decent breaks. What difference can fifteen points make? Everything if it is the case of Jim Cummings being considered! Ever-present throughout the first half of the season, Jim never managed to claim more than one game in a match, but now, with the aforementioned fifteen added to his handicap, ‘Invincible’ would appear to have become his middle name, winning three times by 93, 105 and 125! Malcolm Wharne added a couple of nice wins to enhance his season and complete the rout, leaving the ‘Coventry Four’ floundering in the Institute wake.

26<sup>th</sup> January

**HARTINGTON RBL 5½ S.O'Sullivan (+190) 1; S.Hawkins (+200) 1½; P.Stanyer (+155) 3.**

**NUNEATON ATTACK 3½ G.Barrett (+110) 2; D.Hall (+175) 1½; C.Hudson (+220) 0.**

(1½-1½) S.O'Sullivan 282 G.Barrett 370(76); S.Hawkins 384 D.Hall 384; P.Stanyer 381 C.Hudson 321.

(2-1) S.Hawkins 395 C.Hudson 349; P.Stanyer 316 G.Barrett 294; S.O'Sullivan 296 D.Hall 344.

(2-1) P.Stanyer 370 D.Hall 335; S.O'Sullivan 375 C.Hudson 349; S.Hawkins 296 G.Barrett 337.

Tied games are a rarity in the Midlands League, so when I noticed that Steve Hawkins and Dave Hall were inseparable I quickly reached for the records to check how long ago the last such game occurred – only last season as it happens! This victory keeps newcomers Hartington very much in the title hunt, although they have dropped a further half a point in arrears of Evesham, but perhaps having only one remaining home fixture may count against them. The opening round 'big' match, between the two most prolific winners this season, saw Geoff Barrett taking charge with a very nice run of 76, proving too hot for Sean O'Sullivan to handle. Barrett then went down himself as Peter Stanyer made light of the fact that fifteen had been trimmed from his handicap, the ex-policeman running in another clean sweep, his third such return in four matches this campaign, the wins being not by huge margins, but not nail biters either. Geoff Barrett is holding the Nuneaton team together, winning two thirds of his games, but after their remarkably sequence of ten successive victories, the Warwickshire outfit have now lost four in a row – the Attack captain, Chris Hudson, is suffering from a very unproductive spell, having won only once in his last nine.

**League positions, all teams played six games.**

**Evesham won 4, 35 points; Hartington RBL won 4, 31½ points; Nuneaton Attack won 2, 26½ points; Worcester won 3; 24 points; Coventry Parkstone won 3; 23 points; Stafford Institute won 2, 22 points.**

With the two foremost teams, Evesham and Hartington RBL, both beginning the second half of the season with victories, while the nearest members of the chasing pack were defeated, a clear gap has opened up at the top and it is looking odds on that a new name will adorn the list of Midland League winners.

Only four matches to go, however with nine points at stake in each of these games it is a characteristic of our league that things can change very quickly and it is rare indeed for the final round of games to approach with everything mathematically settled! Proof of this is shown by Stafford Institute, earlier marooned at the foot of the table but now very much with the pack after two successive wins, highlighted by their stunning seven-point haul at Coventry.

Ever-present players lead the way in the quest to obtain the greatest number of seasonal victories, with **Sean O'Sullivan** and **Geoff Barrett** now equal with **twelve wins from eighteen** attempts. However the most consistent winner, with an 83% strike rate is Peter Stanyer (ten from twelve), while Tony Baylis has been successful on eight occasions, also from twelve games. Among those with fewer appearances Carl Saidler has the fine record of seven wins from nine, while, from the same number of shows, Alan Orton and Chris Ward both have six victories to their name.

Still only two centuries recorded, although Geoff Mayor came so very close in the latest games – breaks of seventy and over are listed below: -

**Peter Shelley 151; 96; 89; 79; 74; Geoff Barrett 100; 95; 76; Geoff Mayor 97; John Smith 89; 78; 72; Robert Wharne 84; 81; 81; 73; Chris Ward 82; 75; Alan Orton 75;**

### Handicaps.

Just to re-emphasize the changes, new handicaps for the second half of the season are: -

Norman Routledge +140; Wayne Holbrook +165; Carl Saidler +120; Sean O'Sullivan +190; Peter Stanyer +155; Graham Astle +240; ; Dave Hall +175; Andy Brough +150; Jim Cummings +160; Darren Cutler +165; Plus one player whose handicap is unchanged, but was not originally printed in the fixture book, Stafford Institute's Chris Ward is on +70. Please amend fixture booklets accordingly.

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*The Midland Individual Billiards Championship has apparently received a total of ten entries, the most for some time, and at least a couple of others would have entered but for forgetfully missing the closing date! A vote of thanks is due to Peter Shelley for striving to keep this important event viable and alive.*

