

Priory v Wicklewood - 5th July 2024

The long-awaited first home friendly of the season finally arrived as Priory Gardens welcomed the Wicklewood team on an evening of cloud-filled skies after a morning when 'sunlight of hope' had been the promise.

With the focus away from sporting events in Germany, the Priory team was looking to bounce back from their loss four days earlier at Great Melton and record their first double of the season.

Priory won the toss and decided to take the jack for the first end. Both teams had made changes to their line-ups compared to their first meeting of the season in June. Some planned and others enforced due to players being unavailable at short notice. For the Priory team Cynthia Bullingham, who had been the winning Skip against the Club Captain in the previous day's league match, answered a late call to play, and proved an inspired replacement, helping to secure a ten shot lead on Rink 4 after four ends.

As the match progressed, the clouds thickened and darkened bringing memories of the recent match at Great Melton. This time, instead of being the backdrop to iron monsters, they resembled a scene from that 1963 film as vast buildings of rooks raised a raucous noise as they filled the skies on all sides of the green.

Players of both teams should have taken notice of the birds suddenly falling silent, for within minutes the clouds burst and all below were caught wanting for shelter. The two Captains hardly had time to agree that the match should be abandoned with the scores as they stood after 12 ends.

The greenkeeper was grateful to players of both teams for their help in clearing the green before all concerned sought cover in the clubhouse and the Captains tallied up the score. The Priory team had lost one but won on three rinks and overall it was a victory for the Priory team by 61 shots to 33 shots. The Priory team had achieved their first double of the season.

Those on rink one had won convincingly but had had the advantage of playing three against two as one of the Wicklewood team had failed to arrive. Had the Wicklewood team been at full strength the outcome may have been different as they had won six of the ends played. Rink two witnessed a season's debut for John Boxall as skip. On rink three Ray Jenkins played his first game of the season and on rink four Cynthia along with Derek Dore had helped their skip to a win, 14 shots to 4 shots.

After removing what wet clothes they could, everyone was revived with welcome hot tea or coffee and ample helpings of biscuits before both Captain's gave short speeches, accepting the weather and being thankful for at least having been able to play, and the Wicklewood team were wished a safe journey home.

As the last players ventured homewards, battling against the continuing downpour, some to catch up on events in Germany, the ditches had turned into rills and the shingled seating areas resembled a Norfolk beach as the tide comes in.