

Report from the O'60 Mens Captain Ernie Stoker

As County Captain of the O60s the season could not have played out any better. We won the National County Cup without losing a tie.

When we looked at the Division at the beginning, we couldn't see any easy matches and that was the way it turned out. Our first match was away at holders Kent which was a very tight affair which we won 3-2 after being match point down in one of the singles. Winning that rubber proved key to our end achievement. The second match at home was against South Wales. We believed they were the strongest opponents in our League. Again a tight affair winning 3-2 with great performances from Peter Mott and Howard McGuinness. Our third tie was home to Middlesex where we all performed well to win 5-0. We then travelled to Devon and put in a strong performance to win 4-1. A great first round of rubbers from Peter and myself in the singles and from Alan Kemp and Peter Burgess in the doubles giving us an unassailable 3-0 lead.

Our last match away at Surrey was always going to be a tough one and when Peter travelled carrying an injury it made it tougher ! But again, we stepped up with Howard and I winning the singles and Pete and Alan winning the second doubles to give us a 4-1 win. Any win against Surrey is a good one ! I said at the beginning the season couldn't have gone any better. Unfortunately, it was tainted slightly by Leicestershire who failed to send a team on Finals Day to play us so we were awarded a walkover. To have the day and the occasion taken from us after all the travelling and great performances by the team was a bit disappointing but that was out of our hands. However, in the records it will show that Essex O60s were National Champions in 2024 and that cannot be taken away

It was a real privilege to Captain this team and I want to thank Howard, the two Pete's and Alan for their commitment which makes a Captain's job so much easier. I also want to thank Essex LTA for backing our stance regarding the final. In the end, the correct decision was made.