



Palm Reader

The newsletter of Palmerston Indoor Bowling Club

Issue 5 October 2003

Blackball

by David Rhys Jones

(Reproduced by permission)

Many sports would die for the sort of heaven-sent marketing opportunity that bowls has landed, thanks to the launch of an irreverent film that will rock Drake's ancient game to its core. *Blackball*, which belongs to the same genre of British off-beat comedies as *The Full Monty* and *Billy Elliot*, will certainly bring bowls to the attention of the public.

Made by Midfield Films and directed by Mel Smith, *Blackball* tells the story of Griff Sanders, the self-styled "Bad Boy of Bowls", who wrote rude words on a scorecard and was banned for ten years. It was not so much what the Devonian scribbled, or his generally laddish attitude that attracted the attention of the media in 1999, but the reaction of the Devon County Bowling Association, whose over-the-top punishment raised eyebrows.

Film-makers take liberties with their subjects and they do so to tell a story - and to entertain. A health warning, therefore, to the world's dedicated lawn bowlers who will watch *Blackball*; your enjoyment will be curtailed a tad unless you make a better effort than I did at a private screening. In the film, a 'wide' bowl is said to be homing in on the jack because of the 'spin' the bowler has put on it. And, ludicrously, the power of professional bowls in England is said to rest with the club committee in Torquay.

Although such solecisms may be anathema to the bowlers, they will not offend the rest of the population; I forgave the film everything and urge fellow bowlers to do the same. Actually, it is funny, loud, offensive, tacky, observant, cruel, romantic and satirical - and full of good

lines.

It must be said that Paul Kaye, who plays Cliff Starkey, is the spitting image of the Griff Sanders character the role is based on, and his portrayal shows

how bowls, in its purest form, can be addictive. "It's so simple," Starkey says passionately to some young disciples. "It's all about you, your hand and the wood. It's magic."

As in real life, the Bad Boy upsets the authorities by writing, "Ray Speight is a tosser," on a scorecard and is banned for 15 years (though Sanders's sentence was only ten). The rest is highly entertaining fiction, involving cruel caricatures of the blazer brigade that still exists in bowls and satirical swipes at the lengths to which promoters go to sell their sport.

The language will upset a few and it is worthy of note that not all the four-letter words are uttered by the Bad Boys. Yes, the Men in Blazers seem capable of holding their own in that department: shocking, or what?

Bernard Cribbins plays Starkey's kindly grandfather and Johnny Vegas his best friend, while James Cromwell, who played the farmer in "Babe", is excellent as Speight, the representative of the old school.

I am particularly glad that the film-makers who glorify the young rebel and present Speight as a posh and stuffy old codger, paint both characters as rounded individuals.

Starkey is shown to be irresponsible in his behaviour on and off the green, while Speight, despite that pompous facade, is a vulnerable human being underneath. To know all is to forgive all - perhaps.

In real life, Sanders's ten-year ban was set aside in favour of two years' probation, which he served without blotting his copybook. Since then, however, he has upset Devon by not turning up to an important Middleton Cup fixture and will not be considered for selection for at least a year.

Meanwhile, the governing bodies should make sure that there are advertisements for bowls in every cinema in the land once *Blackball* goes on general release. I doubt

if it will cause a migration of young people from nightclubs to bowls but, if it does, bowlers should prepare for a culture shock.

At Worthing last week, one former EBA official, from Devon, said: "I don't think this sort of thing is good for our image." Tony Allcock, the EBA's chief executive, admitted that the film had not been discussed by his committees. "I don't know much about it, but I'm looking forward to seeing it," he said. "Once we've seen it, we'll be able to decide if we can exploit the publicity for the benefit of the sport."

Copyright David Rhys Jones / The Times, London, 3rd September 2003.

Sunday 19th October International trial at Palmerston

On 19th October Palmerston has agreed to hand over the club facilities to the English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA). The EIBA will be using the green for a series of trials to enable them to select the English Under 25 International team to represent the country in the International Series against the other Home Countries in January 2004. This will therefore mean that the Green and Changing Rooms will not be available to club members for the whole day of the 19th. There will be some provision for Sunday Lunches but the numbers will have to be restricted.

The Club Management would ask for your cooperation and assistance in this matter.

Actual bowling will commence from about 1pm. If you wish to see many of the top young bowlers in England performing, come along in the afternoon for a rare treat.

Ray Gregory (Club Secretary)

Don't miss it!

Stewards

by John Vicary - Chief Steward

Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all I want to say a very sincere thank you to all the Stewards who have supported me during the 2002/2003 winter season. You have all worked very well and helped me a lot by coordinating sessions between yourselves for covering family events, sickness or whatever.

THANK YOU.

Secondly Ladies and Gentlemen I wish to point out that your Board of Directors and the Joint Management Committee, working many hours (unpaid) in my estimation do a great job. They run the Club in terms of what needs to be done, what improvements can be made, what do the members want and where the money can be found to do these things. But they do not run the bowling on a day to day basis - the Stewards do this.

It is not an onerous task, far from it. You meet a lot of lovely people and it can be a very enjoyable and sometimes hilarious experience and I say that from a personal point of view.

It is not necessarily a case of a session every week. I have several pairs who work together on alternate weeks. With enough people we could all do it every other week or once in three weeks, but that means quite a few volunteers.

Fortunately I was able to give up my fortnightly stint when I had a volunteer who offered to take my place. This allows me freedom to take over when Stewards have family, car or other problems at quite short notice.

However I have at least two Stewards who feel unable to continue for this season. They have done well, performing the duties for about five years and I sincerely thank them for their dedication. This means that I am going to have to fill their slots and so I need new volunteers.

In case you are not aware the sessions for Stewards are as follows: 09:15-12:30,

12:30 - 15:45, 15:45 - 19:00 and 19:00 - 22:30.

I put it to you that to give up four hours of your time to be a Steward not only helps the Club but can be an enlightening experience as you'll get to know many new personalities quite well over the course of the season. It's a pleasure to get out of the house, often during miserable winter weather, to come and be uplifted by the banter and merriment of a group of bowlers who are also glad to get out and meet people. **Don't forget that for each session you also get two "Green Shield" stamps giving you two free games on the rinks.**

Please consider that without Stewards your Club would not be able to open. And if we had to employ paid Stewards your subscriptions would be much more expensive.

I know I have "gone on a bit" but I felt that the point had to be made. We have an absolutely splendid club but it does need more support in this area. I hope I can receive this support from the members. If you think you can help just call me on 01329 283881.

Bowls Etiquette

or How to behave on the Green

The etiquette of the game of bowls is a combination of good manners and sportsmanship. These courtesies are best described as the unwritten Laws of the Game. They are intended to promote sociability and the excellent reputation for friendliness and sportsmanship the game of bowls has rightly earned. Many of them come naturally if a thoughtful attitude is used but some of them might not be obvious until pointed out.

1. Be conversant with the Laws of the Game and observe them.
2. Respect the decision of the Umpire.
3. Be punctual to commence play at all matches and come to each game correctly attired.
4. Keep quiet and refrain from moving when players are on the mat.
5. Stand behind the mat while your opponent is playing their bowls.
6. Always stand still at the head when a player is about to bowl - movement at the head or talking at the mat end is very distracting.
7. Always allow your opponent the right

to the head as spelled out in the Laws of the Game. Failure to do so decreases the enjoyment of the game.

8. Walk close to the centre of the rink with minimum delay when changing ends, you could distract or delay play on the next rink.

9. Do not delay play, always play your bowl with minimum delay.

10. Never step on to the mat to deliver your bowl before the previous bowl has come to rest - you do not have possession of the rink.

11. Keep track of play, be ready to bowl when it is your turn.

12. Every player should assist in collecting bowls when the end is completed.

13. Always pay your skip the respect of waiting for their decision. Don't step on to the mat and indicate your intentions - wait for your skip's instructions.

14. Never applaud lucky bowls - accept them graciously.

15. Never complain about lucky bowls - they tend to equal each other out over the season.

16. Respect the playing surface at all times. Do not (i) drop bowls on to the green; (ii) stand on the edge of the green; (iii) stand on the edge of the banks; (iv)

walk in the ditches. Always take care to protect and conserve the green.

17. Always inform your opponent if you wish to leave the green.

18. If you lose, be a good loser. Don't blame your loss on other people, the green, or weather conditions etc.

19. Win or lose, always shake hands with your opponents and thank them for the game. Don't be too taken with your win today, the position could be reversed tomorrow.

20. Offer your opponent a drink or refreshment after the game.

21. When playing singles, whether you have won or not, be sure to thank the Marker and offer them a drink or refreshment. Remember that they have given their time to assist in your game. You can repay them by being courteous in return.

22. It is polite to thank the Umpire of the day before leaving the club.

23. Learn to be a good Marker. When offering your services, remember a Marker can make or break a game. Obtain a copy and learn the "Duties of a Marker".

24. Above all, enjoy the game of bowls for its pleasure and the lasting friendships it provides.

Social Fund Raising Programme

by Rene Bowshell - Social Secretary

Fund Raising activities have continued during the summer months with regular contributions from Club Night Bowlers as well as Rita's weekly Bonus Ball. Proceeds from Raffles at Dinners plus the ever popular Race Night raised in excess of £450. All events have been well supported.

The Club's five year financial plan is ambitious and requires all the support we can give them.

The cost of the new Dance Floor is our current Project. The Programme for the rest of 2003 is already displayed on the new Social Notice Board now permanently sited on the office window near the alphabetical mail-box.

October events

Oct 4 - Dinner Cabaret. Menu and table booking list on display in the restaurant - Micky Morgan will entertain - raffle tickets £2.50 available at the bar.

Oct 18 - Autumn Race Night. List names on Notice Board - tickets £3 - on sale now from the bar. You can become a horse owner for £2 when the Race Card is published. The help and co-operation of Keith and the Bar Staff is appreciated.

Winter Fund-Raising Schedule

'100' Club - entries before 30 September - first monthly Draw Night Friday 31 October.

Christmas Draw Sheets - on display from 26 September, 50p per number.

Treasure Chest - weekly on 'Club Night' commencing Friday September 19.

Bonus Ball - twice weekly, commencing Wednesday 24 and Saturday 27 September.

Annual Coffee Morning will be organised for March 2004.

The Social Committee needs some more members to help with the current programme and bring in some new ideas. Please contact Rene Bowshell if you think you can help. Thank you for your support.

Letters to the Editor

This is just a reminder to send in your letters for publication. Your views are very important. This newsletter won't achieve its purpose if it is just filled with items from the committees. Help others to see your ideas and be a catalyst for change. Just hand items (typed or handwritten) in to the office addressed to the editor.

Job vacancies

As I am about to take a busy job with Hampshire County Bowling Association I need to relinquish one of the tasks I have been doing at Palmerston for a number of years.

There are two posts, either one of which I would like to pass over to someone, they are:

Hampshire IBA Patron's delegate This needs to be a male member of Palmerston who is a member of the HIBA Patron's Scheme. Not a very time consuming job. I have all the records on floppy disc (Microsoft Works). Full advice and guidance given - it really is not rocket science.

Press Reports This job is equally suitable for a man or woman and simply involves supplying the Southampton Daily Echo with

results of our County and National Competitions i.e. Denny, Bramley, Yetton, Egham, etc. I used to supply the Portsmouth News but they rarely included Palmerston reports. Perhaps the new incumbent may have better luck with the News sports desk than I. I have a good working relationship with the Echo and I send reports via email, however telephoning reports is acceptable.

You do not have to write the copy for the paper, just supply them with the facts, names, scores and results and they will do the rest.

Neither of the above jobs require much time or any particular skill or experience, just a willingness to do something for Palmerston. Anyone who is interested in finding out more, please talk to me at the club or phone me at home 023 9255 3046.

Norman Evans-Rohrs

Rink booking procedure

The Club Management Committee have decided that in future members will not be able to enter the office in order to book rinks for competitions. The office is for the use of committee members or others (such as Stewards) who have a committee members permission for specific Club business. This restriction is necessary for practical and security purposes.

The procedure for booking rinks for competitions is as follows:

1. If the booking is for the current week the sheets will be already on the desk. These sheets are available to all members booking any games including roll-ups.

2. If the booking is for a date more than a week ahead ask the duty Steward for the blue ring binder containing future sheets. This must not be used for booking roll-ups (they would be deleted anyway). Make the booking at the desk and hand the book back to the Steward for return to the office.

3. When booking National or County matches you will often need to book two dates, one in the week and one at the weekend, to offer to your opponents who will choose one of them. When making two bookings they should be made in pencil and marked PROVISIONAL. Put in your name and the competition name e.g. Henry Bloggs, National Mixed Pairs.

4. When your opponent comes back to you with the chosen date, mark it CONFIRMED (and preferably ink it in). Don't forget to rub out the other one you booked which you now don't need, and please do it as soon as possible. If you forget, not only will you be charged £12 for the rink, you will be taking up a valuable booking space that someone else will need.

5. You may have to follow this procedure for club competitions also, but in many cases you can agree on the date before booking it.

6. There is an order of precedence for bookings National, then County, then Club. This means that if you really need to, you can take over a booking for a Club competition if you have a County or National game to book. Of course you should try to avoid this where at all possible. And you must inform the person who had booked the session you are taking over so they can rearrange.

7. If you need to book a double session for a 4 hour time slot, it might be necessary to move a league game on to another rink to accommodate this. DON'T DO THIS YOURSELF. Just make the booking using the available rinks and speak to the League Secretary as soon as possible to ask for the league game to be moved. The reason for this is that this affects the Stewards records, etc. so must be done properly.

8. Please remember that an increasing number of Palmerston members are entering National competitions (which is good for the Club) so pressure on rink space can be quite intense in the run-up to Christmas whilst there are many matches to be arranged. Your cooperation in helping each other to get their fair share of the available rinks will be much appreciated by all.

9. Rink fees are: single session £1.50 per bowler, double session £3 per bowler (visitors) £2 members. Remember that for Mens National competitions home players pay all the fees, for all other competitions visiting players are charged for their own fees.

Editorial

I went to see the film Blackball last week and thoroughly enjoyed it. I'm not sure if it will produce a flood of enquiries for memberships from enthused filmgoers, but it does highlight the gulf between popular culture and the old traditions of bowls.

Many people have lamented the lack of younger people wanting to play bowls and asked what can be done to attract them. This film has made it even more clear to me that we need a significant makeover if we are to attract the younger generation. I'm sure that some of our senior bowlers think that the club is an oasis of "old values" in a desert of modern degeneration, but this is a sure recipe for obsolescence.

What is plain is that if we don't get a steady influx of members, then bowls clubs will continue to decline in membership with rising fees and even a threat of closure. One obvious issue is the dress code. Why do we continue to play in drab greys? What purpose does it serve? I'm sure we can all imagine the looks of horror that most young people would have if you took them into a club on a normal league session and asked them if they wanted to join in. This has already been commented on in a letter to the editor last year by one of our members who is a mother.

We can't change the fact that the predominant age group is retired, but we can make it less intimidating. Surely these days even most retired people are dressed in modern clothes outside the club. Whites may be nice for "occasions" like a club match (preferably with a coloured top?) but, please, not the dreaded greys. Come on Palmerston, let's show the way and allow a freer dress code for normal club games. Who's with me?

Russell Gadd - Editor

You can contribute to the newsletter either by writing an article or a letter to the editor. If you use a computer please send it by email to russell.gadd@goldserve.net (the old email address is no longer valid) and I'll acknowledge receipt of emails. Or put it on a floppy disc (either plain text or a .doc file). Otherwise hand items in to the office addressed to Palm Editor.

All issues will be produced monthly with the deadline at the end of the previous month.

End Rink (miscellaneous items)

Money from the summer league has been used to purchase an Electronic Random Number machine which is used for raffles. It is quite easy to use if you read the instructions. All you have to remember is what is the highest number of the ticket strips you have put out on the tables.

There are some different options which you can use but I recommend you keep it simple. You just switch it on, then enter the start and end numbers of the tickets you have distributed. It's then ready for use. Each number is chosen by pressing the little hand plunger.

This means there's now only one colour of ticket (don't ask me what it is as I'm a bit colour blind!). Only the number counts.

President's Charities

During the 2003-4 season I propose with your help, to support four charities.

These Charities are :-

Hearing Dogs for the Deaf

Breast Cancer Research

The Macmillan Nurses

The Haslar Hospital Radio Service

I hope during the year you will at some time be able to make a contribution to these causes, and whatever I manage to accrue will be divided equally amongst the four. We have already started with the summer bowlers, who made a bi-weekly donation to my charities, and to the PIBC Fund Raising Account.

Thank you for your support.

Roy Mudd President

Fully booked?

Some members have complained about the lack of rink space available for rollups. When they come to book a session they find no vacancies. They consider that they have as much "right" to use the rinks as people playing leagues and competitions. This note is an attempt to explain the situation.

Yes, they have as much right as anyone to use the rinks but organised events will always take precedence over casual bookings. This is the way it is done everywhere else and the club would not be viable if it did not organise leagues and competitions. However there is absolutely no reason why those concerned should not enter these leagues and competitions so they too can benefit from some priority and also enjoy some games against different people. I do realise however that this is not for everyone. Have you thought of putting your name down for a friendly?

As the club and national competitions have just begun, this is the peak time of year for booking rinks. This applies both to individuals and Palmerston's teams. Later on as people and teams get knocked out the pressure eases. There is also a full league programme throughout the winter

season. In order to regulate the booking of rinks it is necessary to set a priority otherwise the situation would be chaos. So far as possible rinks are booked around the league programme but occasionally even those games have to be rescheduled - but this is rare. Priority is given as follows: National Competitions - County Competitions - Club Friendlies - Club Competitions - Rollups. Rinks can only be booked more than one week ahead if it is a proper competition or league.

We are fortunate enough to have an eight rink green. You can imagine I'm sure just how awkward things are for clubs with only 6 rinks and pity poor members at clubs with less (like New Milton with 2 rinks or Longmeadow with 4). Of course rollups are valuable as they fill up rink space which otherwise would be wasted and provide a means for people to play at short notice, to play with friends or to practice without the pressure of competition. But there's no guarantee these rinks will be filled and there are many times when space is available, obviously these tend to be the less popular times. Each empty rink is a loss of revenue leading eventually to more expensive fees so we are keen to maximise the rink occupancy. Any ideas anyone has for filling the less popular spaces please write in with your suggestions.