

Northants ECL Success

In the Season 2006 to 2007, Northants had its best ever year in the Eastern Counties League. County Captain, Jim Deacon was in the unusual position of being spoilt for choice with pairs, and the A Team finished comfortably top of the division, with only 1 defeat all season. The B Team had an even better record with only 1 draw in the season, but still needed 8 points going into the last match against Suffolk to be sure of winning the league. As Suffolk could also still win the division, the win for Northants was particularly satisfying. Northants C Team came very close to completing the hat-trick. Needing 17 points from their last match against Suffolk, they recorded a win but not by enough, finishing 2nd in the league to Cambs and Hunts.

Congratulations to all the pairs who played and contributed to these results.

Baines/Miller's Best Ever Result

In the Ranked Masters event held at Kettering Leisure Village this year, Rob Miller and Dan Baines were supposed to play in the Life Masters Section (Dan already playing a rank higher than his Premier National Master status). They were asked to play in the division above (Premier Life Masters) to make up the numbers and decided to have a go.

It was a small field with only 18 pairs, so there were 17 five board matches against each of the other pairs, butler scored. Against all expectations (and recent form) they were in second place with 2 matches to go, with only 4 pairs really still in the running. Playing against the top pair, they bid 2 slams (1 of which was very dodgy) which both came home, and moved into 1st place. The last 5 board match had 4 uneventful boards and, unknown to them, going into the last hand they had edged further ahead to a 17 IMP lead over the pair they had played in the previous match...

The last hand of the event saw a brisk auction by the opposition to 7NT, but after an explanation of the bidding it appeared that one thought the other had shown the King of Diamonds when he hadn't. It didn't matter, there were 6 clubs, 5 spades, and 2 other aces off the top. Hardly anyone had bid the stone cold grand slam, but it was only a loss of 10 IMPs. It would be OK wouldn't it?

The eventual winners (not Dan and Rob) saw their opponents settle in 4 Spades +3, for a gain of 11 IMPs and a victory by 4 IMPs overall. It was an exciting event, with more gold points than Dan had obtained from all the rest of his bridge results put together, but there was still a strange deflated feeling as they left the arena of battle with second prize.

Daniel Baines, 11 March 2007