

SPORTSMANSHIP IS THE DERBY WINNER - By Keith Hale

Bring some fun back into bowling is a message that has been going the rounds for quite a considerable time. There is enjoyment and entertainment in plenty at local centre level, but the national scene is dominated by the big money tournaments and the scratch bowlers.

More power to the elbow of Diane and Barry Joyce at the Derby Super Bowl, then, for conceiving and organising the inaugural Sportsmanship Games on the 7/8 October, a national sixes tournament which attracted a first-time entry of 17 teams to the delightful North Midland centre. The bowlers were not lured by any big prizes but gold, silver and bronze medals were to be won in friendly but sporting competition. Add to this a Saturday night disco in downtown Derby and the weekend get-together proved to be a recipe for success.

The schedule called for singles, doubles, trios and five-person team competition spread over the two days, each contested over a three-game series. The £45.00 entry fee per player included all bowling, overnight accommodation and the disco, plus free raffle tickets for a large array of prizes. What more could anyone ask for?

Unfortunately, the event clashed with the second week of the Silk Cut National League, so a considerable number of prospective teams were committed elsewhere, a point Diane has noted for the date of next years Games.

"I originally thought of a tournament a few years ago which developed into the Super Bowl Challenge Cup", said Diane. "in that the winning team hosts the event the following year. This year it went to Sheffield where Derby Super Bowl general manager Marie Burton saw the event, was impressed with the friendly competition and wanted to host a similar tournament in Derby. We didn't have any tournaments of this kind on the centre's schedule, so I went home and thought it over".

"I thought back through my 30 years in bowling and asked myself the question 'which events did I enjoy the most?' The answer was: the Inter-County finals, Ulster Games, Triple Crown and FIQ World Championships. A quite blatant formula was staring me in the face: they were all a) team events; b) medal prizes; c) involved overnight accommodation; d) had get-together parties; e) had team spirit and camaraderie, and f) involved international and top county players."

"By taking away the last criteria and replacing it with 'open to all levels, with scratch and handicap', I had my formula for the Sportsmanship Games."

"I'm disappointed that we didn't reach our target of 24 teams, but I completely forgot about the Silk Cut National League, even though I'm the Derby team manager! Lots of people told me it was a great idea and they'd love to come, but the Silk Cut League took precedence.

"Next year the date will be brought forward to the provisional slot of 7/8 September to give more teams a chance of entry. All teams that bowled this year will receive their entry forms a week earlier than they are available to the general public. From what I've already been told, most will be back!"

Well, some 102 like-minded folk enjoyed this years Sportsmanship Games, especially those taking home some of the 108 medals presented so nicely by Gill Holt at the end of the hostilities.

The tournament format called for singles and doubles to be played on the Saturday, trios and five's on the Sunday and any thoughts about this being a low-key, 'middling' average event were quickly dispelled when Craig Gostelow from Cleethorpes hit a fine 277 in the singles event, certainly waking everybody up to the high scoring potential of the Derby Super Bowl lanes.

The scores, in fact, were good, very good, right through the event and the medal spread at the time of presentations was nice and wide, but with the home team gathering in a few which will keep the local media happy.

Diane Joyce's recipe for success also included a bit of lively music at the commencement of each squad, seemingly a choice of 'tune' dedicated to each type of event, a move that was certainly appreciated by the participants.

The music at the Saturday night disco got the joint a jumpin' too as most of the competitors went along to the lively session until the wee small hours.

Just the computer scoring program didn't want to make this event go 100% sweetly but, promises Diane, that will certainly be fixed next time around.

But the players were enjoying themselves and didn't moan and groan about anything, a refreshing change from the ranking events, and they 're-Joyce-d' in the tournament organisation and commitment, despite the minor hiccups.

It will be full next year, of that you can be certain, and we'd like to bet that at least ten teams get turned away!