



The end of another year for Special Olympics East Herts Boccia club and once again the Shooting Stars reached the National League finals. This time we had to travel to Nottingham, Saturday 13th July 2019.

Over 90 teams competed in the Boccia England National League this season and the 16 regional winners plus 2 highest runners up met to compete not only for medals for the top spots, but also the additional prize of a place in next season's Super League.

Shooting Stars were one of three teams in their pool. Their first match against Blackpool Flyers started positively for the team, winning the first two ends 1-0, 1-0. Then Blackpool pulled back 2 points with Shooting Stars scoring another point in the 4th end. However the opposition rallied during the last two

ends, and finally won 4-3. The match could have gone either way with not a lot between the two teams.

After a break of an hour the players had to rally themselves again for their second pool match versus Greenhill Grenadiers. This resulted in an emphatic 6-2 win, with all team members contributing excellent attacking and defensive shots.

Shooting Stars progressed to the quarter finals as runners up in Pool A. The match against Nottingham Knights started on a knife edge, as it seemed both teams were well matched. Shooting Stars won the first end 0-1 but lost the second 1-0. Then they pulled away slowly by winning the next three games by the slimmest of margins, 1-0, 1-0, 1-0. The final end went to Nottingham 0-2 but Shooting Stars had done enough to secure a 4-3 win and a place in the semi-final.

The semi final was an interesting prospect. We were matched against Paul's Place Yellows. A team from a club with Super League credentials. First two ends were even but then the opposition had a great third end, winning 3-0. We rallied in ends 4 and 5, but they took the last game and the match 3-5. Shooting Stars played well as a team and their captain Harry was making good tactical decisions. However, the opposition seemed to find a little bit extra in the middle of the match which was enough for them to go through and finally win the finals.

One more game to play versus Blackpool Flyers. We were confident that as we had beaten them once, albeit by a slim margin, we could do so again. Starting well and going into the third end winning 4-0, the omens looked good. Blackpool countered with a 3-0 game to which Shooting Stars replied 1-0. Tension was mounting. However, an unfortunate 5th end loss 0-6 seemed to deflate the team and as Blackpool also took the last game, the final score was 5-11. Shooting Stars finished the competition the 4th best team in the country.

Head Coach, Rita Leader said, ***“Not only is this an achievement for Special Olympics East Herts Boccia Club to reach the National Finals again, but to reach the semi finals was amazing. The standard of play at this year’s tournament was the highest we have ever experienced and the team, Harry Herbert, Andre Hagley-King and Ian Leader, were a credit to themselves and the club. Thank***

you to all the parents who travelled to Nottingham and supported the team during an exciting and emotional day. We would also like to thank Joshua Barklem who helped the club to win their division in the earlier rounds of the competition.”

For more information about the SOEH Boccia Club please check out our website:
www.specialolympicseastherts.org and click on OUR CLUBS/BOCCIA