

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS EAST HERTS BOCCIA REACHES NEW LEVEL



Andre, Ian and Harry  
Special Olympics East Herts Boccia Team

Once again Special Olympics East Herts Boccia club reached the National Boccia League finals in Sheffield. The team of three: Andre Hagley-King, Ian Leader and Harry Herbert travelled to Sheffield Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

Boccia (*pronounced 'bocha'*) was originally designed for people with severe cerebral palsy but is now enjoyed by players from many sectors of the community. In 1984 it became a Paralympic sport, and in 2008 was being practiced in over fifty countries worldwide, from a purely recreational level to a variety of competitive events.

Ninety teams competed in the Boccia England National League this season and the seventeen regional winners met at Sheffield Sports Centre to compete not only for medals for the top spots, but also the additional prize of a place in next season's Super League.

1.7.2017

Special Olympics Shooting Stars were one of three teams in their pool. Their first match against Stockport Dynamos started slowly for the team, losing the first two ends 0-1, 0-2, but then they got into their stride winning the next three ends. Despite dropping the sixth and last end they finished as eventual winners 7-6.

After a break of over an hour the team had to rally themselves again for their second pool match versus Norwich Pioneers. This resulted in an emphatic 8-4 win, with all team members contributing excellent attacking and defensive shots.

As winners of both matches, and top team in the pool, Shooting Stars progressed to the quarter finals for the first time in the history of the club.

The match against Blackpool Boccia started on a knife edge, as it seemed both teams were well matched.

Shooting Stars lost the first end 0-1 but won the second 1-0. This was replicated in the next two ends so the match was tied after four ends. Shooting Stars continued to play well and their captain Harry was making good tactical decisions. However Blackpool found a little bit extra and the final two ends went their way 0-2 and 0-1, making the final score 2-5 to Blackpool.

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 quarter finals was amazing.*”**

***The club has gone from strength to strength in numbers and***

***achievements. Although we are primarily a social community club, it’s good to know that we are developing our players to compete at the highest level.***

***The team Harry Herbert, Andre Hagley-King and Ian Leader were a credit to the club. Thanks need to go to all the parents who travelled to Sheffield and supported the team during an exciting and emotional day.***

***We would also like to thank Mitchell Wright who was unable to travel to Sheffield but who helped the club to win their division in the earlier rounds of the competition. “***