



2ND TEAM MNR 6 COUNTIES FINAL - MATCH REPORT

Match: Derbyshire v Leicestershire and Rutland
Venue: Rothley Park Golf Club
Date: Thursday 30th August 2018

Team list and results attached.

As is my usual preparation on the day of a match, I arrived super early and sat quietly in the car park finalising my ideas and waiting for County Captain, Judy, to arrive. As she always does, she arrived only a few minutes behind me. Both cars were full to the brim with banners, clubs and trolleys, water, tuck boxes, spare kit etc. You name it, we had it. Nothing was being left to chance. We had plenty of time to have one last look at the MNR trophy that Derbyshire were handing over to the Rothley Park Ladies Vice Captain and start our preparations for the day.

Almost all of the team and early supporters had started arriving and once they were all in the car park, we uttered a sigh of relief. County banners and MNR sail flags were on display and the teams had started practicing having agreed the pairings and playing order for the morning foursomes. I know the players felt anxious and keen to do well.

We were feeling positive and so striding out on a glorious sunny day, all three pairings were on the course followed by a number of supporters ensuring that each match had encouragement along the way. Judy and I loaded up the buggy and off we set to ensure we moved between the matches so that we knew what was happening, provide support and encouragement as required and to keep everyone apprised of how the team were doing.

Everyone performed so well and we felt confident but not complacent as Imogen and Lydia posted a 6 & 5 win quickly followed by Beth and Sian with a 2 & 1. Deb and Lesley fought so hard to make sure we scored a further half point and as we broke for lunch we had a 2 point lead on the Leicestershire and Rutland team (2.5 – 0.5 points).

We had strength in our team but so did our opponents. We knew they would come out fighting and having the benefit of a home course, Derbyshire would be at a disadvantage. We were not deterred and after a discussion regarding the singles playing order, we posted our team with Rachel East, the Leicestershire and Rutland team captain and we lined up again for the next six matches.

We were grateful to those who travelled to Rothley Park to support the Derbyshire team as we certainly felt the greater numbers were with our opponents. That said, the banter between teams and supporters was so friendly and many were rekindling some old friendships with others making new ones.

As we moved between matches, it was quite clear as to how close they were and we knew that it was going to be a hard task to bring off a win. By the time we passed through the half-way house at the 12th tee, we knew we had a fight on our hands with most matches all square or 1 maybe two down to Team Derbyshire.

We needed 2.5 points from the afternoon singles to ensure the win but Leicestershire and Rutland ladies were giving us a real fight and credit due to them, they played exceptionally well, but so did Derbyshire. I couldn't have been prouder of the way they held their nerve and dug deep into their reserves. They never gave up until the match had ended.

Lydia was our first match to finish and bless her she sent out her What's App message of her loss and then sat quietly at the back of the 15th tee waiting to support the rest of the team as they came through. Lesley then sadly succumbed to the excellent recovery and short play of team captain, Rachel East. This meant that both teams now had 2.5 points each. With four more games out on the course and some heading towards the 18th we were concerned that Derbyshire wouldn't be able to repeat the 2017 win. Beth fought to the bitter end but lost on the 18th having pulled back a deficit of 4 down. We were now 2.5 points to 3.5 points but right behind was Imogen delivering a 3 & 1 win which bought us back on schedule for a draw. Sian and Debs were fighting hard as they knew that we needed every point.

My nerves were on a knife edge. Despite starting earlier in the order, owing to a slight delay and Sian playing through, Deb now found herself at the back of the field and was one up on the 18th tee. We knew we couldn't lose that match but a win would have been preferred.

Sian was up ahead on the 18th fairway. With everyone now following these two matches, there was much pressure on both players. Judy and I were furiously trying to calculate the options. If Sian won the hole she would have an overall win and with Deb and a certain half, we would have made it. If Sian lost the hole then Leicestershire and Rutland could win if Debs lost the 18th and halved her match. If Sian halved the match then a guaranteed half from Deb meant that with the better game difference, Derbyshire would retain the trophy. There was much whispering and calculating taking place whilst Sian was on the 18th green at the side of us.

Deb was half way up the fairway and it looked like she would lose the hole but gain the half for us.

So many people and players were now gathered around the green and it was down to Sue and Sian to hold their nerves as they putted out to halve the match.

To be honest, I couldn't quite believe it. I was still trying to calculate the scores when Rachel came over and offered her hand and congratulated me on the win.

My thanks go to the ladies of Rothley Park Golf Club, Danny the general manager, the pro shop and catering staff for their hospitality. Thanks also to the ladies and supporters of Leicestershire and Rutland who played so hard in the singles and oh so nearly did it. Thanks also to the merry band of regular supporters for Team Derbyshire. It has been wonderful being in your company. Thanks to the county officials for your support throughout and on the day and how did President Paul manage to get on so many photographs this season?

As for the second team players I have never been so proud to captain a team of fighters. Every single one of them over the five matches, have never given up. It has been an honour and a pleasure to be around such a great bunch of players, caddies and supporters.

So, over to Janet Thomas in 2019 and let's hope we can make it three years in a row but as Lesley said, "can we do it without the need for a count back next year?"

Janet Carlin
2nd Team Captain
30th August 2018