

HUDDERSFIELD & DISTRICT VETERANS BOWLING ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Number 28
April 2019

A review of the past month, a preview of the coming month and more

www.hdvba.co.uk



**BUMPER
17-PAGE
EDITION**

Inside this issue ...

2019 SEASON TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEW

**GOLDEN
JUBILEE
PLANS**

**FANTASY
LEAGUE
TIPS**

**ANNIVERSARY
BOOK
APPEAL**

**2019
STARRED
BOWLERS**

**TRANSFER
MARKET
UPDATE**

PLUS: New Sponsors | 2019 Prize Fund | April Calendar | From the Archives | Club Reps Corner + more

This is the official monthly Newsletter of the HDVBA which provides friendly but competitive crown green bowling for the Over-60s in the Huddersfield area.

Thank you to GRAHAM HALL of RASTRICK B.C. for sponsoring this issue of the Newsletter

NEW SPONSORS FILL THE GAPS

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Jeff Jacklin

info@hdvba.co.uk

SUBSCRIBE/UNSUBSCRIBE at

www.hdvba.co.uk/Newsletter.htm

APRIL SPONSOR

Thank you to GRAHAM HALL of Rastrick B.C. for his generous sponsorship of this issue of the Newsletter. He has made this gesture to coincide with his 70th birthday this month in order to 'bring a little happiness to all.' If, like Graham, you would like to book a future month to help celebrate your birthday it costs just £20 to sponsor an issue with front-page acknowledgement in that edition for the individual or commercial organisation sponsor. There was a tremendous response to last month's appeal for sponsors for the Newsletter and each issue up to and including August 2019 are now spoken for, thank you, but if your birthday is in September Book Now!

FRONT COVER

Daffodils in full bloom at Rastrick Bowling Club is this month's seasonal cover design. Thanks to Bob Haigh for the new photograph.

TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEW



As the daffodils droop the bowlers emerge from their Winter hibernation for the start of the 50th Veterans League season. This is also the month where for the last four years I have taken the brave (but foolish) step of trying to forecast the fate of every team in our Leagues for the coming season. Going further than that to name my top two and relegation certainties in each of the eight Sections. This year is no different - let the ridicule begin!

HDVBA NEWS UPDATES EVERY DAY AT
www.hdvba.co.uk

We are pleased to announce a number of new sponsors that are supporting your Association this year. Having lost Bluebird Care as a significant sponsor last season we have been trying to recruit replacement new sponsors with some success.

We are delighted to welcome Huddersfield Volkswagen, Syngenta, Darkwoods Coffee and Pearson Funeral Services of Meltham as new sponsors to the Association. In addition Peter Hirst who has arranged sponsorship over many years for us from Atkinson Interiors has offered to provide his personal sponsorship following the change of ownership and withdrawal of Atkinsons. This is all very positive news and reflects the buoyancy of the Association at present.

It is also great news that a number of our regular sponsors continue to support us in this way including Croft Care Homes, Lockwood Windows, DP Plumbers, Abacus Stone, Ballcroft, Almondbury Liberal Club, Lindley Bowling Club, Lockwood & Salford Cons Club, Brockholes Bowling Club, Oxter Services, Well Bowled of Luddendenfoot along with personal sponsorships from Paul Rangeley and Alan & Pat Stephenson.

We are not, and do not aim to be, a profit making organisation. If we had £10,000 in the bank that would represent a failure on behalf of the Management Committee. We only raise money to pass on to the clubs not to save it for a rainy day. Having said that the capability of passing even more money on to our clubs is also an objective and we are always working towards attracting more financial support to our League.

We are working hard to promote the extra sponsorship potential that comes with celebrating our Golden Jubilee and it would be good to have even more new sponsors signed up to benefit from our higher profile that will come with the commemoration of our Anniversary. Contact any Committee member to learn how you or any commercial organisation can benefit from a closer link for our celebration year of 2020.

ANNIVERSARY BOOK APPEAL

The work continues on pulling a new book together to commemorate the Association's 50th Anniversary in 2020. I am now looking for items and photos about clubs and their members to add to the collection. The book will include a section on every club in membership in 2019 and it would be good to make that the best section of all.

I have just spent several days working through 8,000 Examiner press cuttings (about 160 of them included items about the Vets League) which had been collected by Peter Muff over 35 years and had been scanned and digitised by John Hodgson. I am grateful to them both along with contributions already received from Bob Swan, Dougie Mellor, Neil Hinchliffe and Gary Cramb. Bob Haigh is working through updating his collection of green photos as well. These will all be supplemented with the official records of our Association where they exist.

Time to appeal for a copy of any club photographs that you may have tucked away or on your clubhouse walls. New team photos are always welcome as well. This book is a unique opportunity to update and improve the profile of your club and make this one-off record of our Leagues a really good and complete read.

Currently the book looks to be around 250 to 300 pages thick and will contain a wealth of information about our Leagues, clubs and bowlers with some fascinating insights as to why and how the first 10-Man League was established. There is a meeting-by-meeting account of clubs getting together to form the initial two divisions with just three months between the first mooted suggestion of a new League to the first game being played. Lots of great photographs, facts and figures are already in my possession which I am sure will prompt nostalgic memories for many.

There are a number of sections within the book including year-by-year League Tables although there are a lot missing so if you have an old handbook or your own collection of press cuttings that fill in any

of the missing years I would be really grateful for a copy of them. The League Tables I am missing are from 1972 right through to 1995, then 2007, 2011 and 2012 for the 10-Man League and the same years for the 6-Man League plus the year 2000.



The price of the book cannot be set yet until the number of pages is finalised which in turn depends on the number of articles and photos I receive and uncover between now and publication date. Kirkwood Hospice will benefit from sales of the book.

I hope that it will be published and available through Amazon before Christmas but there are no guarantees on that at present. It is a very time-consuming business putting something this detailed in print and minimising the number of errors that will inevitably creep in.

But it is going well, there is no shortage of information and I am very excited about the final version. I look forward to hearing from you with news and photographs about your club and its members including 2019 team photos. Bring them on!

ALL THE CLOSE-SEASON TRANSFERS & NEW BOWLERS

With just a few days to go before the start of the 2019 bowling season we take a look at all the new bowler registrations and transfers that having taken place over the last six months. With 10 new teams ready for action that has lead to an influx of new registrations taking the total to 80 new bowlers for 2019 compared with exactly 50 for the start of the 2018 season. Notably there has been a reduction in the total number of transfers compared with the previous year, just 26 this year compared with 40 in 2018. New bowlers first with all the transfers overpage.

NEW BOWLERS 2019

DATE	NAME	CLUB
15-10-18	Harry Redman	Rastrick
15-10-18	John Booker	Marsh United
05-11-18	Rob Allen	Golcar Lib
08-11-18	John Kneeshaw	Ravensknowle Park
11-11-18	Derek Hey	Holmfirth
17-11-18	David Frost	Thorpe Green
17-11-18	Martin Skuse	Thorpe Green
23-11-18	John Wise	Paddock I&C
23-11-18	Peter Brier	Paddock I&C
29-11-18	Michael Pollard	Slaithwaite C&BC
13-12-18	Peter Farnsworth	Holmfirth
13-12-18	Leo Scott	Holmfirth
13-12-18	John Allen	Lindley BC
15-12-18	Donald Rae	Milnsbridge
17-12-18	Alan Brown	Cowcliffe
17-12-18	Steve Halsall	Cowcliffe
17-12-18	Joe Harding	Shepley
17-12-18	Ronald Leather	Shepley
17-12-18	Richard Usher	Shepley
18-12-18	Keith Hatzer	Bradley & Colne
18-12-18	Steve Mynott	Bradley & Colne
24-12-18	Stephen Lunn	Waterloo
24-12-18	P. Atherton	Waterloo
27-12-18	J R Wilson	Waterloo
02-01-19	Peter Allen	Hemplow
02-01-19	Lloyd Armitage	Hemplow
02-01-19	Andrew Beardsall	Hemplow
02-01-19	Duncan Matley	Hemplow
02-01-19	Michael Sykes	Hemplow
02-01-19	Stewart Wike	Hemplow
02-01-19	Nigel Spriggins	Hemplow
02-01-19	Paul Broadhead	Lindley BC
03-01-19	Tony Butterfield	Kirkheaton Con
07-01-19	Robert Dickinson	Longwood
07-01-19	Richard Haigh	Longwood
07-01-19	I Archibald	Elland C&BC
07-01-19	A Dubaj	Elland C&BC
07-01-19	S Lowther	Elland C&BC
08-01-19	Trevor Barker	Milnsbridge
08-01-19	David Horsfall	Milnsbridge

NEW BOWLERS 2019 *(continued)*

DATE	NAME	CLUB
08-01-19	Mick Hirst	Milnsbridge
08-01-19	George Kaye	Milnsbridge
08-01-19	Patrick Hynes	Milnsbridge
08-01-19	Ian Parr	Milnsbridge
12-01-19	Peter Laycock	Marsh Lib
12-01-19	Steve Morgan	Marsh Lib
21-01-19	John Hewison	Thongsbridge
22-01-19	R A Charlesworth	Kirkheaton Con
22-01-19	Gary Senior	Kirkheaton Con
22-01-19	G Slack	Kirkheaton Con
26-01-19	Philip Power	Kirkheaton Con
27-01-19	Steve Sykes	Lindley Lib
27-01-19	Paul Cross	Marsh Lib
27-01-10	Alan Balmforth	Marsh Lib
28-01-19	Derek Sykes	Golcar Lib
19-02-19	Dennis Burnand	Longwood
19-02-19	John Goldthorpe	Shepley
20-02-19	B Ashwell	Crosland Moor
20-02-19	David Heeley	Crosland Moor
20-02-19	J Mulligan	Crosland Moor
20-02-19	J Wade	Crosland Moor
20-02-19	R Wood	Crosland Moor
20-02-19	B Lambourne	Crosland Moor
20-02-19	M Boon	Crosland Moor
22-02-19	Ken Boyles	Kirkheaton C&BC
04-03-19	Ian Smith	Marsh Lib
04-03-19	Philip Richardson	Shepley
09-03-19	Andrew Taylor	Brockholes
09-03-19	Steven Dean	Brockholes
09-03-19	Paul Dean	Brockholes
09-03-19	Adrian Cooper	Kirkheaton Con
09-03-19	A Slack	Kirkheaton Con
11-03-19	James Nolan	Netherton Con
11-03-19	Barry Walker	Holmfirth (10man)
14-03-19	Stephen Lees	Elland C&BC
15-03-19	Gary Armitage	Lowerhouses
18-03-19	Stephen Ayre	Skel Windmill
18-03-19	David Brierley	Holmfirth
18-03-19	Stephen Palmer	Holmfirth
21-03-19	Colman Conneely	Lockwood Con

ALL THE BOWLER TRANSFERS

Lindley Lib have been the busiest club in the close-season transfer business with three bowlers moving on and four new ones joining the club.

With a total of 26 transfers over the last six months this is well down on the 2018 total of the 40 bowlers that started that season with new clubs.

There are still a few days to go before the deadline for transfers is reached as business should end before the start of the new season on 2nd April. That deadline applies to all clubs including those that play in the 6-Man league who don't start their season until two weeks later.

It is still possible to arrange a bowler transfer during the bowling season but it is a longer process and requires the approval of the Management Committee. That approval will only come if there are special circumstances applying although they are very sympathetic to cases where teams are short of a full complement and where bowlers are not getting a game at all with their current clubs.

TRANSFERS FOR 2019 SEASON

NAME	FROM	TO
Rod Jackson	Waterloo	Almondbury BC
John Fawcett	Holmfirth	Brockholes
Graham Illingworth	Milnsbridge	Crosland Moor
Peter Hopkinson	Lindley Lib	Golcar Lib
Robert Senior	Lindley Lib	Golcar Lib
John Mikula	Marsh United	Greenhead Park
John Wright	Milnsbridge	Hemplo
Rex Bamforth	Marsden Park	Hemplo
John Lever	Almondbury BC	Kirkheaton Con
Maurice Nicholson	Bradley & Colne	Kirkheaton Con
Adrian Sykes	Golcar Lib	Lindley Lib
George Simpson	Elland C&BC	Lindley Lib
Peter Thornton	Lockwood Con	Lindley Lib
Vincent Hanlon	Lindley BC	Lindley Lib
John Ollerenshaw	Lindley Lib	Longwood
David Schofield	Crosland Moor	Marsh Lib
Brian Hamilton	Primrose Hill Lib	Marsh United
Dave Worrall	Netherton Con	Marsh United
Stuart Greaves	Clayton West	New Mill
Ben Hammond	Golcar Lib	Outlane
Bill Beattie	Greenhead Park	Outlane
John Swallow	Brockholes	Ravensknowle Pk
Michael Bell	Brockholes	Ravensknowle Pk
Howard Crowther	Thongsbridge	Shepley
Ian Yeardeley	Skel Windmill	Shepley
John Pix	Canalside	Springwood

ADVERTISING IN THE NEWSLETTER

Having been approached about providing some advertising space in the monthly newsletter we are now making available quarter-page adverts for just £5 per issue. It gets even cheaper for longer term commitments (6 months £25, 12 months £45). Whether you want to advertise your business, bowls or house for sale, birthday celebrations or just to say thank you for anything then get in touch we will be delighted to hear from you. Full details on the back page of this newsletter.

We will start with a few acknowledgements to some of our new and regular sponsors.



STARRED BOWLERS 2019

The ratification of the Starred Bowlers for 2019 has now been completed by the Management Committee. Only (and all) Section 1 & 2 clubs have Starred Bowlers. These bowlers cannot bowl in the 6-Man League or play for lower Section teams. A full review of these bowlers will be undertaken six weeks in to the season to ensure that they are actually bowling this season and also bowling at their expected level.

SECTION 1

Almondbury BC A

David Kaye
David Harrison
Donald Crowther
Terry Machen
Dennis Machen

Clayton West

Malcolm Gilbert
J. Lindley
Tim Poulter
Russell Clarkson
E. Smith

Cowcliffe

Trevor Heley
Derrick Hewitt
Viv Smith
Graham Dyson
Hew Clark

Elland C&BC A

G. Bradford
John Sharp
P. Lea
Rod Greenwood
Andrew Bamforth

Golcar Lib A

David Singleton
Peter Hopkinson
Stuart Manson
Tom Chatfield
Dennis Hirst

Lindley Lib A

Robert Morgan
Michael Thornton
Martin Holt
Alan Forrest
Richard Saunders

Lockwood Con A

Mick Cox
Peter Kain
Eddie Haigh
K. Beaumont
Derek Gibson

Longwood

Roger Crowther
Graham Howe
Alan Crowther
John Hunsley
Ian Crawford

Marsh Utd A

Andy Carter
Trevor Sykes
David J Simmons
Brian Swift
Douglas Hamilton

Meltham A

Colin Lloyd
Paul Harburn
Des Emsall
Baldwin Walsh
Alan Chapman

Milnsbridge A

Kevin Brown
Bob Hulley
Roger Hallas
Brian Jenkins
David Blackburn

Netherton Con A

Denis Garner
G. Howe
G. Brook
Tommy Whitaker
J Q Saxton

Rastrick

Ken Fleming
David Wood
Roger Stopford
Geoff Normanton
Kenneth Tiffany

Waterloo

R. Mudd
John Hodgson
Frank Griffin
Alan Stephenson
J. Hirst

SECTION 2

Broad Oak A

Carl Taylor
Ken Wilson
John Schofield
Mick Iredale
Geoff Atkinson

Brockholes A

Peter Green
Richard Green
Peter Beaumont
Carl Beaumont
Tommy Lynes

Crosland Moor

Graham Illingworth
Tony Clegg
Ron Swallow
Rodney Whitehead
Derek Frost

Hemplow

D. Wagner
T. Shaw
F. Armitage
David Armitage
K. Hopper

Kirkheaton Con A

Tony Butterfield
Adrian Cooper
Gary Senior
Ken Baxter
Gordon Walker

Kirkheaton C&BC A

Mick Boyles
Eddie Hine
Alan McNeill
Michael Smyth
Colin Sykes

Lockwood Con B

Brendan O'Prey
Chris Ball
Graham Stocks
H. Ellis
Mick Shore

Lindley BC A

Ken Ellis
Mike Dawe
Robert Taylor
Geoff Stott
Nick Beaumont

Meltham B

Jeff Smith
David Nicholson
George Fellows
Keith Sykes
Bob Grant

Skel Windmill

John Romano
David Vickers
Geoff Smith
Trevor Brook
Manuel Martinho

Shepley

Norman Raper
John Taylor
Robert Oldham
David Erving
Stanley Hoyle

New Mill A

Allen Hufton
Geoff Haigh
Peter Booth
Peter Burgess
Chris Washington

Thongsbridge A

K. Damms
Geoff Alsop
R. Schofield
R. Smith
T. Swift

Thorpe Green

Charlie Landon
Graham Morris
Charlie Littlewood
Alan Hawkins
Barrie Fielding

GOLDEN JUBILEE PLANS

We are pleased to confirm some of the arrangements for the first of the two celebration events already planned for our Golden Jubilee season of 2020.

Coupled with our Annual General Meeting is a Golden Jubilee Launch event which will be held at Meltham Bowling Club from 2.00pm on Monday 17th February 2020. A most generous offer from the club has allowed us to open our 50th Anniversary celebrations in style with a number of appropriate ways to mark the occasion. There will be a number of speakers talking about bowling in Huddersfield and in particular about the formation of the Veterans League in 1970.

In addition we are planning a number of small presentations including some to those founder clubs that are still bowling in our Leagues today. That will be followed by a buffet. Each club will be invited to have two representatives present and our Anniversary Patrons and Life Members will also be invited to join in the celebrations. More details will be shared as plans become more certain.

There will then be an End-of-Season Presentation Event when all the winners from our team, individual and pairs competitions are invited to join representatives from every club along with our Anniversary Patrons and Life Members in marking the climax of our Golden Jubilee season. A buffet will be provided for all attendees. This will be held at Rastrick Bowling Club at 3.00pm on Monday 2nd November 2020.

The Club's Half-Year Meeting will be held as normal at Paddock I&C at 2.00pm on Monday 19th October 2020.

FROM THE ARCHIVES 1991



HDVBA President Tom Sykes with The Examiner Rose Bowl and the 21st running of the tournament. The Finals Day bowlers (L to R) Eric Sewell, Bryan Armitage, winner Colin Taylor, Jim Feather, Peter Cockcroft, runner-up Clifford Armitage. Harrv Wilkinson and Frank Woodhead

ANNIVERSARY PATRONS

We are very grateful to the growing list of Anniversary Patrons for their support of this scheme. Further contributions are most welcome with a minimum donation of £10 getting your name on the list which will be widely shared over the next two years. All funds raised will directly benefit the commemoration of the Association's 50th Anniversary.

The current list of Patrons is below and you can add your name to this list and show your support by contacting the League Secretary.

ANNIVERSARY PATRONS:

Peter & Judith Muff, David Sykes (Brockholes), Jeff Jacklin (Kirkheaton Con), Allan Dobson (Kirkheaton C&BC), Philip Walker (Lindley BC), Bob Swan (Cowcliffe), David Union (Outlane), Jeff & Ann Smith (Meltham), Paul Rushworth (Broad Oak), Ian Crawford (Longwood), David Blackburn (Thorpe Green), Brian Faichney (Canalside) and Bill Blackburn (Lindley BC).

£3,500 PRIZE FUND FOR 2019

The total amount of prize money on offer for the coming 2019 bowling season in the Veteran's League is £3,505. Of this £1,050 will go to the teams who enjoy the most success in the Leagues this year. For each 10-Man Section Champion there is a reward of £100 with £50 going to the runner-up. In the 6-Man League it is £70 to the top team in each Section and £30 to the runner-up.

The Knock-Out team competitions will have a total prize money allocation of £870 with £150 to the winner and £80 to the runner-up of the Bistro, Team KO and Sub-Team KO. The winner of the Julie Fuller Trophy will receive, in addition to the trophy, a cheque for £120 with £60 for the runner-up.

Then the Individual and Pairs competitions will share the remaining £1,585 with the allocation as below.

COMPETITION	FUND	WINNER	No. of PRIZES
Rose Bowl	£440	£160	8
Pairs KO	£300	£120	8
Over-70's KO	£280	£100	8
Over-70's Pairs KO	£200	£80	8
Over-80's	£180	£80	4
LD Trophy	£185	£70	8

Entries are now open for all our Individual and Pairs competitions including the brand new Over-70s Pairs KO. Just visit the HDVBA website to use the online entry form and enter as many as you like for £2 per bowler per competition.

CLUB REPS CORNER

There is a new Registrar for the Yorkshire CCGBA. All bowlers in our Leagues have to be registered with the BCGBA via the Yorkshire CCGBA and there is a one-off increased fee of £12 to obtain that registration. All clubs should note the details of the new YCCGBA Registrar. It is Steven Cochrane of 'Montrose', Ripley Road, Knaresborough HG5 9BY Tel: 01423-867820. His email address is stevencochrane@btconnect.com

An update on the previous announcement that Skel Windmill would not be playing on their own green this season. The club have since been advised to use the green as much as possible to aid their legal standing should matters get difficult further on. That being the case they are now planning to use The Windmill green for all their Veteran's League matches this season. They currently have power routed via the pub but should that be threatened then they will get their own generator in place, They also intend getting a Portaloo positioned on site. So business as usual on The Windmill green and the League expects all clubs to support them during a difficult time for them.

All new teams in our Leagues for the 2019 season who intend submitting match results via Bowlsnet should ensure that they have a new Username and Password before the season starts. Clubs who have teams in the 10-Man League should note that your 10-man team Password will not work for your new 6-man team (and vice versa). Please contact the League Secretary and get set up for the new season.

If you were unable to collect your allocated number of 2019 Handbooks on the designated day then you need to contact Allan Dobson, the Interim General Secretary, to arrange to collect your allocation. Contact Allan on 07974 271 293.

You will be aware that we have had some rule changes over the close-season and these are now all documented in your new 2019 handbook. You can also see them on the HDVBA website under Association/Bye-Laws where the changes are helpfully highlighted in yellow to make them stand out.

Club Reps and Team Captains should familiarise themselves with these changes and make sure that your teams act within the League Rules right from the first day of the season. Your Management Committee will be ensuring that all clubs follow your rules at all times. If any clarity on any rule is required at any time then please contact the League Secretary.

LAST REMINDER:

The Bowler Transfer Window closes on 2nd April.

FANTASY LEAGUE KICKS OFF

The Well Bowled sponsored Fantasy League is once again open for business with £120 in the Prize Fund and free entry for all Veterans League bowlers. Every entrant can also get £5 off Well Bowled purchases when spending a minimum £30 in their shop. To enter all you have to do is select your top teams in each of our eight Sections and every point your teams get goes towards your Fantasy League total. Top performers over the season win the top prizes.

Change in format this year for as well as the one big League with everyone in, we have also created three new Leagues where even more prizes are on offer. There are eight guaranteed winners this year compared with five last season so every reason to get involved. If you don't have time to select your entries then leave it to us with a Lucky Dip entry. The 2019 Team-by-Team Preview of the Season included in this newsletter may help you to finalise your selections or use the tips below. Visit the HDVBA website and enter now. The closing date is 12noon Tuesday 2nd April.

FANTASY LEAGUE TOP TIPS

Milnsbridge have lost their top A team Singles bowler for 2019 but have signed on seven new bowlers; Lindley Lib have been one of the busiest clubs in the Transfer Market with four new signings and losing two of their Section 1 Starred Bowlers; Kirkheaton Con have signed on three new age-qualified Subscription bowlers (two from Moldgreen Con, one from own club); Crosland Moor have finished 3rd in Section 2 for the last two seasons and have signed on the 4th top rated Section 1 bowler from last season; Hemplow have signed the most new bowlers (nine); Elland have signed on three new probable A team bowlers; Almondbury Lib have either been promoted or relegated for the last six years, the last time they dropped to this season's level they earned immediate promotion back to Section 2.

The top Fantasy League selections to date in each of the eight Sections are Section 1: Lockwood Con (95%), Section 2: Crosland Moor (55%), Section 3: Almondbury Lib (35%), Section 4: Lowerhouses (32%), Section 5: Broad Oak B/David Brown Sports/Lindley BC B (all 21%), Section A: Netherton Con (36%), Section B: Longwood (28%), Section C: Marsden Park (36%)

Sections 3 & C are the most open with 9/12 and 8/10 teams respectively already selected at least once by Fantasy League entrants. The number of teams selected to date per Section is Section 1 (3 out of 14), Section 2 (6/14), Section 3 (9/12), Section 4 (6/12), Section 5 (8/12), Section A (6/10), Section B (7/10), Section C (8/10).

TEAM-BY-TEAM SEASON PREVIEW

It is that time of year again when all teams are afresh with enthusiasm for our sport, when winning promotion seems a formality and personal success is guaranteed based on a 'new' bowling action gleaned from a You-Tube video. What could possibly go wrong? This is what I am faced with as I start the annual preview of forecasting the end-of-season fate of all 94 teams in our Leagues. As ever I put my faith in the unpredictable and the unreliable to tease out the unworthy best bets for those of you still to place your forecasts in to the Fantasy League arena. This preview probably wont help you one jot but it has to be done so let's start at the beginning with the 10-Man League.

SECTION 1

2018 Final League Table

		PI	Pts
1	Lockwood Con. A	26	174
2	Elland C&BC A	26	140
3	Marsh United A	26	126
4	Cowcliffe	26	123
5	Milnsbridge A	26	123
6	Almondbury B.C. A	26	123
7	Golcar Lib A	26	118
8	Clayton West	26	117
9	Lindley Lib. A	26	117
10	Meltham A	26	115
11	Waterloo	26	109
12	Netherton Con. A	26	95
13	Brockholes A	26	79
14	Thongsbridge A	26	79

Right all you top Section hopefuls you of course realise that you are all just competing for the place of runners-up to **Lockwood Con**, don't you? Champions for the past five years which is currently equal to that of Milnsbridge (2009-2013) before setting a new record target of their own.

They show no sign of slowing up and a 34-point winning margin last year is a mark in the sand to them of this year's intentions. The Fantasy League entries to date are overwhelmingly in favour of the Champions retaining their title with 48 of the 52 entries to date naming them as their top choice. It is a brave (or foolish) man indeed who picks any alternative punt.

However, let's look at that a little closer by examining the credentials of the following pack. Well for a start four of the next five in last year's final table had all improved dramatically on their 2017 positions signifying teams on an upward trend. **Elland C&BC A** had their best season since winning the title in 2008 with a four-place improvement to finish runners-up and significantly 14 points ahead of the third-placed team. With only one singles bowler and one pairs bowler in the top ten averages it points towards a strong all-round team rather than individual dependency. They have also recruited what

appear to be three new A team bowlers and if they settle in quickly and reach their potential then will expect to be the main threats to our perpetual Champions.

Third placed **Marsh United A** also lifted the Bistro KO trophy to boost confidence last back-end and they finished stronger than they started after suffering a slow start to the season losing 3 of their first 6 matches. Their strength appears to be in the Pairs with the top two in the averages and 3 of the top 10 Section bowlers. If they get a better start to the new season then that might send out the warning bells to all. That will not be easy as their opening five fixtures include Elland C&BC A at home and Cowcliffe and Lockwood Con both away. Having improved in each of the last seasons to climb from 6th to 5th to 3rd last year shows steady improvement and they will be keen and probably capable of extending that sequence.

The next rising star being **Cowcliffe** who finished fourth last year again an improvement on 10th (2017) and 12th (2016) after promotion in 2015. One of only 3 teams to beat the Champions last year which will have done their confidence the world of good. Obviously a third team on the up and the race for the runner-up spot may well be the main attraction in this Section this year and I would expect Cowcliffe to be amongst those contenders.

Almondbury BC A had a great 2018 finishing in 6th position and on the same number of points as the two teams above them and this after avoiding relegation on the final day of the 2017 season, some improvement and there may be more to come. However two 0-9 defeats to the Champions last year shows what shortfall there currently is in making a realistic challenge for honours but improvement on the same level as last year will bode well for the future.

Tucked amongst this quartet of improving teams is **Milnsbridge A** - fading star or just taking a breather? Five times Champions (2009-2013) and never out the top half of the table in the last 10 years shows a stubbornness to be envied and no-one has a better record over that time. They have lost top bowlers each of the last three seasons

without apparent damage to their competitiveness but two more regulars moving on this time including their captain and top singles bowler may be a step too far.

Then comes a group of three separated by a single point last year - Golcar Lib A, Clayton West and Lindley Lib A. The A teams from Golcar and Lindley Lib finished within five points and one position of where they finished in 2017 so no room for optimism with doubts about the power to move upwards from where they are now. It was rumoured that these two clubs would be swapping a number of bowlers over the close-season and although there has been some activity it is nowhere near the level rumoured. Golcar have probably come out the better of the two from the transfer market but it is difficult to see anything other than mid-table weariness for both this season with most of the teams above them looking set to continue their improved form. In fact any faltering in home form for Lindley Lib could be catastrophic as a 12-1 home record last year was vitally important in saving them getting dragged in to the relegation battle.

The enigma that is Clayton West baffles me. Such a dominant home record with only two defeats in 29 home games over three seasons (2015-2017) to suddenly experience four home defeats last season whilst still struggling to beat anyone away from their home lawn defies logic. I thought that they would mount a serious challenge for the title last year but that never materialised and it would go against the trend to come back from that and regain their top two form.

We have two strong looking teams coming up from Section 2 as Champions Rastrick romped away with the title by a clear 22 points with a much stronger team than the one that took them out of the top Section the previous year. I would expect them to consolidate their position and possibly have a top half finish within their capabilities. The much-anticipated arrival of Longwood in the top flight will create great interest and with three significant new arrivals to their ranks they will expect nothing less than a top half finish as well. That threat is mirrored by Fantasy League tipsters who make them second favourites for the title this year.

So with two strong promoted teams and a batch of improving teams it seems inevitable that two long time Section 1 teams will be dropping through the relegation trapdoor this year. We are left with three prime contenders for the drop based on last year's form - Netherton Con A, Waterloo and Meltham A.

Meltham's 10th place finish last year was a huge surprise after finishing fourth the previous two

seasons. It was their results in the first half of the season that did for them with just 4 victories in those 13 matches. Things improved thereafter winning 7 out of 13 but another slow start will test the nerves.

It is only four years ago that Netherton Con A finished runners-up to Champions Lockwood Con with Waterloo in fourth spot but fortunes for both have suffered since then. Waterloo did win the Team KO last year, no mean feat at any time, and did have a 13-13 league record which should give reason for comfort looking ahead.

Whereas I can find no reason to support Netherton Con's continuing dining at the top table and believe that they will go down this year. I'm taking a punt on who will accompany them as I think Waterloo and Meltham have it within them to recover their form and climb away from the lower reaches sufficiently enough to endanger Lindley Lib A who I feel will succumb to the draught of the trapdoor this season.

FORECAST:

Champions - LOCKWOOD CON

Runners-Up - ELLAND C&BC A

Going Down - NETHERTON CON A, LINLDEY LIB A

SECTION 2

2018 Final League Table

		PI	Pts
1	Rastrick	24	168
2	Longwood	24	146
3	Crosland Moor	24	143
4	New Mill A	24	117
5	Lindley B.C. A	24	116
6	Broad Oak A	24	107
7	Kirkheaton C&BC A	24	105
8	Shepley	24	97
9	Hemplow	24	93
10	Meltham B	24	87
11	Skel Windmill	24	86
12	Almondbury Lib.	24	81
13	Primrose Hill Lib A	24	58

We have another stand-out Section 2 contender for this season with Crosland Moor aiming to improve on their third-place finish for the last two years, both times losing out on the last day of the season. The significant recruitment of Graham Illingworth (4th in the Section 1 Singles Averages last year) from Milnsbridge should be enough to push them over the line this year. They had the top two Pairs bowlers in Section 2 last year as well so with no other changes they should be stronger than last term in what looks an easier Section this time around.

Promoted **Thorpe Green** could offer the biggest threat to the 'Moor' and after a forced relegation the year before they know exactly what is expected of them at this level. They are a stronger set-up than when they went down and with no comings and goings look to have the stable set-up that should serve them well. Me and my boys at **Kirkheaton Con** came up with them from Section 3, again after a forced relegation the previous year and we have recruited well adding three Subscription bowlers to the ranks. With the back-up of a new B team the omens are better than for a number of years on the 'postage stamp' green. I can't tip my own team can I.

Lockwood Con B got promoted to Section 2 after the reorganisation required to accommodate the three new teams. Having said that they were unfortunate not to get automatic promotion after being in the top two nearly all season. They have a number of bowlers with experience at this, and a higher, level so will not be fazed by the higher standard of opposition. I would expect a year of consolidation although the continuing success of the A team could rub off on their understudies and provoke a surge of form.

The A teams of **Brockholes** and **Thongsbridge** will once again expect to challenge for Section 2 promotion after being relegated last season. They came down together after getting promotion together the previous year and both have had other Section 1 relegation in the last 5 years. Real yo-yo teams who you would never write out of the promotion race. However with no significant incoming activity for either team and fitness worries about more than one Brockholes bowler then it is difficult to have confidence about their hopes this coming season. I would therefore expect Thongsbridge to finish above their falling friends from Brockholes but think they may need another year to refresh their ambitions before launching another challenge another year on.

New Mill A had an excellent first season in Section 2 last year finishing fourth after promotion the previous year and if they continue in that vein will be a serious threat especially as they have acquired a regular Section 1 bowler from Clayton West to add to their ranks. **Lindley BC A** finished last season four points less and one position worse than the previous year and may have to settle for something similar again this term although an end of season run of three straight wins over teams above them, and still in this Section, may be a promising omen.

Broad Oak A are Section 2 residents having retained that status for several years without ever

really threatening to go up or down. A good Team KO run last season took them to the Final and that experience will have given them a taste for the bigtime and if they are to progress then one suspects this should be the year - although I am not convinced. **Kirkheaton C&BC A** are threatening to take up residence as well with consecutive 7th placed finishes behind them after a previous promotion. With no changes in personnel there is little reason to suggest that anything will change as regards their finishing position.

Hemplow continue to be the Section 2 resident benchmarker. Finish above them you are safe, finish below them then you are in trouble. Same mid-table finish year after year and with no evidence of anything altering, then expectations will be for more of the same. **Shepley** dropped out of Section 1 at the end of 2017 and didn't react well to their lower status. Only the bottom team had a worse away record with a single away win all season (at Meltham) and so finished surprisingly low in eighth position.

Meltham B have finished in the bottom half of Section 2 for the last four seasons and it may well be their turn to face the drop. Sometimes dropping a level allows a team to regroup, get a few wins and come back all the stronger. I think that may happen to the boys from Meltham this time. **Skel Windmill** just avoided relegation last year and they now also face the uncertainty over the future of their own green so could be distracted. They have been in Section 2 for a few years now but never seem to finish in the top half and with this new unwanted development around their green it isn't going to help their cause and I really fear for them this time around.

FORECAST:

Champions - CROSLAND MOOR

Promoted - THORPE GREEN

Relegated - SKEL WINDMILL, MELTHAM B



SECTION 3

2018 Final League Table

		PI	Pts
1	Thorpe Green	20	120
2	Kirkheaton Con.	20	108
3	Lockwood Con. B	20	103
4	Paddock I&C	20	91
5	Almondbury B.C. B	20	90
6	Golcar Lib B	20	88
7	Springwood	20	87
8	Lindley Lib. B	20	85
9	Holmfirth A	20	85
10	Canalside	20	69
11	Ravensknowle Park A	20	64

Whilst there appear to be stand-out teams for honours in the top two Sections from here on it gets very much trickier with a raft of contenders in each Section so the gut-feel factor comes more into play from here-on. Only six teams are left in Section 3 who played there last season and only six points separated all six so no obvious Champions-in-waiting. Based on last year alone you can build a case for promotion and relegation for all six so let's look at the three-year trends for each in turn.

	2018	2017	2016
Paddock	6th	5th	9 th
Almondbury BC B	7th	2nd Section 4	11 th Section 3
Golcar Lib B	8th	1st Section 4	8th Section 4
Springwood	9th	6th	3rd
Lindley Lib B	10th	3rd	5 th
Holmfirth A	11th	4th	7 th

This points towards Almondbury BC B and Golcar Lib B as the two most progressive teams, both on an upward surge. Whereas there is a case for saying that the other four are leaning towards the start of a downward spiral but such is the closeness in points last season then it only takes one bad result to skew the table alarmingly.

Five of these six had Won 10 Lost 10 records last season. So is there anything on the new player situation that might help separate these six? Well as a club Lindley Lib have been the most active but they have gained some and lost some so difficult to judge. Paddock have a couple of newly qualified ones added to their ranks but apart from that it looks pretty much business as usual. There is an argument that these six could finish once again in the middle six, or bottom six, in the table and we have to look towards the new

teams to identify the top of the table contenders so let's do that.

Coming down from Section 2 are Primrose Hill Lib A and Almondbury Lib with the latter having the amazing record of being either promoted or relegated in every one of the last six seasons and never being lower than Section 3. With that kind of history they have to be a serious candidate for one or the other again this term and their history doesn't include appearances in Section 4. The Pip Hill team were well adrift at the foot of Section 2 last year some 29 points off safety after many years playing at that level mainly under their previous name, and playing on their old green, Newsome. Canalside came down to Section 3 the previous year and went straight down again - could the Hill be about to do the same?

What about the newly promoted teams, are they likely to be serious challengers for honours again? Brockholes B and Bradley & Colne were level on 135 points at the top of Section 4 last year, 25 points clear of the third-placed team, after both had been relegated from Section 3 the previous year. That was a formality for Bradley & Colne as they finished bottom of that Section but Brockholes were in 8th place and were a casualty of the league reorganisation. Bradley & Colne's recovery hinged on the new bowlers they managed to recruit from the defunct Waterloo B side and they have once again recruited well during the close season to make them a serious threat. Whereas Brockholes I fear will suffer, especially early season, from call-ups from their A side with a couple of A team regulars unavailable when bowling resumes. A step up in standard with a depleted squad is not a good position to be in but joining the mid-table scramble may be the limit of their ambitions this year.

Also promoted as a result of the reorganisation to accommodate the three new teams are Slaithwaite and Outlane. Marsden Park would have gone up before either of them if they hadn't disbanded their 10-man team through team-raising difficulties. This is a second successive promotion for Outlane and is a big ask at this stage of their team development. It could be a nasty outcome and they will certainly be looking to their home form - 10-1 last season - to keep them in survival contention. Slaithwaite have one of the smallest squads of registered bowlers and only played 14 different bowlers all last season with the minimum number of matches played by any of them was 12.

As I said it becomes more of a gut-feel selection methodology from here on and although the yo-yo history of Almondbury Lib points to another promotion I am betting on that six-year sequence

ending and look towards Bradley & Colne to continue their upward passage accompanied by a Section 3 regular. At the foot of the table it is a case of any two from seven and my two selections shouldn't take this personally as I have little confidence in these choices.

FORECAST:

Champions - BRADLEY & COLNE

Promoted - PADDOCK I&C

Relegated - OUTLANE, LINDLEY LIB B

SECTION 4

2018 Final League Table

		PI	Pts
1	Brockholes B	22	135
2	Bradley & Colne	22	135
3	Marsden Park	22	110
4	Slaithwaite	22	107
5	Outlane	22	107
6	Marsh United B	22	98
7	Denby Dale	22	90
8	Netherton Con. B	22	90
9	Meltham C	22	87
10	Milnsbridge B	22	87
11	Broad Oak B	22	72
12	Lindley B.C. B	22	70

The League reorganisation has decimated Section 4 with only 5 teams appearing at this level in 2018 appearing for the coming season. Five teams promoted, two relegated and Marsden Park dropping out of the League altogether leaves a quintet of mid-tablers who are looking at an unfamiliar fixture list and a trek into the uncertainty. So where does that leave our Fantasy League pundits, where do they place their faith this season? Well a quick count-up shows little faith in these five with only Marsh United attracting any support whatsoever - can that be justified? Well **Marsh United B** are the top team left from last season and have improved their position in each of the last four seasons. To continue that pattern would open up the door to promotion. This will be their third season at this level and with their A team's continual improvement the knock-on effect could get handed down. They also take great delight in proving my annual prediction of their relegation a total fabrication but not this year boys but I am sure that you don't want me tipping you for promotion either - no chance!

Once again we need to examine the credentials of the new teams in the Section to tease out the positive facts and pointers towards the top end performers in this coming season. Coming down we have **Canalside** and Ravensknowle Park A. The

Canalside team appear to be in freefall probably generated by the distraction of the future of their green over the past two years. They seem to be on borrowed time at their current green with ambitious plans for relocating which may mean this is their second and last season on the front green. They have lost their captain to Springwood and with no new names on the roster so far, life may get worse before it gets better but surely three consecutive relegations isn't their fate, is it?

Ravensknowle Park A were 22 points off safety last year and lost their last five fixtures adding to the enforced relegation of the previous year makes sorry reading and so starting from such a low base a year of stability would be welcome and I think is probable. I don't see them scrambling around the lower reaches of the table as any suggestion that they could end up in the same Section as their B side next year should be sufficient incentive to push them out of harm's way.

There is a lot of support amongst the Fantasy Leaguers for the chances of the runaway Section 5 2018 Winners from **Lowerhouses**. Last in this Section in 2016 but rejuvenated last year and deserved Champions to rejoin the ranks this term. They appear to have a good chance for more progression in what could be a less competitive Section 4 this year. They have a familiar looking fixture programme facing four of the teams that finished below them in Section 5 last year and will expect to maintain that level of superiority in their new world.

Three of those four teams joining Lowerhouses in Section 4 this year are B teams, in fact exactly half the teams in this Section are B sides. It is always difficult to predict B team chances as any calls from their A teams will plunder their best bowlers and disrupt plans. The opposite could apply to **Elland C&BC B** as the apparent strengthening of their A team could benefit the B team squad and you just need one or two stronger bowlers to tip the balance on a recurring basis.

That leaves the chances of the B teams from promoted **Thongsbridge** and the resident **New Mill** to evaluate with both their A sides playing in Section 2 this year. The Thongsbridge A team are on the way down from Section 1 and the New Mill A side consolidated their 2017 promotion by a good first season in Section 2. Too difficult for me to call with so many variables to factor in but it should be remembered that it was a B side that lifted this Section title last year. Just one point separated these two teams last year and possibly more of the same this year as they settle in to mid-table obscurity/security. However the 11-0 home record of the Thongsbridge outfit should

stand them in good stead again if they can replicate that form.

The **Rugby Club** had just a single season in the bottom Section last year and only escaped from there courtesy of the reorganisation. A fortunate promotion may be followed by a return to their comfort level whilst avoiding relegation may be the top of their thinking this year and I am not sure that they are up to it.

Just three points separated Denby Dale, Netherton Con B, Meltham C and **Milnsbridge B** in this Section last year. Lots of activity in the Transfer/New Player Market for the Milnsbridge club so will be interesting to see how that pans out for their B side. **Netherton Con B** will need to make a more solid start to their season than they did last year, when they lost their opening six matches, if they are to improve on their 8th place finish of last season. **Denby Dale** and **Meltham C** both won just two of their 11 away games last year and keeping out of the relegation battle may depend on them improving in that area this time around.

FORECAST:

Champions - Elland C&BC B

Promoted - Lowerhouses

Relegated - RUBC, Milnsbridge B

SECTION 5

2018 Final League Table

		PI	Pts
1	Lowerhouses	22	138
2	Thongsbridge B	22	119
3	New Mill B	22	118
4	Elland C&BC B	22	111
5	Huddersfield RUBC	22	109
6	David Brown Sports	22	101
7	Holmfirth B	22	94
8	Dalton	22	87
9	Greenhead Park	22	84
10	Primrose Hill Lib. B	22	84
11	Kirkheaton C&BC B	22	80
12	Ravensknowle Park B	22	62

Three new teams in Section 5 makes it difficult to predict any outcome although I do have some 'inside-info' about my boys from **Kirkheaton Con B**. The team has been formed to ensure a game for some displaced bowlers from the A side after the arrival of three or four new probable A teamers. That being the case they should be capable of holding their own at this level unless we have under-estimated the level of A team calls that could leave the B team seriously out-numbered. I have no information at all about the

two other new boys other than **Marsh Lib** is primarily composed of the same bowlers who play in their 6-man team which finished second to the bottom of Section B. It would be something of a surprise then if they finished anywhere other than a similar position amongst the 'big-boys'.

Hemflow have signed on 9 new bowlers to add to those who didn't get a regular outing with their A team last year so it will be interesting to see how they perform but again their own expectations are that they are probably properly-suited to their initial level of competition.

The B teams from **Broad Oak** and **Lindley BC** will be playing at this level this year following their relegation last back-end with both being well-adrift of safety. Whilst neither attracts as instant promotion material it would be a surprise if they were nearer the bottom than the top this season.

It really did go pear-shaped for the Broad Oak boys last term after the half-way break. Up until then they had won half of their matches and sat top half of the table. After that marker they went on a run of just one win in their final 12 games to plummet down the table and the inevitable relegation. If that form becomes the norm then a top half finish would be seen as a success. Lindley BC B won their first away fixture of the 2018 season (at Marsh Utd) but then didn't claim the majority of the points in any other away game that year. That away form will surely improve this term to keep them out of the trouble-spots.

That leaves **David Brown Sports** as the top performing team from last year still operating at this level. The Fantasy League selections to date show that they are the top choice with 20% of entries adding them to their selections but it should be noted that 8 of the 12 Section 5 teams have already attracted some supporters indicating the open nature of this Section this year.

The B team from **Ravensknowle Park** have finished bottom of the pack for the last two years and will regard any other position as a success. **Kirkheaton C&BC B** and **Holmfirth B** have both finished in the bottom half of this Section in each of the last three seasons. There is little to suggest that anything different this year is on the cards. I thought that **Dalton** would mount a challenge for honours last year and burdened them with my tip which they duly railed against by dropping into the nether regions never to be seen as a threat to anyone. In the last 5 seasons **Greenhead Park** have finished 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 9th last year. Detect the pattern? Sorry boys you are becoming too predictable and 10th place awaits you this season.

Primrose Hill Lib B struggled last season but then won their last five home games to put some light between themselves and the bottom two and will need to continue that form to stay out of trouble next term.

FORECAST:

Champions - DAVID BROWN SPORTS

Promoted - DALTON

Bottom Two - RAVENSKNOWLE PARK B,
GREENHEAD PARK

6-MAN LEAGUE

The withdrawal of Longwood and Lockwood Con from the 6-Man League last season really opened the competition up and Netherton Con took full advantage to take the title. Crosland Moor imploded in the final weeks losing 6 of their last 7 matches to let the title slip from their grasp when leading the way. A points total of 99, the lowest for many years, being sufficient to take the title. Could be an even lower points total required this year with the reduced number of 10 teams in each of three Sections running through 2019. On to the team-by-team preview which covers all 30 of the 6-man teams including seven brand new teams competing at this level.

SECTION A
2018 Final League Table

		PI	Pts
1	Netherton Con.	22	99
2	Shepley A	22	85
3	Crosland Moor	22	84
4	Paddock I&C	22	83
5	Farnley Tyas	22	83
6	Milnsbridge BC	22	81
7	Brockholes A	22	79
8	Thongsbridge B	22	77
9	Clayton West	22	76
10	Skel Windmill A	22	69
11	Almondbury Lib.	22	68
12	Golcar Lib.	22	40

Circumstances certainly worked in **Netherton Con's** favour last season as they peaked just as the usual two prime contenders disappeared from the competition - good timing boys. Some would say that Crosland Moor lost it rather than the Cons winning it but that seems a bit severe as any title winning team has to perform all season and Netherton were certainly in the mix all season and ready when their main opponents faltered to take full advantage. You certainly expect them to be amongst the front-runners again this season but title winners again? I'm not so sure, they say that retaining any league title is more difficult than

winning it for the first time and so it may prove this time as well. Four points between the next five teams but still 14 points behind the title winners. **Crosland Moor** have been done no favours by the Starred Bowlers system for 2019 as they have lost their 6-man captain after his good season in the 10-man team. Which Crosland Moor is going to turn up this season? The one that lead the way for so long last year or the one that faltered so badly in the final weeks when the pressure was really on. If the former then you should look no further for the 2019 Champions but how reliable can they be?

Maybe it is the turn of **Shepley** this year. So often third placed during the Longwood/Lockwood dominating period and a fast finishing runner-up last season. They have entered a B team in Section C this year as well so are obviously taking the competition very seriously and will find many supporters in the Fantasy League.

Also in that pursuing party was Paddock, Farnley Tyas and Milnsbridge. You can't rule out any of them as there was a maximum of four points between them at the end of the campaign. You could add **Brockholes A** to that list as well as a 7th place finish was their worse for many years and they will rue missing out on a better year at a time when the title was up for grabs.

Farnley Tyas have the 2017 top singles bowler in their ranks and he would have finished in the top two again this year but didn't play sufficient games as he played 3 pairs games instead. When they play to their strengths they are a very strong opponent but some teams prefer to have a rotation team selection policy and Farnley seem to be one of those which means they are unlikely to win any title but will keep most of the team happy, most of the time. Nothing wrong with that but that approach will never win the important games or deliver the ultimate prize and I have discounted them from my thinking of top dog for now. I think that **Paddock** will have a good year. Their four-year form reads 9th, 8th, 5th and 4th in 2018 so gradual improvement year-on-year so a top 3 spot awaits them in my book.

One team more than capable of winning this Section is **Milnsbridge**. A strong finish last season winning 5 of their last 6 games, the double over Crosland Moor and only the Champions won more points away from home than them. Unfortunately a very poor start to the season, losing their first 5 games, scuppered any hopes they had of silverware last season. With a strong start this year they will be a major force in this Section. **Thongsbridge B** have the 2018 top singles bowler in their midst and will need him to be operating at full throttle to push their way into the title battle as their away form of last year is easily the

worst of the ten teams to play at the top level this year.

Lindley Lib looked a strong outfit last year when winning the Julie Fuller Trophy to add to their Section B title and could be amongst the Section A front-runners this coming season. They have also entered a B team in Section C so should have better prepared reserves to aid their challenge this year. Coming up with them are **Oakfield** who are no strangers to the top Section and this is in fact their second promotion to the top level in the last four years.

FORECAST:

Champions - MILNSBRIDGE

Runners-Up - NETHERTON CON

Relegated - OAKFIELD, THONGSBRIDGE B

SECTION B 2018 Final League Table

		PI	Pts
1	Lindley Lib.	20	101
2	Oakfield T&BC	20	88
3	Skel Windmill B	20	80
4	Golcar C&BC	20	79
5	Primrose Hill Lib	20	73
6	Holmfirth	20	71
7	Thongsbridge A	20	61
8	Meltham	20	61
9	Hemplow	20	59
10	Marsh Lib	20	53
11	Brockholes B	20	44

This is going to be a very interesting Section this year with **Longwood** and **Lockwood Con** both re-starting their 6-Man League experience at this level. Both teams have declared that their intention of re-entering this League is to provide some action for the bowlers who don't get a game in their 10-man teams. Both declare that they don't expect to be operating at their former levels and the Starred Bowler system will ensure that is the reality as well. The Management Committee deliberated long and hard on which Section to put all the new teams in. It was fairly straight forward for most with five of them starting life in the new Section C. There was the temptation to make all seven new boys start at the bottom level but the thinking moved forward and it was agreed that Section B would be more appropriate. If we got it wrong either way, it will sort itself out at the end of the season with promotion or relegation for one or both of them.

That all doesn't help determine which team to support this year. I think that both Longwood and Lockwood Con will do well in Section B but I haven't a clue which will be the better bet.

Maybe it will be one of the other contenders. **Clayton West** are the top team in Section B based on 2018 standing. They've been playing at the top level for ever and wont like this enforced drop in standards so it will be interesting to see how they react. Not only have **Skel Windmill** got to get used to a new level of playing this year they have to cope with the speculation and uncertainty about their home green. This uncertainty is a distraction and we saw what happened to Canalside and Newsome when they had similar situations to handle and that is the reason I have discounted their chances this year. Both Skel teams are in Section B this season and they face each other on the opening day of the season so it will be interesting to see who settles first.

Almondbury Lib and **Golcar Lib** were the bottom two in Section A last year, the latter being 30 points short of safety after only winning 3 of their 22 fixtures. They will enjoy the drop in standards I am sure but it is difficult to build a case for their total redemption. Almondbury Lib's home form was good last year but a single away win (6-1 at bottom team Golcar Lib) will not be good enough to change around their fortunes.

Golcar C&BC find themselves in Section B after a good first year in the 6-man competition and if they have learnt from that they could go close this year. They do appear to be quick learners as their results improved as the season progressed and that climaxed with a final run of 5 straight wins, 3 of them away from home. Normal progress will place them in the bunfight for honours come next September.

Primrose Hill Lib and **Holmfirth** just edged in to 5th and 6th places last year to retain their Section B status. Whether that gets extended for another season remains in doubt with this Section looking stronger than it has ever been before.

FORECAST:

Champions - LONGWOOD

Runners-Up - CLAYTON WEST

Relegated - PRIMROSE HILL LIB, HOLMFIRTH

SECTION C

No league table from last year to guide us in this new Section but a handful of brand new teams to sort out. Straight away I declare my support for **Marsden Park** to win this Section. This may be a new team but they are certainly not new bowlers in our League as the team has been formed from the remnants of the 10-man team that had to withdraw after team raising problems last year. They still finished in third place in Section 4 and due to the reorganisation would have been promoted to Section 3 for this season but that is not to be. They have the current Lower Divisions Trophy winner in their ranks and had three of the

last eight in this competition. These are no mugs and I fully expect them to romp away with this title. So that's put the curse on them than so who else could feature strongly?

New B teams from Lindley Lib and Shepley are in the field and could go well. Marsh United have a new team as does Marsh Lib and Greenhead Park. Quite a few local derby fixtures lined up here methinks but as for separating them then I can't see a title winner amongst this group.

It's a leap of faith selecting any of the newbies with so little information on them so let's look at the well established block of five teams that played in Section B last year. The highest placed of those were Thongsbridge A and Meltham both on 61 points in 7th and 8th places. So what can we glean from their past experiences? Well they both won their home games when they went head-to-head in both of the last 2 seasons; Meltham didn't win an away game all last season; Thongsbridge haven't been out of the bottom half of the bottom Section in the last five years, Meltham have, in fact they were Section A inhabitants for one season in 2016.

Brockholes B have finished bottom of Section B for the last two years. It doesn't appear to damage their enthusiasm for the game and maybe amongst the new teams they will find one that will take over their last tag. What they would really like is to find an away green where they can win. Their last away victory was in June 2016 which means they are on a 29-match losing run away from home. With that kind of history it is difficult to see them improving on their standing of last season and it hurts me to add them to my list once again this year.

Last year we welcomed Marsh Lib to our ranks with a team almost totally made up of new bowlers. It was good to see that, after a shaky start of one win in their first six matches, they had a good finish to their first campaign when winning 3 of their last 4 fixtures including their first two away wins of the season. They obviously enjoyed the experience as they have now entered a 10-man team as well and all this experience will stand them in good stead. It is probably a step-too-far to predict a top of the table finish this year but constant improvement should be their aim. It wasn't an impressive finish to last season for Hemplow in losing their last five fixtures and as long as there are no hangovers from that we can expect them to improve on their 9th of 11 finish this year.

FORECAST:

Champions - MARSDEN PARK

Promoted - SHEPLEY B

Bottom Two - BROCKHOLES B, THONGSBRIDGE A

FREE ADVERTISING IN THE NEWSLETTER

We are now offering all members **FREE** Classified Advertisements in the monthly newsletter. This service is for members of our League only and applies to individuals and clubs.

A free Classified Ad can be no more than 16 words excluding contact details. Just go to the 'Contact Us' page on the HDVBA website to forward your advertisement. It can be used to promote a social function, sell your woods or your house or home-made jam. Or maybe you just want to say thank you to somebody or everybody about anything.

If you need more than 16 words then consider the options for a bigger advertisement as below with rates starting from less than £4 per month for a quarter-page advertisement.

ADVERTISING RATES

SIZE	MONTHS	COST
Quarter-Page	1	£5
	6	£25
	12	£45
Half-Page	1	£10
	6	£45
	12	£75
Full-Page	1	£20
	6	£90
	12	£150

Closing date to get your free or paid for advertisement in the next issue of the newsletter is **Wednesday 24 April**.

HDVBA NEWS UPDATES EVERY DAY AT
www.hdvba.co.uk

APRIL CALENDAR

Tues 2	10-Man League season starts
Mon 15	Management Committee meeting
Mon 15	6-Man League season starts
Sun 28	May HDVBA Newsletter
Tues 30	Sub-Team KO Round 1

MAY CALENDAR

Thurs 3	Inter-District v Leeds
Tues 7	Sub-Team KO Round 2
Thurs 9	Bistro KO Round 1
Fri 10	Closing Date for Over-70's KO, Over-80@s KO & Pairs KO
Mon 13	Management Committee meeting
Thurs 16	Team KO Round 1
Fri 17	Inter-District v Wakefield
Fri 24	Closing Date for new Over-70's Pairs KO, Rose Bowl & LD Trophy
Wed 29	June HDVBA Newsletter
Fri 31	Inter-District v Halifax