

## **Herts U1850 County Team Report**

The Herts U1850 team had a very good season, reaching the national final.

We competed in the EACU qualifiers held in Newmarket at the King Edward VII Memorial Hall.

This year the matches involved 16 boards rather than the 12 of previous seasons.

This gave us the opportunity to involve more players but also increased the risk of a default.

We were able to recruit some players who had not played for the county before and others who returned after some years' absence. Although we defaulted one board in one of the rounds we qualified in second place behind Suffolk.

Our progress from there was impressive, despite being out-rated in all of the national stage knock-out matches:

Quarter-final: defeated Kent 10-6

Semi-final: defeated Yorkshire 11-5

Final (July 6 at University of Warwick): drew 8-8 with Greater Manchester but lost on board count.

Paul Walton won the Tom Wright trophy for top-scoring during the EACU qualifier stage with 5/6.

Two juniors played for the team this season: Michelle Chan and Charlie Ball, both from St Albans.

When the new season begins, we will lose a few of our top boards as they are no longer rated below 1850 so we will need to bring in some other high-rated players to fill the gap.

Not all Herts clubs were represented in the squad of players available this season and we hope to be able to involve a wider selection next season.

Matt Ball, U1850 captain.

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