

Hertfordshire v Bedfordshire 15th March 2026

With the league title on the line, Hertfordshire finished the league season with a home match against Bedfordshire, at Applecroft School. The teams selected for Hertfordshire were:

H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	H6
D Smith	S Lee	L Walker	P Harris	D Watkins	E Thurley
J Hilson	G Young	A Cobbold	C Drury	J Warren	H Wilson
J Smalley	Maz Cook	D Danby	S Missing	A Missing	S Palmer
C Hearn	N Tuckey	J Ellis	P Cook	M Thurley	R Hearn

First up were Herts 1/3/5. Bedfordshire fielded a full team of 24, which was good to see, and having had a poor early season were coming off the back of an improved performance in their recent 13-23 defeat to Norfolk. With serious title contention being uncharted territory for Herts, an intriguing day lay in store.

All three Herts rinks played well in this session, with H1 and H5 both winning fairly comfortably in the end, 11-4 and 14-8 respectively. H3 put on a masterclass on a slick middle carpet, running away to a ruthless 21-0 win. Herts had broken the back of the match early, taking 6 points from 6.

Next up were Herts 2/4/6 for their opening games. H2 started well, with a 6-0 lead after 2, but Beds came back to 6-4 and it looked nervy for a while, before H2 picked up a couple more counts and eased away 14-5. H4 were in a close battle against a dangerous B4 rink, but they stayed in the game and pulled away in the last couple of ends, winning 13-7. No such drama for H6, who played their opponents off the carpet to post an impressive 19-3 win. Herts took 6 points and were leading the match 12-0 overall.

The third session saw H3 and H5 play some confident controlled bowls, as they eased away to 13-3 and 12-5 wins. However, any thoughts that Bedfordshire were going to roll over were quickly dismissed. Changing their playing order in the B3 rink after a heavy defeat in their opening game, they dug in, and made it very hard work for H1. Going into the last end 4-6 down, H1 constructed a great end, holding a good 2 shots with a tough draw for a third. Though they were unable to convert for the win, it still felt like a point gained as the game finished 6-6, and at the halfway stage Herts led the match 17-1.

H2 and H4 started their second games slowly, but gained control in the middle ends and held on to fairly routine wins, 11-6 and 14-6 respectively. H6 had a much tougher assignment, on the quickest carpet against 'savage' opponents, and the game could have gone either way. In the end, they held their nerve to post a crucial 7-6 win. This meant that Herts had won the match, and now led 23-1 with 2 sessions remaining.

The fifth session saw H1 up their game from the previous session, as they put in a controlled display and eased away to a 12-2 win. Having breezed their way through their first two games, H3 suddenly hit a brick wall and found themselves 1-5 down after 4 ends. However they managed to nick an end, and a change of jack length threw B1 off their game, meaning that H3 were able to run through the gears and come through with a somewhat flattering 16-6 victory. With news filtering through that Essex were leading 14-10 in their match against Cambridgeshire, Herts knew that 28 points was now enough for the league, meaning that H5 needed a point. At 10-2 up after 7 ends the game looked safe, but the Beds skip played a superb takeout for 4 on the 8th end to come back to 10-6. Would there be a twist?

H5 were having none of it, constructing an excellent ninth end to get the 4 shots straight back, win the game 14-6 and secure a maiden league title for Hertfordshire.

After 5 sessions, Herts led the match 29-1 and the job was done.

The last session arrived, and with the league won, there was a dead rubber feel to it. The possibility of a record 35-1 win was quickly eliminated, as H6 surrendered an early lead and had nothing left in the tank for a comeback. Bedfordshire took their only win of the day with a dominant display in front of the cameras, 12-4. The other two games were reasonably tight, with H2 eventually coming home 10-4, and H4 surviving a last end scare to hold on 10-8. The final session was won 4-2 by Herts.

It was all over, final score **Hertfordshire 33-3 Bedfordshire**

There were many good contests through the day, and Bedfordshire have to be considered unlucky to only come away with the 3 points. For Hertfordshire, it had been a hugely successful day, showing character to finish matches off that they perhaps wouldn't have done in years gone by. A record win for the county team in their most important match ever.

Congratulations to the 24 who got Herts over the line on the day, and also to the rest of the squad (Mick, Lisa, Stuart, Thomas, Ricky and Jacqui) for their superb contributions to a historic league season.

Other results: Cambs 16-20 Essex, Suffolk 18-18 Norfolk.

Herts find themselves top of the final standings, 12 points ahead of Essex who had an excellent season, with Suffolk a further 15 points back in third.

2025/2026 SEASON

		Pl	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	Hertfordshire	5	5	0	0	843	616	124
2	Essex	5	4	0	1	854	643	112
3	Suffolk	5	2	1	2	764	675	97
4	Cambridgeshire	5	1	0	4	729	731	93
5	Norfolk	5	2	1	2	691	738	86
6	Bedfordshire	5	0	0	5	507	985	28

Hertfordshire now look forward to the six counties championship at Littleport on Sunday 12th April, where they hope to be in with a chance of completing the Eastern Counties set for the 2025/26 season.