

Hertfordshire v Suffolk 14th December 2025

Hertfordshire opened up their 2025/26 league campaign with a home match against the defending champions Suffolk. The teams selected were:

Herts 1	Herts 2	Herts 3	Herts 4	Herts 5	Herts 6
D Smith	D Danby	R Hart	Maz Cook	J Warren	E Thurley
Mick Cook	G Young	D Watkins	P Harris	A Cobbold	J Hilson
J Smalley	S McNeil	L Edmead	S Missing	A Missing	T Ellis
C Hearn	N Tuckey	J Ellis	P Cook	M Thurley	R Hearn

First up were Herts 1/3/5 against the Suffolk rinks of Pooley/Daniels/S Gilder. H1 started well, in a tight game against a strong Pooley rink they constructed a good last end to snatch victory 9-7. Sadly the other two games went Suffolk's way, with H3 slow out of the blocks to lose 2-12 and H5 suffering a nightmare end to drop a 4 in what was looking a tight game, eventually succumbing 3-10. Suffolk had stamped some early authority on the match taking 4 points from 6.

Next up were Herts 2/4/6 who would face the Fellingham/Hobbs/Jolly rinks. Herts 2 were 3-4 down mid game but scored a good count of 4, then added a single for an 8-4 lead after 7, but the final 2 ends were poor, with the Suffolk skip able to spring the jack with his last wood to secure an 8-8 draw. H4 built an early lead but this was whittled down to 7-6 with the jack leaving the playing surface on several occasions. However they re-grouped and played a solid last 2 ends to come home 11-8. H6 could not build any heads and were scrapping for the odd shot, but kept dropping singles as nothing went their way and the game was lost 2-8. So an even 3-3 session, and Suffolk were still leading the match 7-5 overall.

The third session started tight in all three games, but was to prove pivotal in the overall match. H1 were trading singles against the Daniels rink, and it culminated in a last end showdown. It was a good contest, but Craig could afford to walk his last wood up for a 6-5 win. H3 were 2-2 after 3, then 3-3 after 5, but then constructed 2 excellent ends to break the Suffolk resistance and run away with it comfortably, 12-4. H5 stayed in it early then eased away from the Pooley rink 11-6. In a convincing session of bowls, Herts had gone from trailing the match 5-7 to leading it 11-7.

Suffolk were on the back foot going into session 4, but responded well. In another last end decider, H6 were denied by a wick from the Suffolk 2, resulting in a wood next to a corner jack that was hard to beat, and unfortunately the game was lost 6-8. H4 struggled to get anything going on a tricky camera mat, with the Jolly rink easing away for Suffolk 12-5. H2 were the saving grace from the session, albeit with a degree of fortune, with a comfortable 17-2 win over the Hobbs rink. So the overall score was 13-11 with 2 sessions remaining.

The fifth session saw H1/3/5 play their third and final games. H3 struggled early on in their Pooley match up, but fought back well to 9-9 after 7 ends. However it was not to be, as the Suffolk rink regrouped with some accurate bowls and eased away 12-9. Better news for H1, who put in a controlled, well managed performance to beat the Gilder rink 8-3 on the fast middle mat. This completed an excellent six point maximum for the H1 rink. H5 were involved in the best match of the day against the Daniels rink. Going in to the last end 8-9 down, they secured the 2 shots needed to nick it 10-9. This was a good session for Herts who took the session spoils 4-2 and extended their match lead to 17-13.

So the last session arrived, and here we were looking to get over the line against a stubborn Suffolk outfit for only the second time ever. In the first game to finish, H4 got Herts over the line against the Fellingham rink, pulling away to a 9-5 win. But there were still 4 points to play for. H6 had a nightmare against the Hobbs rink and fell away 4-17. H2, in what always looked like the last game to finish, was well controlled by the Herts rink. 8-2 up after 7, they kept Suffolk to a single on the 8th the had the luxury of taking the jack off the carpet to finish the day with an 8-5 victory.

It was all over, final score **Hertfordshire 21-15 Suffolk**.

There was a lot of tension in this match due to the increased expectation on the back of the Team Bowl win back in October. It was difficult to enjoy at times, and the mats seemed unforgiving for both sides. However, it has to be remembered as Hertfordshire's best ever result against Suffolk, not one for the purists, but a match in which Herts showed unprecedented focus and battling qualities.

Herts find themselves 4th in the league, but with a game in hand over Suffolk, will be looking to leapfrog them with a positive result in the next game. With Essex and Cambs making excellent starts, there is potential for the league to be very close this season.

2025/2026 SEASON								
		Pl	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	Essex	2	2	0	0	379	220	57
2	Cambridgeshire	2	1	0	1	347	233	49
3	Suffolk	2	1	0	1	293	259	36
4	Hertfordshire	1	1	0	0	140	141	21
5	Norfolk	1	0	0	1	121	183	11
6	Bedfordshire	2	0	0	2	180	424	6

Hertfordshire now look forward to a tricky Eastern Counties league fixture against Norfolk at Wortwell on Sunday 4th January.