

Six Counties Championship 2026

For the final event of the season, Hertfordshire were looking to complete the set of Eastern Counties titles. The following rinks were selected:

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

The story of the day, from the Eastern Counties report, is shown here:

On Sunday 12th April, Bedfordshire hosted the season-ending Eastern Counties Championship at Littleport.

Round 1

Norfolk were off to a flier, dropping only one point to Bedfordshire. Hertfordshire won 4 out of 6 games against Cambridgeshire, and Essex just got the better of Suffolk 7-5

	Pts
Norfolk	11
Hertfordshire	8
Essex	7
Suffolk	5
Cambridgeshire	4
Bedfordshire	1

Round 2

Essex were strong against Cambridgeshire, losing just one game, Hertfordshire dropped just 3 points to early leaders Norfolk, and it was the same result for Suffolk over Bedfordshire.

That put Essex and Hertfordshire jointly top on 17 points, with Norfolk and Suffolk just 3 points behind.

	Pts
Essex	17
Hertfordshire	17
Norfolk	14
Suffolk	14
Cambridgeshire	6
Bedfordshire	4

Round 3

Cambridgeshire only dropped a single point to Bedfordshire, Suffolk and Norfolk each took 6 points from their matches, and in the crunch showdown, it was Hertfordshire who got the better of Essex, winning 4 out of 6.

Herts were now clear at the top, 4 ahead of Essex, with Norfolk and Suffolk only a point off second.

	Pts
Hertfordshire	25
Essex	21
Norfolk	20
Suffolk	20
Cambridgeshire	17
Bedfordshire	5

Round 4

Norfolk stopped any thoughts that Cambridgeshire's might have had about getting back into contention by taking 4 out of the 6 games. Essex took 9 points of Bedfordshire, and Suffolk ran Herts as close as anyone had, but Herts still finished ahead, 7-5.

Herts' lead over Essex closed to just 2 points, while Norfolk edged their way clear of Suffolk in the fight for third.

	Pts
Hertfordshire	32
Essex	30
Norfolk	28
Suffolk	25
Cambridgeshire	21
Bedfordshire	8

Round 5

With Herts playing Beds, Essex were going to have to score big against Norfolk, but as it was they only just came out on top, 7-5. Herts took 9 points off Bedfordshire, as did Suffolk over Cambridgeshire.

That meant that Hertfordshire came home as winners, 4 points clear of Essex, while Suffolk finally managed to edge a single point ahead of Norfolk to claim 3rd spot.

Congratulations to Hertfordshire for taking their first Six Counties title, who now hold all three Eastern Counties titles.

	Pts
Hertfordshire	41
Essex	37
Suffolk	34
Norfolk	33
Cambridgeshire	24
Bedfordshire	11

Session Breakdown:

Session 1: H1, H2, H3, H4 v Cambs

All four games were tight early on, and it was a good result to get 3 wins out of 4 in the end. H2 and H4 posted controlled wins, 8-5 and 9-5, while H3 could not gain enough momentum and fell away 4-7. H1 were in a scrap for most of their contest, but constructed a good head mid-game to net a 6, which made the difference in their 12-5 win.

Session 2: H5, H6 v Cambs, H1, H2 v Norfolk

Both Cambs and Norfolk mini sessions were split, with H1 and H5 posting wins, 7-4 and 16-5, while H2 and H6 couldn't get anything going, succumbing 2-10 and 3-8.

Session 3: H3, H4, H5, H6 v Norfolk

The best session of the entire day arrived, with H3 picking up a hard-fought point, and the other three rinks winning 10-3, 12-6 and 13-1.

Session 4: H1, H2, H3 v Essex

Level on points with Essex going in, and with Norfolk and Suffolk both only 3 behind, sessions 4 and 5 were going to be pivotal.

4 points out of 6 from session 4, where H2 were hamstrung by a slow carpet and lost 5-10. Essex battled well but H1 and H3 managed to get over the line for important wins, 9-8 and 10-7.

Session 5: H4, H5, H6 v Essex

H5 briefly held match lie but the Essex rink would not give up, and took advantage of a mistake from the Herts skip to promote their wood into the head and condemn H5 to a 6-8 defeat. H4 and H6 were tested, but both held their nerve to come through with 11-4 and 9-5 wins, cementing a crucial 8-4 overall win for Herts against Essex.

Session 6: H1, H2, H3, H4 v Suffolk

With Suffolk 5 points behind us they were still a threat, and this mini session was a must not lose. Herts did just enough to split the session 4-4. H1 and H3 were in their games for most of the way but Suffolk stepped up in the final ends, and the games drifted away 4-7 and 7-10. H2 picked the right time to deliver their best performance of the day with a satisfying 11-2 win, while H4 kept up their winning streak with a controlled 9-4 victory.

Session 7: H5, H6 v Suffolk, H1, H2 v Beds

H5 looked in control early on, leading 4-0 and 7-2 before Suffolk fought back with back-to-back counts of 3 and as the whistle went, H5 were 7-8 and match lie down. However the Herts 3 was having none of it and drew in a superb forehand around a blocker to within an inch of the jack, a wood that could not be bettered as both skips settled for a draw, 8-8. H6 were also in a close game but got over the line 7-5, meaning that Suffolk had been beaten 7-5 overall. H1 were seriously tested by their Beds opponents and also had to settle for a draw, 7-7. Better news for H2, who ended their day well with a solid 12-5 win. So a decent session overall with 6 points out of 8.

Session 8: H3, H4, H5, H6 v Beds

Essex had closed to within 3 points but had better shots, so 6 points were needed to guarantee the title. As expected, the games were tense early on. H6 couldn't get to grips with a slick carpet, and anything they created was stifled by an experienced Beds skip, and the game slipped away 6-11. Once H4 and H5 took leads mid game they settled well, and both games were managed without too much jeopardy, as they eased away to 12-4 and 13-2 wins. So all eyes on H3, in a tight affair throughout, they managed to chisel out a 7-4 lead going in to the last end. After a difficult day the rink kept their focus and kept woods in the end, managing to secure a single and the win, 8-4.

HERTFORDSHIRE HAD WON THE 6 COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THE FIRST TIME

Analysis:

A long day of bowls, some stubborn opposition, and it was a real test of mindset for Herts who now had a target on their back. No clean swept sessions all day, but every opponent was beaten overall, with the key contests Essex 8-4 and Suffolk 7-5, and if you do that you'll almost certainly have done enough.

Some great bowls played throughout the day, in particular H4 (Marilyn, Carole, Simon and Pete) who posted an impressive 5 wins out of 5.

The overall margin of victory was 4 points, so if one more of the Essex games had gone against Herts that may well have been enough for Essex. Very fine margins, as per the league season where the result of the Essex game effectively decided the outcome.

So an unprecedented season for Hertfordshire to complete the Eastern Counties set of Team Bowl, League and Six Counties Championship, winning all three titles for the very first time.

Plenty to play for in the autumn, as Herts look to defend the Team Bowl, play against the Northern League winners in the Inter County Championship match for the first time, and challenge for a maiden National Championship at Potters in early November.