

ILLUMINATIONS CLASSIC BOWLING FESTIVAL

30th SEPTEMBER – 5th OCTOBER 2007

PRESS RELEASE

The 2006 Illumination Classic Festival at Blackpool was definitely the wettest event ever held in the 17 years of Pontins' Bowling Festivals. It was so bad that organisers, Esselle Sports Management, had to cancel the Mixed Pairs competition entirely, and Finals Day saw the Waterloo green flooded for most of the Finals. But what a difference a year makes!

2007's entrants arrived at Pontins on the Sunday afternoon in sunshine and left on the following Friday in sunshine, and apart from a couple of hours during the week, the weather was very pleasant and absolutely glorious for the Finals Day.

With 26 Ladies' groups and 22 Mens' groups bowling round-robin over 12 greens, the Singles events led off on Monday with the very healthy intake of 'first-timers' to Pontins soon getting into their stride in what must have seemed a very quick-fire competition for those not used to this type of format. However, by Tuesday evening, there were several new names in the lists of qualifiers for the Main and Consolation events – a clear indication of how well they had settled in.

Mixed Pairs day on Wednesday, as always, was very keenly contested, no doubt assisted by the doubled prize money (due to the 2006 event being cancelled and carried over to 2007). With the latter stages being held at Central Drive B.C., this gave spectators and players alike an opportunity to see how well those greens had picked up since the Pontins Spring Festival. By tea on Wednesday, the Mixed Pairs was down to its semi-finalists.

Therefore, by Thursday morning, the final stages of the Main and Consolation events got underway, and straightaway a big shock saw favourites Andrew Spragg and John Hamer both go out in the early knock-out stages. After finishing second in her group, Ronni Lyon saw off Thiri Farnhill in the Ladies' Consolation, and an all-Yorkshire Final in the Mens' Consolation saw Gareth Price edge out Tom Hague. In the Mens' Main, Martin Walker led John Maye throughout, but, pride of place must go to Pat Roscoe from Wigan!

Pat picked herself up from the disappointment of losing the Mixed Pairs final partnering Andrew Spragg, to come from 13 – 7 down to clinch the Ladies title 21 – 18 from Joan Jolly. Having said that, the Mixed Pairs Final itself was an absolute classic – lasting one hour 35 minutes, playing to 15 up, and taking 28 ends! With the crowd on the edge of their seats the two couples shook hands at 14 across, and Matt Bower and Pat Lonsdale took the deciding end bringing tremendous applause from the enthralled crowd. The day's bowling had truly reflected the excellent condition of the Waterloo green which for many was better than it had ever been in the last 15 years – a credit to Jimmy Parker indeed!

Booking forms for the Pontins' Spring Festival are already available, and the North Wales and Illuminations brochures will be out by early November. They will be available off the Esselle website on www.essellesports.com or by telephoning 01257 450991.

LADIES PLATE PAIRS

Ruth Bradshaw & Marian Clayton (Preston) 11
Marjorie Beaumont & Beryl Keogh (Coventry) 6

MENS PLATE PAIRS

Brian Coleman & Peter Lee (Southport) 11
Eddie Lonergan & Terry Hamlett (Rotherham) 6

LADIES CONSOLATION

Veronica Lyon (Whiston) 15
Thiri Farnhill (Dewsbury) 9

MENS CONSOLATION

Gareth Price (Batley) 15
Tom Hague (Sheffield) 12

MIXED PAIRS

Matt Bower (Sheffield) & Pat Lonsdale (Bradford) 15
Andrew Spragg (Chesterfield) & Pat Roscoe (Wigan) 14

LADIES MAIN

Pat Roscoe (Wigan) 21
Joan Jolly (Preston) 18

MENS MAIN

Martin Walker (Macclesfield) 21
John Maye (Wigan) 17