

SHORT MAT BOWLS



Match Report – Short Mat Triples

Combe Martin Bowling Club vs Ilfracombe Bowling Club

Monday 12th January 2026 – Combe Martin Village Hall

The newly adopted home of CMBC Short Mat Bowling, Combe Martin Village Hall, hosted its first fixture of the year as Combe Martin welcomed the experienced visitors from Ilfracombe for a two-mat triples encounter. With the hall now secured every Sunday and Monday afternoon, this match marked an important early step in establishing the venue as a true home base.

Early Ends – A Cautious Opening

Both clubs opened tentatively across Mats 1 and 2, the early exchanges producing little separation on the scoreboard. But the balance didn't remain even for long.

On Mat 1, Ilfracombe soon shifted gears, their experience showing in the weight, line and consistency of their play. Before CMBC could settle, the visitors had surged into a commanding double-figure lead, leaving the home side struggling to keep pace.

Mat 2, by contrast, proved a far more competitive affair. CMBC matched Ilfracombe bowl for bowl through the opening nine ends, reaching the tea break only two shots adrift and very much still in the contest.

Tea Break – A Mountain to Climb

With nine ends completed, the situation was clear:

- Mat 1 required nothing short of a miracle to overturn Ilfracombe's relentless momentum.
- Mat 2 remained finely poised, offering CMBC a realistic chance of salvaging pride and perhaps even a result.

Second Half – A Tale of Two Mats

A substitution on Mat 2 gave another CMBC player the opportunity to take part in the final nine ends. The home trio continued to battle gamely, staying within touching distance for much of the second half. Only in the closing stages did Ilfracombe finally create daylight, pulling away to secure an 8-shot victory.

On Mat 1, however, the restart brought no respite. Ilfracombe resumed exactly where they had left off—clinical, composed and utterly dominant. The home side were outplayed in every department, and while the final scoreline is best left unspoken, the performance could fairly be summarised as:

“Thrashed, outplayed and outwitted – MUST DO BETTER.”

Final Thoughts

This fixture—the first of what will surely become a regular series—offered CMBC a valuable benchmark. Ilfracombe's quality highlighted the areas where improvement is needed if Combe Martin are to compete consistently at this level.

Yet there were positives:

- Mat 2 showed resilience, structure and genuine competitiveness.
- The new venue proved an excellent home setting.
- The squad gained experience that will serve them well in future matches.

If CMBC can build on the spirit shown on Mat 2 and bring greater consistency across the board, they will not only compete—they will challenge. And if they must go down, they'll aim to go down swinging.







