

## MEDITERRANEAN BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIPS XX QUALIFYING

The MBC pattern was a difficult sports pattern which saw a lot of our athletes struggling on it, coloured with a lot of unusual splits like in the case of Mauro getting a Lilly with all his revs!

Day 1: Sue Abela finished in 1<sup>st</sup> place just 2 pins ahead of young star Sara Xuereb (1521), with Melissa following (1498). Justin Caruana Scicluna lead from the start with the only 1700+ series of the night (1727), followed by Mark Spiteri (1666) and Dennis Mercieca (1646).

Day 2: Sue Abela excelled on day 2 with a 1662 series which saw her increase her lead on Sara to 90 pins, whereas Melissa retained the 3<sup>rd</sup> spot but lagged 109 pins behind 2<sup>nd</sup> place. All top male bowlers dropped their averages on day 2, with Justin rolling the only 1600+ (1609) but obviously more than a 100 pins lower than on day 1, Mauro bowled a 1588 to clinch the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot, just 3 pins ahead of Spiteri whose 1534 series ensured he dropped to 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Dennis shot a low 1493 and dropped to 4<sup>th</sup>. The highlight of the day was a 290 by Philippe Vancell.

Day 3: Although she rolled a low 1513, Sue's advantage of the previous 2 days, persevered and she finished in the top spot with a 195.71 average. The tussle was then between Sara and Melissa, the latter rolling good 229 and 247 games in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> and was only 20 pins away from Sara. Very unusual for the ladies' category as it all boiled down to the last game. Sara opened a spare, but Melissa had a split, so all was even. However Sara managed a good finish from frame 8 onwards to end the game with a 215 to Melissa's 179 with the final score being: Sara (4627) and Melissa (4571).

The men's division was very intense, though for the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot, as Justin went on relentlessly to once again shoot the highest series of the tournament (1761). The tussle was between Mauro, Mark and Dennis. By game 4 Mauro rolled a 759, Mark an 808 and Dennis an 825. Spiteri then rolled a 232 to continue to gain grounds, and by the 7<sup>th</sup> game he was 116 pins over Mauro and 189 pins over Dennis. Last game he dropped to a 188, but a 203 from Mauro and a 230 by Dennis was not enough to make him lose the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot.

One must note that there were only 2 bowlers who managed to finish over the 200 average: Justin (212.38) and Mark Spiteri (203.25).

The Maltese contingent will be composed of: Sue Abela who has the absolute record of participating in the Mediterranean Championships for 20 years out of 20, Justin Caruana Scicluna (7<sup>th</sup> time), Mark Spiteri (6<sup>th</sup>) and Sara Xuereb (1<sup>st</sup>). Championships will be held in Slovenia from 26<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

