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## South West Open Championships

Blundell's School, Tiverton, 8/9<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Will Ellison won his 70th open title in his 11th consecutive appearance in the Singles final in the South West Open, his opponent, Ed Kay, having had to withdraw with an ankle injury incurred the previous day in the semi-final against Dan Grant. It was Will's 7th time of winning this title. Will and Dan Grant proceeded to win the Doubles against Ollie Arnold & Charlie Brooks. It was Dan's 13th open title — all doubles — and it was Will's 8th time of winning this title, his 4th time with Dan.

*Organiser Wayne Enstone reports:* With temperatures above 30 degrees at this year's South West Open we spectators were mesmerised by so many marvellous performances from all the competitors. In the Singles the two first round matches set the standard, with newcomer to the tournament Louise Mathias playing well against Old Blundellian Richard Dyke, Richard winning in two games. In the other match, Nick Geere, who now plays regularly at Blundell's, managed to hold off Old Blundellian Damian Rivett in a hard fought second game and go through to the second round. In the second round there were no upsets to the seeded players; however, Alex Rew took James Tilston to three games, after Alex won the first and was 9-3 up in the second game. One thought James had little chance, but how wrong we were. Again in the quarter-finals, some of the seeds were having to produce top performances to win through to the semi-finals. Julian Aquilina won the first game with Dan Grant, only to see Dan produce some phenomenal shots to win in three. One of the hardest hitting matches was between Ollie Arnold and Charlie Brooks, with Charlie eventually using his experience and tremendous defensive skills to win. Andrew Boyd couldn't quite get to grips with the variety of shots Will Ellison displayed; however, there were lots of signs he will eventually be a contender. Equally in the top half, Ed Kay produced a clinical display to control the big hitting of James Tilston. Fortunately for us spectators, the semi-finals were played at different times due to an England soccer match. Thanks must go to Brian Kirk for bringing the TV. Will and Charlie's was the first and whilst Charlie's performance was of an extremely high quality Will seemed to be capable of not only returning many fine shots from Charlie but producing so many unpredictable winners, reducing Charlie's opportunity to score more than his two points — quite remarkable. In the Ed and Dan match it looked after the first game that Dan may be upsetting the seeding, Dan winning a battle royal first game. Ed's retrieving and wonderful variation of shot then began to drain the strength from Dan and whilst even at the start of the third game Dan was still producing winning serves and shots, Ed slowly took control and won the third comfortably.

In the Doubles, which began at midday, again there were some fine and entertaining performances in the first round. Tim Lewis & Stuart Watson showed the mixed pairing of Alexandra Steel & Richard Dyke how the game used to be played, with super volleys and many angle shots — brilliant to watch; however, the fire power of the younger pair eventually proved too great. Father and son pairing of Paul & Damian Rivett rallied in their second game to give Addie Chai & Ed Hatton a great second game. This took us to the quarters, where the seeds all proved far too strong for their opponents and set up the expected semi-finals. The semi's were far from predictable, as proven by Julian Aquilina & James Tilston coming back against favourites Ellison & Grant to take the second game. Unfortunately, for Julian & James normal service was resumed in the third and no matter how hard they tried Will & Dan found the winners to go through to another final — a wonderful match to watch.

In the lower half, whilst the combination of Kay & Boyd looked solid, they didn't quite have the ammunition of an in-form Ollie Arnold & Charlie Brooks partnership. During the main competition, the football and trying to keep up the fluid levels, the Singles and Doubles Plates were being contested. The Singles Plate was eventually won by one of the four and most experienced Old Blundellians, Alex Rew, who beat a very tired Addie Chai in the final. In the Doubles, after many pool games the trophies went to another Old Blundellian pairing of Alexandra Steel and Richard Dyke.

At 7pmish it was time to retire for the main social part of the weekend to our usual Butterleigh Inn and replenish the fluids as well as have an excellent meal.

Sunday morning initially proved disappointing due to the fact that Ed Kay had sprained his ankle during his semi-final and was unable to walk properly on the Sunday morning. Understandably he had to withdraw. Will therefore had won his easiest and seventh South West Singles title.

Fortunately, the spectators' disappointment was short-lived as the Doubles final produced many thunderous and thrilling rallies, The power and variation of shots all four players produced was remarkable; it was truly a spectacular match in all aspects. Ollie & Charlie started the first game well, moving to a 4-2 lead only then for Dan & Will to come back and move in front 5-4, Ollie & Charlie then hit back to level at 5 all. Each player had their moments of special dominance over his opponents but slowly Dan & Will moved away for what began to have the look of a conclusive overall championship win in two games. Ollie & Charlie had other ideas and, within what seemed seconds, had moved into a 5-0 lead which proved decisive in the second. In the third the score and score pattern was virtually identical in favour of Will & Dan, giving them eventually a 4<sup>th</sup> South West Doubles win together, and eight in all for Will.

It was a magnificent performance by all four players, who continually congratulated opponents' wonder shots throughout the match — fairness and sportsmanship personified. How lucky we are to have so many great role models in our sport.

To conclude proceedings the usual trophies were awarded to the winners and a prize-giving of the local Devon Dartington Glassware took place.

Additional thanks go to: Blundell's School and the school's continuing support of fives in general; to Tim Lewis for booking the Saturday meal and his on-the-day support in general; and to Lesley on the catering side.

Lastly, a thought too for the late Nigel Gordon, for his generous and continued sponsorship of his G6 balls which made for some great performances and wonderful play yet again this weekend. Do think about joining us next year, same weekend, for a fun weekend of fives.

PS Andrew Boyd & Kevin Brice won the traditional American Doubles on Sunday.

## Scores

### Singles

**1st round:** R.Dyke bt L.Mathias 11-0, 11-3; N.Geere bt D.Rivett 11-0, 11-7

**2nd round:** E.Kay bt Dyke 11-2, 11-1; J.Tilston bt A.Rew 7-11, 11-9, 11-0; J.Aquilina bt A.Chai 11-4, 11-2; D.Grant bt S.Watson 11-9, 12-10; C.Brooks bt K.Brice 11-2, 11-0; O.Arnold bt J.Hughes 11-7, rtd; A.Boyd bt E.Hatton 11-1, 11-3; W.Ellison bt Geere 11-1, 11-0

**Quarter-finals:** Kay bt Tilston 11-0, 11-2; Grant bt Aquilina 9-11, 11-2, 11-5; Brooks bt Arnold 11-7, 11-2; Ellison bt Boyd 11-0, 11-2

**Semi-finals:** Kay bt Grant 7-11 11-6, 11-1; Ellison bt Brooks 11-1, 11-1

**Final:** Ellison w/o Kay rtd.

**Plate:** Rew bt Chai

### Doubles

**1st round:** N.Geere & D.Hill bt K.Brice & L.Mathias 11-4, 11-3; A.Chai & E.Hatton bt D.Rivett & P.Rivett 11-2, 11-9; J.Aquilina & J.Tilston bt R.Christie & L.Keates 11-1, 11-4; J.Hughes & A.Rew bt B.Kirk & V.Singh 11-4, 11-5; R.Dyke & A.Steel bt T.Lewis & S.Watson 11-6, 11-4

**Quarter-finals:** W.Ellison & D.Grant bt Geere & Hill 11-5, 11-9; Aquilina & Tilston bt Chai & Hatton 11-4, 11-9; A.Boyd & E.Kay bt Hughes & Rew 11-4, 11-5; O.Arnold & C.Brooks bt Dyke & Steel 11-2, 11-2

**Semi-finals:** Ellison & Grant bt Aquilina & Tilston 11-5, 9-11, 11-3; Arnold & Brooks bt Boyd & Kay 11-4, 11-4

**Final:** Ellison & Grant bt Arnold & Brooks 11-5, 4-11, 11-5

**Plate:** Dyke & Steel bt Christie & Keates

## **City of Durham Fives Club at Ushaw College, July 2018**

The energetic and innovative City of Durham Fives Club held its first Annual General Meeting in the grounds of Ushaw College, Durham, playing Fives and handball on the complex of courts there, as well as the game of Cat.

*Julie McIntyre reports:* On Sun 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018 the City of Durham Fives Club met at Ushaw College, near Durham to hold its AGM and try out the unusual outdoor courts. The buildings are closed to visitors on Sundays, but we camped out on the sports field and were soon joined by Chris Seddon of St Cuthbert's Society, Ushaw (not related to the college in Durham). Chris is an expert on the games which were played at the college when it was a Catholic Seminary.

Despite the heat, Chris gave us a very interesting history of the courts and the games played by the students at Ushaw, including a demonstration using the original or replica equipment.

The large courts were also used for a game with wooden bats (battledores) called Keeping Up, which Oscar tried and enjoyed, although we struggled to find a ball to match the bounce of their original. I can provide the rules of Cat, which make very interesting reading, and I'd encourage members to get in touch with Chris for further information if they have an interest in unusual sports. I have his card and email address. He divides his time between running the Alumni organisation at Ushaw and his home in Buckinghamshire.

These courts are the only ones of their kind in the world and we're happy to give anyone a demonstration of what we've learnt or host a visit to play here.

We finished clearing one large Handball court and one small one, and they are playable, with care. The kids were highly amused that the large courts were played four-a-side, including a pent-house for bouncing off and playing inside, potentially a little Real Tennis/Eton touch. The small court was very popular, as the floor was in good condition and a very fast and interesting game could be played.

The College is very keen for these courts to be used, and it would be lovely to see them all restored and in use again.

The other game played on the field, called Cat, was outrageously eccentric and rather complex, but also looked very fun. A lovely morning was had by all.

## **Appointment of Development Officer: Gareth Price**

The Rugby Fives Association, July 2018

The RFA is very pleased to announce the recruitment of Gareth Price to the newly created role of Development Officer.

His key objective is to increase the numbers of both Fives players and courts with particular emphasis on growing the game outside of independent schools. The aim is to build on successes at Derby Moor, Cambridge University and most recently in the North-East, where the game is experiencing an exciting renaissance under the dynamic City of Durham Fives Club.

Gareth is a well-known Fives player and a qualified Level 2 coach. He has been active on the tournament circuit for a number of years, is currently ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the National Doubles rankings and is, of course, the organiser of the President's Cup.

Having coached at school and university level Gareth has a keen interest in encouraging schools and clubs to promote Fives by means of outreach projects. He brings great energy and enthusiasm to the role which, combined with his background knowledge of the game, will ensure that he makes a very positive impact.

## **Andrew Cowie (1950-2018)**

The Rugby Fives Association, August 2018

The RFA is sad to report the death last month of former Amateur Singles champion Andrew Cowie after an extended period of illness.

Andrew learned his Fives at Rugby School and won the Public Schools Doubles in 1968 with his partner Mike Cleaver. Just two years later the same pair were runners-up to Gardner & Reid in the National Doubles. In 1973 Andrew won the Cyriax Trophy with John East, beating Stan Holt & John Howe in the final.

In this period of 5 years Andrew enjoyed great success in Rugby Fives, before dedicating his efforts from the age of 23, post-university, to county-level squash and subsequently to his career in business. A left-hander with a subtle wrist action that left many an opponent wrong-footed, Andrew enjoyed success in senior Fives in both Doubles and Singles. He won the Amateur Singles as it was then known in 1971 and 1972, beating John East on both occasions, before losing in the final in 1973 to Wayne Enstone, who would then go on to achieve his extraordinary run of victories in that event. Andrew was Universities Singles champion in 1970 and runner-up in 1971; he won the North of England Singles title in 1971; and he was Scottish Singles champion in 1971 and 1972. He won the Universities Doubles with Tony Dixon in 1970; and the North West Open Doubles with Dave Hebden in the same year.

Andrew was at Cambridge University for four years and has one of the very best records in the Varsity Match, where he was on the winning side each time. Captain in his third year, he played Singles in three of the matches and Doubles — with David Storey, Tony Dixon, Robin Skinner and Nick Mount — in all. He never lost a match and his aggregate points score was 285-136. Andrew was an undergraduate at Magdalene College when he won the National Singles title — a very rare achievement indeed, — but the Cambridge University Rugby Fives Club decided not to recommend him for the Full Blue that his achievement so obviously warranted as there was talk at the time of downgrading Rugby Fives from its Half Blue status. Instead, in Andrew's honour, Jock Burnet, the President of the Club, gave a dinner in the College at which there were no speeches, simply a toast: "Gentlemen: The Amateur Champion".

## **South East Open Championships**

Christ's Hospital, Horsham, 18/19th August 2018

STOP PRESS: Normal Service was resumed at the South East Open this year, with a singles final between Dan Tristao and Will Ellison. Although the much anticipated semi between Will and Ed Kay went to three games, there was no repeat of Ed's surprise win last year, and Will won through to face Dan in the final. And, although Will started where he left off – taking the first game to 1 – it was Dan who took the next two games to secure his first title of the season. It was also his third consecutive singles title on the courts at Christ's Hospital.

The doubles, as usual, was run using a President's Cup-style format and produced some intriguing pairs – but such was the strength of the field, it was impossible to predict who would win through to the final.

In the end, Ed Hatton and Rob Whitehorn faced James Tilston and Ben Chua – with the latter pair (pictured above) coming through in two games to take the title. For James, it was his first regional title – although his two President's Cup wins suggest this format suits him! – but it was Ben's second win in the event, having also been doubles champion (with this year's Plate winner Ben Beltrami) at the inaugural event in 2014.

*Organiser Ed Hatton reports:* The pleasingly efficient number of 16 players gathered at Christ's Hospital for the 5th annual South East Open Championships. Many regulars attended, but some particularly impressive performances came from newcomers James Smith and Joe Sumner. All of the seeds progressed to the quarter-finals – Smith achieving a good victory in two close games against Woolfenden and Parker pushed hard by Hatton. The top 4 of Tristao, Kay, Ellison and Beltrami made similarly comfortable progress to the semi-finals. It was here that the physical pyrotechnics began, as the sheer power and enthusiasm of Kay overwhelmed Ellison in the first 11-1. Come the next game, Will's more patient defence and ruthless exploitation of errors then swung the score 11-2 in his favour. Anything could have happened – and rather than either player folding, a hard fought third game went 11-7 to Will.

It would have been reasonable to suggest that Dan's much more comfortable win in the other match gave him an advantage in the final, but this did not show, at least until the third game. A revitalised Will dominated the first game, before narrowly losing the second 8-11. Dan stepped up the pressure in the final game and took his 3rd consecutive singles title at this tournament. Hatton took the Plate despite strong challenges from Sumner, Spillane, Hamilton and Woolfenden.

The doubles followed a handicap format as usual, with two round robin groups of 4 and semi-finals following that, meaning that everyone played at least five games. Fancied pairs included Hebblethwaite & Pringle, Beltrami & Mathias, Smith & Woolfenden and Chua & Tilston. After some very tough and long games, Hatton & Whitehorn emerged top of one group and Chua & Tilston top of the other. There was even some mathematical dispute as to positions in the second group, resolved by the organiser's typically diplomatic and dictatorial intervention.

In the main competition Chua & Tilston & proved too consistent and accurate for their opponents, winning their semi-final impressively against Kay & Sumner, followed by defeating Hatton & Whitehorn. This is Tilston's first Open title, and Chua remains unbeaten in doubles at this event. Beltrami & Mathias proved to be even more resilient, winning the Plate in very close games against Geere & Spillane and Cook & Parker.

## **RESULTS**

### **Singles**

1st round: D.Tristao bt L.Cook 11-1, 11-1; J.Smith bt N.Woolfenden 12-10,11-5; T.Parker bt E.Hatton 11-9, 11-7; B.Beltrami bt M.Spillane 11-1, 11-2; W.Ellison bt L.Mathias 11-0, 11-1; J.Tilston bt N.Geere 11-1, 11-2; R.Whitehorn bt A.Hamilton 11-4, 11-3; E.Kay bt J.Sumner 11-2, 11-0  
Quarter-finals: Tristao bt Smith 11-2, 11-1; Beltrami bt Parker 11-2, 11-2; Ellison bt Tilston 11-4, 11-4; Kay bt Whitehorn 11-5, 11-0  
Semi-finals: Tristao bt Beltrami 11-5, 11-3; Ellison bt Kay 11-1, 11-2, 11-7  
Final: Tristao bt Ellison 11-1, 11-8, 11-3  
Plate: Hatton

### **Doubles**

Group A: 1st Hatton & Whitehorn (45 pts); 2nd Kay & Sumner (41); 3rd Beltrami & Mathias (29); 4th Hebblethwaite & Pringle (21)  
Group B: 1st Chua & Tilston (45); 2nd Smith & Woolfenden (38); 3rd Cook & Parker (35); 4th Geere & Spillane (24)  
Semi-finals: Hatton & Whitehorn bt Smith & Woolfenden 11-9, 11-6; Chua & Tilston bt Kay & Sumner 11-9, 11-4  
Final: Chua & Tilston bt Hatton & Whitehorn 11-7, 11-6  
Plate: Beltrami & Mathias

## The London Open: Kay does the Double

Whitgift School, Croydon

Saturday/Sunday, 15-16 September 2018

Ed Kay successfully defended his Singles title and then went on, despite twisting his ankle in the second game, to win the Doubles with partner Dan Grant.

In the Singles Ed brought to an end an 11-month unbroken run of titles for Dan Tristao, while in the Doubles it was also at the expense of Dan, who was paired with Julian Aquilina, the latter reaching his first senior final, we believe.

Alleyn Old Boy and Oxford undergraduate Ben Kirwan won the high-quality Singles Plate, beating Old Pauline Theo Parker from Bristol University in the final. In the Doubles Plate a seven-pair round robin was won by Hamish Buchanan & Sam Russell without the need for a final.

A smallish entry contained new faces from the Old Whitgiftians, Merchant Taylors' School and the OMTs, the welcome return of James Pinder to competitive play and an appearance by U23 Ladies champion Louise Mathias. There were impressive performances in the Singles from Sam Russell, Peter Hanton and Andrew Boyd.

Finally, thanks go to Dan Tristao for taking over the organisation of the event from Will Ellison, who welcomed a daughter into this world (of Fives).

### Scores

#### Singles

**1st round:** A.Hopkins bt L.Mathias 11-0, 11-1; B.Kirwan bt C.Low 11-8, 11-3; J.Pinder bt E.Townshend 11-2, 11-2; J.Hanton bt N.Geere 11-3, 11-4

**2nd round:** D.Tristao bt Hopkins 11-3, 11-1; S.Russell bt B.Jourdan 11-6, 11-2; J.Aquilina bt J.Smith 11-3, 11-7; Grant bt Kirwan 11-5, 11-2; C.Brooks bt Pinder 11-1, 11-3; P.Hanton bt T.Parker 11-8, 5-11, 11-5; A.Boyd bt O.Arnold 11-5, 11-4; E.Kay bt J.Hanton 11-3, 11-1

**Quarter-finals:** Tristao bt Russell 7-11, 11-5, 11-4; Grant bt Aquilina 11-5, 12-10; Brooks bt P.Hanton 11-2, 11-4; Kay bt Boyd 11-3, 11-5

**Semi-finals:** Tristao bt Grant 11-9, 11-9; Kay bt Brooks 11-0, 11-4

**Final:** Kay bt Tristao 11-6, 11-1

**Plate: Semi-final:** Kirwan bt Jourdan 15-9; Parker bt Arnold 15-13

**Final:** Kirwan bt Parker 15-7

#### Doubles

**1st round:** B.Chua & J.Smith bt J.Graham & E.Townshend 11-4, 11-5; T.Hebblethwaite & A.Hopkins bt C.Low & S.Prakash 11-7, 11-7; N.Geere & A.Hanton bt L.Mathias & J.Pinder 11-8, 6-11, 11-9

**Quarter-finals:** D.Grant & E.Kay bt Chua & Smith 11-0, 11-5; A.Boyd & B.Jourdan bt H.Buchanan & S.Russell 11-6, 11-5; O.Arnold & T.Parker bt Hebblethwaite & Hopkins 11-0, 11-3; J.Aquilina & D.Tristao bt Geere & A.Hanton 11-5, 11-2

**Semi-finals:** Grant & Kay bt Boyd & Jourdan 11-2, 11-7; Aquilina & Tristao bt Arnold & Parker 2-11, 11-9, 11-9

**Final:** Grant & Kay bt Tristao & Aquilina 11-5, 11-1

**Plate:** Buchanan & Russell

## The Owers Trophy

St Paul's School, Barnes, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018

The Old Paulines reinforced their position as the country's premier Old Boys team with another victory in the Owers Trophy. It was their ninth win in the last 11 years, and one of the most emphatic.

To be honest, the result was no great surprise, but as ever with a team Fives competition, this year's Owers Trophy took a few unexpected twists and turns before the winners were able to get their hands on the trophy.

For example, when the players started to arrive at the courts – and, indeed, after the first matches in the round-robin had started – it was thought that there would be six teams competing. However, as the morning wore on, it was discovered that only four teams could make it after all. So, a competition that had been planned as two groups of three turned into one round-robin group of four, with the results of the matches that had already started being carried over.

Mind you, that new format was only a few minutes old when it became clear that the Old Paulines and Old Bradfieldians were the best squads. Indeed, they went on to score comfortable wins in their opening two matches – against the Old Eastbournians and a scratch team drawn from a squad of two Alleyn Old Boys, one from the Old Bedford Modernians and one from Merchant Taylors'.

In the end, after some careful scheduling, it meant that the final matches in the round-robin would decide the destiny of the trophies. The clash between the Paulines and the Bradfieldians would decide the winners and runners-up, while the Eastbournians and the scratch team would fight over the Plate. It was the second match that by far the closer. In fact, it was the only one on the day to be won by two games to one; every other match had been won 3-0.

The scratch team took the first game quite comfortably, only for Eastbourne to strike back even more emphatically in the second, giving them a two-point lead going into the final game of the match. That pitted Andy Pringle and Marcus Bate against Hamish Buchanan and Nick Geere, and it was the two Alleyn Old Boys who started off more strongly. They went into a 7-3 lead, but at that point, something seemed to click in Andy and Marcus. They began to find their length and angles again, and went on to record an 11-8 win in the game, securing the plate for Old Eastbournians.

There was plenty of fine Fives played in the final, but the end result was far more one-sided. The Pauline side – Ed Kay, Julian Aquilina and Henry Jefferies – simply overwhelmed the Bradfieldian side of David Butler, Ed Ronan and Tim Hebblethwaite. It was a welcome return to the competition for the Paulines, who hadn't been able to raise a team for the 2017 event. However, it also meant the boys from Berkshire sealed the perhaps unwelcome hat trick of having been the runners-up for the last three years.

## **RESULTS**

**Final:** Old Paulines bt Old Bradfieldians 33-7

**Plate:** Old Eastbournians bt Scratch III

### **Teams**

Old Paulines: Julian Aquilina, Henry Jefferies, Ed Kay

Old Bradfieldians: Dave Butler, Tim Hebblethwaite, Ed Ronan

Old Eastbournians: Marcus Bate, Tim Caroe, Andy Pringle

Scratch: Bhaswar Baral (OMT), Hamish Buchanan (AOB), Nick Geere (AOB), Joe Sumner (OBM)

## **The Yorkshire Open Championships**

Giggleswick School, Yorkshire

Saturday/Sunday, 6-7 October 2018

**STOP PRESS:** In Saturday's Doubles Ollie Arnold & Theo Parker regained the title they won in 2016, in a small but high quality field, by beating the former Barnes Bridge champion pairing of Ben Beltrami & Dave Butler in the final. Beltrami and Butler met in the Singles final on Sunday, with Butler winning his third regional Singles title.

## **Singles**

1st round: O Arnold bt S Russell 15-8, 15-3; T Parker bt H Buchanan 15-5, 15-1; B Beltrami bt E Hawke 15-6, 15-10

Semi-finals: D Butler bt Arnold 15-3, 15-3; Beltrami bt Parker 14-16, 15-10, 15-7

Final: Butler bt Beltrami 15-7, 15-1

Plate: Russell bt Hawke 15-4, 15-11

## **Doubles**

1st round: E Hawke & R Lebon bt N Roberts & R Sandie 15-5, 15-3; H Buchanan & S Russell bt R Christie & S Kirby 15-2, 15-8; B Beltrami & D Butler bt AR and V Singh 15-1, 15-7

Semi-finals: Arnold & Parker bt Hawke & Lebon 15-2, 15-4; Beltrami & Butler bt Buchanan & Russell 15-4, 16-15

Final: Arnold & Parker bt Beltrami & Butler 15-4, 15-7

Plate: 1st Christie & Kirby (+20); 2nd Roberts & Sandie (+3); 3rd AR & Singh (-23)

## **The Alastair Mackenzie 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner**

The Queen's Club, Barons Court, London,

Saturday 13th October 2018

Some 75 members of the RFA and their guests gathered at the Queen's Club in West London yesterday to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Association at The Alastair Mackenzie Anniversary Dinner.

The guest list included everyone from greats of the game – including David Gardner, Stan Holt, Ian Fuller and David Hebden – to members of the Board, today's top players and the self-proclaimed 'Next Generation'. Chief among this latter party – and it certainly was a 'party' on their table – were the likes of David Butler, Theo Parker and Ollie Arnold. However, the young man who left the greatest impression was Sam Russell, inspired by the occasion, the company and maybe just the atmosphere to say a few impromptu, but thoroughly heartfelt, words to his fellow diners.

His speech was the final one of four addresses that varied in tone, content and – let's be honest – coherence, but all of which perfectly suited the occasion. David Bawtree and Bernard Atkinson spoke with passion and eloquence about the game and its history, while Alex Smith gave a wide-ranging crowd-pleaser of a speech that left everyone bemused and amused in equal measure.

In fact, that probably summed up the event better than anything. At various points in the evening, most people lost track of quite what was going on, despite Guy Matthews' best efforts to marshal the troops. But, everyone had a smile on their face from the moment they arrived to the moment they left. Whether it was the rekindling of old friendships or the establishment of new ones, it was a great evening that was enjoyed by all who attended.

After all, it's not that often that the Board of the RFA will actively encourage its members to hit the bar.

Here's to the centenary dinner in 2028!

## **The Lady's Cup 2018**

Cambridge University Sports Centre

Saturday, 20th October 2018

Bob Dolby reports: The magnificent trophy which Mrs Malt gave in memory of her husband Philip Malt AOB on his death in 1937 has finally returned to Alleyn's School, won by pupils Martha Nugent & Gwydion Wiseman in a thrilling final played against Ibbey Lee & Dick Warner.

Philip Malt was Amateur Singles Champion in 1933, 1934 and 1935 and won the Amateur Doubles four years in a row in the same period. He died from tuberculosis aged 31. The trophy which his widow gave to be played for by the Alleyn Old Boys has been repurposed for a tournament at Cambridge promoting Fives for female beginners and students. This year's event was the fifth.

This time we saw 8 pairs compete. Three Past-and-Present Rugbeian combinations, 3 all-female pairings from Cambridge University, a brother and sister from Bedford Modern and two pupils from Alleyn's School. Sadly, illness prevented an eagerly anticipated appearance from a pair representing the new City of Durham Club.

After a morning of mix and match friendlies, giving everyone a chance to acclimatise to the courts, enjoy some coaching and get to know their partner, the organiser was able to determine draws for the afternoon's two knock-out competitions.

In the first, the Lady's Bowl, Malachai & Surianne Griffith from Bedford Modern, the youngest pairing by some distance, swept away opposition from the University in the semi-final but had to work hard to beat Cambridge's experienced Cassi Henderson and total beginner Sophie Kenny 15-12 in the final.

Malachai and Surianne also won the Ball-in-the-Box Challenge, ably run by Hugo Harrison on an adjacent Eton Fives court, though it took a Sudden Death encounter with Freya Harrison & Trevor White before they could win their second competition of the day.

Meanwhile in the main competition, the Lady's Cup, Ibbey Lee & Dick Warner won a tough semi-final against Freya Harrison & George Terry, a match worthy of any final. Perhaps the effort expended in this victory was the deciding factor against Martha Nugent & Gwydion Wiseman, who had enjoyed an easier route to the final. 16-14 was the score in seesawing match which delighted the numerous spectators but disappointed those who wished Dick a third victory in this prestigious event!

## **Results**

**Cup Final:** Martha & Gwydion bt Ibbey & Dick 16-14

**Plate:** Freya & George bt Claudia Harrison & Tris Edwards 15-2

**Bowl Final:** Surianne & Malachi bt Cassi & Sophie 15-12

## **The latest RFA Rankings - October 2018**

### **Dan Grant takes over at Number 1 in the Doubles Rankings**

Dan Tristao retains his lead in the new Singles Rankings, but we see a change in the Doubles, with Dan Grant taking over from Will Ellison at the top.

These rankings reflect the first four events of the 2018-19 season. Normally I would have issued an interim rankings update but house-moving has preoccupied me somewhat over the last few months. My apologies, but rest assured, my move will see me remaining in Banstead so any references to the "fans in Burgundy & Banstead" will not need to change!

The Singles sees no great change at the top, but the start of the season is remarkable for other reasons. We have had four open events and a different winner in each competition — Will Ellison in the South West, Dan Tristao in the South East, Ed Kay in London, and David Butler in Yorkshire. I was curious to look at how often this has happened before, and so did some digging.

It turns out that the last occasion was in the season of 1978-79 when the winners of the first four events were John East, Wayne Enstone, Tony Wynn, and ... errr ... Dave Hebden. It also happened 3 times in the 1960s when quite a few of the top players travelled less, and we were blessed with some legends of the game who were happy to share the spoils — e.g. Marsh, Watkinson, Howe, Puckle, Gardner, East, and Enstone to name just a few.

In 1978-79 one of the winners of the first four events went on to win the 5th and final event, so the run came to an end — yes the tournament schedule was much restricted in those days compared to now. Only once have we had more than 4 different winners of the open singles events in a season which was 1968-69 when all the 5 competitions were won by different players. With 5 open singles events to go this season there is maybe a chance of breaking that record — time for Charlie Brooks, Dan Grant, or Ben Beltrami, or maybe someone else, to step up??

In the Singles top ten, Ben Beltrami moves up a place despite losing to David Butler in the final of the Yorkshire, Ben's semi-final place in the South East making the difference. Matt Shaw and Ollie Arnold move into the top ten. Andrew Boyd, Peter Hanton and Ben Kirwan make good progress into the top 20, whilst lower down Alex Rew, Rob Whitehorn and Ed Hatton move up the list. We see 3 new entries — Addie Chai, Richard Dyke, and Morgan Spillane, all benefiting from good performance in Plate competitions.

In the Doubles, Dan Grant hits the top spot after wins in the South West (with Will Ellison) and in London (with Ed Kay). Ollie Arnold and Theo Parker, who seem to like this event, won in Yorkshire, and James Tilston and Ben Chua won the South East “invitation” Doubles. Ben is the first player to win this event twice, while this was James's first doubles trophy.

A word about Will Ellison. Will has topped the Doubles Rankings for some 3 years now, an amazing run. Parental duties kept Will away from the last 2 open events, but no doubt he will be back soon fighting for that top spot.

The Doubles list sees Ed Kay moving up a place to 4th, and Ollie Arnold moving up to 6th. Ben Chua's South East win sees him enter the top 20, while Rob Whitehorn, Ed Hatton, Ben Jourdan, James Smith, Addie Chai, Stuart Kirby, Richard Christie and Louise Mathias all make good progress. We have an encouraging 7 new entries in the Doubles, with Richard Dyke, Alexandra Steel, Daniel Hill, Richard Lebon, Joe Sumner, Cameron Low, and Sarath Prakash all joining the list. Alexandra joins Louise Mathias and Alley Scott as the 3rd female in the Doubles rankings.

The official RFA rankings are prepared by Dave Hebden

## **RFA v. WFA**

Winchester College, Sunday, 21st October 2018

**The spoils in this year's intercode contest went to the VIII representing the Winchester Fives Association. Harry Akerman, unavailable to play but supportive of his side as ever, reports below.**

Despite Dan Tristao and Will Ellison missing this fixture for the first time we had an excellent match on Sunday at Winchester College. The RFA have got the better of the Winchester Fives Association the last couple of years but this time the WFA edged out the opposition in a very evenly matched game. No pair won all its games and all pairs won some. There were four old Bradfieldians on show for the WFA, with James Birch the dark horse, hitting the ball as cleanly as ever. Old pairings of James Marshall & Ed Ronan plus Kieran Mackinson & Tom Kidner (last year's Schools champions) were reunited, so the WFA were able to use their home advantage well. The overall score in this excellent tight series now stands at 4-4, with the total of points won by the RFA 1,963 against 1,943

won by the WFA ..... 20 points over eight years! The hard work of all was once again rewarded by lunch in the sunshine at The Queen.

## Teams

### RFA

Ed Kay & Peter Hanton  
 Theo Parker & Sam Russell  
 Hamish Buchanan & Gareth Price  
 Tom Watkinson & Nick Whitney

### WFA

David Butler & James Birch  
 Giles Munn & Ed Hawke  
 James Marshall & Ed Ronan  
 Kieran Mackison & Tom Kidner

## Scores

	<b>RFA I</b>	<b>RFA II</b>	<b>RFA III</b>	<b>RFA IV</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>WFA I</b>	8-11, 11-6	11-4, 4-11	11-0, 11-1	11-3, 11-1	78-37
<b>WFA II</b>	6-11, 11-9	11-4, 5-11	11-4, 11-0	11-5, 11-0	77-44
<b>WFA III</b>	11-9, 6-11	11-8, 7-11	11-4, 9-11	11-5, 11-7	77-66
<b>WFA IV</b>	11-9, 8-11	6-11, 4-11	8-11, 6-11	4-11, 7-11	54-86
<b>Total</b>	<b>72-77</b>	<b>59-71</b>	<b>78-42</b>	<b>77-43</b>	<b>286-233</b>

**WFA won by 286-233**

### Results of the previous years:

2011 WFA win 248-217  
 2012 WFA win 252-223  
 2013 RFA win 237-217  
 2014 RFA win 258-230  
 2015 WFA win 266-257  
 2016 RFA win 249-214  
 2017 RFA win 289-230

## City of Durham Club Ladies Invitation Tournament

Durham, Saturday, 27th October 2018

### Inaugural City of Durham Fives Club Ladies' Invitation Tournament

And what a success it was! 19 players from 12 years old upwards played out two separate Singles competitions over the course of the day. Nonstop fives masterminded by Tom Wakelam, players fuelled by a combination of enthusiasm for the game and ample catering by Julie McIntyre, and spectators treated to matches you'd pay money to enjoy in any other sport.

The entry consisted of 12 players from the Edinburgh Academy, 3 young ones from the Durham Club and 4 adults, two of whom are studying at the University. For one competition these players were divided into pools for a Festival of Fives, with an Open category, won by club member Phoebe Bracken, an U18 category won by Academy Number 1 Zara Elliot, an U16 category, won by Durham

junior member Sian Tustin, and an U14 category won by junior member Camille Beattie. Just playing out these matches would have been plenty of fives at any event, but in addition there was an Open Knock-out Tournament for all.

In the knock-out event the early rounds produced no surprises. It was at the quarter-final stage that Amelia Law, seeded 1, found herself outrun, and occasionally out-hit, by young Camille Beattie in the first major surprise of the day. Camille then had a much easier semi-final against her Academy opponent, but next door the other semi-final tussle between 2nd and 3rd seeds, Phoebe Bracken and Zara Elliot, was a feast of hard and effective serving, interspersed with some brutal hitting. Zara emerged the winner, the scoreline not doing full justice to the quality of the contest.

Come the final, we had the sight of 12 year-old Camille taking the game to her sixth form opponent fearlessly for the first 20 minutes. It took Zara some time to claw back a significant deficit, but then her greater strength came into play and she took the first game 11-8. Predictably, given the age gap, the second game was much less close, but the spectators had had a glimpse of some very promising fives yet to come from these two young opponents. We look forward to a rematch later in the season in Edinburgh.

Bob Dolby

### **Knock-out Scores**

**Preliminary round:** C Petrie bt P Atkinson 15-10; C Elliot bt G Edwards 15-5

**1st round:** A Law bt Petrie 15-0; C Beattie bt L Hawkins 15-0; A Hussein bt A Calder 15-3; F Millar bt C Millar 15-0; Z Elliot bt J McIntyre 15-2; R Elliot bt McWatters-Reed 15-5; S Tustin bt H Brown 15-4; P Bracken bt C Elliot 15-0

**Quarter-finals:** Beattie bt Law 11-5, 11-3; Hussain bt F Millar 11-8, 11-9; Z Elliot bt R Elliot 11-1, 11-2; Bracken bt Tustin 11-2, 11-5

**Semi-finals:** Beattie bt Hussain 11-8, 11-9; Z Elliot bt Bracken 11-2, 11-5

**Final:** Z Elliott bt Beattie 11-8, 11-1

### **Festival of Fives**

**Open:** 1 Phoebe Bracken ; 2 Amelia Law

**U18:** 1 Zara Elliot ; 2 Flora Millar

**U16:** 1 Sian Tustin ; 2 Cecily Millar

**U14:** 1 Camille Beattie ; 2 Holly Brown

## **West of England Championships**

Marlborough College, 27/28 October 2018

**STOP PRESS** With the help of Marlborough College, who agreed to host the event, organiser Ollie Arnold put on a superb event at the West of England Championships. And it was fellow Old Pauline Ed Kay who came away with perhaps the biggest smile on his face, after winning both the singles and doubles titles.

However, there may well be some aching limbs to accompany that winning smile, as Ed did it the hard way, with both finals going to three games. His singles win came with an 11-9 win in the final game, while it took an 11-8 win the last game to clinch the doubles title. In both matches, it was Dan Tristao who ended up with the runner-up's medal – along with Dan Grant in the doubles.

Ed's partner in the doubles was Will Ellison, who had created headlines of his own on the Saturday, after a quarter-final loss to David Butler. However, any fatigue or lack of practice on Will's part is perhaps understandable, given the recent birth of his first child. And, we're sure that the gold medal for the doubles title won't be the last one he brings home.

Finally, special mention must go to Sam Russell, who scored a double of his own: winning both Plate competitions. Like Ed, it's all the more remarkable as both his wins also came in three-game finals. First, he beat Theo Parker to win the singles plate, before teaming up with Tom Watkinson to clinch the doubles plate.

**Organiser Ollie Arnold writes:** This year the West of England Championships attracted 21 singles and 13 doubles entries to Marlborough College, where Ed Kay won his fifth Open singles title and teamed up with Will Ellison for a hat trick of doubles titles.

The singles started at a pace, with James Tilston and Julian Aquilina battling it out over three long games. Having recovered from losing the first set 12-10, Tilston's powerful hitting could not get him over the line in the third; Aquilina's reward was a quarter-final versus defending champion Dan Tristao. Elsewhere, Theo Parker pushed Will Ellison in a long first game, but could not keep up the pace, losing 11-8, 11-1.

With the top eight seeds safely into the quarter-finals, the plate competition started in earnest. 13 players played 36 matches over two groups, leading to mixed reactions from those involved. Alex Rew delighted in the volume of fives, whereas Parker and Ben Kirwan complained of fatigue, suspiciously before they had played any of their games...

Back in the main draw, not all was well for the top four seeds. Dan Grant recovered from losing a tight second set to beat Ollie Arnold in three games, while next door the biggest story of the day was developing. Dave Butler and four-time singles champion Will Ellison were locked in a brutal first set, which Dave finally won 12-10. This proved crucial in the outcome of the match, and Dave was celebrating his biggest singles scalp soon after. Tristao came past Aquilina in two, and despite a surge of winners from Ben Beltrami, Ed Kay made up the semi-finalists.

Dave Butler continued where he had left off to start his semi versus Ed Kay. The first set see-sawed as each player took the initiative, but it was Ed's greater experience at the sharp end of open tournaments that saw him take the match in two. Grant and Tristao, watching the other semi-final, clearly decided that they would not be sucked into the grind of the Marlborough courts. Drop-shots and winners followed, as well as an ambitious behind-the-back, facing-the-back-wall shot from DT. From the sublime to the ridiculous however: a second attempt not as successful as the first, though this could not prevent Tristao winning in two.

Finally the plate had reached a conclusion, with Theo Parker and Sam Russell pushing through their groups. They began in a wild atmosphere, spectators cheering every point. When Sam took a tight first game, many thought that Theo's final was over, but an unlikely ally surfaced: cramp befell Sam early in the second. This gave Theo the opening he needed to take the match to a third, though Russell's grit and determination nevertheless won out in the end.

Refreshed after a wonderful Saturday evening meal organised by Stuart Watson, we started Sunday morning with the singles final in front of a large crowd. Dan T took the early advantage after a first set which lasted 40 minutes, though the momentum shifted fast in the second: Ed had settled into his rhythm and was pushing Dan to all corners of the court in a display of control. When up 7-2 in the third Ed looked to have one hand on the trophy, but of course Dan came back to make it 9-9. Tense exchanges followed, but it was Dan who faltered first – Ed winning his first West of England Singles Championship.

Meanwhile, the doubles was underway; this was evident from the loud, booming voice of Tim Lewis, distracting all others on court. Unfortunately, this seemed to include his partner Stu Watson, as they

lost their first-round match. Elsewhere, Sam Russell & Tom Watkinson battled to a three-set win over the promising new Bristol pair of Archie McCreath & Cameron Low. The top four seeds progressed to the semi-finals with relative ease, although James Tilston & Henry Jefferies troubled Arnold & Parker in their second game.

The doubles plate saw seven pairs take part. In the top group, McCreath & Low won out, taking the notable scalp of Aquilina & Pete Hanton along the way. Their reward was a rematch in the final against Russell & Watkinson, who won the other group. A particular highlight was Lewis & Watson's game versus Gareth Price & Julian Hanton: amid shouts and whoops (very few of them from the spectators) Price & Hanton took the game 15-10.

The doubles semi-finals were next on court. Although recent winners in Yorkshire, Arnold & Parker found it tough to break down Kay & Ellison. The two-time defending champions won out in two lengthy sets, overcoming a second-set surge from the Bristol pair. The other semi-final was more straightforward: Tristao & Grant comfortable winning in two. Next was the doubles plate final. This time McCreath & Low took the first and were looking on the verge of a big win in the second before Tom Watkinson stole the show with some attacking play, dominating from the front of the court. This continued in the third game, Russell taking home both plate titles this year.

The main draw finalists had six West of England titles between them, and the 2018 title seemed to be going the way of the Cyriax Cup holders when Dan T & Dan G took the first 12-10. However, as the game wore on, Will Ellison showed why he had only recently been overtaken in the doubles rankings, with consistent hard-hitting throughout proving too much for the Dans. After Will & Ed had won one gigantic rally, there was no looking back and they took the third 11-8; this was Will's 71st and Ed's 12th open title.

Thanks must go to Marlborough College for the use of their courts at short notice, and to all of the competitors who made this such a fantastic weekend of fives! Once again, these results set things up nicely for the National Singles in December, where all the top players will be looking to end Dan Tristao's two-year reign. I look forward to welcoming you all back next year!

## **RESULTS**

### **Singles**

**1st round:** A McCreath bt A Shaw 11-1, 11-1; A Rew bt W Shardlow 11-2, 11-3; S Russell bt D Whitham 11-7, 11-7; T Parker bt N Geere 11-7, 11-4; B Kirwan bt L Mathias 11-0, 11-0

**2nd round:** D Tristao bt McCreath 11-7, 11-5; J Aquilina bt J Tilston 12-10, 9-11, 11-6; O Arnold bt Rew 11-3, 11-3; D Grant bt Russell 11-4, 11-4; W Ellison bt Parker 11-8, 11-1; D Butler bt J Hanton 11-3, 11-0; B Beltrami bt H Jefferies 11-4, 11-3; E Kay bt Kirwan 11-1, 11-3

**Quarter-finals:** Tristao bt Aquilina 11-7, 11-4; Grant bt Arnold 11-0, 9-11, 11-7; Butler bt Ellison 12-10, 11-1; Kay bt Beltrami 11-1, 11-7

**Semi-finals:** Tristao bt Grant 11-2, 11-6; Kay bt Butler 11-8, 11-5

**Final:** Kay bt Tristao 5-11, 11-3, 11-9

**Plate:** Russell bt Parker 11-8, 5-11, 11-2

### **Doubles**

**1st round:** Russell & Watkinson bt McCreath & Low 11-2, 4-11, 11-9; Aquilina & Hanton bt Watson & Lewis 11-1, 11-3; Beltrami & Butler bt Mathias & Brice 11-2, 11-0; Tilston & Jefferies bt Geere & Baral 11-5, 11-4; Kirwan & Hanton 11-6, 11-8

**Quarter-finals:** Grant & Tristao bt Russell & Watkinson 11-5, 11-9; Beltrami & Butler bt Aquilina & Hanton 11-3, 11-3; Arnold & Parker bt Tilston & Jefferies 11-6, 11-6; Ellison & Kay bt Kirwan & Whitham 11-1, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Grant & Tristao bt Beltrami & Butler 11-9, 11-1; Ellison & Kay bt Arnold & Parker 11-9, 11-7

**Final:** Ellison & Kay bt Grant & Tristao 10-12, 11-6, 11-8

**Plate:** Russell & Watkinson bt McCreath & Low 8-11, 11-9, 11-4

## **RFA Schools' Winchester Fives Doubles 2018**

Winchester College; Sunday, 4th November 2018

**David Barnes reports:** A small but high-quality entry made the day's fives a pleasure to watch. A round-robin system ensured that each pair played five games to 15 points, and it was hard to spot the likely finalists, since five of the pairs were of more or less equal standard.

Winchester's first pair, a year young but improving fast, survived stern challenges from Marlborough, Merchant Taylors' and both St Paul's pairs, qualifying for the final with high hopes of continuing the home side's run of success in this tournament.

It was unclear until the last game of the round-robin who would meet them there. In the end the Merchant Taylors' pair, playing ever more confidently, beat St Paul's I by 15-11 to qualify for the final. Both St Paul's pairs were close behind on points scored, and they played each other in the plate final, won narrowly by the second pair.

The main final, played over the best of three games to eleven, was a good one. The decisive factor was the control and accuracy shown by Townshend and Graham of Merchant Taylors', who won in straight games, 11-6, 11-7. A left and right partnership, they both attacked and retrieved to greater effect than their Wykehamist opponents, Percival and Fraser, who fought hard but made more mistakes. Townshend dominated the left court and capped his performance by playing a series of unreturnable shots down the left-hand wall.

The Merchant Taylors' win was their first in this competition, made more remarkable by the fact that their school is temporarily without courts. Theirs was a performance of both ability and character.

### **Pool (order based on points scored)**

**1st:** Winchester 1: D Percival & S Fraser

**2nd:** Merchant Taylors': E Townshend & J Graham

**3rd:** St. Paul's 1: E Monro-Davies & L Odgers

**4th:** St. Paul's 2: M Skoczylas & D.Jourdan

**5th:** Marlborough: H Powell & C Jobson

**6th:** Winchester 2: W Griffith & I Kwan

**Final:** Merchant Taylors' (Townshend & Graham) bt Winchester 1 (Percival & Fraser) 11-6, 11-7

**Plate:** St. Paul's 2 bt St Paul's 1 15-12

## **The new Rugby Fives ball comes on stream**

7th November 2018

**A Message from Howard Wiseman at Glove and Balls:** We are pleased to announce that the new Rugby Fives ball is now available. These are being made as a full-time occupation for a Swiss craftsman, Mark, who is a Fives enthusiast and will supply a constant stock to keep up with demand!

The new Wiseman ball is being made with the same machinery and materials as the previous G6 ball. The formula has been very slightly adjusted. The intention is to produce a more consistent weight and bounce with the product. It is also intended that the ball produces even better rewards for a good-length shot and well executed drop-shots too. The balls are expected to last a good length of time, without losing their bounce, exactly the same as the previous G6 ball. There is even a reversed-leather covering available so that the ball will not skid when new on very smooth courts. One of these balls will be provided in each ten purchased unless requested otherwise (more or none!).

A group of people is now familiar with the manufacturing process, and it is hoped that the future of British-made Rugby Fives balls is now secure for generations to come, A range of special edition coverings will be launched in May, and special requests will be considered!

The price is £12.50 per ball or £120 for a box of 10.

We hope that you enjoy the new Wiseman ball and that your Fives is all the more exciting for playing with it!

## **British Universities & Student Fives Championships 2018**

St Paul's School, Barnes, London

Saturday/Sunday, 17-18th November

**STOP PRESS** After several years of domination by players from Cambridge University, it was all change in this year's Student Championships. In fact, neither the singles nor doubles champions had previously won a title at this level.

David Butler took the singles title, becoming the first player from Edinburgh University to win the title in 50 years. Runner-up was Theo Parker, but Theo — along with fellow Bristol student Ollie Arnold — did have the consolation of winning the doubles title. In the process, they became the first Bristol champions since the very first Universities event in 1960.

*Organiser Theo Parker writes:* This year, St Paul's School provided the ideal setting for the British Universities and Student Fives championships. Entries were once again good, with 35 singles players (despite three last minute drop-outs) and 18 pairs in the doubles. Particular mention should go to Oxford University for contributing the largest group of players: an impressive 11 singles entries and 5 doubles pairs, which bodes well for the Varsity Match early next year. The challenge for next season is for another institution to match or better Oxford's numbers. It was especially good to have four female players (Louise Mathias, Shinan Zhang, Phoebe Thornhill and Bee Crinnion) enter for the first time, and all should be congratulated for rising to the challenge admirably (all the more given they competed in the Ladies U23 tournament simultaneously on Sunday). It would be great to see even more women enter the tournament next year.

Overall, the fives was of a great quality, with close matches throughout the main and plate competitions, and silverware split between three institutions. An early highlight in the singles was a tight 3-set match between Dan Whitham (Oxford) and Cameron Low (Bristol), with the former coming through 11-5 in the third. Similarly, Christian Blackaby (Durham) came through in two tight games against Jeremy Manger (Cambridge) 11-6, 11-8. Given this, it was unsurprising that Jeremy and Cameron went through the plate to meet in the final on Sunday morning, with Cameron winning 15-5 15-1.

In the main competition, David Butler (Edinburgh) came into the competition as the clear favourite, given his recent form which had seen him win the Yorkshire Open and beat Will Ellison in the West of England Open at Marlborough. True to form, Butler made it through to the final with relative ease, despite coming up against perennial student Jacob Brubert (Oxford) in the quarter-final, and

Cambridge no.1 Andrew Boyd in the semi-final. Andrew might have been feeling the effects of a long game in the previous round against Oxford no. 1 Ben Kirwan: a meeting of two attritional styles of play. In the other half, there was an exciting match up between brothers Hanton (Julian and Peter), with Julian upsetting his older brother 15-7, 15-8.

Other than that, the matches went to seeding until the semi-final, where Theo Parker (Bristol) managed to overcome the left-hand hard hitting of his fellow Bristolian Ollie Arnold. This set up a final, played on Sunday morning, between two familiar foes: Butler and Parker. David stormed ahead in the first game, playing a nice line and length, and tiring Theo out on the hot St Paul's courts, closing out the first 15-7. Many expected Theo to roll-over in the second, but he came out strongly, hitting some nice winners and serving exceptionally. But David, now a seasoned singles 'Top Tenner', managed to weather the storm, claw back a lead, and eventually close out a deserved victory. Congratulations, Dave.

By this point, the doubles competition was already underway, with timings tight due to the Ladies U23 championships using two of the courts and the strict 5pm curfew. In the Plate competition, Sid Bhushan & Dan Whitham made up for a tight 2nd round loss to the Durham 1st pair to reach the final, coming up against Durham no. 2 Douglas Law & Michael Suddaby. After a tight first game, and in front of a huge crowd of enthusiastic supporters, the Oxford pair closed out the second 11-2 to take the crown (Dan's second plate doubles win in a row).

In the main competition, like the singles, there was a clear favourite pair: Arnold & Parker from Bristol, the reigning Yorkshire Open champions, who had lost the previous three finals (a statistic that was helpfully highlighted by David Barnes in his information display, much to the organiser's displeasure!). The doubles went mainly to seeding, other than a brilliant quarter-final win for freshers Cameron Low & Archie McCreath against the seasoned Oxford no. 1 pair Pete Hanton & Ben Kirwan. The final saw Parker & Arnold come up against Butler & Jourdan, giving Theo the chance to take his revenge on David. In the end, and despite Dave & Ben's best attempts, Ollie & Theo proved far too strong, winning with ease 15-4, 15-2. This was Bristol's first doubles win since the first ever tournament in 1960.

The trophies were kindly presented by current RFA President David Bawtree. It was great to have David, along with a number of other past Presidents and esteemed guests, supporting the event at different points throughout the weekend. One noticeable absentee, however, was 58-year organiser and founder of the event, David Gardner, who had taken a well-earned holiday to Sri Lanka. We look forward to being able to welcome David back to the championships in the near future.

A few final words of thanks: to St Paul's School for hosting the event in their top quality facilities; to all the supporters for making the atmosphere so lively and vibrant all weekend; and to all the players for travelling long distances to compete and for making the tournament so smooth and painless to run. Until next year!

## Results

### Singles

**1st round:** M.Suddaby (Durham) bt L.Mathias (Bristol) 11-3, 11-2; S.Zhang (Southampton) bt P.Thornhill (Oxford) 11-5, 11-5; J.Sissons (Durham) bt B.Crinnion (Oxford) 11-0, 11-2

**2nd round:** D. Butler (Edinburgh) bt Suddaby 11-0, 11-3; S.Bhushan (Oxford) bt J.Sumner (KCL) 11-3, 11-3; J.Brubert (Oxford) bt P.Kullavanijaya (Durham) 11-6, 11-2; R.Whitehorn (Exeter) bt C.Barnett (Edinburgh) 11-0, 11-6; B.Kirwan (Oxford) bt Law (Durham) 11-1, 11-0; A.McCreath (Bristol) bt G.Marshall (Durham) 11-1, 11-0; D.Whitham (Oxford) bt C.Low (Bristol) 11-4, 0-11, 11-5; A.Boyd (Cambridge) bt J.Longden (Oxford) 11-0, 11-1; Parker (Bristol) bt Zhang 11-0, 11-1; W.Shardlow (Oxford) bt J.Malde (UCL) 4-11, 11-4, 11-3; J.Hanton (Sheffield) bt A.Ahuja (Cambridge) 11-0, 11-0; B.Jourdan (Edinburgh) bt A.McGee (Oxford) 11-0, 11-1; P.Hanton (Oxford) bt W.Rentoul (Edinburgh) 11-1, 11-3; J.Smith (Manchester) bt C.Kengeter (Oxford) 11-0, 11-4; C.Blackaby (Durham) bt J.Manger (Cambridge) 11-6, 11-8; O.Arnold (Bristol) bt Sissons 11-3, 11-0

**3rd round:** Butler bt Bhushan 15-4, 15-1; Brubert bt Whitehorn 15-11, 15-0; Kirwan bt McCreath 15-7, 15-7; Boyd bt Whitham 15-8, 15-5; Parker bt Shardlow 15-6, 15-4; J.Hanton bt P.Hanton 15-7, 15-8; Jourdan bt Smith 15-6, 15-13; Arnold bt Blackaby 15-7, 15-0

**Quarter-finals:** Butler bt Brubert 15-0, 15-1; Boyd bt Kirwan 15-11, 15-2; Parker bt J.Hanton 15-5, 15-10; Arnold bt Jourdan 15-5, 15-7

**Semi-finals:** Butler bt Boyd 15-3, 15-1; Parker bt Arnold 15-9, 15-7

**Final:** Butler (Edinburgh) bt Parker (Bristol) 15-7 15-10

#### **Plate**

**Semi-finals:** Low bt Kullavanijaya 15-2, 15-5; Manger bt Sumner 15-8, 12-15, 15-1

**Final:** Low bt Manger 15-5, 15-1

#### **Doubles**

**1st round:** Marshall & Sissons (Durham) bt Thornhill & Crinnion (Oxford) 11-0, 11-7; Law & Suddaby (Durham) bt Mathias & Zhang (Bristol/Southampton) 11-7, 11-2

**2nd round:** Arnold & Parker (Bristol) bt Marshall & Sissons 11-1, 11-1; Blackaby & Kullavanijaya (Durham) bt Bhushan & Whitham (Oxford) 11-7, 11-1; Smith & J.Hanton (Manchester/Sheffield) bt Kengeter & McGee (Oxford) 11-0, 11-4; Boyd & Manger (Cambridge) bt Rentoul & Barnett (Edinburgh) 11-0, 11-0; P.Hanton & Kirwan (Oxford) bt Ahuja & Pyman (Cambridge) 11-1, 11-2; Low & McCreath (Bristol) bt Shardlow & Longden (Oxford) 11-0, 11-2; Malde & Whitehorn (UCL/Exeter) bt Sumner & Liu (KCL/Imperial) 11-6, 11-1; Butler & Jourdan (Edinburgh) bt Law & Suddaby 11-0, 11-1

**Quarter-finals:** Arnold & Parker bt Blackaby & Kullavanijaya 15-6, 15-4; Boyd & Manger bt Smith & J.Hanton 15-8, 15-5; Low & McCreath bt P.Hanton & Kirwan 15-8, 15-4; Butler & Jourdan bt Malde & Whitehorn 15-1, 15-5

**Semi-finals:** Arnold & Parker bt Boyd & Manger 15-4, 15-2; Butler & Jourdan bt Low & McCreath 15-1, 15-5

**Final:** Arnold & Parker (Bristol) bt Butler & Jourdan (Edinburgh) 15-4 15-2

**Plate:** Bhushan & Whitham (Oxford) bt Law & Suddaby (Durham) 12-10, 11-2

## **Ladies U23 Championships**

St. Paul's School, Barnes

Sunday, 18th November 2018

Bob Dolby reports: Various factors made this third running of the event a gruelling day for the eleven competitors. Firstly, four of them were also competing in the British Universities championships being conducted on the adjacent courts; secondly, the traditional heat of the St. Paul's courts was increasingly strength-sapping for players used to cooler courts at Alleyn's, Edinburgh Academy and Bedford Modern, for example; thirdly, two of the competitors had been up since 3.30am, having flown down from Edinburgh.

Nevertheless, the quality of play was outstanding, with the defending champion Louise Mathias in imperious form, Shinan Zhang volleying everything in sight, Martha Nugent striking the ball ferociously and Zara Elliot taking the ball early at every opportunity. Add to that the mature play of Katie Sumner & Maddie Kent, the attacking instincts of Sophie Lundie and Lottie Simpson, and the welcome reunion of Phoebe Thornhill & Bee Crinnion — and the result was compulsive viewing for the several supporters and passing BUSF competitors, not to mention a clutch of RFA Presidents past and present.

The Singles produced some exciting matches: the contest between Oxford University's Bee Crinnion and Edinburgh Academy's Sophie Lundie was the pick of the early matches; in the quarter-finals Zara Elliot pushed defending champion Louise Mathias much harder than the score suggests, as did Maddie Kent in her match against Shinan Zhang. The first upset came at the same stage, when young Martha Nugent from Alleyn's beat the Oxford University Ladies Captain Phoebe Thornhill. Martha nearly did the same in her semi-final against Shinan, who benefitted from two crucial errors by

Martha at 13-13. No one was going to stop the ever stronger Louise from taking her second Claire Knowles Trophy, though.

The Plate took the form of a series of 11-point matches, American style, which Zara Elliot clearly relished, averaging 8 points per game over the course of six matches.

In a one-day event such as this fatigue does come into play in the afternoon when the Doubles are played. Errors, above all caused by tired footwork, began to creep into the play of all the ladies, and nowhere was this more obvious than in the final, where Louise & Shinan were seriously challenged by Martha & Lottie. The match went to the wire, with Louise holding things together best at 13-13 to close out a double for herself and ensure a gold medal for Shinan, to whom we now say goodbye.

It has been a pleasure to look after this event, but it should now, rightly, pass into the hands of the young players themselves, as is the case with the National U25s. It may be that the tournament will be decoupled from BUSF next season as more ladies' Fives is played at universities and a clash of championships becomes more and more undesirable.

## Results

### Singles

**1st round:** Z.Elliot bt K.Hatchley 15-0; B.Crinnion bt S.Lundie 15-10; M.Nugent bt L.Simpson 15-1; M.Kent w/o V.King-Forbes

**Quarter-finals:** L.Mathias bt Elliot 15-3; K.Sumner bt Crinnion 15-0; Nugent bt P.Thornhill 15-7; S.Zhang bt Kent 15-7

**Semi-finals:** Mathias bt Sumner 15-2; Zhang bt Nugent 15-13

**Final:** Mathias bt Zhang 11-2, 11-3

**Plate for Fast Fives Singles;** 1st Z.Elliot; 2nd P.Thornhill; 3rd M.Kent

### Doubles

**Pool A:** Mathias & Zhang bt Sumner & Kent 15-10; bt Elliot & Lundie 15-7; Sumner & Kent bt Elliot & Lundie 15-11

**Pool B:** Nugent & Simpson bt Thornhill & Crinnion 15-11

**Final:** Mathias & Zhang bt Nugent & Simpson 15-13

**Plate:** Sumner & Kent and Thornhill & Crinnion (shared)

## Colquhoun Trophy

Sherborne, Dorset, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2018

Boys from Marlborough and Blundell's won the two big titles at this year's Colquhoun Trophy — the RFA's South West Regional Schools' tournament. It was Harry Powell from Marlborough who beat Harry Harvey from host school Sherborne in the Open final, while the Colts title went to Boris Ames from Blundell's, who scored an emphatic win over Marlborough's Conrad Peck.

In fact, Boris had been scoring emphatic wins all day, so his triumph was no surprise. He finished top of his round-robin group with a 100% record and conceding more than a single point in only one of his four games. Behind him, the battle was for second place — a battle only won by a tiny margin, when Boris' fellow Blundellian Max Mayor beat Marlborough's Oliver Light 11-9 in their round-robin game.

In the second group, too, things went down to the wire, again with a battle between boys from Marlborough and Blundell's. Ed Swarbrick from Blundell's and Conrad Peck from Marlborough both came into their match with a 3-0 record in their first three round-robin games, meaning this match would decide first and second places in the group and, as a result, their seedings in the knockout section.

In the end, it was a comfortable win for Peck, which meant he was able to avoid Ames in the semis and claim a place in the final after a comfortable win over Max Mayor (also from Blundell's). Instead, the dubious honour of facing Ames fell to Swarbrick, who was duly brushed aside by his fellow Blundellian.

It was the same story in the final — on paper — although the scoreline belies the amount of effort Conrad put in to try and stay on terms in the rallies. In the end, though, he simply couldn't compete with his opponent, who displayed a fine mix of power, length and deft touch, while his speed around the court was matched only by his speed of thought. A deserved winner.

In the Open category, too, the competition produced another worthy winner, although the all-Marlborough final that had been suggested by the round-robin results didn't materialise.

Marlborough's Harry Powell and Charlie Jobson had topped the two groups to secure top seedings in the semis, but here Jobson was undone by Sherborne schoolboy Harry Harvey — a semi-finalist in the Colts category last year. Powell — himself a semi-finalist last year, but in the Open category — duly made it through to the final and went on to claim the title with a fine all-round display. Harvey put his heart into it, but in the end just couldn't get the better of his opponent, who had already beaten him in the round-robin.

However, with another year's experience under his belt, who's to say Harvey won't go one better in 2019 — the tenth running of this event, which was set up in memory of Charlie Colquhoun and inspired other regional schools' tournaments. It would seem appropriate to celebrate the anniversary with a home winner on the courts of Sherborne School, who have so generously hosted the event since its inception — for which the RFA is extremely grateful.

## **RESULTS**

### **Colts**

#### **Round-robin stage:**

**Pool 1:** 1st Conrad Peck (Marlborough); 2nd Ed Swarbrick (Blundell's); 3rd Will Buckenall (Blundell's); 4th Freddie Clayton (Blundell's); 5th Alex Grubb (Blundell's)

**Pool 2:** 1st Boris Ames (Blundell's); 2nd Max Mayor (Blundell's); 3rd Oliver Light (Marlborough); 4th James Bartlett (Blundell's); 5th Harry Rackham (Blundell's)

**Semi-finals:** Peck (Marlborough) bt Mayor (Blundell's) 15-4; Ames (Blundell's) bt Swarbrick 15-0

**Final:** Ames bt Peck 11-1, 11-0

**Plate:** Buckenall (Blundell's)

### **Open**

#### **Round-robin stage:**

**Pool 1:** 1st Charlie Jobson (Marlborough); 2nd Harry Lack (Marlborough); 3rd William Barker (Sherborne)

**Pool 2:** 1st Harry Powell (Marlborough); 2nd Harry Harvey (Sherborne); 3rd George Gibbs (Blundell's)

**Semi-finals:** Harvey (Sherborne) bt Jobson (Marlborough) 15-4; Powell (Marlborough) bt Lack (Marlborough) 15-2

**Final:** Powell bt Harvey 11-3, 11-4

**Plate:** Gibbs (Blundell's)

## **National Singles Championship – the draw**

**Last 16: Cambridge, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> December**

Organiser Charlie Brooks has now published the draw for the last 16 of this season's National Singles Championship – and there are plenty of talking points even before the first ball of the first match is struck.

Primarily, that's because the top seed is neither Dan Tristao nor Will Ellison, who have dominated this event over the last five years. Instead, the Number 1 seed is Ed Kay, who has been in superb form so far this year, winning both the London and West of England Open Championships. And, while he has now left Cambridge University, few would argue against his status as the favourite on the courts of the Jock Burnet Fives Centre, which are effectively his 'home' courts these days.

## **National Singles Championship**

Cambridge University Sports Centre; Saturday/Sunday, 1-2 December 2018

Dan Tristao won his third consecutive National Singles title (and fourth overall) in Cambridge, beating Ed Kay in the final, and what a final it was! There was superb shot-making from both players, off both hands and from seemingly every corner of the court. The first game, in particular, was Fives at its very best, leaving the crowd in awe of the athleticism and finesse on show.

The opening encounters were high in quality, with hardly anything between the two players' standard and a gap of never more than a couple of points. Ed seemed to have made the decisive move, as a run of points saw him reach 14-9. Dan battled back, though, using all his experience, and didn't give an inch. At 14-11, another energy-sapping rally saw Ed move Dan well out of position, only to agonisingly clip the top of the bar with what would have been a clear winner to take the first game. Dan then kept the pressure on to inch ever closer, saving game balls along the way, before forcing his own game ball. At 15-14, he summoned a superb boast shot for a front-court winner and a one-game advantage.

The second game saw more of the same: more spectacular retrieval, more deft touches and more never-ending rallies. At 8-7, it looked like it would go all the way again, but this time Dan managed to assert himself and relentlessly apply the pressure. He took the game 15-10, and with it his fourth National Singles title. For Ed, it was his first National Singles final, but surely not his last.

Saturday had got off to an inauspicious start, with train cancellations (*déjà vu!*) and motorway standstills delaying the early rounds. In particular, the south-westerners suffered bad luck with their travel, which undoubtedly affected their day's performance.

The pick of the first round was Andrew Boyd's victory against number 5 seed Dave Butler. Using home advantage, Andrew came through a very close match 15-13, 15-9, despite Dave's fightback in the first. There was also a close game between Ollie Arnold and Julian Aquilina. Julian won the first easily, but Ollie's mettle brought him within two points of snatching the second, before Julian won it 15-13.

•

On to the quarter-finals, and was there another upset on the cards? Dan Grant against the higher seeded Will Ellison looked set to be a classic and it did indeed turn out to be the best of the round, but there was no upset. Dan's customary power and shot diversity was on show. To counter this, Will varied his pace to great effect, upsetting Dan's rhythm and not letting him find as many winners as he would have liked. On the next-door court, in stark contrast, was a war of attrition between Charlie Brooks and seed-slayer Boyd — not the prettiest match but one of the longest at 1 hour 45 minutes. After many an ebb and flow, Charlie came through in two, making it the four top seeds in the semis.

There were no three-gamers over the weekend, but the first semi-final — between Dan (T) and Will — came close. These two have met so many times over the past few years, and this clash was another

worthy of being a final. Their movement around the court, anticipation and tactical nous are a lesson for all young players! Dan had the edge, though, and marched on to the final. There, he met a considerably fresher Ed, who had comprehensively beaten a weary Charlie in the other semi. Nonetheless, it was Dan who eventually emerged as the champion.

Meanwhile, the Plate competition was also under way. We're used to having an extremely high standard in the plate and this year was no disappointment. In the group stages, a repeat of the recent BUSF final was the highlight — the result being the same (Butler bt Parker), but a far closer affair at 16-15. In fact, had the players realised they were only meant to be playing to 15, the tables might well have been turned. In the other group, Richie Murby, flying the flag from the Edinburgh qualifier, rose above the others to earn a final against Dave. There, he used a combination of power and wily experience to deservedly claim the coveted trophy.

The finals weekend was being held in Cambridge for the first time, and it proved to be a huge success. The courts were superb for spectators and filming, with plenty of livestreaming, allowing fans from far afield to enjoy much of the day's play, complete with expert commentary.

To finish on yet another positive note, this year was the highest ever entry to the tournament, with 60 players entering the qualifiers, from Tiverton to Edinburgh, via London, Cambridge and Manchester.

## Results

**1st round:** E.Kay (1) bt R.Whitehorn 15-2, 15-2 ; J.Aquilina (8) bt O.Arnold 15-3, 16-14 ; A.Boyd bt D.Butler (5) 15-13, 15-9 ; C.Brooks (4) bt J.Tilston 15-1, 15-5 ; W.Ellison (3) bt P.Hanton 15-1, 15-3 ; D.Grant (6) bt T.Parker 15-8, 15-11 ; B.Beltrami (7) bt R.Murby 15-4, 15-8 ; D.Tristao (2) bt T.Watkinson 15-6, 15-3

**Quarter-finals:** Kay bt Aquilina 15-2, 15-0 ; Brooks bt Boyd 15-8, 15-10 ; Ellison bt Grant 15-8, 15-7 ; Tristao bt Beltrami 15-5, 15-5

**Semi-finals:** Kay bt Brooks 15-0, 15-6 ; Tristao bt Ellison 15-13, 15-9

**Final:** Tristao bt Kay 16-14, 15-10

**Plate:** Murby bt Butler 11-4, 11-4

## The President's Cup

Marlborough College, Wiltshire

Sunday, 9th December 2018

Youth very much triumphed over experience in the final of the President's Cup when Ed Kay & Martha Nugent teamed up to defeat Tom Kiggell & Dick Warner. The same was true in the Love Mug and the Mate's Plate where the trophies were won by Charles Compton & Gwydion Wiseman and by Louise Mathias & Theo Parker respectively. Only in the T-Pot could one speak of 'old hands' vying for the silverware.

The event (and much appreciated catering) was master-minded once more by Gareth Price and the competition hosted for the first time by Marlborough College, the courts at the previous venue, St. Paul's School, being subject to a 5 pm curfew: devotees of the President's Cup will well know that more hours are needed to complete what Dick termed "a marvellous day of gruelling Fives". Marlborough and Tom Kiggell deserve our special thanks for providing an environment in which organiser, competitors and spectators felt very much at home: a warm and generous space with sufficient courts for the purposes of this event.

## Results

**The President's Cup:** Ed Kay & Martha Nugent bt Tom Kiggell & Dick Warner 15-9, 15-8

**The Love Mug:** Charles Compton & Gwydion Wiseman bt Ashwin Ahuja & Robin Perry 15-8, 15-16, 15-10

**The T-Pot:** Hamish Buchanan & Gareth Price bt Jim Hughes & Guy Matthews 15-11, 15-6

**The Mate's Plate:** Louise Mathias & Theo Parker bt Tim Bury & Ben Hale 15-11, 15-12

Also played: Jeremy Manger & Tom Webster; Ed Hawke & Stuart Scott; Ollie Arnold & Bernard Atkinson; Kevin Brice & Laurence Cook; Tim Hebblethwaite & Ben Yass; Ibbey Lee & Sam Russell; Jonathan Peterson & Howard Wiseman; Nick Geere & Bruce Hanton.

## Christmas Rankings 2018

These end-of-calendar-year rankings take account of the West of England, Universities, and National Singles events. Normally I would publish a full rankings update following the WofE championships ahead of the National Singles, but moving house in recent months has diverted my attention a little, for which my apologies. However, I did actually rerank the top players as input to the National Singles and it emerged that Ed Kay was, at that point, top of the Singles rankings, hence his number one seeding at Cambridge. Congratulations to Ed on this achievement.

Like many, I followed some of the amazing contests in the Singles, particularly the Ellison/Tristao and Kay/Tristao battles, which were of the very highest quality. The fact that Dan emerged as narrow victor in both these matches not surprisingly restores his position at the top of the Singles rankings. Ed Kay is 2nd, with the losing semi-finalists Will Ellison and Charlie Brooks 3rd and 4th respectively. We look forward to further exciting contests between these rivals.

Richie Murby and Andrew Boyd had good results in the Singles which take them into the top 10, while Tom Watkinson and Alex Rew rise up into the top 20. Manchester qualifier winner Dave Fox moves up to 22. Julian Hanton, Jacob Brubert and Cameron Low all picked up points at the Universities event, while Christian Blackaby had some good wins in the National Singles qualifiers to move up the list.

We have three new entries in this Singles update — Jacob Brubert, Cameron Low, and Daniel Whitham.

At the top of the Doubles rankings Dan Grant retains a very slender lead over Will Ellison. Will and Ed Kay won the West of England doubles to close the gap, with Ed moving up to 3rd place ahead of Dan Tristao.

Universities Doubles finalist (with David Butler) Ben Jourdan moves up into the top 20. Archie McCreath, Ben Kirwan, Cameron Low and Daniel Whitham all had success in both the WofE and Universities Doubles and make good progress, while James Smith, Jeremy Manger, Sid Bhushan and Christian Blackaby all picked up useful points in the Universities event.

We have two new entries this time — Pete Kullavanijaya and Jack Malde.

I hope to do the next update in February following the North West, U25, and North of England championships.

Meanwhile, Happy Christmas everyone!

The official RFA rankings are prepared by Dave Hebden.

## **Update on Robertside1800**

29th December 2018

*Rob Cleave reports from Thailand on his fund-raising round-the-world cycle ride so far:*

Having set off from Nottingham in April 2018 I have covered 8,500 miles and cycled through 19 countries; England, Morocco, Gibraltar, Spain, Portugal, France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Italy, Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Turkey, India and Thailand.

It has been absolutely fantastic, but each day you never know quite what is going to happen. As well as all of the wonderful scenery, sights, food and experiences there have been a few lows and some challenges: countless storms, one earthquake and a hurricane in Greece and one cyclone in Kerala in southern India; a couple of incidents of 'Delhi belly' and a chest infection in Rajasthan, India which was exacerbated by the heat, dust and pollution. Also a couple of bike breakdowns, when the hub on the rear wheel broke and a gear changing cable went; these were very frustrating and delayed me for three weeks in all while repairs were made. I had no punctures for the first 5,000 miles but then six punctures in one day in India. Also a split tyre which I patched up with Gorilla tape to prevent the inner tube poking out through the gap. This was good enough to get me through the next 250 miles to new tyres.

The highlight for me so far have been the forts and palaces of Rajasthan, the desert state in India. In addition, Jaipur, Udaipur, Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh and Jodhpur really are awesome.

Amidst all the beauty I've seen of people, cathedrals, museums, temples and palaces, the concentration camp at Mauthausen in Austria was a stark reminder of the darker side of life.

I'm currently in Bangkok, having spent a different but wonderful Christmas with my family and celebrating Christmas at Christchurch, the Anglican Church in Bangkok. This involved being invited to bring my bike to church and then cycling down the nave at the start of a service and being interviewed by the vicar.

Many thanks for the very generous support for the two charities, Traidcraft Exchange and Cancer Research UK.

I can be followed at robertside18000.com and on Facebook Robert Cleave, where I post daily. Looking forward to 2019 and reaching the 9,000 mile halfway point in two weeks' time.

## **The West of England Schools Championships**

Sherborne School, Dorset

5/6 January 2019

**STOP PRESS:** Alleyn's School won three of the four titles at the West of England Schools at Sherborne School. The talented Gwydion Wiseman, still a Colt, won the Senior Singles without conceding a game, and he and Alex Cochrane took the Doubles with a confident display in the final against a good Merchant Taylors' pair (Ewan Townshend and Jamie Graham).

The U16 Singles was won by Boris Ames from Blundell's School, who defeated another Blundellian, Will Bucknell, in the final. The Doubles saw the Alleyn's pair of Stuart Scott & Martha Nugent come through tough semi-final and final encounters with pairs from St Paul's to win the title.

*Tournament organiser Lionel Lawson writes:* The 2019 competitive Fives season got under way with the West of England Schools' Fives championships at Sherborne School on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> January. There was a healthy entry of 54 players across the Senior and Under 16 groups, with 9 schools involved altogether. It was particularly pleasing to have two senior boys from Merchant Taylors' School involved, bearing in mind that at present there are no courts at the school.

In the Senior Singles all 8 top-seeded players reached the quarter-finals without any upsets. The only seeded player to be threatened in the quarters was Cochrane from Alleyn's, who was pushed all the way by Graham of Merchant Taylors' but managed to secure the first game to 10 before taking full control in the second.

The semi-finals therefore saw the top four seeds in action. Leading the way was 15 year-old 1<sup>st</sup> seed Gwydion Wiseman from Alleyn's, whose progress in the game at such a young age is remarkable. He was nevertheless made to work hard by Townshend of Merchant Taylors' to secure his place in the final. The other semi-final between Cochrane of Alleyn's and 2<sup>nd</sup> seeded Percival from Winchester was a close-fought affair but the 3<sup>rd</sup> seeded Cochrane proved the steadier player to book his place in the all-Alleyn's contest.

The result of the final was never in doubt, with Wiseman playing with skill and steadiness way beyond his years to secure the title. An exciting future lies ahead for this young player and it will be very interesting to follow his further progress.

The Senior Doubles reflected the form shown in the Singles with Alleyn's and Merchant Taylors' convincingly making their way to the final, where Alleyn's (Wiseman & Cochrane) were always slightly ahead of Graham & Townshend from Merchant Taylors', who nevertheless tested them all the way.

Ali & Singh of Derby Moor were deserving winners of the Senior Plate – a reward for their long journey to the tournament.

There was a strong entry of 28 players in the Under 16 singles, with in particular strong entries from Blundell's, St Paul's and Alleyn's. It is always difficult to accurately predict the outcome at this level as there are not so many form guides available.

Cloke-Brown of Winchester was posted at the top of the draw and after a convincing win in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round was involved in a tense tussle with Bucknell of Blundell's in the quarter-final, with the latter player coming through strongly in the third game.

Scott of Alleyn's upset the form-book in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter by beating the 2<sup>nd</sup> seed Pymont of St Paul's, who fell away after evenly matched opening games.

The semi-finals and final involved Blundell's and Alleyn's, with Bucknell and Ames from Blundell's both winning their semis against Puvanendiran and Scott from Alleyn's. In the final Ames, with his long reach and powerful play, raced away quickly to take the title against his team-mate Bucknell.

The U16 Doubles was diminished in size as Blundell's and Alleyn's, who had contributed greatly to the number in the Singles, fielded just one pair each – in all there were 9 pairs in the competition. There were nevertheless some tense and hard-fought matches in both the main competition and the Plate.

The semi-finals were made up of two St Paul's pairs plus Winchester I and Alleyn's. The semi-finals were straightforward but in the final, after St Paul's II had won the first game convincingly, Alleyn's (Stuart Scott & Martha Nugent) combined hard-hitting and steadiness to hang on and take the title. This produced a special bit of history as Martha was the first schoolgirl to win a trophy at this tournament.

The St Paul's third pair were unbeaten in the Plate and were worthy winners of the same.

As always we are indebted to Nick Scorer and Sherborne School for their generous and caring hospitality, and I was personally grateful to Peter de Winton and David Barnes for the support which they gave me over the weekend.

On a personal note I would like it to be known that, after running the tournament for 24 years, I have decided to call it a day. I am quite sure that the RFA will soon find a more than adequate and nimble replacement. I wish all schools and masters-in-charge involved with the tournament all the very best for the future. It is an important part of our great game's annual calendar and I hope it will continue to prosper in the years ahead.

## RESULTS

### Open (under 18) Singles

**Preliminary Round:** Stanger (St Paul's) bt Lack (Marlborough) 15-2.

**1st Round:** Fraser (Winchester) bt Ryder (Blundell's) 15-3; Toalster (Tonbridge) bt Harvey (Sherborne) 15-12; Ali (Derby Moor) bt Stanger 15-10; Singh (Derby Moor) bt Ward-Jackson (St Paul's) 15-12; Parsapour (St Paul's) bt Jobson (Marlborough) 15-5; Choo-Choy (Tonbridge) bt Sholapurkar (Alleyn's) 15-3; Skoczylas (St Paul's) bt Hirth (Alleyn's) 15-6; Powell (Marlborough) w/o Croke (Tonbridge).

**2nd Round:** Wiseman (Alleyn's) bt Fraser 15-6; Monro-Davies (St Paul's) bt Toalster 15-13; Mercer (Sherborne) bt Ali 15-2; Townshend (Merchant Taylors') bt Singh 15-4; Cochrane (Alleyn's) bt Parsapour 15-0; Graham (Merchant Taylors') bt Choo-Choy 15-9; Odgers (St Paul's) bt Skoczylas 15-10; Percival (Winchester) bt Powell 15-6.

**Quarter-finals:** Wiseman bt Monro-Davies 11-3, 11-1; Townshend bt Mercer 11-3, 11-6; Cochrane bt Graham 12-10, 11-2; Percival bt Odgers 11-2, 11-8.

**Semi-finals:** Wiseman bt Townshend 11-4, 11-8; Cochrane bt Percival 11-7, 11-8.

**Final:** Wiseman (Alleyn's) bt Cochrane (Alleyn's) 11-5, 11-4.

**Plate:** Powell (Marlborough)

### Open (Under 18) Doubles

**1st Round:** Marlborough bt St Paul's III 15-0; Tonbridge bt Derby Moor 11-1, 11-5; Sherborne bt Alleyn's II 11-0, 11-1.

**Quarter-finals:** Merchant Taylors' bt Marlborough 11-3, 11-1; St Paul's I bt Tonbridge 12-10, 11-6; Alleyn's I bt St Paul's II 11-1, 11-3; Winchester bt Sherborne 11-5, 11-3.

**Semi-finals:** Merchant Taylors' bt St Paul's I 11-7, 11-1; Alleyn's I bt Winchester 11-2, 11-5.

**Final:** Alleyn's I (Wiseman & Cochrane) bt Merchant Taylors' (Townshend & Graham) 11-5, 11-4.

**Plate:** Derby Moor (Ali & Singh)

### Under 16 Singles

**1st Round:** Whitham (St Paul's) bt Mahmood (Derby Moor) 15-1; Lim (Winchester) bt Grubb (Blundell's) 15-6; Yusuf (Derby Moor) bt Swarbrick (Blundell's) 15-7; Ridley (St Paul's) bt Rackham (Blundell's) 15-4; Clayton (Blundell's) bt Coles (Alleyn's) 15-10; Puvanendiran (St Paul's) bt Roberts (St Paul's) 15-10; Taylor-Schindler (Alleyn's) bt Lewis (Winchester) 15-0; Harrison (St Paul's) bt Nugent (Alleyn's) 15-8; Jopling (St Paul's) bt Bartlett (Blundell's) 15-3; Scott (Alleyn's) w/o Mayor (Blundell's); Yates (Derby Moor) bt Akerman (Winchester) 15-12; Brimancombe (Alleyn's) bt Bazyljiski (Derby Moor) 15-0.

**2nd Round:** Cloke-Brown (Winchester) bt Whitham 15-9; Bucknell (Blundell's) bt Lim 15-3; Ridley bt Yusuf 15-10; Puvanendiran bt Clayton 15-5; Ames (Blundell's) bt Taylor-Schindler 15-0; Harrison bt Jopling 16-14; Scott bt Yates 15-1; Pymont (St Paul's) bt Brimancombe 15-5.

**Quarter-finals:** Bucknell bt Cloke-Brown 11-7, 6-11, 11-0; Puvanendiran bt Ridley 11-7, 11-5; Ames bt Harrison 11-5, 11-0; Scott bt Pymont 11-6, 7-11, 11-2.

**Semi-finals:** Bucknell bt Puvanendiran 11-8, 11-1; Ames bt Scott 11-6, 11-3.

**Final:** Ames (Blundell's) bt Bucknell (Blundell's) 11-0, 11-1.

**Plate:** Roberts (St. Paul's)

## Under 16 Doubles

**1st Round:** Derby Moor I bt St Paul's III 11-7, 11-9.

**Quarter-finals:** Winchester I bt Blundell's 11-0, 11-0; St Paul's II bt Derby Moor II 11-0, 11-1; Alleyn's bt Derby Moor I 11-8, 11-6; St Paul's I bt Winchester II 11-2, 11-3.

**Semi-finals:** St Paul's II bt Winchester I 11-2, 11-6; Alleyn's bt St Paul's I 11-7, 11-12, 12-10.

**Final:** Alleyn's (Scott & Nugent) bt St Paul's II (Ridley & Whitham) 7-11, 11-7, 11-2.

**Plate:** St Paul's III (Harrison & Roberts)

## North West Open Championships

Manchester Y Club

Saturday/Sunday, 12-13 January 2019

**Stop Press:** Dan Tristao successfully defended his title, winning the Singles for the 6th time — on this occasion at Dave Butler's expense, but in a match that went to three games. In the Doubles, however, it was Charlie Brooks & Will Ellison who took the honours, beating Dan and his partner Matt Shaw. It was Will's 6th North West Doubles title, Charlie's 3rd.

### Singles

**Preliminary round:** J.Smith bt T.Wakelam 11-0, 11-0; A McCreath bt G.Marshall 11-0, 11-2

**1st round:** D.Tristao bt Smith 11-7, 11-6; T.Watkinson bt S.Russell 11-4, 11-6; A.Boyd bt H.Jefferies 11-3, 11-7; J.Aquilina bt D.Fox 11-4, 11-3; D.Butler bt H.Buchanan 11-0, 11-3; M.Shaw bt J.Sumner 11-8, 11-0; O.Arnold bt J.Tilston 11-0, 11-3; McCreath bt T.Walker 11-3, 11-4

**Quarter-finals:** Tristao bt Watkinson 11-8, 11-8; Boyd bt Aquilina 11-3, 11-2; Butler bt Shaw 12-10, 11-9; Arnold bt McCreath 11-5, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Tristao bt Boyd 12-10, 11-3; Butler bt Arnold 11-3, 11-2

**Final:** Tristao bt Butler 6-11, 11-1, 11-6

**Plate:** Russell bt Jefferies 15-11

### Doubles

**1st round:** Buchanan & Watkinson bt Fox & McCreath 12-10, 11-12, 11-8;

**Quarter-finals:** Brooks & Ellison bt Buchanan & Watkinson 11-1, 11-3; Arnold & Beltrami bt Butler & Jefferies 11-9, 11-4; Russell & Tilston bt Boyd & Jourdan 5-11, 11-8, 11-2; Shaw & Tristao bt Lidiard & McGuire 12-11, 11-4

**Semi-finals:** Brooks & Ellison bt Arnold & Beltrami 12-10, 5-11, 11-2; Shaw & Tristao bt Russell & Tilston 11-6, 5-11, 11-7

**Final:** Brooks & Ellison bt Shaw & Tristao 11-2, 11-5

**Plate:** Butler & Jefferies bt Boyd & Jourdan 15-9

## New Year Women's Rankings

21st January 2019

Courtesy of Chris Burrows, we announce the latest rankings for Women's Rugby Fives ahead of the Ladies' National Rugby Fives Championships at the Manchester Y Club this coming weekend.

The rankings follow the Ladies' U23 Championships in November, in which Louise Mathias successfully defended her Singles title and won the Doubles with Shinan Zhang.

There are five new entrants after that tournament: coming in at 14 Martha Nugent of Alleyn's School; at 33 Maddie Kent from Bedford Modern School; at 35 Zara Elliot and at 46 Sophie Lundie (both from Edinburgh Academy); and at 47 Kitty Hatchley of Oxford University.

## **Jesters Tour to Scotland**

Edinburgh, 17/19 January 2019

*Organiser Ben Hale writes:* This year's tour was one of traditions, many old and hopefully a few new ones made. So, we started with our customary Friday lunch at The Cumberland and then got down to the nitty gritty.

First, a Jesters IV took on Edinburgh University in the slot usually reserved for Durham. The encounter ended in a Jesters victory, but given that we played alongside and against six current students throughout the tour, maybe we'll be able to make this a six-a-side fixture next year — allowing Edinburgh to squeeze in messrs Butler and Jourdan.

Meanwhile, at The Academy a Jesters squad led by Andy Passey was taking on all comers in the form of 30(!) school boys and girls. And, up at Merchiston, an intrepid Jesters IV took on their Colts on the newly refurbished courts. I didn't make it to Merchiston this year, but heard only positive feedback on the work that has been done there, and I have to say that the courts look great from the pictures.

Six o'clock on Friday evening usually means the Schoolboys Select VI tournament, competing for the Akerman Quaich. Not wanting to disappoint the fans — or Harry — we left this one in the fixture list, but we also put on a Schoolgirl Select tournament at The Academy. This was superbly run by Louise Mathias, featuring our seven lady Jesters and nine schoolgirls. The brand new viewing gallery made this quite an occasion and something that we hope becomes very much part of the traditional fixture list. Doug from Merchiston defended the Akerman Quaich, with some assistance from Laurence Cook, while the girls' tournament was won by Colette (from Fettes) and Louise, who clearly wasn't that burdened by the task of organising ...

Once again, Fettes then put on a marvellous curry for an alleged 90 Jesters and guests. It was wonderful to see so many young players and their parents (along with staff and match opposition) in attendance. As always, we pass on our thanks to Fettes and their staff for looking after us so wonderfully.

Normal Friday night traditions were followed (and will go unrecorded in public) before we reassembled around 9am on Saturday for the next round of fixtures. At Merchiston, the Wessex Club prevailed over both Cambridge University and the Executioners, while Fettes and the Academy hosted a four-pair clash between the RFA and the Jesters.

It will surprise no one to find out that the result of this match was declared a draw — just as tradition dictates that the Jesters' annual Strawson match is. However, perhaps an honourable mention should go to the RFA pairs, as the score sheets show that they were actually the winners. Then again, given that none of the players seemed to know who they were representing anyway, a draw seems the fairest result!

The flagship match on the Saturday morning of the tour is the first of two fixtures with the Caledonian Club out at Loretto. I'm glad to report that adult fives in Scotland is every bit as healthy as school fives and the Jesters were on the end of a 21-point defeat.

For lunch, we returned to the pub that had hosted us for the first time last year and the vast majority of the party were able to enjoy a leisurely lunch before our 3pm games. However, many thanks much go to the noble four that instead played the Fettes Colts in what I hear was a Festival of Fives. They are already looking forward to your return next year!

Over recent years, 3pm on Saturday has become the customary time for one of the great grudge matches and this year the tradition continued in style. So, the Old Blues of Christ's Hospital once again took on a team of Old Bradfieldians in a classic clash of quantity over quality. It was perhaps hard to tell from the players after the match, but my understanding is that the cream did rise to the top, with Bradfield reclaiming the Sinton-Matthews Cup and taking a 2-1 lead in the series.

For those not involved in the Big Match, Saturday afternoon also saw some tightly contested games against the school boys at Merchiston. Marvellous Fives was played at all times — and, in the case of their 1st IV — *winningfives*. Well played to the boys!

At Fettes, we played what sounds like a most enjoyable match against their Girls VIII and then took on a mixed universities side. This game was neck-and-neck until the final rotation of games, when the Jesters were finally able to pull out a lead. Maybe Harry has still got it, after all ...

The one remaining Saturday fixture saw a rerun of last year's game against the Accies. Avid readers of this report may recall that last year we lost by a single point. This year, again, it was a neck-and-neck tussle between the Jesters' second and third pairs and all three Accie pairs, but the less said about the failed Jesters first pairing the better. Perhaps, it was too soon after the Sinton-Matthews Cup for a reunion, but whatever the reason, the fact was that, at this point, it left the fixture finely balanced and the janitor keen to lock up and go home.

Fortunately for him — and perhaps our access to the courts the following day! — the Accies' second pair turned around a 13-11 deficit to win 16-14, thereby giving the Accies an unassailable 20-point lead with only one game to 15 remaining. At that point, we called it a day and ensured another victory for the home side.

In now time-honoured tradition, we acquired a 'trophy' for this relentlessly frustrating fixture that we will one day win. Inspired by one of the pieces of silverware that's played for at the annual President's Cup, the 'trophy' was a tea pot that my brother found, and bought, in an Edinburgh antiques shop. Sadly, I can only apologise for losing and having to leave it in Scotland!

Once the day's matches were completed, the party descended (as usual!) upon La P'tite Folie for our Saturday dinner. Virginie's team looked after us wonderfully, the company was excellent and there were some speeches — which will go unreported.

The following morning, the early risers headed out to Loretto for the second leg of the Caledonian Club fixture. A level of Jesters pride was restored, as the previous day's 20-point losing margin was avenged thanks to victory by a similar margin. Meanwhile, at the Academy, we took on the Boys 1st VI, followed by the Girls 1st VI; and, at Fettes, the matches were against the Juniors, Colts and, finally, the 1st IV. The new Merchiston courts cemented their reputation as a Jesters' Graveyard of Champions, with the Merchistonians seeing off our four comfortably.

Overall, it was another wonderful tour, even if I say so myself. Thanks, as always, to Dave, our drivers, hosts and opposition. And, of course, to our tourists, both experienced veterans and fresh-faced debutants.

But, a special mention should go to the Lady Jesters. Their Friday-evening tournament was, by all accounts, a resounding success and I'm sure the school girls got far more out of playing them than they ever got from playing the likes of me. Bring on the 2020 tour and let's see if we can continue to grow the number of ladies taking part towards 50%...

*Full list of the tourists: Alec Younger, Alex Smith, Andy Passey, Anna Laakkonen, Bee Crinnion, Ben Hale, Dave Butler, Dominic Shepherd, Duncan Neale, Ed Thompson, Giles Constantine, Guy Matthews, Harry Akerman, Helena Tunks, Ian Mettam, Ibbey Lee, James Birch, James Pinder, Jeremy Manger, Jez Sinton, Jon Peterson, Laurence Cook, Lottie Simpson, Louise Mathias, Malcolm Reid, Martin Patterson, Matthew Hale, Miles Catton, Nigel Gainsborough, Phoebe Thornhill, Rich Lebon, Robin Thompson, Rupert Mathieu, Tom Wakelam and Tom Webster*

## **Alan Maltby 1942-2019**

The RFA is sorry to hear of the death of Alan Maltby, at the age of 76. Alan served as Honorary Secretary of the RFA from 1968 to 1973, attending over 40 meetings during his time on the Committee. He was also a member of the RFA Club Committee from 1971 to 1978, a Jester since 1969 and a stalwart of the Old Tonbridgian Fives Club for many years. He played in the National Masters Doubles at Marlborough College in 2013 and 2015, when he and Neil Arnott “took the non-existent Bronze medal”. Alan impressed his fellow players with what Ian Fuller described as “his enthusiasm for the game and his overriding positive attitude in all things — even at the end”.

Neil Arnott from the Old Tonbridgians writes of Alan: He was a very regular player [with the OTs], often travelling from his last surveying engagement a long distance and then happily heading home to Canterbury, far further than any other player, such was his enthusiasm. He also started playing again pretty quickly after his hip replacement, and I know was a regular skier along with his family. He always was full of life and his enthusiasm for the game most infectious.

## **Ladies' National Championships**

Y Club, Manchester, January 26/27th 2019

*Organiser Louise Mathias writes:*

This year, the Ladies' Nationals saw a new format and venue, held over two days at the Manchester Y Club. A strong turnout of 26 players made it for the event, one of the highest entries to date! This included the top seven from the Women's Rankings, a large student contingent, and many up-and-coming schoolgirls; the standard of fives was undoubtedly the best this tournament has seen.

The singles started with some close early-round games. Julie McIntyre took a hard-fought win over Maisie Harte 11-9, while on the adjacent court Camille Beattie (only 12 years old!) proved a force to be reckoned with, pushing Maddie Kent with some strong hitting and long rallies to steal the game 11-9. Zara Elliot cruised through the first round to play Tessa Mills in the second, where her powerful right hand and length of shot caused her opponent problems. However, experience paid off and the 2017 champion came back quickly in the second game to win 12-10, 11-4 overall.

In the meantime, while reigning champion Kathleen Briedenhann disappeared for a pre-match workout at the gym, Shinan Zhang and Dominique Redmond had a long three-game battle: Shinan came through in the end, winning 11-2, 8-11, 12-10. President's Cup winner Martha Nugent powered through in a game against Phoebe Thornhill to also secure a place in the quarter-finals. Having returned from the treadmill, last year's champion began her defence against Sophie Lundie. Despite good play from Sophie, Kathleen remained on top, winning 11-1, 11-0.

Action from the Plate then took over, with 15 players involved. This led to some very evenly matched games, but it was Anna, Dominique, Zara and Phoebe who came through to reach the semis. Still as energetic as at the start, Durham Ladies' Champion Zara beat Phoebe 12-10, 11-1, and Dominique proved too tough for Anna in an 11-0, 11-2 win.

Back in the main draw, Ibbey Lee took on Shinan Zhang in the quarter-finals. The first game went to Shinan, and although Ibbey came back with fighting spirit, she couldn't quite push it to a third, with a final result of 11-4, 12-11. More excitement soon followed as Martha took on Tessa in a match that had everyone on the edge of their seats. The first game see-sawed up to 10-10, and it was Tessa who won the crucial final points. Maintaining the intensity, she pulled away in the second game to win 12-10, 11-4. With Kathleen and Louise also winning their games, the top four seeds were safely through to the semi-finals.

Shinan and Kathleen started the semis off, both players showing great movement around the court. In the end, despite Shinan's excellent retrieving, Kathleen's strong cross-court right-handed shots allowed her to gain a 11-8, 11-7 win. Louise then played Tessa in a game of long rallies, but with

Tessa's energy reserves low from two tough early games, Louise maintained her lead to win 11-8, 11-7.

With play finished for the day, we all convened for a wonderful dinner organised by Julie McIntyre at Tampopo (thanks must also go to Dave Fox); the pouring rain was no dampener to our spirits! Sunday morning saw two champions of the game take to the court, although Rafa and Novak cannot have known that their Rod Laver Arena clash would be so overshadowed by the battle on Fred Beswick Court! With a crowd surrounding and live viewers tuned in on social media, it was only right that the clash between Kathleen and Louise should be a three-game epic — and you can watch a video of the match below the results on this page.

Putting pressure down the left and taking advantage of a few service errors from Kathleen, Louise sped away to take the first game 15-8. Determined to come back harder, Kathleen showed all the qualities of a four-time champion and upped the pace, delivering some excellent down-the-line shots to make it one game all. The third set decider only proved more agonising, with long rallies and great retrieving, but at 7-7 Louise managed to pull away and gain a crucial lead. This was far from the end of it, though, as Kathleen continued to dig deep and refused to give up, saving three match points before Louise finally emerged as champion for the first time.

Meanwhile, the plate final between Zara and Dominique also went to three games, with a great show of fitness and determination from both. With experience on her side, Dominique pulled through to win 11-1, 7-11, 11-9.

The pool matches for the doubles then got going, with 12 pairs competing. The highlight was the match between Martha & Dominique and defending champs Alexandra & Maddy: last year's winners won a tight 11-8 game. Martha & Dominique's strength later took them to Plate victory. It was Shinan & Louise who eventually overcame Alexandra & Maddy in a yet another three-gamer to make it to the final. Here, they would meet the force of Kathleen & Tessa, who had sailed through their semi against Ibbey & Anna. Unfortunately, Ibbey had injured her right arm, which turned the game into a rare battle between two righties and two lefties.

The doubles final provided yet more compelling viewing. Louise & Shinan dominated the first game, but Kathleen & Tessa took over in the second, driving the ball hard to the back corners. Tactics reassessed and helped out by some effective (but not always purposeful...!) winners, it was Louise & Shinan who gained the doubles title for the first time, by a 15-8, 6-15, 15-11 score line. And so the day ended with two new, first-time National winners and high spirits from all players and spectators!

The weekend proved a fantastic success, with a very high standard of play and great enthusiasm from everyone involved. Thanks to the Y Club and Dave Fox for the use of courts, the glass back lending perfectly to the expert live-streaming carried out by Gareth Price and James Smith, allowing the excitement and high quality of Ladies' Fives to be spread far and wide. Further thanks to Gareth must be made for sourcing tournament shirts for everyone, as well as Julie McIntyre, who organised all the food and helped the day run as smoothly as it did.

Ladies' Fives is undoubtedly growing bigger and better every year, and I very much look forward to seeing you all at future tournaments! Don't miss out on the Ladies' Winchester Nationals at Winchester College (organised by Maddy Raynor) on 3rd March — entry opening soon!

## RESULTS

### Singles

**1st round:** Sophie Lundie bt Viola King-Forbes 11-1; Anna Laakkonen bt Flora Millar 11-0; Julie McIntyre bt Maisie Harte 11-9; Dominique Redmond bt Ambereen Hussain 11-0; Camille Beattie bt

Maddie Kent 11-9; Bee Crinnion bt Jan Hutchinson 11-0; Martha Nugent bt Ailsa Calder 11-0; Zara Elliot bt Kitty Hatchley 11-0.

**2nd round:** Kathleen Briedenhann bt Lundie 11-1, 11-0; Katie Sumner bt Laakkonen 11-6, 11-5; Ibbey Lee bt McIntyre 11-0, 11-0; Shinan Zhang bt Redmond 11-2, 8-11, 12-10; Louise Mathias bt Beattie 11-2, 11-2; Anastasia de Clermont bt Crinnion 11-2, 11-2; Nugent bt Phoebe Thornhill 11-2, 11-2; Tessa Mills bt Elliot 12-10, 11-4.

**Quarter-finals:** Briedenhann bt Sumner 11-4, 11-0; Zhang bt Lee 11-4, 12-11; Mathias bt de Clermont 11-1, 11-0; Mills bt Nugent 12-10, 11-5.

**Semi-finals:** Briedenhann bt Zhang 11-8, 11-7; Mathias bt Mills 11-8, 11-4.

**Final:** Mathias bt Briedenhann 15-8, 7-15, 15-10.

**Plate:** Redmond bt Elliot 11-1, 7-11, 11-9.

### Doubles

**Group A:** 1st Briedenhann & Mills (22 pts); 2nd Lundie & Elliot (14 pts); 3rd King-Forbes & Hatchley (1 pt)

**Group B:** 1st Lee & Laakkonen (22 pts); 2nd Thornhill & Crinnion (15 pts); 3rd Hussain & Calder (6 pts)

**Group C:** 1st Alexandra Steel & Maddy Raynor (22 pts); Nugent & Redmond (19 pts); 3rd McIntyre & Emily O'Malley (2 pts)

**Group D:** 1st Mathias & Zhang (22 pts); 2nd Kent & Sumner (16 pts); 3rd Beattie & Millar (7 pts)

**Semi-finals:** Briedenhann & Mills bt Lee & Laakkonen 11-0, 11-2 ; Mathias & Zhang bt Steel & Raynor 11-8, 3-11, 11-7

**Final:** Mathias & Zhang bt Briedenhann & Mills 15-8, 6-15, 15-1

**Plate:** Redmond & Nugent bt Sumner & Kent 15-9

## North of England Open Championships

Durham University Courts

Saturday/Sunday, 9-10 February 2019

**STOP PRESS** It's first time winners in both Singles and Doubles: Ed Kay defeated 5-time champion Dan Tristao to take his first Ferens Trophy for Singles, and then on Sunday Ollie Arnold & Ben Beltrami won the Fuller Cup for Doubles for the first time, backing up their recent win in the National U25s, by beating defending champions Dave Butler & Dan Tristao.

*Organiser Julian Aquilina reports:* This year's North of England tournament was contested slightly earlier than usual, brought forward by two weeks due to scheduling clashes. Those fearing even colder weather need not have worried, as the new addition of dehumidifiers and heaters made for a significantly more pleasant experience at the Durham courts. In addition, the rescheduling brought along some new faces — with significant implications, as it turned out ...

With over 30 singles entries for the second consecutive year, and just two courts at the Racecourse, a qualifying round was held on the Friday night between members of the City of Durham club. This was just a taste of things to come, with fierce competition on display alongside a spread of food normally reserved for the President's Cup. After over two hours, Simon Beattie, Camille Beattie and Adam Hicks had booked their place in the main draw, thus committing themselves to returning to the courts in less than 14 hours. The fans were forced to wait for the media coverage to begin, as the press conference was skipped in the interest of time.

24 players started in the main singles draw on Saturday, with relatively smooth progress through the first two rounds. In the first round, the crowd's pick of the matches was between recently-crowned Ladies' National champion Louise Mathias and local club captain Tom Wakelam, in a game that lived up to the hype, going down to the wire before Tom edged it out, 12-11. In an equally exciting match, Doug Law managed to come from behind to oust Nick Geere 12-10, spurred on the thought of joining the singles rankings.

There were no upsets in the quarters or the semis, with relatively convincing scorelines throughout. This set up a final between the top two men in the rankings, five-time champion Dan Tristao and first-timer Ed Kay. The players had met three times already this season with Ed leading 2-1, although Dan had won their last meeting at the Nationals in December in two close games — and so the stage was set.

The match was played at high-intensity right from the start, with each player manoeuvring the other around the court in long rallies full of drop shots — the ball flying barely above the bar. However, Ed's imperious consistency and focus looked to be taking an early toll on Dan, who appeared slightly off the pace. Ed kept drawing the errors from Dan, racing away with the first game in just 12 minutes.

In the second game Ed continued his rich vein of form, continuing to chase down drop shots and putting Dan under pressure early in each rally, sweeping him aside inside 10 minutes. Final score: 11-3 11-1. It was a dominant display from Ed to lift his first Ferens Trophy, leaving the crowd dumbfounded. No one was able to recall a time that someone had outclassed Tristao in that manner.

Earlier in the day, the Singles Plate had been contested between 13 players, with the final between top seed Nick Geere and Durham University student Jack Sissons. Both players had come through entertaining semi-finals, with Nick beating local schoolboy Simon Beattie and Jack overcoming Louise Mathias. The final went the distance, but after a very close first game Jack was able to outlast Nick in three. Final score: 10-12 11-6 11-4. Meanwhile, in the PlatePlate, Phoebe Bracken won all her round robin matches.

In Sunday's Doubles there was smooth progress through the first round and most of the quarter-finals. In the fourth/fifth seed match the student pairing of Julian Hanton & Archie McCreath did push ex-Durham Uni captains Sam Russell & James Tilston all the way, but they eventually succumbed 11-8 in the third. From there onwards though, Julian & Archie won all their Plate matches, outlasting current Durham Uni captain Christian Blackaby & partner Pete Kullavanijaya in a see-sawing final, 11-0 6-11 11-5.

Meanwhile in the main draw, Arnold & Beltrami took down Aquilina & Kay in their semi-final to set up a showdown with defending champions Butler & Tristao. Ollie & Ben were bringing form into the tournament, having won the U25s championships together the previous weekend, and it was on full display, with their consistent big-hitting and powers of retrieval sealing an attritional first game of the final.

Having looked relatively comfortable, a dip in concentration came as a surprise, bringing Dave & Dan back into the match — Dan timing the ball to perfection over and over. But in game three Ollie & Ben found their previous form, easing to victory despite their opponents' best efforts. Final score: 11-7 1-11 11-1. This was their first Fuller Cup, and in fact Ollie's first time at the tournament.

Special thanks to Julie McIntyre for all her help with the organisation and catering. The tournament could not have been the same without her input. Thanks also to Tom Wakelam for organising the qualifiers, Jan for additional catering, and the City of Durham (including parents) and Durham University clubs for their undying enthusiasm.

## Results

### Singles

**1st round:** T Wakelam bt L Mathias 12-11; J Hanton bt A Hicks 11-1; A McCreath bt J Gibbor 11-4; D Law bt N Geere 12-10; G Marshall bt J Sissons 11-7; C Blackaby bt S Beattie 11-0; J Smith bt C

Beattie 11-1; M Suddaby bt P Bracken 11-0

**2nd round:** D Tristao bt Wakelam 1-0, 11-1; J Tilston bt Hanton 11-5, 11-8; J Aquilina bt McCreath 11-7, 11-0; B Beltrami bt Law 11-0, 11-0; D Butler bt Marshall 11-2, 11-3; O Arnold bt Blackaby 11-5, 11-5; S Russell bt Smith 11-6, 11-7; E Kay bt Suddaby 11-0, 11-0

**Quarter-finals:** Tristao bt Tilston 11-3, 11-3; Beltrami bt Aquilina 11-4, 11-3; Butler bt Arnold 11-3, 11-0; Kay bt Russell 11-0, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Tristao bt Beltrami 11-6, 11-6; Kay bt Butler 11-0, 11-3

**Final:** Kay bt Tristao 11-3, 11-1

**Plate:** Sissons bt Geere 10-12, 11-6, 11-4

**PlatePlate:** Phoebe Bracken

### Doubles

**1st round:** D Law & M Suddaby bt S Beattie & T Wakelam 15-8; J Hanton & A McCreath bt C Beattie & S Tustin 15-4; S Russell & J Tilston bt P Atkinson & I Wright 15-3; O Arnold & B Beltrami bt K Mendelson & E Wardle 15-1; C Blackaby & P Kullavanijaya bt C Beattie & J McIntyre 15-1; N Geere & L Mathias bt G McIntyre & J Sissons 15-4

**Quarter-finals:** D Butler & D Tristao bt Law & Suddaby 11-6, 11-4; Russell & Tilston bt Hanton & McCreath 4-11, 11-3, 11-8; Arnold & Beltrami bt Blackaby & Kullavanijaya 11-6, 11-3; J Aquilina & E Kay bt Geere & Mathias 11-1, 11-0

**Semi-finals:** Butler & Tristao bt Russell & Tilston 11-5, 11-2; Arnold & Beltrami bt Aquilina & Kay 11-5, 11-7

**Final:** Arnold & Beltrami bt Butler & Tristao 11-7, 1-11, 11-1

**Plate:** Hanton & McCreath bt Blackaby & Kullavanijaya 11-0, 6-11 11-5

## National U25 Championships

Oundle School

Saturday/Sunday, 2-3 February 2019

**STOP PRESS:** In his last year of eligibility Dave Butler finally secured the U25 Singles title with a win over Andrew Boyd, while Ollie Arnold & Ben Beltrami beat defending champion Matt Shaw and his new partner Theo Parker to take the Doubles title, after “a few years” when they have been runners-up. Archie McCreath won the Singles Plate from Jeremy Manger, while Christian Blackaby & Joe Sumner won the Doubles Plate against Archie McCreath & Cameron Low, Joe having also won the Singles PlatePlate.

*Organiser James Smith reports:* Once again, the best and most committed members of the next generation of fives descended on Oundle School for the first weekend in February. While the field was slightly depleted in number from last year, the quality of fives on offer was not, with almost every eligible top player featuring, and any weather worries were misguided, as a distinct lack of snow meant no travel issues.

Saturday morning started bright and early with the first round of singles matches, and almost every entrant arriving early! The pick of the matches at this early stage was George Marshall of team Durham inching past Cambridge's Emrys Thursfield; the latter surrendering a 10-2 lead in the first game to lose 15-13, 16-15. Meanwhile National Ladies champion Louise Mathias pushed Michael Suddaby hard, the final scoreline of 15-3, 15-2 not reflective of the quality of the game.

The second round brought the seeded players into the frame, and all eight progressed to the quarter-finals with relative ease: Jeremy Manger pushed Matt Shaw in their game, and Archie McCreath battled it out against fellow Bristolian leftie Ollie Arnold, but neither player was able to upset his seeded opponent. Meanwhile Christian Blackaby battled against a spasming back in his match with James Smith to progress to a quarter-final against top seed Dave Butler, while Theo Parker and Tom Watkinson progressed with relative ease, as did second seed Andrew Boyd and also Sam Russell.

From the quarter-finals, the top four seeds all progressed to the semis. The pick of these matches was the clash between Parker and Watkinson – the latter taking the first game 16-14, before, at 15-15 in the second game, serving into himself, handing the game to Parker. Parker was then able to keep up the momentum into the third game to win 14-16, 16-15, 15-10. Russell battled hard against Boyd, gaining ten points in the first game, but then fell away to lose 15-10, 15-1. Shaw overcame Arnold's hard hitting in straight games, while Butler was able to dispatch a very sore Blackaby. The semi-finals went as expected too, with Shaw unable to upset Butler and Parker slightly too drained from his grind against Watkinson to trouble Boyd. This then set up a final between the top two seeds: both players started the match a bit shakily, not quite finding the right lengths or having the confidence to switch things up. Butler was the first to settle; however Boyd, after losing the first game, started to put more pressure on his opponent to push harder in the second game. Butler's experience won out eventually as the second game see-sawed, however, allowing him to take the title in his last year of eligibility 15-7, 15-12.

Meanwhile the Plate and PlatePlate competitions were underway. The Plate was as hotly contested as ever, albeit with slightly more traditional scoring, with Manger and McCreath eventually progressing through their pools to earn a place in the final, where it was McCreath who took the silverware.

While the scoring system in the PlatePlate was changed to be best of five games to fives – maximum fives being the mentality – the winner was the same as last year! Joe Sumner progressed through his group to face off against Michael Suddaby in the final, winning a second mug to go with the one he won last year.

Sunday brought the doubles, and along with it another entrant: Ben Beltrami, having opted not to enter the singles competition, travelled from London on the day to play with Ollie Arnold.

The first round ensued as expected, with the lower seeded pairs all progressing to the quarter-finals. These, too, were relatively simple fare for the top four pairs, resulting in the lower four seeds also entering the Plate.

The pick of the semi-finals was a battle between top seeds Shaw & Parker and their fourth-seeded opponents, Boyd & Watkinson. The latter pair won the first game 15-8, but ultimately were unable to maintain the momentum against strong opponents, with Shaw & Parker confirming their place in the final 8-15, 15-4, 15-7. In the other semi-final, the pairing of Butler & Russell, in their last year at the tournament, struggled against the hard-hitting of second seeds, Arnold & Beltrami, with the final score of 15-7, 15-5 showing this.

This set up a final between the top seeds. Arnold & Beltrami fancied their chances, while Shaw was understandably desperate to retain his doubles title with new partner Parker. This was evident in a very tight first game, which could have gone either way, before being taken 15-13 by the younger pair. The second game was slightly more of a formality, with Arnold & Beltrami racing into a 13-2 lead and closing out to win the championship 15-13, 15-7.

Meanwhile, the six pairs in the Plate split into two pools of three: unfortunately, the Cambridge pairing of Thursfield & Ahuja had to withdraw due to injury. Blackaby & Sumner battled through to win their pool, while McCreath and a bruised Cameron Low won out in the other group. McCreath & Low won the first game comfortably 11-4, but were reeled back in by their opponents, who won in three games to take the Plate: 4-11, 11-5, 11-4. Unfortunately, due to numbers no PlatePlate competition was played.

As ever, all the players would like to thank Oundle School for allowing us to use the courts and for their great hospitality throughout this tournament, and I think everyone will agree that the courts are playing as well as ever.

## Results

### Singles

**1st round:** M Suddaby bt L Mathias 15-3, 15-2; A McCreath bt D Law 15-1, 15-0; J Manger bt J Sissons 15-2, 15-1; G Marshall bt E Thursfield 15-13, 16-15; J Sumner bt A Ahuja 15-3, 15-3

**2nd round:** D Butler bt Suddaby 15-1, 15-0; C Blackaby bt J Smith 15-7, 15-2; O Arnold bt McCreath 15-3, 15-4; M Shaw bt Manger 15-6, 15-10; T Parker bt Marshall 15-5, 15-1; T Watkinson bt J Hanton 15-7, 15-1; S Russell bt C Low 15-6, 15-2; A Boyd bt Sumner 15-3, 15-2

**Quarter-finals:** Butler bt Blackaby 15-5, 15-0; Shaw bt Arnold 15-4, 15-7; Parker bt Watkinson 14-16, 16-15, 15-10; Boyd bt Russell 15-10, 15-1

**Semi-finals:** Butler bt Shaw 15-11, 15-4; Boyd bt Parker 15-5, 15-8

**Final:** Butler bt Boyd 15-7, 15-12

**Plate:** McCreath bt Manger 11-6, 11-1

**PlatePlate:** Sumner bt Suddaby 11-0, 11-2

### Doubles

**1st round:** Blackaby & Sumner w/o Ahuja & Thursfield; Hanton & Smith bt Law & Suddaby 15-6, 15-1; Manger & Mathias bt Marshall & Sissons 15-2, 15-5

**Quarter-finals:** Parker & Shaw bt Blackaby & Sumner 15-3, 15-8; Boyd & Watkinson bt Low & McCreath 15-1, 15-9; Butler & Russell bt Hanton & Smith 15-6, 15-8; Arnold & B Beltrami bt Manger & Mathias 15-7, 15-5

**Semi-finals:** Parker & Shaw bt Boyd & Watkinson 8-15, 15-4, 15-7; Arnold & Beltrami bt Butler & Russell 15-7, 15-5

**Final:** Arnold & Beltrami bt Parker & Shaw 15-13, 15-7

**Plate:** Blackaby & Sumner bt Low & McCreath 4-11, 11-5, 11-4

## Cambridge and Oxford: Past versus Present

St. Paul's School, Barnes; University Sports Centre, Cambridge  
Saturday, 16th February 2019

On the Saturday before the 2019 Varsity Match the annual Past versus Present match was played for Oxford at St. Paul's School and for Cambridge at the University Sports Centre. In the latter case it was the 70th anniversary of the founding of this fixture in 1949 under the presidency of Jock Burnet. Matches were followed by dinner at Queen's Club and Pembroke College respectively. The two matches had very different outcomes.

*FOR CAMBRIDGE — President of CURFC, Bob Dolby, writes:* At Cambridge there was a full-scale rehearsal for the upcoming Varsity Match, with 8 games of Singles and 16 games of doubles, all played with the new ball, variously called the 'New G6', the 'Wiseman Ball' or even the 'SE22'. Six of the Singles games went the way of the Past, which was no surprise with players like Ed Kay and Matt Shaw now playing for the Past.

With so many former members of the club volunteering to play, a further six players were 'subbed in' to contest the Doubles for the Past. Tim Caroe & Joe Gribble and Ian Jackson & Elliott Malone were conspicuously successful pairs in the first round of Doubles, and the addition of Andy Pringle to partner Matt Shaw after the turn was all too tough a combination for the Cambridge 1st pair to counter.

The final score was a victory by 325-185 for the Past, enabling a proud captain Rupert Mathieu to carry off the Trapnell Tankard. On the third court, however, the Mixed Doubles match for the Ted Isaacs Trophy was a very close affair which went down to the wire, with Cassi Henderson & Joe Gribble holding on to deny Lottie Simpson's IV in a nervous game against Holly Nugent & Helena Tunks, Helena having the distinction of being the first lady Sparrow to represent the Past. The final score: 66-63 to Cassi's IV.

*FOR OXFORD — Dick Warner, Senior Member of OURFC, writes:* 2019 marks the 34th annual Rugby Fives fixture between Oxford Past and Oxford Present, inaugurated in 1986. The prize we contest is the Mackenzie Bowl, named in honour of that nonpareil schoolmaster of St Paul's School, who insisted on having six fives courts built as part of its relocation from Hammersmith to Barnes. All six courts were in furious use last Saturday, as the Past and Present Vllls, Beavers IV, and Ladies teams competed keenly and chivalrously. The Present VIII notched up only its eighth victory in the series — and by its largest ever margin. The dinner at Queen's Club relived old battles, and we looked forward to an exciting Varsity Match, at which fives is always the winner.

*Oxford organiser Nick Whitney reports:* It was another hotly contested Oxford Past versus Present fixture at St. Paul's School on Saturday. The Oxford Present team, now under the captaincy of Alex McGee, remains largely unchanged from last year's Varsity-winning side. However, there have been welcome additions in the likes of Peter Hanton, who has stepped into the team at number one. In the Singles, despite some hard fought battles from the Past, seven of the eight games went to the Present. Notably, last year's captain Sid Bhushan overcame his former teacher Sam Roberts to win 15-11 in a gruelling game. The Present's only loss came in the top-seeded game, with Peter Hanton able to get only 6 points off former National Singles champion Matt Cavanagh. This left Present up by 111-72 going into the Doubles.

The Present carried this momentum through the rest of the afternoon's play, showing some great consistency and endurance. They ended the day with 297 points to Past's 174, winning the Mackenzie Bowl for the first time since 2010.

Fresh from receiving recognition as a Half Blue sport, the Oxford Ladies' Rugby Fives team also competed in a round robin singles tournament. Phoebe Thornhill narrowly edged out her doubles partner Bee Crinnion to come out on top of the group.

## **RFA Tour to Scottish Schools**

Edinburgh, 1-3 February 2019

Following on from the successful RFA tour to Scotland in 2017 Hamish Buchanan organised a similar, but larger, tour earlier this month. In all eight Buchananeers made their expectant way to Edinburgh on Friday afternoon by rail, plane and car via pick-up points in the Midlands and West Yorkshire – Stuart Kirby, Richard Christie and Lewis Keates from Derby Moor, Nick Geere, Stuart Watson and his good lady from the South West, Bob Sandie from White Rose country, Phil Atkinson from Bedford, and Hamish from London.

Matches were played over the course of Friday to Sunday at three of the fives-playing schools — Edinburgh Academy, Merchiston Castle School and Fettes College — with victories for the RFA against each of them when points were counted, plus much friendly, mixed play and coaching with some of the aspiring youngsters, male and female, at Loretto School and Fettes. The RFA IV met its match, however, at Fettes when playing the Caledonian Club – Richie Murby and Ben Jourdan taking no prisoners.

As ever, there were moments to reminisce on: Stuart leaving his gloves in courts behind locked school gates; the Headmaster's wife bringing tea and home-made cakes at Loretto; shabby chic restaurants visited; olives inspiring keen discussion of the best colour for the Merchiston floors (**click here!**) ; but this year no food poisoning for Hamish. A good time was had by all.

## The Varsity Match

St. Paul's School, Barnes

Saturday, 23rd February 2019

**STOP PRESS:** Oxford had the better of the day this year: they won the Men's Match by 327 to 229 and the Beavers/Sparrows Match by 166-48, thereby winning the Jock Burnet Trophy for the second year in a row and the Fist of Iron for the third consecutive time. Cambridge had the consolation of winning the Ladies Match and the Silver Salver by 170-84; it was their fourth win in as many years.

*Match referee David Barnes reports:* The Varsity Match has changed. A few years ago it was a comparatively classical affair, with four games of Singles in the morning and eight of Doubles after lunch, plus a four-a-side Beavers v. Sparrows match if sufficient players were available. The men were on court, and the girls were in the gallery.

Now the fixture is verging on the baroque. It has become an all-action fives-fest, with a game of Singles for each player and featuring, for the fourth successive year, a Ladies' IV. This year there was also a 'friendly' match for Ladies' reserve pairs.

In the men's Varsity Match, the Oxford VIII retained the Jock Burnet Trophy with a solid performance from an experienced team of players, well organised and led by Alex McGee. It was no walk-over, however, as Jeremy Manger's Cambridge side put up some stout resistance, winning three of the eight Singles and four of the Doubles games in the bottom half.

The top Singles was a close one, with the light-blues' Andrew Boyd digging in to win by four points against Varsity rookie Peter Hanton. Meanwhile Jacob Brubert, playing in his ninth (!) Varsity Match (7 for CU, 2 for OU), led a group of four Oxford men who each won their game 15-4, providing the bedrock of Oxford's Singles success. It was left to the bottom two Cambridge players, Garella and Yass, to make their side's Singles total respectable, but Oxford still led by 33 points at this stage.

Oxford confirmed their superiority in the Doubles, with the top two pairs (Bhushan & Hanton and Brubert & Whitham) winning all their games, although seven of the eight were well-contested. Below the line, the games were shared but Oxford won more points. All in all, a good Varsity Match: the better side won, but the losers were certainly not disgraced.

Oxford had the necessary strength in depth to see them through in the reserves match as well, with a sound Beavers side scoring an impressive victory over the Sparrows and retaining the 'Fist of Iron' trophy by a wide margin.

In the Ladies' match, Cambridge fielded a thoroughly experienced IV which has had more than a hand in winning three previous encounters with the Dark Blues. Although Oxford's Phoebe Thornhill won the top match against Cassi Henderson, the remaining Singles each went to Cambridge by some margin. The Light Blues also scored heavily in the Doubles: although they lost three of the eight games by a couple of points, the other games were won easily. Three of the Cambridge team are leaving this year, so rebuilding will be needed to give Oxford a game next time round!

The match was played with the new Wiseman ball, and it stood the test well. In size, speed and durability it seemed comparable to the G6, and I heard no criticism of it from any of the players. We are grateful to St. Paul's School for their hospitality, and I would like to thank Sam Roberts and Peter King, as well as the Sports Centre staff, for their help in setting things up.

The match was supported once again this year by Pol Roger Champagne, and we are most grateful to them for their continued generosity.

Cambridge now counts 57 wins against 32 by Oxford.

## Scores

### Oxford v Cambridge 2019

**Singles.** (Oxford names first): PA Hanton (Alleyn's & St. Hugh's) lost to ADF Boyd (Edinburgh Academy & Churchill) 11-15; JB Brubert (Alleyn's & St. Peter's) bt CDB Mabbutt (Whitgift & Girton) 15-4; S Bhushan (St. Paul's & Nuffield) bt J Manger (Oundle & Downing) (*Capt.*) 15-4; DS Whitham (St. Paul's & St Benet's Hall) (*Hon. Sec.*) bt ED Thursfield (Merchant Taylors' & Fitzwilliam) 15-4; WJR Shardlow (Sherborne & New) bt ECS Pyman (Sherborne & Corpus Christi) 15-4; CDJ Kengeter (St. Paul's & St John's) bt A Ahuja (St. Paul's & Gonville & Caius) (*Hon. Sec.*) 15-8; JAH Longden (Eton & Pembroke) lost to S Garella (Merchant Taylors' & St. John's) 5-15; AG McGee (Radley & St. Hugh's) (*Capt.*) lost to BS Yass (St. Paul's & Downing) 11-15.

**Singles totals:** Oxford 102 pts, Cambridge 69 pts.

**Doubles.** Bhushan & Hanton bt Boyd & Thursfield 15-13, 15-7; bt Mabbutt & Manger 15-9, 15-12. Brubert & Whitham bt Mabbutt & Manger 15-4, 15-9; bt Boyd & Thursfield 15-9, 15-8. Longden & Shardlow bt Ahuja & Pyman 15-4, 15-9; lost to Garella & Yass 12-15, 13-15. Kengeter & McGee bt Garella & Yass 8-15, 15-7; bt Ahuja & Pyman 12-15, 15-9.

**Doubles totals:** Oxford 225 pts, Cambridge 160 pts.

**Match result:** Oxford beat Cambridge 327–229.

### Oxford Beavers v Cambridge Sparrows

**Singles.** (Oxford names first): CE Rogers (Oundle & Lincoln) (*Capt.*) bt AG Spencer (KCS, Wimbledon & Trinity) (*Capt.*) 15-3; JH Malton (Tonbridge & St. Hugh's) bt BH Shindler-Glass (St. Paul's & Peterhouse) 15-0; SB Thompson (Alleyn's & Jesus) bt MAE von Lany (Colyton GS & Fitzwilliam) 15-0; TJ Whitehead (Blundell's & St. Edmund Hall) bt DW Garbutt (Stonyhurst & Selwyn) 15-1.

**Doubles.** Malton & Rogers bt Spencer & von Lany 15-4, 15-0; bt Garbutt & Shindler-Glass 15-1, 15-0. Thompson & Whitehead bt Garbutt & Shindler-Glass 15-5, 15-4; lost to Spencer & von Lany 5-15, 11-15.

**Match result:** Oxford Beavers bt Cambridge Sparrows 166-48

### Oxford Ladies v Cambridge Ladies

**Singles.** (Oxford names first): PS Thornhill (Christ's Hospital & Somerville) (*Capt.*) bt CJ Henderson (Elizabeth Town Area HS & Queens') 15-9; BBH Crinnion (Christ's Hospital & St. Anne's) lost to GE Shepherd (Oakham & Emmanuel) 3-15; VA King Forbes (Alleyn's & Jesus) lost to HCM Nugent (Alleyn's & Selwyn) 2-15; MM Wild (Chesham GS & St. Catherine's) lost to CL Simpson (Rugby & Peterhouse) (*Capt.*) 4-15.

**Doubles.** Crinnion & Thornhill lost to Henderson & Simpson 15-13, 6-15; bt Nugent & Shepherd 16-14, 16-14. King Forbes & Wild lost to Nugent & Shepherd 0-15, 0-15; lost to Henderson & Simpson 3-15, 4-15.

**Match result:** Cambridge Ladies bt Oxford Ladies 170-84.

### Ladies Reserve pairs (friendly match)

**Oxford:** O Laidler (UCS & St. Catherine's) & KS Hatchley (Cheltenham Ladies' & University).

**Cambridge:** HG Tunks (Chigwell & Newnham) & S Kenny (Davenant Foundation & Girton).

## Scottish Schools U18 Singles Championship

Fettes College, Edinburgh

24th February 2019

**Richie Murby reports:** 13 players from four schools entered the draw for the Boyd Trophy competition — an expansion from previous years made possible by the switch of timing from a weekday to a weekend, and by the decent number of players involved in playing Fives at the Edinburgh schools. Encouragingly, the increase in entrants in no way diluted the quality of play. The group stages yielded some excellent matches, the best of which was Ben A of Merchiston Castle holding off a tremendous fight from the Edinburgh Academy's ever-improving Callum C.

That all three of the Merchiston participants advanced to the semi-final underlines just how strong a group of players the school has produced. Despite the best efforts of Edinburgh Academy's Ramsay H to avoid an all-MCS final, he could not find the right balance between consistency and pressure, while his opponent Ben was able to do exactly that, posting an impressively mature performance.

The scoreline in the final did not quite reflect how closely fought it was, full of long exchanges. However, Doug ultimately proved too steady and unflappable for his opponent to break down, and his patient defending and error-free attacking enabled him to retain the Boyd Trophy 11-2, 11-2.

In the Plate, Loretto's current top Colt, Nathan G-W, bested the more experienced Callum C, and advanced to face another Academy stalwart, Liam H. But with energy reserves dwindling, Nathan was unable to sustain the all-court coverage and retrieving that Liam's controlled placement and angled shots required, and Liam was able to turn the screw when it mattered, winning by a score of 15-3.

For some, this tournament will have served as preparation for the UK National Schools event in early April. For others this was a chance to switch to singles competition, in a Scottish Fives calendar full of doubles matches. In any case, the tournament continues to thrive, and we hope to maintain or even further expand the scale of the event.

### The Boyd Trophy

#### Group Stages

**Pool A:** Doug T (Merchiston) bt Olly H (Fettes) 15-0; Doug T bt Liam H (EA) 15-2; Liam H bt Olly H 15-1

**Pool B:** Ramsay H (EA) bt Josh F (Loretto) 15-4; Olly H (Fettes) bt Josh F 15-4; Ramsay H bt Olly H 15-7.

**Pool C:** Marcus M (Merchiston) bt Nathan G-W 15-5; Marcus M bt Alex C 15-0; Nathan G-W bt Alex C 15-5.

**Pool D:** Callum C (EA) bt Joe C (Loretto) 11-4; Ben A (Merchiston) bt Silas G (Fettes) 11-6; Callum C bt S 11-9; Ben A bt Joe C 11-0; Ben A bt Callum C 11-7; S bt Joe C 11-4

**Semi-finals:** Doug T bt Marcus M 15-0; Ben A bt Ramsay H 15-5

**Final:** Doug T (MCS) bt Ben A (MCS) 11-2, 11-2

#### McKeown Plate

**Semi-finals:** Liam H bt Joe C 11-3; Nathan G-W bt Callum C 11-7.

**Final:** Liam H (EA) bt Nathan G-W (Loretto) 15-3

## **Women's Rankings**

28th February 2019

There are some big changes in the Women's National Rankings, prepared by Chris Burrows after the recent Ladies' National Championships at the Manchester Y Club.

First, we have a new Number 1: Louise Mathias. Louise currently holds 5 National titles in Rugby and Winchester Fives at open and U23 level, to add to a previous clean sweep of all schoolgirl titles.

Secondly, we now have 2 schoolgirls in the top ten: Martha Nugent (8th), who can boast titles at U13, U14 and U23 level plus a victory this season in the President's Cup; and Katie Sumner (9th), the current U16 Singles champion.

Thirdly, we have 6 new entrants into the rankings as a result of their participation in the national championships at Manchester, among them two players from the new City of Durham Club — Camille Beattie at 26 and Julie McIntyre at 29. Five of the new six are schoolgirls, as is Zara Elliot from Edinburgh Academy, who jumps from 35 to 17.

Fourthly, we see a significant rise from 32 to 14 for Dominique Redmond, better known for her prowess in Eton Fives, who made a welcome return to competitive Rugby Fives in Manchester.

The end-of-season rankings will be published in June after the upcoming Ladies' Winchester Fives Singles and Doubles Championships, the Schoolgirls; Championships in April; and the Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles in May.

## Midlands Schools Regional Championships

Bedford School and Bedford Modern School  
Sunday, 3rd March 2019

*Bob Dolby reports:* In damp weather the organisers made some minor modifications to the schedule so as to complete a full programme of Singles and Doubles across three events: the traditional U18s and U15s, plus a new category — the U13s.

The U18s featured players from Rugby, Oundle, Bedford, Derby Moor and — for the first time — Sedbergh, who were on a weekend tour to the Midlands. It proved a happy hunting ground for them as their senior pair, Taylor McGuire and Andrew Taylor, did the double.

It was the same in the U15s, where a small entry featured players from Rugby, Bedford, Bedford Modern, Derby Moor and Sedbergh, with the Sedbergh pair of James Griffin and Jack Taylor emulating their elders by winning Singles and Doubles.

To cater for a new crop of squash-court fivesplayers at Stamford School and a keen group of relative beginners at Bedford Modern an U13 event was run for 20 players from those two schools. There were action-packed contests in Singles and Doubles, largely dominated by the year-older players from Bedford Modern. No one could get close to Malachi Griffith and his partner Marcus Garcha. However, the great success of the tournament was the huge pleasure all the players clearly derived from the day and the obvious improvement in all the youngsters' play as they experienced this kind of competition for the first time.

Our thanks to both schools, to the coaches and masters in charge and to the supportive parents.

### Results

#### U18 Singles

**Pool A** 1st J Sorensen (Bedford); 2nd T Mosvold (Rugby); 3rd D Baszyliski (Derby Moor); 4th A Zulfqar (Derby Moor)

**Pool B** 1st T McGuire (Sedbergh); 2nd J Drabble (Rugby); 3rd K Awan (Bedford) and T Sloan (Rugby)

**Pool C** 1st D Ali (Derby Moor); 2nd X Christopher (Rugby); 3rd Williamson (Bedford); 4th A Taylor (Sedbergh)

**Pool D** 1st AR (Derby Moor); S Stoddart (Rugby); 3rd Pong (Bedford); J Langham (Rugby)

**Quarter-finals:** Sorensen bt Stoddart 15-6; McGuire bt Christopher 15-1; Drabble bt Ali 15-7; AR bt Mosvold 15-1

**Semi-finals:** McGuire bt Sorensen 15-2; Drabble bt AR 15-10

**Final:** McGuire (Sedbergh) bt Drabble (Rugby) 15-0

**Plate for 3rd Place:** AR (Derby Moor) bt Sorensen (Bedford) 15-8

#### U18 Doubles

**1st round:** Oundle I bt Bedford II 11-5; Oundle II bt Rugby III 11-3

**Quarter-finals:** Sedbergh bt Oundle I 11-3; Rugby I bt Derby Moor II 11-0; Derby Moor I bt Oundle II 11-0; Bedford I bt Rugby II 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Sedbergh bt Rugby I 11-8; Derby Moor I bt Bedford I 11-5

**Final:** Sedbergh (McGuire & Taylor) bt Derby Moor (Ali & AR) 15-4

**Plate:** Rugby II (Sloan & Christopher) bt Bedford II (Williamson & Pong)

#### U15 Singles

**Pool A** 1st D McBride (Bedford); 2nd J Taylor (Sedbergh); 3rd W Shingles (Rugby)

**Pool B** 1st K Mahmood (Derby Moor); 2nd W Harbottle (Rugby); 3rd M Doherty (Bedford Modern)

**Pool C** 1st J Griffin (Sedbergh); 2nd T Hortop (Rugby); 3rd R Menhart (Bedford)

**Pool D** 1st C Yates (Derby Moor); 2nd M Molloy (Rugby); 3rd S Masin (Bedford Modern)

**Quarter-finals:** Molloy bt McBride 11-9; Mahmood bt Hortop 11-1; Griffin bt Harbottle 11-0; Yates

bt Taylor 11-8

**Semi-finals:** Mahmood bt Molloy 11-5; Griffin bt Yates 11-6

**Final:** Griffin (Sedbergh) bt Mahmood (Derby Moor) 11-5, 11-2

**Plate:** Molloy (Rugby) bt Yates (Derby Moor) 15-5

**PlatePlate:** Menhart (Bedford) bt Shingles (Rugby) 15-6

### U15 Doubles

**Quarter-finals:** Rugby I bye; Sedbergh bye; Rugby II bt Bedford I 15-11; Derby Moor bt Bedford Modern 15-5;

**Semi-finals:** Sedbergh bt Rugby II 15-3; Rugby I bt Derby Moor 15-6

**Final:** Sedbergh (Griffin & Taylor) bt Rugby I (Molloy & Harbottle) 15-6

**Plate:** Derby Moor (Mahmood & Yates) bt Rugby II (Hortop & Shingles) 15-2

**U13 Singles** — all matches 21 rallies, ‘American scoring’

**Pool A** 1st: C Drutman (Stamford); 2nd M Garcha (Bedford Modern). Also played: C Selkin (Stamford); P Wienand (Stamford); A Williams (Bedford Modern)

**Pool B** 1st J Cleary (Bedford Modern); 2nd A Noonari (Bedford Modern). Also played: J Laud (Stamford); E Long (Stamford); M Fletcher (Bedford Modern)

**Pool C** 1st J Thompson (Bedford Modern); 2nd L Nusair-Palmer (Stamford). Also played: T Pennell (Stamford); T Cowin (Stamford); O Wojciechowski (Stamford)

**Pool D** 1st M Griffith (Bedford Modern); 2nd C Burgess (Stamford). Also played: W Fraser (Stamford); R Horwood-Palm (Stamford); B Hart (Stamford)

**Quarter-finals:** Drutman bt Burgess; Cleary bt Nusair-Palmer; Noonari bt Thompson; Griffith bt Garcha

**Semi-finals:** Cleary bt Drutman; Griffith bt Noonari

**Final:** Griffith (Bedford Modern) bt Cleary (Bedford Modern)

**Plate for 3rd Place:** Drutman (Stamford) bt Noonari (Bedford Modern)

### U13 Doubles

**1st round:** Bedford Modern IV bt Stamford IV 11-4; Bedford Modern III bt Stamford VI 11-0

**Quarter-finals:** Stamford 1 bt Stamford 5 11-1; Bedford Modern II bt Stamford III 11-5; Bedford Modern IV bt Stamford II 11-3; Bedford Modern I bt Bedford Modern III 11-1

**Semi-finals:** Bedford Modern II bt Stamford I 11-1; Bedford Modern I bt Bedford Modern IV 11-2

**Final:** Bedford Modern I (Garcha & Griffith) bt Bedford Modern II (Noonari & Williams) 15-2

**Plate:** Bedford Modern III bt Stamford II 15-8

## **Representative Match: British Students (BUSF) VI versus RFA VI**

Alleyn's School, Dulwich and St. Paul's School, Barnes

Sunday, 3rd March 2019

*Club Manager Hamish Buchanan reports:* After a stuttering start, with last minute RFA team changes and sweating Alleyn's courts, this year's match between the best of the students against an experienced RFA team finally hit its stride at St Paul's.

Right from the start participants and interested observers were predicting a close match, even after the RFA shuffled their line up and brought in James Birch at the eleventh hour: there were few people willing to commit to the outcome. To add to the uncertainty, none of the RFA team had actually played for the Association in this match in the past, although most had played for the students at some point.

The early exchanges from the three and a half singles played at Alleyn's led to a narrow lead for the RFA, and this continued with the remainder of singles at St Paul's, at the end of which there was a five point cushion for the RFA. Notable games from the singles were, firstly, a 15-12 victory for Dave Butler over an out of sorts Ed Kay, with Dave remaining focused under the pressure exerted by an uneven bouncing ball, whereas Ed struggled to adapt to the random nature of the bounce and, secondly, a ding dong battle between the mercurial Ollie Arnold and six-times National Singles champion James Toop. Indeed with James not having played singles for over two years the expectancy was for an early lead for Ollie, but, as is often the way in this format of one game with every point counting, the early exchanges were long and cagey. Then James found his length and Ollie struggled with consistency, James moved into a 13-4 lead. But with some degree of anger and a touch of exasperation Ollie chose to hit out and the increased pace caught a slightly complacent James off guard: Ollie tied the game at 14-14. James regrouped, as a great champion does, to win 16-14, but had Ollie set the tone for what was to come?

On to the doubles and the first two rounds of the 'uneven' matches, where third pair plays second, second plays first etc and the spectators and tacticians try to evaluate who is looking the strongest and most likely winners of a match that in all likelihood will go down to the wire.

The RFA stretched their lead to 20 points with some outstanding retrieval and angles from Toop & Maconie, great ball striking from Birch & Watkinson to upset Boyd & Butler and solid dominance from Beltrami & Kay.

There were still 90 points for each side up for grabs in the final round of two-to-15 against opposite pairs. Unfortunately, James Toop had unavoidable evening plans and the repercussion of the shift of venue and time spent travelling from Dulwich to Barnes led to only one game being played between the second pairs.

Toop & Maconie won this game 16-14, which meant a 22 point lead for the RFA, but these final games can result in large shifts and the students were not done yet. Arnold & Parker did not falter in a 15-8 victory over Beltrami & Kay and Low & McCreath looked fresh and determined in turning a 9-1 lead into a 15-8 victory in the penultimate games. At this point the RFA was ahead by 8, with two games to go.

The RFA dug in but the momentum was with the students and 15-11, 15-10 wins in the final games gave them a one point victory by 205-204. Well played to all, a wonderful example of team Fives -- where every point counts!

Many thanks to Alleyn's and St Paul's schools for hosting this event and to the team captains for engineering such an exciting match.

<b>BUSF</b>	<b>v.</b>	<b>RFA</b>	
<b>Singles</b>			
David Butler	v.	Ed Kay	15-12
Andrew Boyd	v.	Ben Beltrami	6-15
Theo Parker	v.	Tom Watkinson	15-8
Ollie Arnold	v.	James Toop	14-16
Cameron Low	v.	Tom Maconie	6-15
Archie McCreath	v.	James Birch	15-10
			<b>71-76</b>
<b>Doubles</b>			
Arnold & Parker	v.	Birch & Watkinson	15-5
Boyd & Butler	v.	Beltrami & Kay	9-15
Low & McCreath	v.	Maconie & Toop	5-15
			100-111
Arnold & Parker	v.	Maconie & Toop	15-10
Boyd & Butler	v.	Birch & Watkinson	13-15
Low & McCreath	v.	Beltrami & Kay	3-15
			<b>131-151</b>
Arnold & Parker	v.	Beltrami & Kay	15-8
			15-11
Boyd & Butler	v.	Maconie & Toop	14-16
			-----
Low & McCreath	v.	Birch & Watkinson	15-8
			15-10
			<b>205-204</b>

## Ladies' Winchester Fives Championships

Winchester College

Sunday, 3rd March 2019

Organiser and defending Singles champion Maddy Raynor retained her title, beating Alleyn's player Marth Nugent in the final. Maddy and her partner Alexandra Steel went on to successfully defend their Doubles title against Martha and her partner Dominique Redmond.

**Players:** Maddy Raynor; Alexandra Steel; Martha Nugent; Dominique Redmond; Katie Sumner; Maddie Kent; Phoebe Thornhill; Emily O'Malley; Wendy Carling

### Scores

#### Singles

**Preliminary Round:** O'Malley bt Carling 11-5

**1st round:** Raynor bt O'Malley 11-3; Sumner bt Thornhill 11-8; Nugent bt Redmond 12-10; Steel bt Kent 11-1

**Semi-finals:** Raynor bt Sumner 11-6, 11-7; Nugent bt Steel 11-4, 11-7

**Final:** Raynor bt Nugent 15-11, 4-15, 15-9

**Plate Round Robin:** Kent bt O'Malley 11-1; Thornhill bt Kent 11-2; Thornhill bt O'Malley 11-1; Redmond bt Kent 11-4; Redmond bt Thornhill 11-0; Redmond bt O'Malley 11-2

**Plate winner:** Dominique Redmond

## Doubles

**Round Robin:** Raynor & Steel bt Sumner & Kent 15-5; Raynor & Steel bt Thornhill & O'Malley 15-7; Redmond & Nugent bt Sumner & Kent 15-6; Redmond & Nugent bt Thornhill & O'Malley 15-2

**Final:** Raynor & Steel bt Redmond & Nugent 15-2, 15-6

**Plate:** Sumner & Kent bt Thornhill & O'Malley 15-6, 15-13

## The Winchester Fives Open Doubles Championship

Winchester College,

Sunday, 10th March 2019

*Organiser Harry Akerman reports:* 16 pairs entered this year's 'Barnes Bridge' and despite the poststorm British Rail excuses of 'trees on the line' and 'scaffolding on the line', all 32 players made it safely to Winchester College for what could be the last Barnes Bridge before the new courts are opened.

The first round sprung no surprises other than local Wessex Club stalwarts Martin Patterson and Miles Catton leading in both their games against number 2 seeds Dan Tristao and Dave Butler... but not for long! Again the second round and quarter-finals went according to the seedings apart from a fine 3-game victory by Hamish Buchanan and James Bristow over Giles Munn and James Birch. The expected hard hitting onslaught of Ollie Arnold and Theo Parker could not put the number 2 seeds off their line and with Will Ellison and Ed Kay having a relatively easy semi-final against an understandably tiring Hamish and James the number 1 and 2 seeds made it through to the final without too many concerns.

Various Plate competitions were meanwhile underway to ensure that no one went home feeling short of exercise. In the main plate for first-out losers Ben Chua and James Smith won an excellent final against James Marshall and Louise Mathias. A plate for the second round losers saw Giles and James coming out up against John Minta and Ed Hawke in another 3-gamer.

Other highlights of the plates included Duncan Neale (always one for a bit of extra fives) playing a best of 3 in the Plate without realising it was a best of one and then he went on to display some extraordinary delaying tactics to catch his breath when playing against the organiser — you really need to learn to tie those laces properly the first time, Duncan!

And so to the final, and what a final it was! I cannot think there have ever been too many better games of fives played.

The first started cagily, with both pairs not wanting to give anything away. All players were serving well, not necessarily into the buttress but into the nicks around it, so chances to win points were scarce. Eventually Will and Ed broke the deadlock with the game havjng been stuck at 6-6 to lead 13-7. As often happens in Winchester Five, however, it was Dave and Dan's turn to go on a run of points. It looked at one point like they may turn the tables and take the game, but they never managed to quite get level and Will and Ed held on to take the game 15-13.

The second game was a role reversal of the first. Dave and Dan broke the deadlock again at 6-apiece to go up, only for Will and Ed to claw their way back successfully enough to earn their first match point, but Dave and Dan narrowly won 16-14.

With the match all square going into the third it was very hard to call a winner. Both pairs again knew the importance of a strong start and as was the norm there were a close first few points until Dave and Dan went 10-6 up. Were Ed and Will going to rue not winning that match point in the previous game? At 11-11 it was impossible to call a winner until some killer buttress shots gave Will and Ed the lead and eventual victory 15-12.

## Scores

### Main Competition — The Barnes Bridge

**1st Round:** W. Ellison & E. Kay bt S. Fraser & D. Percival 15-0, 15-2; M. Crompton & R. James Duff bt D. Neale & N. Geere 15-4, 15-3; H. Buchanan & J. Bristow bt L. Amery & G. Daykin 15-1, 15-2; J. Birch & G. Munn bt J. Marshall & L. Mathias 15-3, 15-2; O. Arnold & T. Parker bt B. Hale & S. Zhang 15-3, 15-7; J. Minta & E. Hawke bt B. Chua & J. Smith 15-2, 15-10; A. Passey & L. Cook bt C. Davey & J. Sumner 15-7, 15-8; D. Tristao & D. Butler bt M. Catton & M. Patterson 15-1, 15-3

**Quarter-finals:** Ellison & Kay bt Crompton & James Duff 15-0, 15-2; Buchanan & Bristow bt Birch & Munn 5-15, 16-14, 15-13; Arnold & Parker bt Minta & Hawke 15-8, 15-2; Tristao & Butler bt Passey & Cook 15-0, 15-0

**Semi-finals:** Ellison & Kay bt Buchanan & Bristow 15-4, 15-2; Tristao & Butler bt Arnold & Parker 15-9, 15-7

**Final:** Ellison & Kay bt Tristao & Butler 15-13, 14-16, 15-12

### Plate for 1st round losers

**Quarter-finals:** Fraser & Percival bt Neale & Geere 15-7, 15-8; Marshall & Mathias bt Amery & Daykin 15-3; Chua & Smith bt Hale & Zhang 15-3; Davey & Sumner bt Catton & Patterson 15-4

**Semi-finals:** Marshall & Mathias bt Fraser & Percival 15-3; Chua & Smith bt Davey & Sumner 15-3

**Final:** Chua & Smith bt Marshall & Mathias 15-11

### Plate for 2nd round losers from Barnes Bridge

**Semi-finals:** Birch & Munn bt Crompton & James Duff 15-4; Hawke & Minta bt Passey & Cook 15-8

**Final:** Birch & Munn bt Hawke & Minta 5-11, 11-7, 11-5

### Plate for first round Plate losers

**Semi-finals:** Amery & H. Akerman bt Neale & Geere 15-12; Hale & Zhang bt Catton & Patterson 15-6

**Final:** Hale & Zhang bt Neale & Geere 15-4

### Plate for 1st round losers from Plate for 2nd round Barnes Bridge losers (!)

**Final:** Crompton & James Duff bt Passey & Cook 15-13

## Latest National Rankings

March 2019

*David Hebden reports:* Will Ellison regains top spot in the new Doubles Rankings published today, replacing Dan Grant who drops down a place after his much enjoyed three month reign as number one. This change follows Will's win with Charlie Brooks in the North West. These rankings reflect results from the North West, Under 25s, and the North of England events.

Normally I would have published a singles and doubles rankings update after the Under 25s in February, but a problematic house move has made this difficult – my apologies. I have decided to publish this Doubles update now, and there will be a further update following the National Doubles and Scottish Doubles at the end of the season. With just the Scottish Singles left this season, rather than do a Singles update now, I will leave that until the end of season in May.

Lower down in the top ten Doubles, Dan Tristao overtakes Ed Kay at 3, Ollie Arnold overtakes Charlie Brooks at 5, while Ben Beltrami enters the top ten at no. 8. Ollie and Ben benefit from great wins in the U25s and North of England, while Dan T picked up useful points as runner-up in the NofE with Dave Butler. In the top 30 Sam Russell (14), Archie McCreath (21), Julian Hanton (27), and James Smith (29) all make good progress, while elsewhere, great strides up the list are made by

Christian Blackaby (31), Louise Mathias (37), Joe Sumner (40), and Pete Kullavanijaya (51). Louise becomes the highest placed of the three ladies now featured in the open rankings.

We also have two new entrants, Douglas Law and Michael Suddaby, who enter the rankings at equal 59th place.

## **The National U13 Championships**

St. Paul's School

Sunday, 17th March 2019

**STOP PRESS:** Players from 7 schools and clubs contested this year's National U13 Championships. Among them was a first ever contingent from Stamford School, plus one young player, Camille Beattie, from the new City of Durham Club, who distinguished herself in the Singles by winning the Bronze Medal for Third Place. The later stages of both Singles and Doubles were dominated by competitors from Pilgrims' School, Bedford Modern School and, above all, Alleyn's School, whose players did the double.

*Organiser Sam Russell reports:* 38 schoolchildren travelled to London from far and wide to compete in the National U13 Championships at St Paul's School.

The day was filled with many tight contests, none more so than the Singles final, where Theo Vernacchio (Alleyn's) beat Malachi Griffith (Bedford Modern) 15-11. Griffith, having managed to grind out an 11-9 lead, appeared to have the strength to close out victory, but Vernacchio skilfully dug in and focused well to come back to win. The wild celebrations amidst the Alleyn's supporters in the crowd contrasted with the camaraderie of the players, who embraced warmly before posing for pictures.

Earlier in the day Camille Beattie (City of Durham Club) gave a fantastic account of herself by navigating her way through a tough group to the semi-finals. Although many suspected that she would go on to win, being one of the most adept players at reading the angles around the back walls, she had to make do with victory in the third place playoff against Joe Cleary of Bedford Modern. Camille's extensive support group were very proud, including her physiotherapist, brother Simon Beattie, as bookmakers slashed the odds on her becoming a future women's national champion.

Elsewhere in the Singles tournament, a multitude of talent had been on display. Chase Burgess (Stamford) did well to almost qualify for the knockout stages, having only practised on squash courts, and Karanveer Singh from Derby Moor entertained with a mature and enthusiastic display. Blundell's showed typical spirit and tactical nous without getting the results they were looking for and Pilgrims' demonstrated the greatest depth of squad with the most players from any school making the knockout stages. It is likely that at least one of these players will emerge as a future champion, as individuals develop their skills at different rates.

The Doubles largely mirrored the Singles, as Alleyn's 1 (Milner & Vernacchio) beat Bedford Modern 1 (Garcha & Griffith) 15-11, also overturning an 11-9 deficit. Both pairs had defeated a top Pilgrims' pair in the semi-finals, with the 11-9 victory for Bedford Modern 1 over Pilgrims' 2 one of the best in the tournament. The all-girl pairing of Beattie & Davey almost took down Bedford Modern 1 in the second round and certainly would have dominated the Plate had they been eligible to enter.

The Plate competition was successfully run by Alex Smith and was won by Bedford Modern 3, despite spirited competition from Blundell's and Stamford.

A fantastic day was rounded off with the presentation of medals, trophies and chocolate eggs. The new Peter de Winton Cup was awarded to the Singles winner, named in honour of Peter who had run this competition for many years.

## Scores

**Key:** AS (Alleyn's School); BS (Blundell's School); BM (Bedford Modern School); CoD (City of Durham Club); DM (Derby Moor Club); PS (Pilgrims' School); StS (Stamford School)

### Singles (for the Peter de Winton Cup)

From the Pool stage the following progressed to the knock-out:

**Pool A** Fairbrother (PS); Winlaw (AS); Innes (BM)

**Pool B** Vernacchio (AS); Boissier (PS); Hull (BS)

**Pool C** Burnand (PS); Mynors (AS); Williams (BM)

**Pool D** Cleary (BM); Bradshaw (PS)

**Pool E** Garcha (BM); Kennedy (PS); Turner (PS)

**Pool F** Griffith (BM) Beattie (CoD)

**Also played:** Davey, Dorokhov, Milner, Sternby (AS); Leach, Doherty, Noonan (BM); Pugsley, Templeton, Tomlinson (BS); Singh, Valentine (DM); Kingsbury, Wither (PS); Burgess, Cowin, Laud, Nusair-Palmer, Selkin, Thory, Wienand, Wojciechowski (StS)

### Knock-out

**1st round:** Vernacchio bt Williams 11-1; Garcha bt Bradshaw 11-1; Beattie bt Mynors 11-0; Fairbrother bt Turner 11-2; Cleary bt Innes 11-5; Kennedy bt Hull 11-3; Burnand bt Winlaw 11-2; Griffith bt Boissier 11-4

**Quarter-finals:** Vernacchio bt Garcha 11-3; Beattie bt Fairbrother 11-1; Cleary bt Kennedy 11-5; Griffith bt Burnand 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Vernacchio bt Beattie 11-6; Griffith bt Cleary 11-0

**Final:** Vernacchio (Alleyn's) bt Griffith (Bedford Modern) 15-11

**Plate for Third Place:** Beattie (City of Durham) bt Cleary (Bedford Modern) 11-6

### Doubles (for the Alastair Mackenzie Trophy)

**Preliminary round:** Bedford Modern 3 bt Pilgrims' 4 11-1; Alleyn's/City of Durham bt Stamford 4 11-0; Bedford Modern 4 bt Stamford 3 11-4

**1st round:** Alleyn's 1 bt Bedford Modern 3 11-1; Pilgrims' 3 bt Stamford 2 11-0; Pilgrims' 1 bt Bedford Modern 2 11-3; Alleyn's 2 bt Stamford 1 11-2; Bedford Modern 1 bt Alleyn's/City of Durham 11-8; Alleyn's 3 bt Blundell's 2 11-0; Pilgrims' 2 bt Blundell's 1 11-2; Bedford Modern 4 bt Derby Moor 11-5

**Quarter-finals:** Alleyn's 1 bt Pilgrims' 3 11-3; Pilgrims' 1 bt Alleyn's 2 11-3; Bedford Modern 1 bt Alleyn's 3 11-2; Pilgrims' 2 bt Bedford Modern 4 11-0

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**Semi-finals:** Alleyn's 1 bt Pilgrims' 1 11-4; Bedford Modern 1 bt Pilgrims' 2 11-9

**Final:** Alleyn's 1 (Milner & Vernacchio) bt Bedford Modern 1 (Garcha & Griffith) 15-11

**Plate:** Bedford Modern 3 (Cleary & Innes)

## National Vintage (Over 55) Championships

Cambridge University Sports Centre

Sunday, 31st March 2019

A few accidents and injuries, including a broken leg for organiser Brian Kirk, reduced this year's entry in both Singles and Doubles, but the enthusiasm for non-stop, all-day Fives was in no way diminished. The new ball largely behaved itself on the glass-backed Cambridge courts, though not all competitors were comfortable on what some feel is a slippery playing surface.

Pick of the early Singles was a doughty performance by Angus Hanton against fellow AOB and old friend Nick Geere: the game went to three, as then did Angus's semi-final against erstwhile champion Stuart Kirby. By the time of the final, with a tired Angus facing a relatively fresh Ian Jackson making his debut in this event, the writing was on the wall. What a shame defending champion Neil Roberts was not able to play: Ian would have relished the challenge of taking him on.

Tony Burrows, Bernard Atkinson, Keith Kennerley, Chris Blakeley, Spencer Beal and Mark Kiteley joined in for the doubles. We missed Tony Hamilton, who had to withdraw from the Singles with a tender hamstring so as to improve his chances of defending the Masters title next week with Spencer. Stuart, Ian and Richard all showed signs of fatigue as the final stages were played out — not surprising, with 12-11 a popular score! — and so the power and speed which Morgan Spillane generated with his left hand ultimately proved to be decisive. So, new champions all round, though history repeated itself in the Doubles Plate, where Angus & Nick successfully retained the pewterware!

### Results

#### Singles

**Preliminary round:** I Jackson bt M Spillane 11-0, 11-7

**Quarter-finals:** S Kirby bt A Passey 11-9, 11-4; A Hanton bt N Geere 4-11, 11-3, 11-0; Jackson bt R Christie 11-0, 11-7; A Hamilton bt P Atkinson 11-5, 11-5

**Semi-finals:** Hanton bt Kirby 4-11, 11-3, 11-0; Jackson bt Hamilton (withdrew)

**Final:** Jackson bt Hanton 11-3, 11-1

**Plate:** 1st Spillane; 2nd Passey

#### Doubles

**Quarter-finals:** A Burrows & Kirby bt B Atkinson & Passey 11-8, 11-7; Christie & Jackson bt Geere & Hanton 11-5, 11-6; C Blakeley & Spillane bt P Atkinson & M Kiteley 11-3, 11-1; S Beal & K Kennerley bye

**Semi-finals:** Burrows & Kirby bt Christie & Jackson 12-11, 12-11; Blakeley & Spillane bt Beal & Kennerley 11-4, 2-11, 11-5

**Final:** Blakeley & Spillane bt Burrows & Kirby 12-11, 11-3

**Plate:** Geere & Hanton bt Beal & Kennerley

## National Schools Championships

St. Paul's School, Barnes

Monday/Thursday 1-4 April 2019

**STOP PRESS** 101 players from 17 schools took part this year, with welcome entries from Merchiston Castle School, Loretto School, St. Dunstan's College and UCS, Hampstead. Titles were won by players from Sedbergh (Open Singles), Merchant Taylors' (Open Doubles), Merchiston Castle (U16 Singles and Doubles) and St. Olave's (U14 Singles and Doubles). Silver medals and Plates were won by competitors from Allyn's, St. Paul's, Tonbridge and Winchester.

Several matches were live-streamed on the RFA Facebook page, including an outstanding, dramatic three-gamer in the Open Doubles between top pairs from Merchant Taylors' and Alleyn's. Thanks go to organiser Gareth Price, to coaches and parents from the competing schools and to host school, St. Paul's.

## Results

**Key:** All (Alleyn's); Brad (Bradfield); Blu (Blundell's); DM (Derby Moor); Lor (Loretto); Mar (Marlborough); MTS (Merchant Taylors'); MC (Merchiston Castle); Rad (Radley); Sed (Sedbergh); Ton (Tonbridge); SDC (St. Dunstan's); SOS (St Olave's); SPS (St. Paul's); UCS (University College); Whi (Whitgift); Win (Winchester)

### U18 Singles

**Pool A** 1st Wiseman (All); 2nd Burgess (Ton); 3rd Jobson (Mar)  
**Pool B** 1st McGuire (Sed); 2nd Parsapour (SPS); 3rd Shaw (Rad)  
**Pool C** 1st Matvienko (Brad); 2nd Hirth (All); 3rd Toalster (Ton)  
**Pool D** 1st Townshend (MTS); 2nd Monro-Davies (SPS); 3rd Gujadhur (Win)  
**Pool E** 1st Tidy (MC); 2nd Stanger (SPS); 3rd Turner (All)  
**Pool F** 1st Cochrane (All); 2nd Choo-Choy (Ton); 3rd Ali (DM)  
**Pool G** 1st Odgers (SPS); 2nd Fraser (Win); 3rd Kendrick (Whi); 4th Meredith (All)  
**Pool H** 1st Percival (Win); 2nd Bell (MC); 3rd Lack (Mar); 4th Lam (Whi)

**Quarter-finals:** Wiseman bt Percival 11-12, 11-2, 11-4; Tidy bt Townshend 11-5, 11-4; Matvienko bt Cochrane 11-7, 11-6; McGuire bt Odgers 12-10, 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Wiseman bt Tidy 11-8, 11-8; McGuire bt Matvienko 11-3, 11-3

**Final:** McGuire (Sedbergh) bt Wiseman (Alleyn's) 11-7, 12-10

**Plate:** Parsapour (St. Paul's) bt Ali (Derby Moor)

### U18 Doubles

#### Knock-out stage

**Semi-finals:** Alleyn's 1 (Cochrane & Wiseman) bt St. Paul's 1 (Odgers & Monro-Davies) 11-3, 8-11, 12-10; Merchant Taylors' (Graham & Townshend) bt Merchiston Castle (Bell & Tidy) 11-8, 11-12, 11-8

**Final:** Merchant Taylors' (Graham & Townshend) bt Alleyn's 1 (Cochrane & Wiseman) 12-10, 9-11, 11-7

**Plate:** Winchester (Fraser & Percival) bt Alleyn's 2 (Hirth & Turner)

**Also competed:** Derby Moor (Ali & Raheem); Marlborough (Jobson & Lack); St. Paul's 2 (Parsapour & Stanger); Tonbridge (Choo-Choy & Toalster); UCS (Rahman & Williams)

### U16 Singles

**Pool A** 1st Harrison Shaw (All); 2nd Ruiz-Cano (Win); 3rd Garella (MTS); 4th Jopling (SPS)  
**Pool B** 1st Mackintosh (MC); 2nd Swarbrick (Blu); 3rd A Tillotson (MTS); 4th Fisher (Win)  
**Pool C** 1st Layton (MC); 2nd Cloke-Browne (Win); 3rd Harrison (SPS); 4th Hudson (Mar)  
**Pool D** 1st Lewis (Ton); 2nd Groombridge-Westacott (Lor); 3rd Mumford (Blu); 4th Lim (Win)  
**Pool E** 1st Taylor Schindler (All); 2nd Kottler (Mar); 3rd Goulding (SPS); 4th Cunningham (Lor)  
**Pool F** 1st Bucknall (Blu); 2nd Whitham (SPS); 3rd Matthews (MTS); 4th Harrison (All)  
**Pool G** 1st Mulvey (MC); 2nd Raheem (DM); 3rd Nolan (Ton); 4th Choi (SPS)  
**Pool H** 1st Scott (All); 2nd Rackham (Blu); 3rd Innes (All); 4th D Tillotson (MTS)  
**Pool I** 1st Ames (Blu); 2nd Puvanendiran (All); 3rd Ridley (SPS); 4th Graham (Win)  
**Pool J** 1st Campanale (Ton); 2nd Mayor (Blu); 3rd Ferguson (Lor)  
**Pool K** 1st Afshar (MC); 2nd Johnstone (All); 3rd Bremner (Win)

**1st round:** Scott bt Taylor Schindler 6-11, 11-8, 11-8; Layton bt Harrison Shaw 11-3, 11-2; Mulvey bt Lewis 11-1, 11-6

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**Quarter-finals:** Afshar bt Scott 11-3, 11-2; Mackintosh bt Bucknall 11-2, 11-5; Layton bt Ames 11-9, 11-4; Mulvey bt Campanale 11-8, 6-11, 11-8

**Semi-finals:** Afshar bt Mackintosh 11-6, 11-4; Layton bt Mulvey 11-2, 11-4

**Final:** Layton (Merchiston Castle) bt Afshar (Merchiston Castle) 11-4, 11-3

**Plate:** Cloke-Brown (Winchester) bt Raheem (Derby Moor)

## U16 Doubles

### Knock-out stage

**Quarter-finals:** Merchiston Castle 1 (Afshar & Mackintosh) bt Merchiston Castle 2 (Layton & Mulvey) 12-11, 11-9; Winchester 1 (Bremner & Ruiz-Cano) bt St. Paul's 1 (Ridley & Whitham) 11-9, 3-11, 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Merchiston Castle 1 (Afshar & Mackintosh) bt Blundell's 1 (Ames & Bucknall) 8-11, 11-1, 11-0; Tonbridge 1 (Campanale & Nolan) bt Winchester 1 (Bremner & Ruiz-Cano) 11-7, 11-3

**Final:** Merchiston Castle 1 (Afshar & Mackintosh) bt Tonbridge 1 (Campanale & Nolan) 11-4, 11-5

**Plate:** Tonbridge 2 (N Hudson & Lewis) bt Alleyn's 1 (Puvanendiran & Scott)

**Also competed:** Alleyn's 2 (Harrison & Harrison Shaw); Alleyn's 3 (Innes & Taylor Schindler); Blundell's 2 (Mayor & Swarbrick); Blundell's 3 (Mumford & Rackham); Loretto (Cunningham & Groombridge-Westacott); Merchant Taylors' 2 (Garella & Matthews); Merchant Taylors' 3 (Tillotson & Tillotson); St. Paul's 2 (Choi & Harrison); St. Paul's 3 (Goulding & Jopling); Winchester 2 (Cloke-Browne & Lim); Winchester 3 (Fisher & Graham)

## U14 Singles

**Pool A** 1st Freudenheim (Ton); 2nd Lewis (Win); 3rd Francis (SDC); 4th Ion (SPS)

**Pool B** 1st Wu (Win); 2nd German (All); 3rd Whittom (SDC); 4th Dmitriew (SPS)

**Pool C** 1st Vernacchio (All); 2nd Cliff (Win); 3rd Glover (Sed); 4th Chiari-Gaggia (SPS)

**Pool D** 1st Akerman (Win); 2nd J Hudson (Ton); 3rd Arie (All)

**Pool E** 1st Lee (Win); 2nd E Smith (SOS); 3rd Sauvel-Porter (SPS); 4th Z Hudson (Ton)

**Pool F** 1st Burnell (Mar); 2nd Nsenge (SOS); 3rd Minko (Win); 4th Calzia (SPS)

**Pool G** 1st Boy (SOS); 2nd Frigo (SPS); 3rd Kennedy (Win); 4th Milner (All)

**Pool H** 1st Baron (SOS); 2nd Monro-Davies (SPS); 3rd Gardner (Ton); 4th Bond (Win)

**Quarter-finals:** Freudenheim bt Vernacchio 15-10; Wu bt Akerman 15-4; Lee bt Burnell 15-1; Boy bt Baron 15-1

**Semi-finals:** Boy bt Lee 15-3; Wu bt Freudenheim 15-2

**Final:** Boy (St. Olave's) bt Wu (Winchester) 11-4, 11-4

**Plate:** Nsenga (St. Olave's) bt Z Hudson (Tonbridge)

## U14 Doubles

**1st round:** Alleyn's 2 bt Tonbridge 2 15-3; St. Olave's 2 bt Winchester 3 15-11; Alleyn's 1 bt Winchester 4 15-13; Tonbridge 1 bt St. Paul's 2 15-1; St. Paul's 1 bt St. Dunstan's 15-3; Winchester 2 bt St. Paul's 3 15-13

**Quarter-finals:** Winchester 1 bt Alleyn's 2 11-3, 11-1; St. Olave's 2 bt Alleyn's 1 11-3, 11-3; Tonbridge 1 bt St. Paul's 1 11-3, 11-7; St. Olave's 1 bt Winchester 2 11-5, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Winchester 1 bt St. Olave's 2 11-1, 11-7; St. Olave's 1 bt Tonbridge 1 11-0, 11-2

**Final:** St. Olave's 1 (Boy & Nsenga) bt Winchester 1 (Lee & Wu) 10-12, 11-8, 11-7

**Plate:** St. Paul's 2 (Ion & Frigo) bt Tonbridge 2 (Gardner & Z Hudson) 15-8

## National Veterans' Championships

Marlborough College, Wiltshire  
Saturday/Sunday, 6-7 April 2019

**STOP PRESS:** It was 4th time in a row for Matt Cavanagh in the Singles; 3rd time of winning the Doubles for John Minta (twice previously with Andy Pringle); and first time for Dave Fox as he paired up with John. Tim Widdop did the double in the Plate, winning the Doubles Plate with Harvey Bishop.

No luck for Jeremy Stubbs & Fabrice Pierson who came over from France, nor for the Derby Moor pair of Richard Christie & Stuart Kirby, and disappointment for Hamish Buchanan & Andy Pringle, hoping to successfully defend their Doubles title. Vintage Doubles champion Morgan Spillane continued to impress, winning the third place play-off with Tim Hebblethwaite; Jim Hughes & Alex Rew flew the flag for the South-west; and host Tom Kiggell starred with Dave Fox in one of the longest Singles matches ever seen!

*Organiser John Hawke reports:* The 2019 Veterans' tournament suffered from a low Singles entry, which allowed the start time to be later than usual. This had the wonderful side effect, for the northern contingent at least, of being able to meet up at 7:30 on Saturday morning, as opposed to the more usual 6:00am start.

Once the elite of the Veterans Fives world — and the organiser — had managed to penetrate the new security arrangements at the College, the quality of the field could be assessed. It proved to be magnificent. Two players, complete with female associates, had even made the trip from France, allowing Fabrice his first sight of a real Fives court; his previous play was on a squash court. Usually the cup competition gets off to a fast start with the first round matches completed well within the twenty minutes that keep the organiser sane. Tom Kiggell and Dave Fox had other ideas, though, playing a hard fought, three game match, which seemingly only approached the end after Tom damaged his ankle. He ploughed on gamely after the injury, but the advantage was clearly with the Fox, limiting the total time for the match to a mere two hours. Unfortunately the ankle damage was so severe that it kept Tom out of the remainder of the tournament; the Doubles were poorer for his absence.

As the afternoon progressed seeds one and two, also known as Matt Cavanagh and John Minta, moved effortlessly towards their meeting in the final. John defeated Fabrice Pierson, the French Fives court newcomer, and then Hamish Buchanan, while Matt disposed of newcomer Tim Widdop and the fatigued Dave Fox. Matt then gave another of his customary master classes as he vanquished John 15-11, 15-5. In the plate Tim Widdop swept away all the opposition with embarrassing ease.

The exertions of the day were, for all the Singles players except the winner, soothed away by an excellent evening in Pino's, a superb Italian Restaurant which has become the Saturday night home of the Vets at Marlborough. The evening, efficiently arranged as usual by Tom Hillman and attended by a number of players' wives, partners and Marlborough club players, fuelled us all for the Doubles on Sunday; it also contributed to many hangovers.

Sunday commenced with some frantic re-jigging by the organiser, as the absence of Tom Kiggell from the draw had upset the seedings, and another injury had sidelined Leslie Jenkinson. Tom Hillman was press-ganged in to replace Leslie, Bob Sandie was released from his partnership with the organiser to partner Tom's intended, Keith Kennerley, and the Derby pairing of Christie & Kirby were elevated to 4<sup>th</sup> seed. The remaining 11 pairs faced up to an exhilarating day of exhausting Fives. The cup competition proceeded smoothly up to the semi-finals, except for the small hiccup in the adjusted seedings when Christie & Kirby were knocked out by Hebblethwaite & Spillane in the quarter-finals.

For the spectators the semi-finals were magnificent. Both went to 3 games, with Buchanan & Pringle defeating Hebblethwaite & Spillane 15-11, 13-15, 15-3, while Fox & Minta found it slightly harder to remove Hughes & Rew, eventually coming out on top 13-15, 15-11, 16-14 after having defended a

match-point. Hebblethwaite & Spillane subsequently triumphed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> place play-off.

With both semi-finals being three games, the prospects for an epic final were high. However, the fewer points played in the last semi-final game by defending champions Buchanan & Pringle did not leave them with the additional energy needed to get past the clinical Mr Minta and the magnificent Mr Fox, who won 15-11, 15-10.

More pairs than usual were introduced by the Veterans' dating service this year due to injuries befalling regular partners. One of these blind dates, local lad Harvey Bishop and newcomer Tim Widdop, sailed through the plate, defeating Kirby & Christie in the final to make Tim a double plate winner.

To ensure that the lesser players went home happy (or knackered) a second plate was also played. Some eligible pairs had elected not to put themselves through this additional torture, and Tom Hillman generously stood aside to let the organiser have a few games. Two bottles of beer were procured to give the players in this round-robin more incentive. It worked for Keith Kennerley & Bob Sandie, who fought their way to the top of the pile.

2019 was, again, an enjoyable Veterans' tournament. All the competitors must be congratulated on creating such a wonderful weekend, as must Marlborough College and their employees who generously agree to accommodate us. The lack of newly qualified players is a bit worrying; Matt Cavanagh could do with some younger competition. Those who qualify but do not enter should understand that they will enjoy a fantastic social event in a beautiful setting, with some competitive Fives thrown in, whatever their ability. We need to see that expandable table in Pino's, as well as the Fives Courts, full to bursting in future.

## Results

### Singles

**1st round:** T Widdop bt J Stubbs 15-0, 15-0

**Quarter-finals:** M Cavanagh bt Widdop 15-6, 15-3; D Fox bt T Kiggell 10-15, 16-14, 15-3; H Buchanan bt N Geere 15-9, 15-7; J Minta bt F Pierson 15-0, 15-1

**Semi-finals:** Cavanagh bt Fox 15-2, 15-2; Minta bt Buchanan 15-7, 15-11

**Final:** Cavanagh bt Minta 15-11, 15-5

**Plate:** Widdop

### Doubles

**1st round:** H Bishop & T Widdop bt F Pierson & J Stubbs 15-0, 15-0; Geere & Kiteley bt Hillman & Williams 15-10, 15-11; Kennerley & Sandie bt Bethwaite & Folland 15-7, 15-10

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan & Pringle bt Bishop & Widdop 15-2, 15-2; Hebblethwaite & Spillane bt Christie & Kirby 15-7, 15-4; Hughes & Rew bt Kennerley & Sandie 15-1, 15-3

**Semi-finals:** Buchanan & Pringle bt Hebblethwaite & Spillane 15-11, 13-15, 15-3; Fox & Minta bt Hughes & Rew 13-15, 15-11, 16-14

**Final:** Fox & Minta bt Buchanan & Pringle 15-11, 15-10

**Third Place:** Hebblethwaite & Spillane bt Hughes & Rew 11-9, 11-9

**Plate:** Bishop & Widdop bt Christie & Kirby

## The National Masters' Doubles and the inaugural National Grand Masters' Doubles

Marlborough College, Wiltshire  
Saturday, 6th April 2019

*Bernard Atkinson reports: Was there ever such a day.....?*

I suspect that the answer is no, there never has been a single day when three National Tournaments were taking place on the same courts. This is what happened at Marlborough College on Saturday, 6th April 2019 – Archivist, take note – when the Veterans’ Singles (over 45s), the Masters’ Doubles (over 65s) and the Grand Masters’ Doubles (over 75s) took their separate courses in complete harmony together.

**The Masters:** Five pairs of venerable players set out to prove that there is indeed life in old dogs even if they are not totally resistant to being taught new tricks. Notable of these was some effective lobbying from Bob Sandie, which had the others, including his partner, feeling as if they were under a sustained mortar attack. In the end, last year’s winners, Tony Hamilton & Spencer Beal, emerged summa cum laude without dropping a match. A stalwart offensive mounted by Martin Wilkinson & Mark Kiteley, produced points, but rather too few, while the rest of the field, after life’s fitful fever, were still left with enough energy to lose gracefully.

## Results

**1st** Beal & Hamilton 60 pts  
**2nd** Kiteley & Wilkinson 51 pts  
**3rd** Atkinson & Sandie 40 pts  
**4th** Hawke & Hillman 26 pts  
**5th** Gunyon & Horrocks 17 pts

**The Grand Masters:** The establishment of the Masters by David Bawtree in 2003 inevitably nurtured the ambition that there might be another tournament lurking in the RFA gerontocracy. The date of inception was clearly a critical trade-off between sufficient numbers on the one hand and creeping mortality on the other! Deeming the moment to be right, Bernard Atkinson launched the new tournament, and so two pairs of players in late middle age were able to prove that there is probably life after death, with a contest of three games to 11. In the end all four players were still standing and a red line had been crossed and a serious point proved. The new trophy will be engraved with the names of Bernard Atkinson & Bev Boag, while Chris Horrocks and his partner David Neal can bask in the pride of having not only participated in the making of history, but giving the winners some nervous moments on the way.

## National Doubles Championship for the Cyriax Cup

Alleyn’s School, Dulwich  
Saturday/Sunday, 13-14 April 2019

**STOP PRESS:** Ed Kay won his first National Doubles title, partnering defending champion Dan Tristao, in a match against Charlie Brooks & Will Ellison that went to three games. For Dan it was his 4th title and for Will it was his 10th appearance in the final.

*Organiser Hamish Buchanan reports:* There were a number of firsts for the final of this year’s Cyriax Cup. The primary one noticed by the select few who have witnessed this event in recent years was the influx of spectators in the gallery, provided from the players participating in the wonderfully conceived inaugural Mixed Doubles competition happening the same day. The secondary, an unfortunate power cut at the Alleyn’s courts that threatened the playing of the final, or at least it would have rendered a somewhat dimmer spectacle to those viewers present. Fortunately the organiser, with help from a member of the gallery, a long extension lead and a screwdriver, managed to get the lights back on. Thirdly, and more appositely, Ed Kay won his first National Doubles title in partnership with three-time winner Dan Tristao, beating former champions Charlie Brooks and Will Ellison in a scintillating three-game final.

Ed was the man under pressure in the early stages of the first game as Charlie and Will set out to test his resolve under the intensity of play found only in National Doubles finals, where rallies are rarely shorter than 20 shots and often 50 plus. With some outstanding retrieval and a determination indicating a desire for the long haul, Ed and Dan came through the early exchanges with parity and

after three or four exquisite winners from Ed moved into a 9-5 lead. And although they were less than half way through the first game the die had been cast and they held the lead to win 15-10.

Charlie and Will, having won the title four times previously, were well aware that a strong start was essential in the second game and they duly delivered with a string of winners, added to a couple of errors from their opponents and established a 6-1 lead. The game ebbed and flowed, but the lead was never relinquished, and even after a late fightback the match was levelled at 1-1.

The standard of play was at times breathtaking, brilliant retrieval became the norm, great nicks and sublime dropshots were not good enough to win rallies. Still, as is so often the case in a game of Fives, the errors outnumbered the winners, but at this level of play errors are not of the hebdomadal club standard. (NB. that is to say weekly, rather than pertaining to the ten-times Doubles champion and rankings guru Dave Hebden.)

An insightful example of the personal level of performance from the players was given at the start of the third game when Will produced a well disguised hard hit cross court shot from deep in the left corner. The ball flew from the right hand wall onto the front and then into the left wall nick and Dan finding himself, most unusually, caught out stranded on the back wall, exclaimed in desperation to his partner 'You! You!'. Ed, alive to the threat, sprinted forward covering for his partner, with great athleticism and balance he retrieved the almost certain winner in time and then.... dumped the ball into the bar.

'Not good enough!' he bellowed in frustration. Those in the gallery looked on with raised eyebrows. 'It looked pretty darn good to me', said one young spectator, clearly astonished that what had appeared to be an unstoppable winner was in fact retrieved with enough time for the ensuing mistake to feel like a bad miss.

The deciding game continued without either pair gaining more than a two or three point advantage and the scores were level at 9-9. With the players tiring, mentally as well as physically, the error count of the finalists started to rise, but it was noticeable that Dan resisted this trend, continually applying pressure on his opponents and with the addition of one or two timely winners he and Ed moved to 14-9 up and Championship point. Charlie and Will were not going down without a fight and they staved off 7 match points, but as they were unable to score more than one point in return they eventually succumbed to the eighth Championship point and Dan and Ed deservedly took the title.

As usual the match was played at the highest level of sportsmanship, with offered lets sometimes refused and apparently clean pick-ups called down; the honesty on display was inspiring. Twenty-four hours earlier eighteen pairs lined up at the start of the tournament and although the top eight seeds progressed through, there were a couple of close matches. At the top of the draw an all-student clash saw Cameron Low and Archie McCreath squeezing past local pair Julian Hanton and Ben Kirwan, in an enjoyable, hard hitting encounter. Meanwhile at the bottom end of proceedings there was a far more attritional battle with Christian Blackaby and Sam Russell fighting back from game point down to win 16-14 against the scratch pairing of multiple National Singles and Doubles champions Hamish Buchanan and James Toop. The second game was much easier for the seeded ex-Durham pair.

The only tie to upset the seeding committee came in the quarter-finals when fifth overcame fourth as Dave Butler and Tom Watkinson beat Julian Aquilina and James Tilston in three games. After the more experienced James and Julian won a tight first game, Dave and Tom changed tactics for the second game, with Dave taking the left. They became the more steady pair and this allowed Tom to find some easy power hitting from the right, catching a somewhat rusty James and Julian rather flat. The second and third games went to Dave and Tom convincingly.

The highlight of the day for some was the late arrival of the Dan-Grant-designed tournament T-shirt. The man himself was absent this year, but the colour of the shirt certainly made up for the lack of sunshine usually enjoyed at Alleyn's on this weekend. Another popular part of the day is the spread of food available, it is no surprise that hungry Fives players enjoy good bread with cheese or ham and the occasional chewy sweet for energy, or in Dave Butler's case, a somewhat more than occasional

handful of confectionery. It was far more surprising to learn, however, that the same man with the sugar cravings is also addicted to brie, showing alarming withdrawal symptoms when confronted with only a cheddar option for his afternoon sandwich!

The semi-finals were hard fought and hard-hitting affairs, with the top seeds showing just enough of that class that flowed freely the next morning to ease through close first games and effectively break the resolve of their opponents.

The plate competition had nine pairs arranged in three groups with the winners and best runner-up through to the semi's. Three strong pairs emerged, the aforementioned Hanton and Kirwan, the scratch pairing of Henry Jefferies and Lewis Keates and the hard-hitting local pair of Tim Hebblethwaite and Jonnie Heath, with the best runner-up spot taken by the improving Chris Davey and Joe Sumner. In Chris's case the big improvement came after a trip to a local sports shop for some new shoes that allowed him to be vertical instead of horizontal for the majority of each rally. Ben and Julian outlasted Tim and a tiring Jonnie 15-12 and Henry and Lewis had too much power and speed for Chris and Joe.

The final was of high quality and thoroughly entertaining for the few spectators left at the end of a long day. With all four players striking the ball hard there was little thought of much front court action, but that did not detract from some fine doubles play in a one-game final from which it was impossible to pick the winner. The lead changed hands many times until 10-10, at which point the more experienced pair of Julian and Ben managed to dovetail good retrieval with attacking play for three or four consecutive rallies to forge ahead and win the plate 15-10.

Our thanks to Alleyn's School for the use of their courts and changing facilities on both days.

## Scores

**Preliminary Round:** J Heath & T Hebblethwaite bt C Davey & J Sumner 15-3, 15-5; L Cook & B Hale bt A Ahuja & S Garella 15-5, 15-7

**1st round:** C Brooks & W Ellison bt B Baral & O McIntyre 15-0, 15-0; C Low & A McCreath bt J Hanton & B Kirwan 15-13, 15-11; D Butler & T Watkinson bt H Jefferies & L Keates 15-2, 15-6; J Aquilina & J Tilston bt E Hatton & L Mathias 15-6, 15-7; O Arnold & M Shaw bt Heath & Hebblethwaite 15-4, 15-1; B Beltrami & R Murby bt E Carr & R Sulkin 15-2, 15-4; C Blackaby & S Russell bt H Buchanan & J Toop 16-14, 15-10; E Kay & D Tristao bt Cook & Hale 15-2, 15-4

**Quarter-finals:** Brooks & Ellison bt Low & McCreath 15-2, 15-1; Butler & Watkinson bt Aquilina & Tilston 13-15, 15-6, 15-7; Arnold & Shaw bt Beltrami & Murby 15-7, 15-13; Kay & Tristao bt Blackaby & Russell 15-8, 15-4

**Semi-finals:** Brooks & Ellison bt Butler & Watkinson 15-10, 15-3; Kay & Tristao bt Arnold & Shaw 15-13, 15-11

**Final:** Kay & Tristao bt Brooks & Ellison 15-8, 13-15, 15-10

**Plate:** Hanton & Kirwan bt Jefferies & Keates

## National Rugby Fives Mixed Doubles Championship

Alleyn's School, Dulwich  
Sunday, 14th April 2019

**STOP PRESS** Eight pairs contested the inaugural Rugby Fives Mixed Doubles championship at Alleyn's School. The event was won by Helena Tunks, who learned her Fives at Cambridge University, partnered by Douglas Law of the Durham University Fives Club; in the final they beat Bristol University student Louise Mathias and her partner Duncan Neale, Old Radleian and member of the UCS Old Boys Club. The Plate was won by Cambridge Ladies captain Lottie Simpson and her partner Bhaswar Baral of the Old Merchant Taylors' Club.

*Organiser Louise Mathias reports:* The first ever Rugby Fives Mixed Doubles tournament was played alongside the finals of the National Doubles Championship this year at Alleyn's. It was fantastic to

see so many players getting involved, with 9 pairs competing in a handicap format. Despite a few hiccups in the morning — no electricity, a few calling in unwell, and Georgina's train sending her back to Cambridge — play was soon underway with some very close pool matches.

The pool stage was played as 2 groups of four and five, 1 game to 15. In group one, Elsje Van Es, a new lady to the fives scene, and her partner Dan Whitham had a number of closely fought matches, a highlight being their game against Lottie Simpson & Bhaswar Baral. Excellent retrieving was seen from both pairs, but it was Elsje & Dan who finally emerged as winners with a score of 16-15. Emily O'Malley & Rupert Mathieu also proved a pair to be reckoned with, winning all their games to come out top of the group.

Meanwhile in group two, Julie McIntyre & Tom Webster had a game of long rallies against Holly Nugent & Abhishek Bhattacharya to finally come out on top 15-13. However, it was Louise Mathias & Duncan Neale and Helena Tunks & Douglas Law who came first and second in the group respectively and so went through to the semi-finals.

Pool matches over, attention was drawn to the spectacular 3-game final of the National Doubles championship, which provided additional excitement to the day and some inspiring play before the semi-finals took place.

In the semis, Helena & Douglas were challenged by Emily & Rupert but managed to maintain a steady lead, winning 15-11. Louise & Duncan won 15-3 against Elsje & Dan to join them in the final. Meanwhile, the plate was in full swing, another pool of 5, ensuring plenty of fives for all! This again saw some closely contested games, with Lottie & Bhaswar stealing a win by just one point against Viola King Forbes & Dan Sorensen, the score 12-11. Showing lots of strong and consistent play in their other games as well, Lottie & Bhaswar went on to win the plate and gain themselves the bronze medal.

In the final, an exciting rematch of the first pool games between Helena & Douglas and Louise & Duncan, all players significantly upped their game. The first game went to Louise & Duncan 16-14, helped by Duncan's unsuspecting drop-shot returns. In the second, however, Douglas' powerful serves and Helena's strong retrieving meant they made it one game all, winning 15-11. Despite some tactical water breaks by Duncan and some excellent nicks, Helena & Douglas pulled through in the third to become the very worthy winners of the inaugural Rugby Fives Mixed Doubles tournament. The final score was 14-16, 15-11, 15-9 — an excellent finish to an exciting day of fives.

Many thanks to Hamish for all his help. It was fantastic for the tournament to run alongside the National Doubles Championship and for us be able to watch the best in action. A great day was had by all. The next mixed tournament is happening on the Winchester Fives courts at Bradfield College on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May. Hope to see you there!!

### **Results (lady's name first)**

**Pool A 1st** Emily O'Malley & Rupert Mathieu 60 pts; **2nd** Sarthak Garella & Oscar McIntyre\* 55 pts; **3rd** Elsje van Es and Dan Whitham 47 pts; **4th** Lottie Simpson & Bhaswar Baral 37 pts; **5th** Viola King Forbes & Dan Sorensen 16 pts

**Pool B 1st** Louise Mathias & Duncan Neale 45 pts; **2nd** Helena Tunks & Douglas Law 31 pts; **3rd** Julie McIntyre & Tom Webster 24 pts; **4th** Holly Nugent & Abhishek Bhattacharya 18 pts

**Semi-finals:** Tunks & Law bt O'Malley & Mathieu 15-11; Mathias & Neale bt Van Els & Whitham 15-3

**Final:** Tunks & Law bt Mathias & Neale 14-16, 15-11, 15-9

**Plate:** 1st Simpson & Baral 34 pts; 2nd Nugent & Bhattacharya 30 pts; 3rd McIntyre & Webster 21 pts; 4th King Forbes & Sorensen 16 pts

\* Ineligible for main draw

## National Club Championships for the Wood Cup

St Paul's School, Barnes, London, 27 April 2019

Six teams took to the courts at St Paul's to compete for the national club championship and in the end, it was the West of England Club that made history by winning the famous Wood Cup for the first time.

It was a hard-fought win for a team composed primarily of Bristol University students, but the team of Theo Parker, Ollie Arnold, Tom Watkinson and Tom Maconie just had enough to score a win over the defending champions from the Wessex Club – represented in the final by Will Ellison, David Butler, Giles Munn and James Bristow (James Birch also played in the earlier rounds).

The day had started with the six teams split into two round-robin groups. Organiser Tom Dean came up with a unique format for the games, allowing all the various matches to be played at the same time and ensuring the whole event was completed by the 5pm curfew.

Pool 1 was won by the Wessex Club, with Derby Moor and West of England 2 in second and third places, respectively. Meanwhile, Pool 2 saw the West of England 1 come out on top of the Old Paulines and the Executioners.

Those results dictated the positions for the next stage and saw the Old Paulines play Derby Moor for the Plate – with the OPs coming out on top – while the Executioners and West of England 2 played a match for the 'Jaffa Cup'. This was won comfortably by the team from Bristol.

The main final, too, was won by a Bristol team, although it was anything but a comfortable win. After the opening four singles matches, there were just three points in it – with the nine points that Ollie Arnold scored in his defeat to David Butler crucial in ensuring the Bristolians were slightly ahead as the match went into the doubles.

Here again, there was precious little to choose between the two teams, although the opening doubles matches were both very one-sided. Over the four games, the Wessex Club pulled back a single point, meaning that all was to play for in the reverse doubles.

As expected, the games were very close – three were 11-9 – but the West of England won all four games, ensuring that they would win the magnificent trophy.

### RESULTS

**Pool 1:** 1st Wessex, 2nd Derby Moor, 3rd West of England 2

**Pool 2:** 1st West of England 1, 2nd Old Paulines, 3rd Executioners

**Jaffa Cup:** West of England 2 bt Executioners

**Plate:** Old Paulines bt Derby Moor

**Final:** West of England 1 bt Wessex 100-83

(**Singles:** Parker lost to Ellison 1-11; Arnold lost to Butler 9-11; Watkinson bt Munn 11-3; Maconie bt Bristow 11-4.

**Doubles:** Parker & Arnold bt Butler & Bristow 11-2, 11-1; bt Ellison & Munn 11-9, 11-2. Watkinson & Maconie lost to Ellison & Munn 1-11, 1-11; bt Butler & Bristow 11-9, 11-9)

### Teams

West of England 1: Parker, Arnold, Watkinson, Maconie

Wessex: Ellison, Butler, Bristow, Birch, Munn

Old Paulines: Beltrami, Russell, Aquilina, Dean

Derby Moor: Whitehorn, Keates, Goodwin, Frost

West of England 2: McCreath, Low, Mathias, Brice

Executioners: Hale, Bridge, Horder, Even

## The National Schoolgirls' Championships

Marlborough College, Wiltshire

Sunday, 28th April 2019

With a late Easter and public examinations looming in England and Scotland there was some worry about potential numbers for this ever more popular event, now in its 10th year, but in the end 9 schools attended, their coaches bringing 63 girls in all. Stamford School competed for the first time with the encouragement of their master-in-charge and the tournament organiser, Alex Smith, and Blundell's School returned, led by Alexandra Steel. Sadly no Scottish players this year, nor any of the promising contingent from the City of Durham Club. What we wouldn't give for a suite of 4 or more courts north of London to facilitate a truly national entry!

The U18 competition was small, featuring players from Bedford Modern, Rugby and Marlborough only. The Singles final was an all-BMS affair, with Katie Sumner holding off her partner and good friend Maddie Kent. These two then came up, in the Doubles final, against Lena Barton and Kirsten Bell from Marlborough, who had beaten them in the final of the U16s last year — and history repeated itself. Perhaps these four will meet for a third time next year! The Doubles Plate, donated by Malvern 3 years ago, went to Rugby for the third year in a row; the non-existent Singles Plate went to Lena, whose parents promptly offered to donate one. All 8 players involved will receive Women's Ranking points for their participation in this event.

The U16s were, not surprisingly, dominated by Alleyn's, even though the winning Doubles pair, Martha Nugent and Claudia Davey, are actually U15 and U13 respectively. Martha won the Singles against her former partner Katie Innes; then Lucie Arie paired up with Katie for the all-Alleyn's Doubles final to complete the domination of the South East Londoners. Not to be totally outdone, Marlborough provided both players in the Singles Plate final, while in the Doubles Plate Christ's Hospital edged past the Eastbourne pair, a first success for newly installed CH coach Bart Callaghan and a disappointment for the Eastbourne duo of Kathleen Briedenhann and Simon Beal.

A large entry in the U14s necessitated some creative thinking to complete play before dark, so games were shortened by the flexible use of 'American scoring'. At the end of several hours of play, masterminded largely by Chris Thomas, medals of various hues — and their accompanying cups and plates — were won by players from Marlborough, Eastbourne, Malvern and Stamford. Some of these youngsters had been playing for only a very short time but have already reached a commendable standard — we look forward to seeing them back again next year.

The same applies, and more so, to the entrants in the U13 category, though Claudia Davey from Alleyn's, who successfully defended her Singles title, now almost counts as a veteran. The beginners from Blundell's, Malvern and Alleyn's who made up the rest of the entry threw themselves into the competition with gusto.

A demanding day, some lengthy journeys ahead but a general feeling of achievement and success. The RFA's thanks to Marlborough College and Tom Kiggell as ever, to the providers of Cup Cakes for Charity, and to Alex Smith for ten years of service to schoolgirls' Fives.

Alex writes: "It has been a fantastic privilege running the National School Girls' Tournament for the past ten years, with the help of many other enthusiasts. Many of the girls who started competitive Fives in this tournament have gone on to play in adult tournaments at a high level, and I look forward to seeing the tournament continue to grow in strength.

This year was notable for having a very strong field in all age groups, and I think that the younger age groups are now playing at a very competitive level, to match the senior age groups. Each year the strength in depth of players across the draw is improving.

I thought the girls showed impressive tenacity and skill throughout a long day, a testament to their enthusiasm and the dedication of their coaches.

I am very grateful to the coaches and players from all the schools for making the day such great fun to participate in, and to Bob Dolby for supporting us from the start and compiling the scores and report.”

## Results

**Key:** All (Alleyn’s School); Blun (Blundell’s School); BMS (Bedford Modern School); CH (Christ’s Hospital); Eastb (Eastbourne College); Malv (Malvern College); Marl (Marlborough College); Rug (Rugby School); Stam (Stamford School)

### U18 Singles

**Pool A 1st** Katie Sumner (BMS); **2nd** Kirsten Bell (Marl); **3rd** Mollie Molloy (Rug); **4th** Jika Nyirenda (Rug)

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**Pool B 1st** Maddie Kent (BMS); **2nd** Freya Harrison (Rug); **3rd** Lena Barton (Marl); **4th** Alice Day (Rug)

**Semi-finals:** Sumner bt Harrison 11-2; Kent bt Bell 11-4

**Final:** Sumner bt Kent 15-6

#### Plate

**Semi-finals:** Barton bt Nyirenda 11-5; Day bt Molloy 11-0.

**Final:** Barton bt Day 11-7

### U18 Doubles

**Semi-finals:** Bedford Modern bt Rugby 2 15-2; Marlborough bt Rugby 1 15-5

**Final:** Marlborough (Barton & Bell) bt Bedford Modern (Kent & Sumner) 15-12

#### Plate

Rugby 1 (Harrison & Nyirenda) bt Rugby 2 (Day & Molloy) 15-10

### U16 Singles

**Pool A 1st** Martha Nugent (All); **2nd** Georgina Wood (Malv); **3rd** Eleanor Moorcroft (CH); **4th** Rebecca Lamb (Eastb); **5th** Sacha Hood (Eastb)

**Pool B 1st** Honor Richards (Rug); **2nd** Amelia Dipper (Eastb); **3rd** Charlotte Stanworth (Eastb); **4th** Mina Lamb (CH)

**Pool C 1st** Katie Innes (All); **2nd** Sophie Lambert (CH); **3rd** Saffy Grant-Down (Eastb); **4th** Mel Stewart (Marl)

**Pool D 1st** Lucie Arie (All); **2nd** Shona McGuinness (Rug); **3rd** Maddy Smith (Marl); **4th** Bella Park (Eastb)

**Quarter-finals:** Nugent bt McGuinness 7-4; Lambert bt Richards 6-5; Innes bt Dipper 7-4; Wood bt Arie 8-3

**Semi-finals:** Nugent bt Lambert 9-2; Innes bt Wood 7-4

**Final:** Nugent bt Innes 11-5

#### Plate

**Semi-finals:** Stewart bt Moorcroft 6-3; Smith bt Grant-Down 6-3

**Final:** Stewart bt Smith 11-8

### U16 Doubles

**Quarter-finals:** Alleyn’s 1 bt Marlborough 11-3; Eastbourne 1 bt Eastbourne 3 11-0; Christ’s Hospital bt Rugby 11-7; Alleyn’s 2 bt Eastbourne 2 11-4;

**Semi-finals:** Alleyn’s 1 bt Eastbourne 1 11-6; Alleyn’s 2 bt Christ’s Hospital 11-3

**Final:** Alleyn’s 1 (C.Davey & Nugent) bt Alleyn’s 2 (Arie & Innes) 11-6

#### Plate

**Semi-finals:** Christ’s Hospital bt Rugby 6-5; Eastbourne 1 bt Marlborough 1 7-4

**Final:** Christ’s Hospital (Lambert & Moorcroft) bt Eastbourne 1 (Dipper & Park) 11-9

### U14 Singles

**Pool A 1st** Carys Stephens (All); **2nd** Vicky Monilor-Bessio (Malv); **3rd** Georgie Cresswell (Marl); **4th** Georgie Balfrey (Malv); **5th** Leonie Hart (Stam); **6th** Theodora Sogunro (Stam)

**Pool B 1st** Hally Barton (Marl); **2nd** Bethan Morgan (All); **3rd** Megan Linden (Eastb); **4th** Lucy

Underwood (Malv); **5th** Amy Rule (Stam); **6th** Neve Murison (Stam)  
**Pool C 1st** Erin Butler (Marl); **2nd** Milly Clayton (Marl); **3rd** Kiri Marshall (Eastb); **4th** Rhiannon Mallard (Malv); **5th** Maddie Pike (Stam); **6th** Evie Joyce (Stam)  
**Pool D 1st** Grace Hornby (Marl); **2nd** Chloe Mackellar (Malv); **3rd** Zara Pollock (Stam); **4th** Gracie Piggott (Rug); **5th** Jolie Mitchell-Clark (Stam); **6th** Eliza Roche (CH)  
**Quarter-finals:** Cresswell bt Stephens 8-7; Barton bt Pollock 10-5; Morgan bt Butler 8-7; Linden bt Hornby 8-7  
**Semi-finals:** Barton bt Cresswell 9-6; Linden bt Morgan 8-7  
**Final:** Barton bt Linden 11-3  
**Plate**  
**Semi-finals:** Balfrey bt Underwood 6-5; Mallard bt Sogunro 6-5  
**Final:** Mallard bt Balfrey 8-7

#### U14 Doubles

**Quarter-finals:** Marlborough 2 bt Eastbourne 11-5; Alleyn's bt Malvern 2 12-11; Stamford bt Malvern 1 11-8; Marlborough 1 bt Malvern 3 11-0  
**Semi-finals:** Marlborough 2 bt Alleyn's 11-7; Marlborough 1 bt Stamford 11-0  
**Final:** Marlborough 1 (Barton & Hornby) bt Marlborough 2 (Butler & Clayton) 11-5  
**Plate**  
**Semi-finals:** Stamford 3 bt Christ's Hospital; Stamford 2 bt Stamford 4  
**Final:** Stamford 3 (Hart & Sogunro) bt Stamford 2 (Mitchell-Clark & Rule)

#### U13 Singles

**Pool A 1st** Claudia Davey (All); **2nd** Hannah Thomas (Malv); **3rd** Jemima Mitchell (Blun); **4th** Jasmine Kriedt (All)  
**Pool B 1st** I Wayman Scarlett (All); **2nd** Tilly Lane (Blun); **3rd** Elenor Harrison Bell (All); **4th** Rachel Collins (Malv)  
**Pool C 1st** Honor Tobin (Blun); **2nd** C Isherwood (All); **3rd** Annie Guo (All)  
**Pool D 1st** Flossie Ames (Blun); **2nd** Emily Erdmeier (All); **3rd** R Fathipour (All)  
**Quarter-finals:** Davey bt Isherwood 9-2; Lane bt Erdmeier 8-3; Thomas bt Ames 8-3; Tobin bt Wayman Scarlett 9-2  
**Semi-finals:** Davey bt Lane 11-0; Tobin bt Thomas 11-3  
**Final:** Davey bt Tobin 11-6  
**Plate**  
**Semi-finals:** Mitchell bt Collins 8-3; Guo bt Harrison Bell 8-3  
**Final:** Mitchell bt Guo 11-8

#### U13 Doubles

**Pool A 1st** Blundell's 2; **2nd** Alleyn's 1; **3rd** Alleyn's 3  
**Pool B 1st** Blundell's 1; **2nd** Alleyn's 2; **3rd** Alleyn's 4  
**Semi-finals:** Blundell's 1 bt Alleyn's 1 11-4; Blundell's 2 bt Alleyn's 2 11-5  
**Final:** Blundell's 2 (Ames & Lane) bt Blundell's 1 (Mitchell & Tobin) 11-10  
**Plate:** Alleyn's 4 (Erdmeier & Harrison Bell) bt Alleyn's 3 (Fathipour & Kriedt) 11-2

## Scottish Open Championships

Loretto School, Musselburgh  
Saturday/Sunday, 4-5th May 2019

18 players contested the Singles at Musselburgh this year and another 6 joined the fray on Sunday for the Doubles. In the lamented absence of Neil Roberts, the Doubles were run by Richie Murby in the style of the President's Cup.

In Saturday's Singles it was good to see a contingent of young players from Loretto School testing themselves against older players from the Caledonian Club and Durham University, while the City of Durham Club entered one of their coaches and three youngsters. As it worked out, two of those young players, Simon Beattie and Oscar McIntyre, fought out the Plate final.

In the main draw the first round saw a good game between Douglas Law, recently crowned National Rugby Fives Mixed Doubles champion, and the Edinburgh Academy coach, Hector McFarlane. The closest quarter-final was the game between Durham captain Christian Blackaby and Caley Club final slot, while the victor, Richie, had little left in his legs in the final to challenge defending champion Dave Butler, who duly walked off with his third Cuthbertson Quaich.

On Sunday 10 pairs were arranged in 2 pools, from which Loretto's Josh Ferguson and Caley veteran Simon Hodgson emerged to win the first semi-final against Richie Murby and Alley Scott. In the other semi Mike Kemp and his young Loretto partner Joe Cunningham defeated the even younger Oscar McIntyre and Nathan Groombridge-Westacott. Thus we had a very evenly balanced final lineup, with each pair consisting of an experienced Caledonian and a Loretto schoolboy. It was hardly surprising, then, that the match went to 14-all, then 15-all — not for the first time that day — before Simon Hodgson and Josh Ferguson (under his Headmaster's glinting eye) garnered the decisive point.

For those with an interest in the statistics of Scottish Fives it is noteworthy that Simon was a winner of the Scottish Schools Open Doubles in 1988, so it has taken him a while to do the double! As is traditional in regional events there was a plethora of Plates played out. Enrique Castillo Carbonell & Loretto's Oliver Hay emerged as winners 16-14 against Julie McIntyre & Tom Watkinson in the 1st Plate. Simon Beattie & Hugo Edlmann beat Jack Brodie & Jonathan Lee in the 2nd Plate, while Camille Beattie & Hector McFarlane took the 3rd Plate from brothers Fraser, Alex & Seb. No one complained of having had too much Fives!

## Scores

### Singles

**Preliminary round:** J.McIntyre bt A Scott 15-1; C.Beattie bt J Brody 15-9

**1st round:** D Butler bt J McIntyre 11-1, 11-0; M Suddaby bt J Ferguson 11-0, 11-2; M Kemp bt C Beattie 11-3, 11-1; C Blackaby bt E Castillo Carbonell 11-0, 11-2; T Watkinson bt J Cunningham 11-0, 11-0; N Groombridge-Westacott bt O McIntyre 11-9, 11-2; D Law bt H McFarlane 11-6, 11-3; R Murby bt S Beattie 11-3, 11-1

**Quarter-finals:** Butler bt Suddaby 11-2, 11-3; Blackaby bt Kemp 11-3, 11-5; Watkinson bt Groombridge-Westacott 11-0, 11-0; Murby bt Law 11-1, 11-0

**Semi-finals:** Butler bt Blackaby 11-1, 11-1; Murby bt Watkinson 12-10, 4-11, 11-6

**Final:** Butler bt Murby 11-1, 11-3

**Plate:** S Beattie bt O McIntyre 15-5

### Doubles

**Pool A 1st** Ferguson & Hodgson 59 pts; **2nd** Groombridge-Westacott & O McIntyre 57 pts; **3rd** Brodie & Lee and Castillo Carbonell & Hay 55 pts; **5th** Fraser & Fraser 11pts

**Pool B 1st** Cunningham & Kemp 60 pts; **2nd** Murby & Scott 53 pts; **3rd** J McIntyre & Watkinson 51 pts; **4th** S Beattie & Edlmann 49 pts; **5th** C Beattie & McFarlane 46 pts

**Semi-finals:** Ferguson & Hodgson bt Murby & Scott 15-7; Cunningham & Kemp bt Groombridge-Westacott & O McIntyre 15-9

**Final:** Ferguson & Hodgson bt Cunningham & Kemp 16-15

**1st Plate:** Castillo Carbonell & Hay bt J McIntyre & Watkinson 16-14

**2nd Plate:** S Beattie & Edlmann bt Brodie & Lee 11-7

**3rd Plate:** C Beattie & McFarlane bt A Fraser & S Fraser 15-6

## Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles Championship

Bradfield College, Berkshire, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2019

As the dust settled on the end of a record-breaking Premiership football season, so Bradfield College witnessed a Mixed Doubles tournament that was packed with every bit as much drama and tension. The Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles tournament has grown in stature in recent years, with more and

more elite players competing. This year, for instance David Butler played for the first time – just a week after winning the Scottish Open singles championship. He was partnering another first-timer, Shinan Zhang, and they came agonisingly close to winning the event.

They certainly provided the first shock of the day by beating the defending champions, Ollie Arnold and Louise Mathias, in the opening round-robin section. However, in the end, both pairs did enough to claim places in the semi-finals after scoring good wins over the other pairs in their group.

By comparison, the second group was a much closer affair. Eventually, Andy Pringle and Alex Steel secured three wins out of three to top the group, but it was hard work. The pool's two young pairs – Katie & Joe Sumner and Gwydion Wiseman & Martha Nugent, all but one of whom are still at school – pushed the former champions very hard, but it was the final group match, against Howard Wiseman and Dom Redmond, that was the game of the tournament so far.

It was a match of contrasting styles, pitting two hard-hitting Rugby Fives players against the guile and craft of two Eton Fives veterans. It was horribly close through the whole game, with Dom and Howard's serving causing huge problems for their opponents. Both weren't just hitting the buttress, they were hitting the bottom of the buttress, so that ball didn't bounce up – meaning Andy and Alex couldn't get into rallies, let alone win points.

As a result, the scores rose slowly, although when Andy and Alex got to 14-12, they seemed set to win, only for Dom and Howard to fight back. 14-12 became 14-14, then 15-15 – and the game became a test of nerve. Both pairs saved several game points, but in the end luck favoured Alex and Andy, who won 16-15.

It was an important result, ensuring they would top the group, while Gwydion (with Martha) would be the Wiseman to reach the semi-finals. However, for both pairs, that was as far as they would get, soundly beaten by better pairs. They went on to play a third/fourth place play-off, with Andy and Alex winning the unofficial (and non-existent!) bronze medals.

The plate final also featured a Wiseman, as Howard & Dom lined up against the Sumners. However, by this stage Howard's serve had lost its sting and Katie and Joe came through to win.

For all that, though, the final is what will see this event remembered for years to come. It was the closest final this event has ever seen – and almost certainly the highest-quality, too.

Dave and Shinan had won the pairs' encounter in the round-robin, so they were perhaps slight favourites. And, indeed they won the first game – but it was as keenly fought as the 15-13 scoreline suggests.

The second game was even closer, but after saving several match points, it was Ollie and Louise who finally clinched it 16-15. That set up a deciding third game – and it was every bit as tight as the previous two games. In fact, the lead may well have swapped as many times as the Premiership lead swapped between Manchester City and Liverpool during the course of the season.

Not for the first time in the event, it was a game of contrasting styles. Dave was very much the dominant partner in his pair, flying round the court to take by far the majority of the shots – although it must be said that, when Shinan was called upon to play shots, she did so with real power and plenty of skill. By contrast, Ollie and Louise shared the work much more evenly – and to great effect. Inevitably, there was almost never more than a point or two between the pairs during the game – and it's hard, if not impossible, to pinpoint any one reason why the winners actually came out on top. All we can say is that, over the crucial final points of the final game, it was the defending champions who held their nerve and were able to force critical mistakes from their opponents. It wasn't a significant number of errors, but the fact that they came at the end of the match made them significant. In the end, the final game went to Ollie and Louise 15-12. But, the looks on their faces at the end suggested relief as much as joy.

The match was a fitting end to a wonderful event, and we feel sure that Dave and Shinan will be back next year to mount an even stronger challenge – especially as it looks as if Ollie’s studies mean he won’t be around to defend his title...

## **RESULTS** (lady’s name first)

**Pool A 1st** S Zhang & D Butler 45 pts, **2nd** L Mathias & O Arnold 38 pts, **3rd** I Lee & S Russell 26 pts, **4th** A Lumbard & C Lumbard – 21

**Pool B 1st** A Steel & A Pringle 45 pts, **2nd** M Nugent & G Wiseman 42 pts, **3rd** D Redmond & H Wiseman H 41 pts, **4th** K Sumner & J Sumner 27 pts

### **Knockout stages**

**Semi-finals:** Zhang & Butler bt Nugent & Wiseman 11-4, 11-3; Mathias & Arnold bt Steel & Pringle 11-6, 11-3

**Final:** Mathias & Arnold bt Zhang & Butler 13-15, 16-15, 15-12

**3rd/4th place play-off:** Steel & Pringle bt Nugent & Wiseman 11-6, 11-5

**Plate:** Sumner & Sumner

## **End-of-Season National Rankings**

**June 2019**

### **Kay, Tristao and Ellison head the 2018-19 End-of-Season Rankings**

The end of season 2018-19 rankings have thrown up a few interesting results. It has certainly been a year where the spoils have been shared around a little more widely than is usual, perhaps something that is good for the game. Ellison, Tristao, and Kay emerge as the dominant forces in fives, but many others have had their successes. Unusually, our National Singles winner does not head the Singles rankings this year, with Ed Kay pipping Dan Tristao at the top, while in the Doubles we see a tie at the top between Will Ellison and Dan T.

In the Singles, Ed Kay and Dan Tristao each won 3 open events, with Ed winning in London, WofE and NofE, while Dan triumphed at the South East and North West in addition to picking up the National Singles title. However, it has been in the head to heads that enabled Ed to have the edge with his achieving a 3 to 1 success rate in the 4 matches the two played during the season.

Will Ellison won in the South West and retains a solid 3rd position in a season where he took part in rather fewer events than usual. Charlie Brooks takes 4th spot with some solid performances, including a National Singles semi-final, and also benefited from adopting a strategy of not losing to anyone he shouldn’t do. If more players did this, it would make my job doing the rankings a lot easier! However, the prize for the most events won goes to David Butler who won in Yorkshire and Scotland, in addition to picking up the “closed” University and U25 titles, where fewer rankings points are on offer. David moves up to #5 in the list.

Elsewhere, Richie Murby and Andrew Boyd make good progress within the top 10, while Tom Watkinson, Christian Blackaby, Peter Hanton and Ben Kirwan all move into the top 20.

We see a total of 14 new singles entries over the season, the highest of which is Nathan Groombridge-Westacott from Loretto School who reached the quarter-finals in a large entry Scottish event, enough to take him to #23 in the list. We also see two City of Durham Club players added to the list, with Oscar McIntyre and Simon Beattie picking up rankings points in Scotland. Well done to all the new additions.

In the Doubles, 8 different players took a share of the 7 open titles on offer. Will Ellison won 3 events, all with different partners. Dan Tristao retained his National Doubles title which was just sufficient to move him up alongside Will at the top, while Ed Kay moves up very close behind at #3 after winning 3 events, again with different partners, including the National Doubles with Dan T. Dan Grant (winner of 2 events) and Charlie Brooks (winner in the NW) occupy the next two

positions, but at #6 we see Ollie Arnold who won 4 events, two with Theo Parker and two with Ben Beltrami, albeit two of these being the “closed” University and U25 championships. Our final 2018-19 winners in the two “draw for partner” events, where fewer points are on offer, are James Tilston & Ben Chua (South East) and Josh Ferguson & Simon Hodgson who won in Scotland. The latter two players who enter at #22 are amongst 17 new names appearing in the current doubles rankings. Other high movers include Tom Watkinson (#15) and Archie McCreath (#18) who move into the top 20, while Ben Jourdan (#21), Julian Hanton (#26), Christian Blackaby (#27), Ed Hatton (#29), Ben Kirwan (#29) and Cameron Low (#29) all make it into the top 30. We also see more success in the doubles list from the Loretto school boys.

Tournament entry levels for the 2018-19 season remain at a healthy level, so congratulations to all our championship organisers for all their hard work.

The official RFA rankings are prepared by Dave Hebden.

## **Danny McGregor 1935-2019**

### **The RFA is sad to report the death in May of one of the great characters from the heyday of Manchester Fives.**

*Wayne Enstone writes:* Danny McGregor was a great all-round sportsman and person. In his younger days his first love was soccer, playing for a number of semi-professional soccer clubs around the Greater Manchester area, finally ending his footballing career in the 1960's playing as centre forward for the Manchester YMCA 1st team. To quote Fred Beswick: “I supply the ball and Danny does the rest with his cannon ball shot, feet and head included” and “God help the goalkeeper if he got near it, he was in the back of the net, too!”.

Danny followed Fred Beswick onto the fives courts in the late 60's and they formed a formidable partnership, winning our YMCA Fives Club Doubles five times. Danny had a style of his own, being one of the first bent arm hitters in the club and known for his unique martial arts breathing, ‘whoosh’ noise on striking the ball. Fred was the drop shot master (MOTWB\*), while Danny used his powerful hitting to great effect. He was a first team player and captained the club at Oundle in the National Club Knockout Championship, narrowly losing to the RFA in the semi-final, our best ever result up to then.

Danny was a great supporter of junior fives. In the 70's he became a Junior YMCA Leader on Saturday mornings, helping with our Father and Son camps and in all sorts of activities for 15 years or more. He introduced his son Andrew to the game; Andrew went on to partner John Beswick a number of times in our Greater Manchester Youth Championships. One particularly memorable fives occasion was when Danny helped take a group of juniors to the West of England Schools tournament in Bristol: we had happy memories of sleeping in the Bristol Grammar School 6th form Common Room with 60 plus others. Such was Danny's support for fives.

A stalwart of the Exeter University Fives Coaching Course, in 1983-4 Danny helped with the sponsorship of the South West Fives Championship, getting his company to buy the two trophies for the first event. He also donated the trophy for the North West Doubles in conjunction with Fred Beswick, whose son John describes Danny as “my dad's best pal. Big hitting Danny loved playing fives together, but loved more being in the bar!”

Danny's competitive fives playing career was coming to an end in the 1980's, partly due to him moving away from Manchester with his job for a couple of years and then, when returning, his appointment as Commercial Manager of Manchester United understandably took over his time. He still took a great interest in fives and helped our club raise significant money within the Manchester YMCA. Those who attended our Fives Club Dinner Dances – one of them at Old Trafford, fondly remembered by Dave Hebden – will have witnessed the talent which ex-Scots Guardsman, bagpipeplaying Danny possessed for entertainment, with his wonderful singing voice, and there was

never a dry eye when watching the Danny and Fred sketches, a laugh a second. Danny was particularly proud to become President of the Manchester YMCA from 2012 to 2018, during which time he yet again raised a great deal of money for charity.

I began speaking of Danny as 'great' and in that context I will finish by saying: Danny was truly one of Manchester YMCA Fives Club's most generous, warm and loveable players, and that made him a great person to have known and remember for life.

\* MOTWB: Master Of The White Ball, as Fred was known.

## **Dennis Silk 1931-2019**

The RFA is sad to report the death in June of one of the great post-war players of Fives: **Dennis Raoul Whitehall Silk**.

Dennis was National Doubles Champion with his partner, the late John Pretlove, on four consecutive occasions from 1956 to 1959. He and John, whose partnership and life-long friendship dated from their time at Cambridge together, lost in competitive play just the once — in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the National Doubles in 1960, going for a fifth consecutive title, defeated 5-15, 15-12, 15-10 by Bob Dorey & Pat Badmin. Tongue in cheek, Dennis always maintained "We won on points, and we'd have won on games if I hadn't left my glasses in my MCC cricket bag!"

Dennis Silk was a magnificent all-round sportsman who excelled in all he played as a boy at Christ's Hospital and won blues in Cricket, Rugby and Fives at Cambridge, where he read History at Sidney Sussex College. He played in the Varsity Match four times between 1952 and 1955, captaining the side in 1954 [photo above], unbeaten in Singles and winning 15 of his 16 games of Doubles. He put his success in the Cyriax Cup with John Pretlove down to having "a pretty decent right hand and playing with the best player in the world!"

After a successful period as an amateur batsman with Somerset County Cricket Club Dennis concentrated on his career as a schoolmaster, first at Marlborough College, then as Warden (Headmaster) at Radley College from 1968-1991. At Radley he gave great support to the game of Fives which benefited from a succession of Cambridge captains like himself running and promoting Fives: Simon Langdale, Brian Wilson, Richard Morgan, Chris Hirst and Bob Dolby. Dennis would happily play against the boys in the Dons (Masters) v. Boys match and amaze the younger players with the power of his service once he had managed to overcome a perplexing case of the yips when throwing the ball up to serve.

Dennis was an indefatigable supporter of the annual Cambridge Fives Match and Dinner, the so-called Past versus Present, and was, of course, a generous contributor to the new Cambridge courts. A man who exercised a huge influence upon generations of schoolboys and colleagues, Dennis invariably sat at the Dinner with the man he credited with being one of the greatest influences on his own life, Jock Burnet, President of Cambridge University Fives Club and a long-serving member of the Radley College Council, the school where Dennis in turn left his greatest mark.

Dennis is the subject of several obituaries in the national and sporting press, which give a full account of his many interests and achievements: writer on cricket and lecturer on literature, friend of Siegfried Sassoon, inadvertent star of television, captain of MCC cricket tours to New Zealand and Canada, President of the MCC, Chair of the TCCB, awarded the CBE for services to cricket and education. Eric Anderson, the former Head of Eton, described Dennis as the best headmaster of his generation in England.

## End-of-Season Women's Rankings 2019

The fourth set of End-of-Season Women's Rankings, compiled by Chris Burrows, show significant gains made principally by younger players whose performances at the recent National Schoolgirls' Championships have elevated them, in the case of champion doubles pairing Lena Barton and Kirsten Bell from Marlborough College, into the top 20. Two schoolgirls occupy top 10 places following successes at school and adult level: National U18 Singles champion Katie Sumner at 9 and National U16 Singles champion Martha Nugent at 7.

National Ladies Singles and Doubles Champion Louise Mathias has consolidated her lead at number 1 over former champion Kathleen Briedenhann. Winchester Fives champion Maddy Raynor has climbed into the top 3, while Dominique Redmond's performances earn her the number 10 spot. Helena Tunks, who won the inaugural Rugby Fives Mixed Doubles, enters at 21, just below Cambridge Ladies Captain Lottie Simpson who introduced Helena to the game. The City of Durham Club now have Camille Beattie and Julie McIntyre at 23 and 25 respectively.

The next ranking tournament is the City of Durham Invitation event on the weekend of 2-3 November. It is Chris Burrows' intention to then introduce separate rankings for Singles and Doubles.

## Derby Moor Invitation Doubles tournament

Derby Moor Academy, Sunday, 30th June 2019

*Organiser Brian Kirk reports:* Derby Moor Fives Club ran its annual Doubles tournament on Sunday, June 30<sup>th</sup> at the Derby Moor Academy Fives Courts in Littleover, Derby. Thankfully it was a much cooler day than the Saturday. As ever entrants were paired so as to create a balanced draw, making for good long games of Fives.

Twelve pairs competed for the winners' trophy, with first and second round losers entering a Plate competition made up of two pools of four pairs, with winners of each pool based on total points playing in a final. The first round of the main tournament gave younger players the opportunity to play against some very experienced pairings and, as ever, the more experienced players adjusted their games to make sure the youngsters were not overwhelmed. Winners of the first round then progressed to the quarter-finals where there were some very strong balanced pairings. The highlight of this round and indeed the tournament was an exhausting battle of Aaron Wheatley & Tom Wakelam against Lewis Keates & Simon Beattie, with the latter pair winning through in a contest lasting nearly 1.5 hours and going to three close games (16-14, 10-15, 15-12). This was followed by an equally exhausting battle of Raheem & Joe Sumner against Anthony Goodwin & Oscar McIntyre, which again lasted almost 1.5 hours and went to three even closer games (16-15, 10-15, 15-12). Chris Davey & Dan Sorensen had beaten Stuart Kirby & Camille Beattie in a close three-set quarter-final, but then succumbed to Raheem & Joe in two in the semi. Meanwhile hard-hitting Max Frost and "new boy" (to Rugby Fives) Nick Baron first beat Richard Christie & Julie McIntyre in two games, and then in the semi-final a most probably tired Lewis and Simon also in two games. So we were in for a mouthwatering final of Raheem & Joe against Max & Nick.

The initial game was a tense, nervous affair, with Max hitting the leather off the ball but Raheem & Joe managing very well to keep the ball in play, ultimately winning 12-11. The second game was not as close, with Raheem & Joe playing more on the inexperienced Nick, who has been playing at Derby Moor for just a few weeks. Raheem and Joe took that second game 11-6 and duly bagged the trophy. The Plate was the usual jolly affair, with a mix of junior and senior pairings playing fives for the fun of it. The final of Aaron & Tom versus Anthony & Oscar was, as expected, a titanic battle between two pairs who could have easily competed in the main tournament final. In two very close games Aaron & Tom managed to sneak through 12-10, 12-10.

As ever the tournament was supported by the City of Durham club, visitors from Halifax and Bedford and other local players, and everyone went home satisfied that they had had a good day's Fives.

**This tournament marks the end of the Rugby Fives Season**