

## THE NORTH OF ENGLAND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Year	Singles	Doubles
1953	G.P.M.Cuthbertson	D.A.Sheard & F.J.Unsworth
1954	A.I.F.Mackenzie	E.H.Miller & A.W.Seddon
1955	A.I.F.Mackenzie	F.J.Unsworth & G.Van Lottum
1956	J.N.H.Smith	A.C.Dracup & D.T.Sparrow
1957	D.E.Gardner	D.E.Gardner & P.J.W.Greender
1958	J.N.H.Smith	F.F.R.Fisher & D.E.Gardner
1959-1962	no competition	
1963	D.E.Gardner	J.W.Howe & K.Knight
1964	D.E.Gardner	D.E.Gardner & S.Holt
1965	D.E.Gardner	E.Marsh & G.A.Tiffin
1966	J.W.Howe	D.E.Gardner & S.H.Reid
1967	J.W.Howe	D.E.Gardner & S.H.Reid
1968	J.W.Howe	D.E.Gardner & S.H.Reid
1969	J.H.Mytton	D.E.Gardner & S.H.Reid
1970	P.R.Leary	D.E.Gardner & S.H.Reid
1971	T.A.Cowie	D.E.Gardner & S.H.Reid
1972	G.W.Enstone	D.E.Gardner & S.H.Reid
1973	G.W.Enstone	S.H.Reid & J.D.Turner
1974	G.W.Enstone	J.H.M.East & G.W.Enstone
1975	G.W.Enstone	J.H.M.East & G.W.Enstone
1976	G.W.Enstone	J.H.M.East & G.W.Enstone
1977	G.W.Enstone	D.E.Gardner & S.H.Reid
1978	J.H.M.East	B.S.Ashton & A.R.Wynn
1979	A.R.Wynn	B.S.Ashton & A.R.Wynn
1980	A.R.Wynn	D.E.Gardner & S.H.Reid
1981	J.H.M.East	J.H.M.East & C.M.G.Heron
1982	C.A.Hyde	S.T.Davies & C.A.Hyde
1983	D.J.Hebden	D.J.Hebden & D.S.Parlby
1984	D.J.Hebden	C.H.G.Heron & J.W.Howe
1985	A.R.Wynn	C.M.G.Heron & A.R.Wynn
1986	C.M.G.Heron	G.C.Reed & N.H.Roberts
1987	D.J.Hebden	D.J.Hebden & D.S.Parlby
1988	R.M.Layton	D.J.Hebden & D.S.Parlby
1989	J.H.M.East	G.C.Reed & N.H.Roberts
1990	N.H.Roberts	N.H.Roberts & R.J.Sutcliffe
1991	no competition	
1992	R.M.Layton	N.H.Roberts & R.J.Sutcliffe
1993	G.W.Enstone	P.Last & R.M.Layton
1994	G.W.Enstone	N.H.Roberts & R.J.Sutcliffe
1995	N.H.Roberts	J.Beswick & I.P.Fuller
1996	I.P.Fuller	J.Beswick & I.P.Fuller
1997	I.P.Fuller	I.P.Fuller & D.J.Hebden
1998	I.P.Fuller	I.P.Fuller & R.A.Perry
1999	I.P.Fuller	J.G.Beswick & N.H.Roberts
2000	H.Buchanan	J.G.Beswick & N.H.Roberts
2001	H.Buchanan	J.G.Beswick & N.H.Roberts
2002	J.G.Beswick	J.G.Beswick & N.H.Roberts

2003	H.Buchanan	J.G.Beswick & N.H.Roberts
2004	H.Buchanan	D.N.Austin & H.Buchanan
2005	H.Buchanan	D.N.Austin & H.Buchanan
2006	H.Buchanan	J.G.Beswick & N.H.Roberts
2007	J.F.Minta	H.Buchanan & D.J.Hebden
2008	J.F.Minta	P.W.Bishop & J.F.Minta
2009	E.J.Fuller	P.W.Bishop & J.F.Minta
2010	D.C.Tristao	M.S.Bate & W.A.Ellison
2011	D.C.Tristao	H.Buchanan & D.C.Tristao
2012	W.A.Ellison	T.Dean & W.A.Ellison
2013	W.A.Ellison	T.Dean & W.A.Ellison
2014	W.A.Ellison	T.Dean & W.A.Ellison

The first **North of England Doubles Championship** was actually played in 1936 at Heath Grammar School in Halifax, and it was the first regional tournament. The **Yorkshire Open**, now held as a singles and doubles event at Giggleswick School, is its descendant.

The present **North of England Open Championships** were born in Durham in 1953. Trophies for the Singles and Doubles were given by H.C.Ferens and J.A.Fuller respectively. Cecil Ferens was a distinguished Old Boy of Durham School who as an Alderman of the City was to open the new Durham University courts in October 1957; while J.A.Fuller, a Mancunian, had just replaced E.R.Conradi as the R.F.A. Honorary Area Secretary for the North of England and assisted in the organisation of the early Championships.

Nineteen singles players and fourteen pairs entered in 1953, and both competitions were won by University students, the singles by G.P.M.Cuthbertson of Glasgow and the doubles by D.A.Sheard and F.J.Unsworth of Manchester. Cuthbertson was to reach the final of the Amateur Singles the next year, losing to Roy Birmingham, the Oxford captain.

Although there was good support for the first competition, entries declined during the 1950s. The problem was the chosen date of early April. Depending on Easter, the Cyriax Cup was held in early to mid April, and although the North of England Championships attracted players from the South who enjoyed a weekend in Durham, they found it clashed with the major doubles event of the season.

The Championships lapsed for four years (1959-62) before a suitable slot in mid-February 1963 was found. The weather that year was appalling, but ten singles players and seven pairs entered, with a strong Old Dunstonian contingent taking the honours in both singles and doubles. David Gardner beat John Howe in the singles final, while the doubles final saw the unusual sight of three left-handers on court, Howe and Ken Knight beating Gardner and David Hebblethwaite in three games.

Numbers recovered rapidly after this, proving that the new February date was the right choice. The 1965 event had the largest entry for a regional tournament yet recorded: 28 singles players and 15 doubles pairs. 'If this size of entry continues', commented the report, 'then additional courts will have to be found for the tournament lest the weekend become one of 'non-stop fives'. The next year, the courts at Durham School were also used, an arrangement that was to last on and off until the mid 1990s.

Stuart Halder, a Durham University fives player of the 1950s, took over as organiser in 1967 and in 1972 he handed it on to Stuart Reid, a Newcastle schoolmaster and top-class fives player (Cyriax Cup winner with David Gardner 1970-72 and 1975). Stuart and David had already clocked up six

successive wins in the North of England Doubles, and they won it again in 1972, the year that a young Wayne Enstone, already North-West champion, won his first North of England title. The next season, Wayne was to embark on his saga of wins in the National Singles. Surprisingly, the North of England event was cancelled in February 1973 'for lack of support', but Wayne stepped in and ran it over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend. He won the Singles and was to win every year until 1977, after which he decided to withdraw from the event.

1978 marked a turning-point in the tournament. Both the singles and doubles were won from then on by a healthy variety of top-class players, and one could argue that Wayne's decision increased the entry over the next fifteen years! The Durham Championships, under Stuart Reid's relaxed but competitive handling, was a target not only for good fives but for good cheer and companionship as well. Others had to fill in for Stuart in some years, when through ill-health, work pressures (he had become headmaster of Ascham House School in 1977) or for other reasons he was unable to be there for the whole weekend; and sometimes no report appeared in the R.F.A. Handbook, although the competition had definitely taken place. It was rumoured that the draw was made at 9pm on the Friday night, so that 'prospective contestants should not have too much time to change their minds'! It annoyed some people and amused others, but only in 1991 was there a complete blank, for whatever reason.

In the dozen years from 1978 to 1989, John East, Tony Wynn, Dave Hebden and Chris Heron were among the well-known players who recorded wins in singles and doubles at Durham. They were the cream of the crop, but Durham has always been an inclusive tournament, and one of its great features has been the sheer number of local students who have entered. With no Varsity Match of their own – although matches have been held against various other universities, including of course Oxford and Cambridge – Durham students have always looked forward to the opportunity to take on the stars on their own courts. Jeremy Schroeter (Durham Captain in 1972/73) was one of the best of these, but unbelievably he never got his name on the winners' list. Roger Layton (Durham Captain in 1985/86) went one better by winning the singles in 1988 and 1992 and the doubles (with Phil Last) in 1993, the year of Wayne Enstone's return to Durham. Don't ask who won the singles...

It was Roger Layton who took over from Stuart Reid in the mid 1990s, and in 1995 there was a move to hold the event in late March instead of February. This was unsuccessful and the event had returned to early March by 1997. By now the Durham School courts had been closed in spite of many objections, and there was even a threat to one of the University courts in 1998. Great credit for averting this goes to Chris Jones, another outstanding Durham Captain, who presented a compelling case to Dr Peter Warburton, Director of Sport, for both courts to remain open.

Alex Wilson, a local lad made good down south, took over as organiser in 1999. In the 1990s, Neil Roberts, Ian Fuller and John Beswick had come to prominence in the listings, and in 2000 Hamish Buchanan won the first of his six singles titles. Durham University continued to supply at least half the draw in many years, and St. Paul's top schoolboy players were conveyed by the organiser to Durham for an exhausting weekend. One of these, Adrian Lee, having attended Durham as a student, was to take over as organiser in 2008.

In recent years, John Minta has taken his turn as singles and doubles champion, and as organiser from 2012. And in the last five years, the trio of Dan Tristao, Will Ellison and Tom Dean have had their names engraved thirteen times altogether on the Ferens and Fuller silverware.

Lastly, don't forget to thank the new organiser, Julian 'Spelling-test' Aquilina – another ex-Durham man – for his administrative powers and general understanding of human nature.