

Results and Reports from the RFA Website 2005-2006

Index:

p. 2	South West Open	Blundell's	July 2005
p. 3	Whitgift Doubles	Whitgift	August 2005
p. 4	London Open preview London Open	Barnes	September 2005
p. 5	Owers Trophy preview		
p. 6	Owers Trophy	Barnes	October 2005
p. 7	James Toop in The Daily Telegraph Yorkshire Open Doubles	Giggleswick	October 2005
p. 8	West of England Open	Sherborne	October 2005
p. 9	Schools Winchester Doubles	Winchester	November 2005
p.10	Latest Rankings		November 2005
p.11	Bob Holland Memorial BUSA Tournament	Manchester Sherborne	November 2005 November 2005
p.12	National Men's and Ladies Tournaments preview		
p.13	National Men's Singles	Manchester	December 2005
p.14	National Ladies' Championships	Barnes	December 2005
p.15	President's Cup West of England Schools	Northwood Clifton	December 2005 January 2006
p.18	North West Open	Manchester	January 2006
p.19	RFA v. BUSA	Horsham	February 2006
p.20	National U25s	Durham	February 2006
p.21	Varsity Match	Barnes	February 2006
p.22	North of England Open	Durham	February 2006
p.23	Winchester Ladies' Winchester Doubles	Bradfield Bradfield	March 2006 March 2006
p.24	National U13s	Barnes	March 2006
p.25	National Doubles	Alleyn's	March 2006
p.26	National Veterans	Horsham	April 2006
p.27	National Schools	Barnes	April 2006
p.29	Wood Cup National Vintage and Masters	Barnes Barnes	April 2006 April 2006
p.30	Scottish Open	Loretto	April 2006
p.31	Winchester Mixed Doubles	Bradfield	May 2006
p.32	RFA North v. South	Oundle	May 2006
p.33	End of Season Rankings RFA AGM Report		May 2006 June 2006
p.34	CFA One-Wall Tournament	Westway	June 2006
p.35	Derby Moor Doubles	Derby	June 2006

SOUTH WEST OPEN

Blundell's School, Tiverton, 30th July 2005

Hamish Buchanan completed a memorable double at the new season's first tournament, winning both the singles and doubles titles.

Like last year, he faced Matt Cavanagh in the singles final, but this time there was no amazing fightback from Matt. From the start, Hamish quickly took control and raced through the first game. Matt stepped up a gear, but couldn't recapture his scintillating form from the earlier rounds. In the face of relentless pressure, he made an uncharacteristically high number of unforced errors, and had to admit defeat.

On this form, Hamish is all but untouchable but, in a tournament full of memorable matches, perhaps the most notable performance was from Ed Fuller. Facing North West champion Phil Bishop in the quarter final, he came back from 4-10 down in the third game to win 12-10.

The doubles competition, too, was hard fought, but the top seeds eventually battled their way through to the final, with defending champions Hamish and Dave Hebden facing John Beswick and Paddy d'Ancona. The match was played in fantastic spirit, with oohs, aahs and applause regularly ringing out from the gallery. Indeed, one spectator said: 'I thought I knew how to play fives, but after seeing that, I now realise I might as well have been playing Pat-a-Cake all these years.'

From game point down, Paddy and John nicked a tight first game and, for most of the second, seemed to have the measure of their opponents, Paddy fishing out umpteen apparently dead-cert winners from around his ankles to stay in rallies. Gradually, though, the power, precision and touch from Dave and Hamish began to tell. A succession of quick points won them the second game and levelled the match.

The deciding game carried on where the second had finished off and, although Paddy and John gave it their all, they couldn't quite match their opponents. For Hamish, it was his second title of the day but, for Dave, title number 102.

Singles

Round 1: M Sage bt A Bowden 11-2, 11-3; J Minta bt S Watson 11-3, 11-2; M Bate bt T Lewis 11-3, 11-3; E Fuller bt R Dyke 11-0, 11-0; A Pringle bt W Harrison 11-5, 12-11; E Hatton bt J Thomas 11-4, 11-4; K Henry bt N Geere 11-3, 11-5; A Rew bt L Samuels 11-1, 11-2; J Bristow bt P Breslin 11-0, 11-3; M Hajialexandrou bt B Nithsdale 11-0, 11-1; D Hebden bt J Savery 5-11, 11-7, 11-2; J Hughes bt S Lewis 11-0, 11-5

Round 2: M Cavanagh bt Sage 11-0, 11-3; Bate bt Minta 10-12, 11-9, 11-2; Fuller bt Pringle 11-1, 11-2; P Bishop bt Hatton 11-2, 11-0; P d'Ancona bt Henry 11-0, 11-5; Bristow bt Rew 11-7, 12-10; Hajialexandrou bt Hebden 5-11, 11-7, 11-2; H Buchanan bt Hughes 11-3, 11-5

Quarter-finals: Cavanagh bt Bate 11-3, 11-3; Fuller bt Bishop 9-11, 11-2, 12-10; d'Ancona bt Bristow 11-9, 11-4; Buchanan bt Hajialexandrou 11-4, 11-1

Semi-finals: Cavanagh bt Fuller 11-4, 11-1; Buchanan bt d'Ancona 11-5, 11-2

Final: Buchanan bt Cavanagh 11-2, 11-4

Plate: Savery

Doubles

Round 1: Sage/Savery bt Bowden/Enstone 11-6, 7-11, 11-6; Fuller/Henry bt Geere/Pringle 9-11, 11-4, 11-4; Bristow/Cavanagh bt Breslin/Thomas 11-0, 11-2; Bishop/Minta bt Dyke/Rice 11-0, 11-1; Hughes/Rew bt Harrison/Nithsdale 11-7, 11-5; Bate/Hatton bt Lewis/Samuels 11-5, 11-1; Beswick/d'Ancona bt Lewis/Watson 11-0, 11-5

Quarter-finals: Buchanan/Hebden bt Sage/Savery 11-0, 11-5; Bristow/Cavanagh bt Fuller/Henry 11-4, 11-6; Bishop/Minta bt Hughes/Rew 9-11, 11-5, 11-3; Beswick/d'Ancona bt Bate/Hatton 11-5, 11-8
Semi-finals: Buchanan/Hebden bt Bristow/Cavanagh 11-4, 11-5; Beswick/d'Ancona bt Bishop/Minta 12-10, 8-11, 12-10
Final: Buchanan/Hebden bt Beswick/d'Ancona 10-12, 11-8, 11-4
Plate: Geere/Pringle

WHITGIFT DOUBLES TOURNAMENT

Saturday 20th August 2005

Hamish Buchanan maintained his 100% record this season ably supported by his partner for the day, Neil Karia. The final was very close but from 11-10 up, they won the remaining four points through sustained Buchanan pressure.

The format this year was a round-robin of 6 pairs, with the two leading point scorers playing a final deciding game for the title. With just one game to go, four pairs could still have made the final. But Ed Fuller and hard-hitting Tom Foulser's defeat by a resurgent Allan Bowden and Andy Pringle 15-13 allowed Ed 'stepover' Hatton and Cameron Powrie to squeeze into the final by a point.

Hamish and Neil qualified nervously as they had to save game points at 10-14 against Ben Hitchins and James Partridge before winning the 6 points they needed to make the final. Steve Korris and Eraaj Selvadurai played some excellent fives, but just missed out in their last game.

The tournament is here to stay and it's free! So if you are just finishing school and interested in playing competitive fives whilst partnering some of the best in the land, please do two things. Firstly, join the RFA (that's also free for four years after leaving school) and then contact Chris Jones (chrisjones@hotmail.com) to say that you would like to play

Round-robin stages:

Buchanan/Karia bt S Korris/E Selvadurai 15-10; bt Hatton/Powrie 15-7; bt A Pringle/A Bowden 15-10; bt B Hitchins/J Partridge 16-14; lost to E Fuller/T Foulser 11-15
Hatton/Powrie bt Korris/Selvadurai 15-4; bt Pringle/Bowden 15-12; bt B Hitchins/J Partridge 15-7; bt Fuller/Foulser 15-7
Fuller/Foulser bt Korris/Selvadurai 16-14; bt Hitchins/Partridge 15-4; lost to Pringle/Bowden 13-15
Hitchins/Partridge bt Korris/Selvadurai 15-10; bt Pringle/Bowden 15-8
Korris/Selvadurai bt Pringle/Bowden 15-12

Total scores:

1st Buchanan/Karia 72
2nd Hatton/Powrie 67
3rd Fuller/Foulser 66
4th Pringle/Bowden 57
5th Hitchins/Partridge 55
6th Korris/Selvadurai 53.

Final: H Buchanan/N Karia bt E Hatton/C Powrie 15-10

LONDON OPEN PREVIEW

17th/19th September 2005, Barnes

James Toop is set to return to the rugby fives fray for the first time since becoming an injury-hit runner-up in last December's national championship.

Since then, the former national champion has focused on his Eton fives and on cycling thousands of miles across Europe.

He is third seed for a tournament whose seedings are headed by Hamish Buchanan and Matt Cavanagh. Phil Bishop would complete the semi-finals line-up if the tournament goes according to the seedings.

But John Beswick, Dave Fox, Mike Hajialexandrou and John Minta are among the danger men in a draw which sees several recent school leavers step up to the adult fives stage for the first time.

In the doubles, Buchanan teams up with Jonny Nelmes as top seeds, with Beswick and Minta, Paddy d'Ancona and Hajialexandrou and Toop and Marcus Bate the obvious main rivals.

LONDON OPEN

St Paul's School, Barnes
17th/18th September 2005

Hamish Buchanan continued his perfect start to the season with victory in both the singles and doubles at the London Open.

The singles final was a repeat of July's South West Open final but, although the result was the same, London produced a very different match.

Whereas Hamish was a comfortable winner in Devon, this final was a much closer affair, with superb play from both men. Top seed Hamish edged a tight first game against second seed Matt Cavanagh, but was behind for most of the second game. He eventually levelled at 10-10, though, and went on to win 12-11 to retain the title.

Third and fourth seeds, James Toop and Phil Bishop, completed the semi-final line-up, but the seeds didn't have it all their own way in the earlier rounds: Ollie Stone-Lee, Johnny Nelmes and Chris Jones all beat seeded opponents to reach the quarter-finals, with Chris's win over fifth seed John Beswick a particularly fine result.

The top seeds also made it through to the last four of the doubles, and the final was contested by the day's best partnerships, the all-Manchester pairing of John Beswick and John Minta taking on reigning West of England champions, Hamish and Johnny Nelmes.

The match was a brutal encounter, with the players and ball flying around the court at frightening speed. Minta, playing on the left, tried to counteract the pace of Nelmes' right hand by coming forward to take the ball early on the volley, but to no avail.

In the end, the combined firepower of Hamish and Johnny was simply too much. Although they had to recover from an early deficit in the second game, they were convincing winners in two games.

Singles

Round 1: Buchanan bt Emmett 11-2, 11-1; Grant bt Bowden 12-10, 11-7; Stone-Lee bt Kemp 11-6, 11-1; Minta bt Gibbor 11-1, 11-2; Jones bt Sinton 11-4, 11-2; Roberts bt Ellison 11-1, 11-2; Bishop bt Corbin 11-5, 11-8; Hughes bt Tristao 11-0, 11-5; Nelmes bt Mohammed 11-4, 11-0; Fox bt Hay 11-2, 11-4; Rew bt Matthieu 11-3, 11-1; Hatton bt Smith 8-11, 11-1, 11-7

Round 2: Buchanan bt Grant 11-1, 11-3; Stone-Lee bt Minta 11-8, 11-5; Jones bt Beswick 11-6, 11-6; Bishop bt Roberts 11-3, 11-5; Toop bt Hughes 11-1, 11-2; Nelmes bt Fox 11-4, 11-7; Hajialexandrou bt Rew 11-1, 11-7; Cavanagh bt Hatton 11-3, 11-0

Quarter-finals: Buchanan bt Stone-Lee 11-5, 11-7; Bishop bt Jones 11-3, 11-1; Toop bt Nelmes 11-5, 11-2; Cavanagh bt Hajialexandrou 11-2, 11-1

Semi-finals: Buchanan bt Bishop 5-11, 11-9, 11-2; Cavanagh bt Toop 11-6, 11-1

Final: Buchanan bt Cavanagh 11-8, 12-11

Plate: Mohammed

Doubles

Round 1: Baral/Walter bt Emmett/Gibbor 12-11, 5-11, 11-1; Rew/Hughes bt Tristao/Corbin 11-3, 11-5; Toop/Bate bt Ashok/Ladak 11-0, 11-2; d'Ancona/Hajialexandrou bt Sinton/Thomas 11-8, 11-5; Pringle/Jones bt Hay/Siegel 11-0, 11-8; Hatton/Smith bt Mohammed/Ellison 11-8, 4-11, 11-3

Quarter-finals: Buchanan/Nelmes bt Baral/Walter 11-7, 11-2; Toop/Bate bt Rew/Hughes 11-7, 11-5; d'Ancona/Hajialexandrou bt Pringle/Jones 11-7, 11-8; Beswick/Minta bt Hatton/Smith 11-1, 11-1

Semi-finals: Buchanan/Nelmes bt Toop/Bate 11-2, 11-0; Beswick/Minta bt d'Ancona/Hajialexanrou 11-9, 11-4

Final: Buchanan/Nelmes bt Beswick/Minta 11-7, 11-5

Plate: Sinton/Thomas

OWERS TROPHY PREVIEW

1st/2nd October 2005 at St Paul's School, Barnes

This weekend sees the third playing of the Old Boys' Championship, for the Owers Trophy, at St Paul's.

It's a unique tournament in the fives calendar as the players will be representing their old schools, but it's also remarkable for the sheer diversity of players competing.

Entries are still coming in, but there are already five teams confirmed – the reigning champions from St Dunstan's joined by teams from Alleyn's, Eastbourne, Bedford and Oundle – and the possibility of up to four more teams joining them.

Even within those first five entries, it's already obvious that the competition will throw up some intriguing battles. Seasoned tournament veterans and regular partners will be rubbing shoulders with scratch teams brought together specially for the day.

The Old Bedfordians, for instance, will be playing the experience card in their first ever entry to the tournament, and have assured the organiser that their team will be genuinely old. On the other hand, the Oundle squad includes a current schoolboy and a recent school-leaver alongside a 40-something Cambridge Blue who hasn't played a competitive game for 20 years.

By complete contrast, the Alleyn Old Boys and Old Dunstonians – who have contested the previous two finals, winning one each – both have Top 10-ranked players in their squads.

It's having this blend of players that makes the tournament such a success, and no-one goes home without a smile on their face.

OWERS TROPHY

1st/2nd October 2005 at St Paul's School, Barnes

The Old Dunstonians made a successful defence of the Owers Trophy with a hard-fought victory over the Old Eastbournians. Their win was the climax to a fine day's fives between seven Old Boys' teams. Each match involved four games of doubles and two singles, and the tournament began with a round-robin group stage. After that, the winners of each group would play the runners-up from the other group in the semi-finals.

In Group A, the crunch match was between the Old Eastbournians and the Alleyn Old Boys. Although the AOBs' top pair, Hamish Buchanan and Bruce Hanton, were dominant, their second pair (Bruce's brother Gus and the impressive young Ed Carr) couldn't follow suit and, after the doubles, the OEs were a single point ahead. Two games of singles would decide the result: in one court, a fantastic match saw Hamish just edge out Marcus Bate 11-9; next door, Ollie Stone-Lee survived a fightback from Bruce to win 11-5, and secure first place in the group for the OEs - by just three points.

In Group B, meanwhile, the defending champions from St Dunstan's made comfortable progress, only just missing out on maximum points, while the Old Paulines deservedly took second spot.

The first semi-final, between Eastbourne and St Paul's, started with singles while Andy Pringle dashed to Clapham Junction to collect their fourth player, Mike Sands, a replacement for Chris Caroe, who had played in the group stage. Both games saw convincing wins for Eastbourne and, after similar results in the first doubles, St Paul's conceded.

The other semi-final was a repeat of last year's final – as was the result. Hamish and Bruce battled valiantly, but the greater strength of the St Dunstan's squad (Paddy d'Ancona, Phil Bishop, Tim Stock and Steve Korris) allowed them to build up an unassailable lead and secure a clear victory.

It was much the same story in the final. Eastbourne's first pair (Ollie and Marcus) combined well and could match the opposition blow for blow – their 15-10 win over Phil and Tim was a particularly fine performance. But, the second pair of Andy and Mike (the latter playing in his first senior competition) couldn't survive the onslaught of such relentless top-class play. In the end, St Dunstan's needed just five points in the singles to secure victory, and Paddy duly obliged, securing the trophy for the second year in a row.

Credit must go to organiser Alex Smith, who ensured the competition ran perfectly on the day, despite the fact that he only knew at the last minute just how many teams would be playing. And, thanks are also due to three generations of the Smith family, whose superb refreshments ensured that competitors and spectators alike were fed and watered throughout the day.

Group A: Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Bedfordians 77-40; Old Eastbournians bt Old Bedfordians 75-36; Old Eastbournians bt Alleyn Old Boys 55-50

Group B: Old Dunstonians bt Old Paulines 73-36; Old Dunstonians bt Old Blues 82-8 (w/o); Old Dunstonians bt Old Oundelians 82-20; Old Paulines bt Old Blues 73-26 (w/o); Old Paulines bt Old Oundelians 82-16; Old Blues beat Old Oundelians 61-58

Semi-finals: Old Eastbournians bt Old Paulines 52-16; Old Dunstonians bt Alleyn Old Boys 53-35

Final: Old Dunstonians bt Old Eastbournians 61-40 ; **Plate:** Old Bedfordians

TOOP IN *THE DAILY TELEGRAPH*

James Toop was the subject of a major profile in the *Daily Telegraph* on October 19th. The former national champion spoke of his love for both Rugby and Eton Fives, and of a new project he is helping to run in London schools, promoting one-wall Fives. As handball, the sport is already popular in New York, and he hopes to eventually introduce the sport to every London school through the Inner City Fives Association.

YORKSHIRE OPEN DOUBLES TOURNAMENT

Giggleswick School, 15 October 2005

Neil Roberts celebrated the 20th anniversary of his first win in the Yorkshire Open Doubles by reuniting with John Beswick to claim the title for a thirteenth time.

The pair had won the title six consecutive times from 1997, but had not played together in the tournament since their last victory in 2002. Nevertheless, they showed no sign of rustiness, and their path to the 2005 title was relatively comfortable, conceding just 14 points in three matches.

Their opponents in the final deserve praise, though. And, if Neil's achievement was impressive, Wayne Enstone's performance in reaching the final no less than 31 years after his first Yorkshire Open title was every bit as remarkable. Especially when he and partner Kevin Henry had to come back from a game down to win a tough semi-final in three games.

The plate competition was no less hard fought and, after several tough group games, the pairing of Sandie and Ross eventually went on to beat Butler and Kirk in two close games.

Main competition

1st Round:

RA Pearson & WDB Clark beat HR Wilman & CD Lamb: 15-0; 15-1.
RG Sandie & RWG Ross beat TI Roberts & DK McIntyre: 15-1; 15-5.
S Korris & TC Widdop beat R Barrant & MD Mortimer: 15-6; 15-5.

2nd Round:

NH Roberts & JG Beswick beat PC Reynolds & JN Reynolds: 15-0; 15-1.
Pearson & Clark beat Sandie & Ross: 15-16; 15-13; 15-4.
Korris & Widdop beat B Kirk & C Butler: 15-8; 15-13.
GW Enstone & K Henry beat JL Ellacott & CTG Taylor: 15-8; 15-2.

Semi-Finals:

Roberts & Beswick beat Pearson & Clark: 15-4; 15-8.
Enstone & Henry beat Korris & Widdop: 11-15; 15-4; 15-8.

Final:

Roberts & Beswick beat Enstone & Henry: 15-0; 15-1.

Plate competition

Block A:

Butler & Kirk beat Wilman & Lamb 15-4; and Barrand & Mortimer 15-6.
Barrand & Mortimer beat Wilman & Lamb 15-4.

Block B:

Sandie & Ross beat Roberts & McIntyre 15-2; Reynolds Brothers 15-1; and Ellacott & Taylor 15-5.
Ellacott & Taylor beat Roberts & McIntyre 15-6.
Roberts & McIntyre beat Reynolds Brothers 15-11.
Reynolds Brothers beat Ellacott & Taylor 15-11.

Plate Final (Winners of Block A v Winners of Block B):

Sandie & Ross beat Butler & Kirk: 15-10; 15-11.

WEST OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sherborne School, 29th / 30th October 2005

Hamish Buchanan picked up his third singles title of the year at the West of England Championships, while John Minta and Phil Bishop paired up to record their first ever tournament victory in the doubles.

Hamish's hat-trick of titles came with victory over top seed James Toop, who had reached the final after winning an epic semi-final clash with Phil Bishop. The final was an enthralling match, played in front of a large crowd; and, although James pushed his opponent hard, there was never any doubt that Hamish would emerge the winner.

It may have been the top two seeds in the final, but that's not to say seeds had it all their own way in the earlier rounds. James Bristow, for instance, did extremely well to beat eighth seed Nick Austin in the second round, while Johnny Nelmes beat both Paddy D'Ancona and David Fox (third and sixth seeds, respectively) on his way to the semi-finals.

In the doubles competition, however, the seedings held true: the quarter-finals included seven of the eight seeded pairs. The only non-seeded pair to reach this stage were Alex Smith and Ed Hatton, who had a memorable win over seventh seeds Ollie Stone-Lee and Nick MacIver in three hard-fought games.

The second, third and fourth seeds (Dave Hebden/Neil Roberts, Phil Bishop/John Minta and Jim Hughes/Alex Rew) duly made it through to the semi-finals, but an unfortunate injury forced the withdrawal of top seeds and defending champions Hamish Buchanan and Johnny Nelmes, meaning that eighth seeds Andy Pringle and Chris Jones completed the semi-final line-up.

In the bottom half of the draw, Bishop/Minta powered their way past the experience of Roberts/Hebden, but it was a much closer match in the top half. Hughes/Rew won the first game, but Jones/Pringle came back to win the second and held their nerve to clinch victory in the third.

They went on to take a 6-3 lead in the opening game of the final, but from then on, it was pretty much one-way traffic. Once Minta/Bishop found their length, their combination of power and accuracy deservedly won them the title.

Singles

Preliminary round: Grant bt Mohammed 11-4, 11-7; Smith bt Ishii 7-11, 11-2, 11-7; Moger bt Sjostrom 11-5, 11-4

Round 1: Toop bt Kennedy 11-1, 11-0; Pringle bt Watson 11-12, 11-7, 11-8; Bristow bt Grant 11-5, 11-3; Austin bt Henry 11-1, 11-7; Bishop bt MMCrichton 11-8, 11-3; Rew bt Park 11-3, 11-1; Jones bt Hughes 11-7, 12-10; Roberts bt Hatton 8-11, 11-2, 11-5; d'Ancona bt Thomas 11-3, 11-0; Minta bt Smith 11-0, 11-0; Geere bt Kirk 11-8, 12-10; Nelmes bt Fox 11-5, 12-10; Sinton bt Hajialexandrou w/o; Bate bt Moger 11-3, 12-10; Stone-Lee bt Lewis; 11-3, 11-7; Buchanan bt Savery 11-6, 11-1

Round 2: Toop bt Pringle 11-4, 11-6; Bristow bt Austin 11-7, 11-7; Bishop bt Rew 11-2, 11-7; Roberts bt Jones 11-2, 11-7; d'Ancona bt Minta 11-0, 8-11, 11-4; Nelmes bt Geere 11-5, 11-1; Bate bt Sinton 11-6, 11-2; Buchanan bt Stone-Lee 11-2, 11-3

Quarter finals: Toop bt Bristow 11-6, 11-7; Bishop bt Roberts 9-11, 11-5, 11-4; Nelmes bt d'Ancona 1-11, 11-7, 11-9; Buchanan bt Bate 11-1, 11-4

Semi-finals: Toop bt Bishop 10-12, 11-7, 11-3; Buchanan bt Nelmes 11-5, 11-0

Final: Buchanan bt Toop 11-8, 11-4

Plate: Fox

Doubles

Preliminary round: Savery/Geere bt Moger/Kennedy 4-11, 11-7, 11-4; Smith/Hatton bt Ishii/Sjostrom 11-5, 11-3

Round 1: Buchanan/Nelmes bt Bristow/MMCrichton 7-11, 11-5, 11-8; Jones/Pringle bt Savery/Geere 11-0, 11-3; Toop/Bate bt Lewis/Watson 11-5, 11-5; Hughes/Rew bt Mohammed/McGairl 11-8, 12-10; Bishop/Minta bt Thomas/Sinton 11-2, 11-5; Atkinson/Austin bt Kirk/Park 11-6, 12-10; Smith/Hatton bt MacIver/Stone-Lee 7-11, 12-11, 11-9; Roberts/Hebden bt Fox/Moar 11-4, 11-4

Quarter finals: Jones/Pringle bt Buchanan/Nelmes w/o; Hughes/Rew bt Toop/Bate 11-4, 8-11, 11-8; Bishop/Minta bt Atkinson/Austin 11-6, 12-10; Roberts/Hebden bt Smith/Hatton 11-4, 11-2

Semi-finals: Jones/Pringle bt Hughes/Rew 7-11, 11-7, 11-5; Bishop/Minta bt Roberts/Hebden 11-4, 11-2

Final: Bishop/Minta bt Jones/Pringle 11-6, 11-2

Plate: Bristow/MMCrichton

SCHOOLS WINCHESTER FIVES DOUBLES TOURNAMENT

Winchester College, 6th November 2005

Despite solid rain all day outside, the Winchester courts held up well and the only sweating came from the competitors, writes David Barnes. It was good to have entries again from the Winchester Fives contingent of Bradfield, Malvern and Radley, and Winchester itself provided its now customary entry of three pairs, supplemented by an excellent fourth to make up for a late withdrawal.

St. Paul's deservedly became the first Rugby Fives school to win this competition, having three evenly matched pairs, all of whom reached the semi-finals. Malvern provided the other semi-finalists, having come through hard matches against Winchester IV and Christ's Hospital I.

In the semis, St. Paul's II defeated the Malvernians in two games, although the second was very close, while St. Paul's I were caught cold by their third pair, going a game down before they knew what was happening. The second game was a lot closer, but the young third pair won it 12-10.

The final lacked nothing in skill and determination, and showed how intelligent Rugby Fives players can adapt to the demands of the Winchester game. Although the buttress was not hit quite as often as in some past finals, it played a crucial part at many stages. Hay and Seigel (SP's II) won the first game, Corbin and Tristao (SP's III) came back to take the second, and the third was a total cliff-hanger in which all four players maintained an extremely high standard of play, the older pair winning by the narrowest possible margin.

Having had things all their own way last year, the host school was less successful this time, although their first pair only just lost in the quarter-finals to the outstanding St. Paul's III. Winchester II went out early to the solid Christ's Hospital I, but had the consolation of winning the plate in a good final against Bradfield I.

Many thanks as ever to Winchester for the use of its courts and facilities, and to Jamie McManus for his help on a very busy day!

1st Round: Marlborough II bt Radley II 11-4, 11-3; Winchester III bt Marlborough I 11-6, 11-3

2nd Round: St. Paul's I bt Christ's Hospital II 11-4, 11-2; Marlborough II bt Tonbridge I 11-6, 11-8; St. Paul's III bt Radley I 11-4, 11-4; Winchester I bt Bradfield II 11-1, 11-8; Malvern bt Winchester IV 7-11, 11-3, 11-8; Christ's Hospital I bt Winchester II 8-11, 12-10, 11-0; Winchester III bt Tonbridge II 11-1, 11-0; St. Paul's II bt Bradfield I 11-5, 11-9

Quarter-Finals: St. Paul's I bt Marlborough II 11-0, 11-3; St. Paul's III bt Winchester I 6-11, 11-8, 11-7; Malvern bt Christ's Hospital I 11-8, 11-9; St. Paul's II bt Winchester III 11-3, 11-5

Semi-Finals: St. Paul's III bt St. Paul's I 11-1, 12-10; St. Paul's II bt Malvern 11-5, 12-10

Final: St. Paul's II bt St. Paul's III 11-6, 8-11, 12-11

Plate: Winchester II.

LATEST RFA RANKINGS

[posted 09 November 05]

At the same time as maintaining his position as the top-ranked doubles player, three successive tournament wins at the start of this season have seen Hamish overtake James Toop to return to the top of the rankings.

There are some further interesting moves lower down the order. Strong performances from Johnny Nelmes and Ed Fuller have secured them Top 10 rankings, while Chris Jones has jumped into the Top 20 after his fine victory over John Beswick at the London Open. And, making their first appearance in the

singles ranking are former schoolboy champions Hal Mohammed and Will Ellison – both names to watch in the future.

In the Doubles rankings, Hamish cemented his position at the top, but things are getting much tighter below him. Thanks to their win in the recent West of England tournament, John Minta and Phil Bishop have both gained places in the top 10, while the losing finalists, Chris Jones and Andy Pringle, are now in the Top 20.

BOB HOLLAND MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT

Manchester, 12th November 2005

[posted 28 November 05]

Photographs of the Bob Holland Memorial Tournament are now available to view online. The doubles tournament was held at the Manchester YMCA on November 12th, and to see the all the photos, [click here](#).

BUSA RUGBY FIVES CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sherborne School, 25th / 27th November 2005

Players from Oxford and Cambridge shared the trophies at the BUSA championships, with Oxford's James Bristow retaining the singles title, while Alan Beverly teamed up with last year's winner Charlie Brooks to claim the doubles title for Cambridge.

James' win came at the expense of Steve Korris and was a fitting climax to a dominant display throughout the competition. However, there were fine performances throughout the tournament. In reaching the semi-finals, Alan Beverly and Charlie Brooks gave more than a glimpse of what was to come, and Ed Hawke played well to win the plate.

As it turned out, losing in the singles semi-finals only seemed to spur Alan and Charlie on, and they went on to gain revenge with a deserved win in the doubles. The Oxford pair of Bristow and Jamie Pendergrass put up a brave fight indeed, they were ahead in both games but the power of Cambridge (Alan, in particular) proved too much and the light blue pair won in two close games.

In fact, this was the second major Oxford scalp for Alan and Charlie, after beating Ed Ronan and Will Hardyment in the semi-finals. Durham's Lee and Midmer also played well to reach to the semi-final, while the London pair of Grant and Sjostrom looked very impressive before losing to the top Oxford pair in the quarter final.

Singles

1st round: C Jones (Cambridge) bt A Seigel (St Paul's) 15-11, 15-5; S Moger (Royal Agricultural College) bt F Sjostrom (UCL) 15-12, 15-4; J Major (Edinburgh) bt Love (Durham) 15-8, 15-4; J Abecassis (Cambridge) bt H Smart (Southampton) 15-7, 15-3; Colton (Bristol) bt Richards (Durham) 15-1, 15-2; C Hay (St Paul's) bt W Midmer (Durham) 15-4, 15-9; R Dale (Bath) bt A Bowden (Durham) 15-12, 15-12; P Rider (Durham) bt B Barber (Southampton) 15-2, 15-2; D Kirk (Sherborne) bt Orton (Durham) 15-11, 15-11; R Nicholls (Durham) bt A Bhuva (Cambridge) 15-0, 15-4; H Manning (Edinburgh) bt D Newsome (Durham) 15-5, 15-13; W Hardyment (Oxford) bt As Smith (Southampton) 15-5, 15-4; Armistead (Durham) bt Brook (Edinburgh) 15-7, 11-15, 15-11

2nd round: Moger bt Jones 15-6, 5-15, 15-11; Major bt Abecassis 15-1, 15-5; Colton bt Adcock (Southampton) 15-5, 15-1; A Lee (Durham) bt R Lebon (Cambridge) 15-6, 15-5; Grant (UCL) bt Hay 15-8, 15-11; Al Smith (Birkbeck) bt J Furniss (Oxford) 15-4, 16-14; A Beverly (Cambridge) bt Dale 15-4, 15-7; S Korris (Leeds) bt Hodder (Imperial) 15-0, 15-1; E Ronan (Oxford) bt E Hawke (Southampton) 16-14, 15-10; Rider bt J Heath (Oxford) 15-0, 15-7; S Byron-Evans (Exeter) bt Malacrida (Edinburgh) 15-1, 15-2; J Pendergrass (Oxford) bt Kirk w/o; Nicholls bt C Lamb (York) 15-1, 15-2; Hardyment bt Manning 15-11, 15-3; C Brooks (Cambridge) bt Armistead 15-4, 15-2

3rd round: Bristow (Oxford) bt Moger 15-3, 15-2; Major bt Colton 15-8, 15-7; Lee bt Grant 15-7, 15-4; Beverly bt Al Smith 15-10, 15-6; Korris bt Ronan 16-14, 15-4; Byron-Evans bt Rider 15-13, 15-5; Pendergrass bt Nicholls 15-7, 15-11; Brooks bt Hardyment 15-4, 15-2

Quarter-finals: Bristow bt Major 15-8, 15-2; Beverly bt Lee 16-15, 13-15, 15-4; Korris bt Byron-Evans 15-12, 15-5; Brooks bt Pendergrass 15-13, 15-5

Semi-finals: Bristow bt Beverly 15-6, 15-11; Korris bt Brooks 15-3, 15-0

Final: Bristow bt Korris 15-3, 15-4

Plate: Hawke

Doubles

1st round: Abecassis & Bhuva (Cambridge) bt Adcock & Hodder (Southampton) 15-6, 15-8; Seigel & Hay (St Paul's) bt Love & Bowden (Durham) 13-15, 15-13, 15-10; Heath & Furniss (Oxford) bt Richards & Armistead (Durham) 15-3, 15-6; Kirk & Park (Sherborne) bt Brook & Malacride (Edinburgh) 15-3, 15-5

2nd round: Bristow & Pendergrass (Oxford) bt Abecassis & Bhuva 15-0, 15-4; Grant & Sjoström (UCL) by Hay & Seigel (15-4, 15-2; Lee & Midmer (Durham) bt Hawke & Barber (Southampton) 15-11, 15-13; Lebon & Jones (Cambridge) bt Newsome & Orton (Durham) 15-3, 15-3; Nicholls & Rider (Durham) bt Smith & Smart (Southampton) 15-1, 15-10; Hardyment & Ronan (Oxford) bt Smith & Ellison (London) 15-10, 15-12; Major & Manning (Edinburgh) bt Heath & Furniss 15-10, 15-8; Brooks and Beverly (Cambridge) bt Kirk & Park 15-9, 15-3

Quarter-finals: Bristow & Pendergrass bt Grant & Sjoström 15-8, 15-8; Lee & Midmer bt Lebon & Jones 15-8, 15-5; Hardyment & Ronan bt Nicholls & Rider 16-14, 16-14; Brooks & Beverly by Major & Manning 15-9, 15-5

Semi-finals: Bristow & Pendergrass bt Lee & Midmer 15-1, 15-3; Brooks & Beverly by Hardyment & Ronan 15-6, 15-8

Final: Brooks & Beverly bt Bristow & Pendergrass 15-13, 16-14

Plate: Colton & Dale (Bristol/Bath)

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (Men's and Ladies') PREVIEW

3rd / 4th December 2005

This weekend will see competition for the top prizes in fives, with the finals of the Men's and Ladies' National Championships. The last 16 in the men's competition will battle it out in Manchester, while the Ladies will be playing at St Paul's in London.

Top seed in the men's championship is Hamish Buchanan, currently ranked number one in the game and already winner of three singles tournaments this season. He is seeded to meet another former champion, James Toop, in the final, while defending champion Matt Cavanagh and Neil Roberts (who first won this title in 1996) complete the top four seeds.

Other men to watch are Phil Bishop and John Minta, both in fine form and playing on their home courts, while Cambridge University's Alan Beverly is a man not to be underestimated after recording some notable wins to reach the last 16. And, if their previous meetings are anything to go by, the first-round clash between Simon Fraser and Neil Roberts should be an epic encounter.

The ladies, meanwhile, will be playing both singles and doubles tournaments on the same day, and all eyes will be on one player, Claire Knowles. Defending champion in both singles and doubles, as well as multiple winner of both titles, she will be looking to etch her name on the trophies again.

JESTERS CLUB CUP: NATIONAL OPEN SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

Manchester Y Club, 3rd / 4th December 2005

'Power, but intelligent power' was the verdict on Phil Bishop's blast to his first national singles title. His hard hitting low into the back corners of his home courts at Manchester's Y Club proved too much (15-8, 15-10) for defending champion Matt Cavanagh.

Matt made his way to face Phil after a repeat of last year's final, overcoming James Toop with shrewd tactics and clinical finishing.

Phil got his first chance at the top prize from a nail-biting semi-final win against past champion Hamish Buchanan. He took the first game and was 14-11 up in the second before faltering in the face of Hamish's ardent competitiveness and having to start again in the third game.

It did not look good for Phil as cramp set in and Hamish raced to a 9-1 lead. But a combination of a tumble for Hamish and Phil waking up from his second game disappointment re-energised the match and Bishop came through despite another late flurry from his rival.

The championship saw a double success for the Y Club with John Minta a worthy winner of the plate competition. It was appropriate then that after the final two greats of the club and the sport – Wayne Enstone and Fred Beswick – were honoured in two plaques naming the courts.

In due course, there will be a full selection of photos on the RFA website, but in the meantime, click [here](#) for John Beswick's pictures of the action.

First round: H Buchanan bt S Roberts 15-13, 15-5; C Jones bt N Austin 15-8, retd hurt; P Bishop bt A Rew 15-9, 15-9; N Roberts bt S Fraser 15-11, 15-4; M Cavanagh bt J Minta 15-13, 15-5; O Stone-Lee bt K Henry 7-15, 15-9, 15-8; D Fox bt M Bate 15-9, 15-13; J Toop bt A Beverly 15-7, 15-5.

Quarter finals: Buchanan bt Jones 15-7, 15-8; Bishop bt N Roberts 8-15, 15-7, 15-0; Cavanagh bt Stone-Lee 15-2, 15-7; Toop bt Fox 15-4, 15-6.

Semi finals: Bishop bt Buchanan 15-10, 14-16, 15-12; Cavanagh bt Toop 15-9, 15-6.

Final: Bishop bt Cavanagh 15-8, 15-10.

Plate: Minta bt Roberts 15-9, bt Rew 15-7; Roberts bt Rew 15-10; Bate bt Henry 11-7, 7-11, 11-3. Final: Minta bt Bate 15-6.

WOMEN'S RUGBY FIVES CHAMPIONSHIPS

St Paul's School, 4th December 2005

Claire Knowles made it a weekend of double celebrations for Manchester as she picked up the Women's singles and doubles titles at the same time as fellow Y Club member Phil Bishop was winning the men's singles title.

This year's tournament was another demonstration of Claire's dominance of the ladies' game. She has now been unbeaten in both singles and doubles championships since her first win in 1999, and conceded no more than a single point in any one game on her way to the singles title.

Losing finalist in both competitions was Dominique Redmond, who was runner-up in the doubles for the second year running, this year with Lia Redmond. Melanie Whitehead also had a good day's play, only losing to Claire in the singles semi-final, before the two teamed up for a convincing win in the doubles.

Sarah McDowell was a clear winner in the plate singles, while Laura Harvey and Anna Shelley took the plate in the doubles.

Singles

Sarah McDowell bt Kathryn Atherton w/o; Alex Steel bt Lia Redmond 15-12; Melanie Whitehead bt Anna Shelley 15-4; Emma Seton bt Laura Harvey 15-5; Denise Hall-Wilton bt Megan Griffith 15-8; Sarah Blessley bt Caroline Makepeace 15-7

Quarter-finals: Claire Knowles bt McDowell 15-1; Whitehead bt Steel 15-5; Seton bt Hall-Wilton w/o; Redmond bt Blessley 15-6

Semi-finals: Knowles bt Whitehead 15-0; Redmond bt Seton 15-9

Final Knowles bt Redmond 15-1 15-0

Plate winner McDowell

Doubles

First round: Sarah Blessley & Sarah McDowell bt Alex Steel & Megan Griffith 11-4, 11-1; Emma Seton & Denise Hall-Wilton bt Laura Harvey & Anna Shelley 11-5, 11-4

Semi-finals: Knowles & Whitehead bt Blessley & McDowell 11-0, 11-1; Redmond & Redmond bt Seton & Hall-Wilton 10-12 11-5 11-7

Final: Knowles & Whitehead bt Redmond & Redmond 15-4 15-3

Plate winners Laura Harvey & Anna Shelley

RFA CLUB PRESIDENT'S CUP

Merchant Taylors' School, 11th December 2005

“The most physically demanding day I’ve probably ever had” – that was the verdict from Gareth Price after his win, with Bruce Hanton, in the 2005 President’s Cup. There’s no doubt that the pair took the most demanding route to the title. Every one of their matches went to three games, and they needed 16 points to win the final game in both the first and second rounds. With that in mind, there’s little surprise that they only came off court at 9.30pm.

Close matches were very much a theme of this year’s tournament, proving the 16 pairs had been selected with no little skill. And, it’s testament to the quality of fives on show that there were enthusiastic spectators in the freezing gallery right to the very end.

However, if last year’s tournament was remarkable for the youth of the finalists – the four had an average age of just 25 – another theme this year was a resurgence for more, err, mature players. This year’s winner Bruce Hanton first won the cup in 1996, two years after Love Mug winner Hamish Buchanan, while Mate’s Plate winner Jeremy Schroeter showed all the delicate touch and sense that are only to be expected of a man who first won the President’s Cup in 1981 and has gone on to win it six more times since.

Hamish’s victory (with Charles Lamb) in the Love Mug plate was particularly notable, as it means he joins the illustrious ranks of players to have won all four of the trophies up for grabs in the tournament.

1st round: Hanton & Price bt Schroeter & Fetherston 15-6, 4-15, 16-15; Minta & Clifford bt Walter & King 15-1, 16-14; Hatton & Reynolds bt Sinton & Butler 11-15, 15-12, 15-12; Baral & Passey bt Grant & McIntyre 15-3, 15-9; Atkinson & Kirk bt Buchanan & Lamb 16-15, 15-10; Thomas & N Arnott bt Harrison & Cohen/Smith 15-9, 15-5; Pringle & Hanney bt Hawke & M Arnott 15-3, 16-15; Henry & O’Brien bt Nithsdale & Hillier 5-15, 15-7, 15-13

2nd round: Hanton & Price bt Minta & Clifford 12-15, 15-10, 16-14; Baral & Passey bt Hatton & Reynolds 15-13, 13-15, 15-7; Atkinson & Kirk bt Thomas & Arnott 15-9, 15-10; Pringle & Hanney by Henry & O’Brien 15-6, 15-10

Semi-finals: Hanton & Price bt Baral & Passey 7-15, 15-6, 15-10; Atkinson & Kirk bt Pringle & Hanney 13-15, 15-5, 15-6

Final: Hanton & Price by Atkinson & Kirk 15-8, 11-15, 15-11

Plates:

Mate’s Plate – Schroeter & Fetherston

T Pot – Harrison & Cohen

Love Mug – Buchanan & Lamb

WEST OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Clifton College, Bristol, 7th/8th January 2006

The West of England Schools Championships were held at Clifton College on 7th and 8th January 2006 with a very healthy entry of 90 competitors from 14 schools.

Dominating the championships was the very strong and talented squad from St Paul’s School, which won six of the eight trophies being contested. Furthermore, in the senior singles and doubles, and the Colts singles and doubles, not only were the winners from St Paul’s, but also the runners-up.

Last year's National and West of England Colts singles winner Daniel Tristao was a worthy winner of the senior singles after a very well fought match against team-mate Alex Seigel.

Tristao played coolly to snatch the first game 12-11 after Siegel had been in front, but the game was wide open after Siegel raced to an 11-2 win in the second game. The younger Tristao kept his composure, however, and played accurately and steadily to take the final game 11-8.

The senior doubles was won by St Paul's second pair, Chris Hay and Alex Seigel, against their top-seeded team-mates Edward Emmett and Mark Gibbor. This was again a very close-run affair, and the standard of fives and the spirit in which the game was played was a tribute to St Paul's.

Jamie Gibbor and Tim Hoolahan dominated the Colts competition and served notice that St Paul's success shows no sign of letting up in the foreseeable future.

Senior Singles

Preliminary round: A Janes (Christ's Hospital) bt J Shepherd (Blundell's) 15-0; A Horsewood bt H McDowell (Blundell's) 15-1; B Litherland (Winchester) bt A Yarwood (Tonbridge) 15-2

1st round: C Hornsey (Abingdon) bt M Schofield (Marlborough) w/o; F Hopewell-Smith (Oundle) bt R Yorke (Bradfield) w/o; E Halliday (Marlborough) bt S McKenney (Abingdon) 15-2; P Kogan (Abingdon) bt R Currall (Blundell's) 16-15; Janes bt Gilbert (Malvern) w/o; R Morgan (Abingdon) bt J Warne (Blundell's) 15-10; A Tong (Winchester) bt E Hansom (Alleyn's) 16-14; D Roberts (Oundle) bt D Emerson (Abingdon) 15-0; B Hale (Winchester) bt A Robinson (Tonbridge) 15-5; A Meek (Eastbourne) bt A Patani (Merchant Taylors) 15-3; Horsewood bt J Holland (Eastbourne) 15-6; T Fabes (Tonbridge) bt E de Moraville (Marlborough) 15-13; C Cochran (Tonbridge) bt J Dudding (Winchester) w/o; Litherland bt A Wall (Marlborough) 15-3; J Vara (St Paul's) bt M Laming (Merchant Taylors) 15-13; W Moir (Tonbridge) bt J Tee (Christ's Hospital) 15-4

2nd round: C Hay (St Paul's) bt Hornsey 15-1; E Hammond (Christ's Hospital) bt Hopewell-Smith w/o; J Lambert (Blundell's) bt Halliday 15-13; D Ackland (Alleyn's) bt Kogan w/o; J Corbin (St Paul's) bt Janes 15-0; M Knight-Robson bt Morgan 15-1; M King (Malvern) bt Tong 15-10; D Tristao (St Paul's) bt Roberts 15-9; A Seigel (St Paul's) bt Hale 15-2; A Lim (Winchester) bt Meek 15-9; Horsewood bt C Cox (Merchant Taylors) 15-1; A Ladak (St Paul's) bt Fabes 15-2; Cochran bt M Oates-Wormer (Sherborne) w/o; M Gibbor (St Paul's) bt Litherland 15-0; J Kelly (Christ's Hospital) bt Vara 15-4; E Emmett (St Paul's) bt Moir 15-4

3rd round: Hay bt Hammond 15-7; Ackland bt Lambert 15-9; Corbin bt Knight-Robson 15-5; Tristao bt King 15-4; Seigel bt Lim 15-8; Ladak bt Horsewood 15-7; Gibbor bt Cochran 15-0; Emmett bt Kelly 15-11

Quarter-finals: Hay bt Ackland 7-11, 11-2, 11-5; Tristao bt Corbin 12-11, 11-9; Seigel bt Ladak 11-1, 11-7; Gibbor bt Emmett 11-9, 11-4

Semi-finals: Tristao bt Hay 15-8; Seigel bt Gibbor 15-12

Final: Tristao bt Seigel 12-11, 1-11, 11-8

Plate: E Hammond

Senior Doubles

Preliminary round: Marlborough I bt Blundell's II 15-4; Merchant Taylors I bt Abingdon III w/o

1st round: Winchester III bt Tonbridge II 15-1; Blundell's I bt Abingdon II 15-8; Marlborough I bt Malvern 15-6; Abingdon I bt Tonbridge III 15-3; Merchant Taylors II bt St Paul's IV 15-12; Merchant Taylors I bt Christ's Hospital II 15-9; Eastbourne bt Oundle w/o; Winchester II bt Marlborough II 16-14

2nd round: St Paul's I bt Winchester III 15-4; Blundell's I bt Bradfield w/o; Winchester I bt Marlborough I 15-8; St Paul's III bt Abingdon I 15-4; Merchant Taylors II bt Christ's Hospital I 16-14; Tonbridge I bt Merchant Taylors I 15-4; Eastbourne bt Alleyn's 15-2; St Paul's II bt Winchester II 15-9

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I bt Blundell's I 15-0; St Paul's III bt Winchester I 15-4; Tonbridge I bt Merchant Taylors II 15-11; St Paul's II bt Eastbourne 15-9
Semi-finals: St Paul's I bt St Paul's III 11-9, 5-11, 11-4; St Paul's II bt Tonbridge I 11-5, 11-9
Final: St Paul's II (Hay & Seigel) bt St Paul's I 11-6, 2-11, 11-4
Plate: St Paul's IV (Ladak & Vara)

Colts Singles

1st round: N Hemming-Brown (Merchant Taylors) bt J Chipping (Tonbridge) 15-6; H McDowell (Blundell's) bt J Morgan (Abingdon) 15-2; S Miller (Merchant Taylors) bt N Pickford (Eastbourne) w/o; R Jesty (Winchester) bt R Walport (St Paul's) 15-13; P Hanton (Alleyn's) bt E Ward (Malvern) 15-2; M Hemmings (Tonbridge) bt H Rogers (Winchester) 15-1; S Jones (Christ's Hospital) bt J Hartley (Oundle) w/o; R Longstreet (Blundell's) bt L McCulloch (Christ's Hospital) 15-4, A McDader (Malvern) bt W Dodds (Eastbourne) 16-14; S Coffey (Malvern) bt D Bowden (Alleyn's) 15-2; L Rowland (St Paul's) bt S Brown (Christ's Hospital) w/o; H Wills (Marlborough) bt R Gramble (Winchester) 15-5; J Baker (St Paul's) bt J Gibson (Marlborough) 15-13; T Gauntlett (Christ's Hospital) bt C Choudry (Merchant Taylors) 15-10; L Squire-Smith (Winchester) bt A Squibbs (Blundell's) 15-3; E Lock (Blundell's) bt C Bughiar (Merchant Taylors) 15-4

2nd round: N Simpson (Christ's Hospital) bt Hemming-Brown 15-5; F Kelly (Winchester) bt McDowell 15-1; R Lowe (Alleyn's) bt Miller 15-0; J Faber (St Paul's) bt Jesty 15-1; T Hoolahan (St Paul's) bt Hanton 15-6; J Eadie (Blundell's) bt Hemmings 16-15; W Kennedy (Winchester) bt Jones 15-1; A Wilson (Marlborough) bt Longstreet 15-4; J Gibbor (St Paul's) bt McDader 15-0; C Burrows (Oundle) bt Coffey 15-5; Rowland bt S Morton (Marlborough) 15-1; I Ackland (Alleyn's) bt Wills 15-4; K Sloan (Merchant Taylors) bt Baker 15-7; R Garratt (Eastbourne) bt Gauntlett 15-8; Squire-Smith bt S Mighail (Christ's Hospital) 15-2; P Winzeler (KCS Wimbledon) bt Lock 15-1

3rd round: Simpson bt Kelly 15-2; Faber bt Lowe 15-11; Hoolahan bt Eadie 15-3; Wilson bt Kennedy 15-4; Gibbor bt Burrows 15-10; Rowland bt Ackland 15-9; Sloan bt Garratt 15-8; Winzeler bt Squire-Smith 15-9

Quarter-finals: Simpson bt Faber 4-11, 11-6, 11-6; Hoolahan bt Wilson 11-2, 12-10; Gibbor bt Rowland 11-1, 11-3; Winzeler bt Sloan 11-4, 12-11

Semi-finals: Hoolahan bt Simpson 15-10; Gibbor bt Winzeler 15-3

Final: Gibbor bt Hoolahan 11-6, 11-3

Plate: R Walport

Colts Doubles

1st round: Blundell's I bt Malvern 16-14; Winchester III bt Merchant Taylors II 15-6; Alleyn's II bt Christ's Hospital III w/o; Marlborough II bt Tonbridge 15-4

2nd round: St Paul's I bt Blundell's II 15-5; St Paul's III bt Eastbourne 15-1; Marlborough I bt Blundell's I 15-10; Winchester I bt Christ's Hospital 15-1; Alleyn's I bt Winchester III 15-1; St Paul's II bt Winchester II 15-5; Alleyn's II bt Merchant Taylors I 15-3; Christ's Hospital I bt Marlborough II 15-5

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I bt St Paul's III 15-5; Winchester I bt Marlborough I 15-8; St Paul's II bt Alleyn's I 15-1; Alleyn's II bt Christ's Hospital I 16-15

Semi-finals: St Paul's I bt Winchester I 11-2, 11-7; St Paul's II bt Alleyn's II 11-1, 11-3

Final: St Paul's I bt St Paul's II 11-9, 11-5

Plate: Winchester II (Squire-Smith & Jesty)

NORTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Manchester, 28th / 29th January 2006

National champion Phil Bishop continued his rich vein of form by winning both the singles and doubles titles at the North West Open.

After beating Paddy d'Ancona in the singles final, he teamed up with John Minta to claim the doubles title. It's Phil's third successive open title on the Manchester courts and, following their West of England win in October, Phil and John's second doubles title this season.

It was runner-up Paddy d'Ancona, though, who could arguably claim to have won the game of the tournament – a tough match against John Beswick, which Paddy finally won 12-10 in the third game.

In the doubles tournament, such close games were very much the order of the day, with the pick being the quarter-final clash between Jim Hughes & Alex Rew and Wayne Enstone & Kevin Henry. Jim and Alex eventually came back from a game down to win the second and third games – by 12-11 in both!

Phil Bishop and John Minta, meanwhile, made rapid progress to the semi-final, where they beat Ben Taberner and Paddy d'Ancona in two close games. Normal service was resumed in the final, though, and two relatively quick games took the local pair to the title – and Phil to his memorable double.

Nevertheless, according to official sources, the talk of the tournament was that Tim Lewis couldn't stop talking about washing machines. However, it's also worth mentioning that Phil's wasn't the only double at the tournament. Steve Korris also went home with two trophies after winning the singles plate and then teaming up with Ed Hatton to claim the doubles plate as well.

Singles

1st round: W Harrison bt T Lewis 11-5, 11-2; B Taberner bt A Bowden 11-6, 11-2; S Watson bt B Nithsdale 11-5, 11-7; J Minta bt R King 11-0, 11-0; E Hatton bt S Werkshagen 11-6, 11-0; L Samuels bt D Clydesdale-Cotter 11-2, 11-3; S Moger bt J Thomas 11-2, 11-3; J Hughes bt T Curtain 11-9, 11-0; M Bowness bt S Maskell 11-3, 12-10; A Rew bt S Kirby 11-6, 11-6; K Henry bt R Larnach 11-7, 11-4; M Skogh bt S Korris 10-12, 11-3, 11-5

2nd round: P Bishop bt Harrison 11-6, 11-3; Taberner bt Watson 11-3, 11-8; Minta bt Hatton 11-5, 11-0; D Fox bt Samuels 11-5, 11-2; J Beswick bt Moger 11-5, 11-1; Bowness bt Hughes 11-8, 11-5; Rew bt Henry 11-8, 7-11, 11-8; P d'Ancona bt Skogh 11-3, 11-4

Quarter-finals: Bishop bt Taberner 11-7, 11-5; Minta bt Fox 11-5, 11-6; Beswick bt Bowness 11-2, 11-4; d'Ancona bt Rew 11-2, 11-3

Semi-finals: Bishop bt Minta 11-7, 11-9; d'Ancona bt Beswick 11-1, 5-11, 12-10

Final: Bishop bt d'Ancona 11-2, 11-3

Plate: Korris

Doubles

Preliminary round: King & Larnach bt Kockatalo & Salish 11-2, 11-8

1st round: Beswick & Roberts bt Brice & Moger 11-2, 11-6; Harrison & Nithsdale by Kirby & Kirk 10-12, 11-4, 11-9; Enstone & Henry bt Bowness & Watson 11-2, 11-5; Hughes & Rew bt Darlington & Thomas 11-8, 11-5; Bishop & Minta bt Maskell & Werkshagen 11-3, 11-1; Samuels & Bowness bt Korris & Hatton 11-5, 8-11, 11-2; d'Ancona & Taberner bt King & Larnach score unknown

Quarter-finals: Beswick & Roberts bt Harrison & Nithsdale 11-4, 11-1; Hughes & Rew bt Enstone & Henry 4-11, 12-11, 12-11; Bishop & Minta bt Cotter & Curtain 11-2, 11-2; d'Ancona & Taberner bt Samuels & Bowness 11-2, 11-5

Semi-finals: Beswick & Roberts bt Hughes & Rew 11-8, 10-12, 11-5; Bishop & Minta bt d'Ancona & Taberner 12-10, 11-8

Final: Bishop & Minta bt Beswick & Roberts 11-1, 11-4

Plate: Hatton & Korris

RFA v BUSA REPRESENTATIVE MATCH

Christ's Hospital, 5th February 2006

The representative teams were well matched this year, with a strong RFA side taking the honours in both singles and doubles and thus winning the match fairly comfortably in the end against a plucky BUSA team.

The RFA won the top five singles, although the students put up stout resistance. Beverly, playing top in the absence of the injured James Bristow, scored more points against Buchanan than he had previously managed, while Korris and Grant could both have won their games. Lee did well for a man based this season in the South of France, and Crichton at six won his game by a wide margin and reduced the deficit considerably.

Five of the first six doubles games were very close, with the second and third pairs coming out almost level on points; but Buchanan and Wilson, having been severely challenged by BUSA champions Beverly and Brooks in their first game, changed tactics and defeated their young opponents heavily in the second, ensuring that the RFA did not lose the overall initiative.

The exchange doubles were shared, each team winning three and losing three games. Beverly and Brooks played their best fives to Jones and Pringle easily, but then lost to Roberts and Stone-Lee when the match was already decided. Lee and Grant did well against Roberts and Stone-Lee but lost to Buchanan and Wilson; and Korris and Crichton came out level on their two games.

We are most grateful to Christ's Hospital for the use of their courts and facilities, and to team managers Alex Wilson (RFA) and Chris Jones (BUSA) for their organisation. Congratulations are also due to the irrepressible David Gardner, who came to support the BUSA team a mere eight days after his hip replacement operation!

Singles

(RFA names first) H Buchanan bt A Beverly (Cambridge) 15-8; C Jones bt S Korris (Leeds) 15-13; O Stone-Lee bt A Lee (Durham) 15-8; S Roberts bt C Brooks (Cambridge) 15-5; A Pringle bt D Grant (UCL) 15-11; A Wilson lost to E M-M-Crichton (Oxford Brookes) 2-15

Doubles

(RFA names first) Buchanan & Wilson bt Beverly & Brooks 16-15, 15-3; bt Lee & Grant 15-3; bt Korris & Crichton 15-9. Jones & Pringle drew with Lee & Grant 12-15, 15-12; lost to Beverly & Brooks 1-15; lost to Korris & Crichton 9-15. Roberts & Stone-Lee bt Korris & Crichton 15-13, 15-16; lost to Grant & Lee 13-15; bt Beverly & Brooks 15-4.

NATIONAL UNDER 25s CHAMPIONSHIPS

Durham, 11/12th February 2006

The largest ever group of competitors gathered for this year's Under 25s in Durham. Thirty-four competed in the singles and sixteen pairs in the doubles.

Unsurprisingly, this resulted in some of the closest and most exciting matches ever. Kirk beat Barlow in a hard-fought three-gamer before doing well against 4th seed Brooks. In the quarter-finals, Durham captain Rider just squeezed past his Edinburgh opposite number Major, but the big story was Ed MMC. The triple-barrelled battleship beat the 3rd and 2nd seeds with something to spare on his way to a final with Beverly, the hitherto fairly untroubled top seed.

MMC gave it his all in a tough first game, but didn't quite have the range of shots to overcome the stylish and worthy winner. In his last eligible year, Hillier showed a wise old head on equally old shoulders to take the plate from a field of 15 entrants.

The doubles games were quickly affected by intense court sweating so, suddenly, the volleyers and those who could play very early shots had a distinct advantage.

The eventual finalists did not have it easy. Nichols and Rider took three games to overcome scratch pair Grant and MMC, and Oxford pair Hardyment and Ronan gave their Cambridge opponents Beverly and Brooks a close second game.

The final was a joy to watch. Each pair gained a small but unbridgeable advantage in the first and second games, but the flowing and spectacular volleying of Nichols succeeded in overwhelming Beverly and Brooks in a convincing and loudly-supported victory in the third. An all-Cambridge plate final was won by Belassie and Abecassis.

Heartfelt thanks go to Durham and Paul Rider in particular. Thanks also to all the competitors for coming and being fairly prompt on court. Next year, the tournament will be held in London.

Singles

1st round: Beverly bt Armistead 11-2, 11-0; Furniss bt Abecassis 11-2, 11-7; Rider bt Thomson 11-1, 11-4; Major bt Midmer 11-4, 11-7; Brooks bt Richards 11-4, 11-1; Kirk bt Barlow 11-6, 7-11, 11-4; Grant bt Newsome 11-2, 11-1; Hardyment bt Love 11-6, 7-11, 11-4; MMC bt Clive 11-1, 11-0; Ross bt Heath 11-2, 11-3; Hatton bt Windham 11-2, 11-2; Belassie bt Lamb 11-4, 11-6; Nicols bt Hillier 11-3, 11-5; Ronan bt Jones 11-0, 11-4; Korris bt Holl 11-3, 11-5; Lebon bt Bowden 11-2, 11-5

2nd round: Beverly bt Furniss 11-2, 11-7; Rider bt Major 12-10, 12-11; Brooks bt Kirk 11-1, 11-9; Grant bt Hardyment 11-5, 11-5; MMC bt Ross 11-3, 11-1; Hatton bt Belassie 11-8, 11-6; Nichols bt Ronan 11-3, 11-1; Korris bt Lebon 11-3, 11-5

Quarter-finals: Beverly by Rider 15-1, 15-2; Grant bt Brooks 15-12, 15-10; MMC bt Hatton 15-5, 15-6; Korris bt Nichols 15-8, 15-9

Semi-finals: Beverly bt Grant 15-5, 15-3; MMC bt Korris 15-7, 15-5

Final: Beverly bt MMC 15-11, 15-4

Plate: Hillier

Doubles

1st round: Beverly & Brooks bt Furniss & Heath 15-0, 15-6; Hillier & Thomson bt Swayne & Baker 15-8, 15-0; Hardyment & Ronan bt Belsassie & Abecassis 15-9, 15-4; Major & Barlow bt Richards & Armistead 15-10, 15-13; MMC & Grant bt Windham & Holl 15-0, 15-5; Nichols & Rider bt Lebon &

Jones 15-7, 15-12; Marshall & Ross bt Newsome & Love 15-2, 15-11; Bowden & Midmer bt Hatton & Korris 15-7, 15-1

Quarter-finals: Beverley & Brooks bt Hillier & Thomson 15-5, 15-1; Hardyment & Ronan bt Major & Barlow 15-5, 15-4; Nichols & Rider bt MMC & Grant 15-3, 8-15, 15-8; Ross & Marshall bt Bowden & Midmer 15-7, 15-9

Semi-finals: Beverly & Brooks bt Hardyment & Ronan 15-6, 15-12; Nichols & Rider bt Ross & Marshall 15-11, 15-4

Final: Nichols & Rider bt Beverly & Brooks 11-15, 16-14, 15-4

Plate: Belassie & Abecassis

OXFORD v CAMBRIDGE

St Paul's School, 25th February 2006

Cambridge's win in the 2006 Varsity Match must go down as one of the most memorable matches ever. The result was the closest since 1928, and victory for either side hinged on the last two games of doubles, where Oxford needed to come out on top by six points.

Pendergrass and Furniss duly beat the Cambridge second pair to 3, only to find that current BUSA champions Brooks and Beverly had beaten the Oxford second pair to 1.

By this time it was nearly 8.30pm, the Cambridge 1st IV having been held up for several hours by an accident on the M11. The bottom half of the match had been completed before the Singles were eventually played at 5.30, followed by the top doubles.

Throughout the match, there were never more than 5 points between the teams, with Cambridge 2 up after the bottom doubles, 3 down after the singles, 5 up half-way through the top doubles, and winning by 4 points at the end.

Cambridge now boast 50 wins against 26 by Oxford.

Singles (Cambridge names first)

A Beverly (St Paul's & Girton) bt J Pendergrass (Loretto & Balliol) 16-14; C Brooks (St Paul's & Caius) bt W Hardyment (Radley & St Hugh's) 15-6; S Beal (Eastbourne, Durham & Homerton) lost to E Ronan (Bradfield & St Hugh's) 7-15; M Belassie (Christ's Hospital & Caius) lost to J Furniss (St Paul's & Pembroke) 7-15

Doubles

Beverly & Brooks bt Pendergrass & Furniss 15-8, 15-1; bt Hardyment & Ronan 15-6, 15-1. Beal & Belassie lost to Hardyment & Ronan 10-15, 7-15; lost to Pendergrass & Furniss 3-15, 3-15. R Lebon (Christ's Hospital & Trinity) & C Jones (Tonbridge & Emmanuel) bt J Heath (Radley & Exeter) & C Powrie (Whitgift & Hertford) 10-15, 15-4; lost to T Windham (Radley & BNC) & A Jennings (St Paul's & Corpus) 9-15, 15-10. A Bhuva (St Paul's & St John's) & J Abecassis (Clifton & St John's) lost to Windham & Jennings 6-15, 6-15; bt Heath & Powrie 15-9, 15-6.

Cambridge won by 219-215

In the Sparrows versus Beavers match, Oxford won by 81-47. Representing Cambridge were: M Hanney (St. Paul's & Jesus) and P Driscoll (Whitgift & Christ's); for Oxford E Wilman (Giggleswick & Hertford) and R Holl (Winchester & Worcester).

NORTH OF ENGLAND OPEN

Durham, 25/26th February 2006

Hamish Buchanan claimed his fourth singles title of the season with victory at the North of England Open, while Neil Roberts and John Beswick teamed up to claim their second doubles title.

Thanks also to a very high turnout of current and recent University players, the tournament had a distinctly youthful appearance. And, the pick of the younger players had to be Nicholls who played well against Beswick but succumbed to the extra power and experience.

In the quarter-finals, Kevin Henry had a good win over Chris Jones, but in the semis, experience told: Buchanan overcame Minta in three, and Beswick powered his way past Henry. In the final, Hamish dealt with John's power shots and, with clever drops and angles, moved him around until tiredness set in, to claim another title.

After an evening at the Court Inn and the Dun Cow, the following day's doubles saw some cracking matches. Korris and Widdup nearly nicked a game off Minta and Henry, while Under 25 champions Nicholls and Rider gave Buchanan and Jones a fright in the semis.

In the other half, a fresh Roberts dominated and ensured a place in the final with some fine length and crisp pace. The final looked like being a very one sided affair as Roberts and Beswick strolled through the first game, but Jones had different ideas in the second and, although Roberts and Beswick threw everything at him, returned it all with interest to ensure that the final would go all the way. In the end, though, the accuracy and power of Roberts and Beswick saw them home.

Singles

Prelims: Hay bt Midmer; Baral bt Love 12-10, 11-7; Newsome bt Lamb 11-2, 12-10

1st round: Buchanan bt Newsome 11-1, 11-1; Rider bt Baker w/o; Minta bt Orton 11-1, 11-1; Hajialexandrou bt Hay 11-3, 11-6; Henry bt Armistead 11-2, 11-0; Jones bt Seigel 11-2, 11-2; Nichols bt Baral 11-0, 11-8; Beswick bt Bowden 11-2, 11-0

Quarter-finals: Buchanan bt Rider 11-8, 11-2; Minta bt Haji 11-2, 11-6; Henry bt Jones 3-11, 11-4, 11-4; Beswick bt Nichols 11-6, 11-2

Semi-finals: Buchanan bt Minta 11-2, 9-11, 11-2; Beswick bt Henry 11-3, 11-0

Final: Buchanan bt Beswick 11-5, 11-2

Plate: Rider

Doubles

Prelims: Korris & Widdup bt Midmer & Swayne; Seigel & Hay bt Armistead & Richards 11-9, 7-11, 11-2; Sandie & Marshall bt Bowden & Newsome 11-4, 11-6.

Quarter-finals: Beswick & Roberts bt McIntyre & Lamb 11-0, 11-2; Minta & Henry bt Korris & Widdup 12-10, 11-1; Rider & Nichols bt Seigel & Hay 11-2, 11-3; Buchanan & Jones bt Sandie & Marshall 11-2, 11-2

Semi-finals: Beswick & Roberts bt Minta & Henry 11-2, 11-6; Buchanan & Jones bt Rider & Nichols 11-1, 5-11, 11-9

Final: Beswick & Roberts bt Buchanan & Jones 11-8, 4-11, 11-3.

Plate: Korris & Widdup

WINCHESTER FIVES NATIONAL LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Bradfield, 11th March 2006

A spirited group of Oundle girls joined the normal elders of the ladies game, making a respectable fourteen competitors. The girls fitted in quickly and added much to the atmosphere of the day. As usual, a variety of formats were contrived to give the newcomers plenty of gentler fives but stretching the others to extremes.

One such game was the doubles match between Denise Hall-Wilton & Alexandra Steel against Kathryn Atherton & Caroline Makepeace - a gruelling one-and-three quarter hour battle. Denise and Alex's reward for the win was to meet Melanie Whitehead and Emma Seton in the final. None of them had played with their partners before and there were both amusing and serious moments in a friendly but hard fought match. Melanie and Emma claimed the win, and the Bradfield Bowl, for the first time.

In the singles, Caroline Makepeace played another three setter, but Oundle pupil Naomi Brass won through. The singles final was a cliff-hanging affair of a high standard. Dominique Redmond, the holder of the Crayke Cup, seemed to have the edge with her Eton Fives-style of service and buttress accuracy. But Emma Seton stuck to her outwardly calm-looking Rugby Fives style (from the Derby Moor Club) to win the crucial third game. With it, she secured the Crayke Cup, her second trophy of the day and - having won the mixed doubles title in 2005 - a very impressive hat-trick of Winchester Fives titles.

Singles Final: Emma Seton bt Dominique Redmond 10-15, 15-13, 15-12

Doubles Final: Seton & Whitehead bt Hall-Wilton & Steel 15-10, 13-15, 15-9

WINCHESTER FIVES NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Bradfield, 12th March 2006

A bitterly cold late winter day saw 24 pairs converge on Bradfield, just far enough south and east to avoid the overnight snow, for the 25th 'Barnes Bridge'.

The first two rounds brought no shock results and relatively few close games. Brice and Moger squeezed past Kirby and Kirk, only to qualify for summary execution by Buchanan and Roberts in the next round; Barford and Butterfield, playing together after 13 years' absence, showed some of their old class in beating the Bury brothers; the young St Paul's pair of Corbin and Tristao, adapting rapidly to the buttress game, proved just too lively for their senior opponents in both rounds; and Maskell and Werkshagen eventually had the better of a tight match with Hodgins and McManus.

The top four seeds all made it through their quarter-finals in straight games, with the Wessex pair of Akerman and Mohammed looking particularly impressive in dismissing Maconie and Wilson.

The semis were both classic encounters. Fox and Hebden, the defending champions, were put under severe pressure by Akerman and Mohammed, who played top-class Winchester Fives to win the first game narrowly. The title holders came back strongly to take the second game, but the men of Wessex regained their best form to claim the third, with Akerman the outstanding player on court.

Next door, Hughes and Rew, who have honed their Winchester Fives technique steadily year by year, finally kept it together for a whole match, beating the luckless Buchanan and Roberts in two desperately close games.

The final was a good one, if not quite rising to the quality of the semis. The first game was extremely close, with all four players (none of whom played Winchester Fives at school) playing to a high standard. Akerman and Mohammed just had the edge in that game, and they proceeded win the next, and with it the match, relatively comfortably.

Hodgins and McManus, also from the Wessex Club, won a hard-fought plate final against local stars Marshall and Ronan.

The RFA is grateful to Bradfield College for the use of its courts and other facilities, and for providing an excellent lunch in a warm environment to fortify the competitors and spectators.

1st round: J Marshall & E Ronan bt M Adcock & A Hodder 11-0, 11-4; J Furniss & W Hardyment bt J Butler & A Inskip 11-9, 7-6 retd; E Emmett & M Gibbor bt A Lewis & Y Smith 11-3, 11-3; H Barford & N Butterfield bt R Bury & T Bury 12-10, 11-4; S Maskell & S Werkshagen bt M Arnott & N Arnott 11-2, 11-3; J Corbin & D Tristao bt C Butler & T Kiggell 9-11, 11-7, 11-7; K Brice & S Moger bt S Kirby & B Kirk 3-11, 11-6, 12-10

2nd round: D Fox & D Hebden bt J Ball & G Kennedy 11-0, 11-2; R Barr & S Constantine bt Marshall & Ronan 11-4, 11-3; T Maconie & A Wilson bt Furniss & Hardyment 11-0, 11-3; H Akerman & M Mohammed bt Emmett & Gibbor 11-1, 11-1; J Hughes & A Rew bt Barford & Butterfield 11-7, 11-1; Maskell & Werkshagen bt J Hodgins & J McManus 12-10, 3-11, 11-5; Corbin & Tristao by J Sinton & C Thomas 11-6, 11-9; H Buchanan & S Roberts bt Brice & Moger 11-3, 11-1

Quarter-finals: Fox & Hebden bt Barr & Constantine 11-5, 11-5; Akerman & Mohammed bt Maconie & Wilson 11-2, 11-1; Hughes & Rew bt Maskell & Werkshagen 11-9, 11-3; Buchanan & Roberts bt Corbin & Tristao 11-5, 11-9

Semi-finals: Akerman & Mohammed bt Fox & Hebden 12-10, 5-11, 11-7; Hughes & Rew bt Buchanan & Roberts 11-9, 12-10

Final: Akerman & Mohammed bt Hughes & Rew 11-9, 11-4

Plate: Hodgins & McManus

NATIONAL UNDER 13 CHAMPIONSHIPS

St Paul's School, 12th March 2006

In an entry a little short of 2005 levels, 5 schools sent boys, together with much parental support, to take part in the tournament, held once again at St Paul's. There were no entries from St Olaves, Stoke Newington and Clifton College but Loretto succeeded in beating the impending Scottish snow and flew down on the Saturday evening. Both Pilgrims and St Dunstans came with eight boys.

In the Singles pool games, 6 boys managed the maximum 44 points, so heralding a keen knockout contest. This indeed did not disappoint, with 16 boys in the fray spread across all schools.

At first, it seemed that Perriam and Allan from Loretto would meet in the final as they came from opposite ends of the draw, but Connolly from St Dunstans had other ideas and put paid firstly to Perriam in the 2nd round, then Allan in the final. Hills from Pilgrims and Stephens-Hemingway from Alleyn's both made it to the Semis to keep their schools' hopes alive.

The final started with a rush of powerful shots from Connolly, who had only played Fives for three weeks, and who won the first game 11-0. But Allan fought back, taking a 5-0 lead in the second until

Connolly's power and timing reasserted itself, the game running out 11-6. Meanwhile the Plate witnessed some close matches, with Stracey from Christ's Hospital showing good stamina to win 12-11 over Hawkins of Alleyn's.

Although St Dunstons did not take part in the Doubles in view of lack of experience, the competition was no less intense, with the games generally hard fought. Pilgrims, who had practised hard at Doubles, deserved commiserations to have 3 out of 4 teams in the knockout stage, only to be displaced by the single Loretto pair in the final.

Singles

Last 16: Perriam (Loretto) bt Nicholson (Alleyn's) 15-2, Connolly (St Dunstons) bt Wyatt (Pilgrims) 15-1, Spooner (Pilgrims) bt Wess (Pilgrims) 15-7, Stephens-Hemingway (Alleyn's) bt McWhirter (Pilgrims) 15-10, Hills (Pilgrims) bt Handy (Alleyn's) 15-0, Leuchars (Pilgrims) bt Noad (Christ's Hospital) 15-2, Owen (Pilgrims) bt Thomson (Christ's Hospital) 15-10, Allan (Loretto) bt Solomon (St Dunstons) 15-2

Quarter finals: Connolly bt Perriam 15-1, Stephens-Hemingway bt Spooner 15-10, Hills bt Leuchars 16-14, Allan bt Owen 15-9

Semi finals: Connolly bt Stephens-Hemingway 15-8, Allan bt Hills 15-12

Final: Connolly bt Allan 11-0, 11-6

Plate: Stracey (Christ's Hospital)

Doubles

Semi-finals: Loretto bt Pilgrims 3 11-3, Pilgrims 1 bt Pilgrims 2 11-7

Final: Loretto bt Pilgrims 1 11-6, 11-5

Plate: Alleyn's 1

NATIONAL OPEN DOUBLES (CYRIAX CUP)

Alleyn's School, 25/26th March 2006

Hamish Buchanan and Robin Perry have claimed their third successive National Doubles title - and, with it, the Cyriax Cup - after a win over Phil Bishop and John Minta at Alleyn's.

Playing on their home courts, Hamish and Robin were always on top in a brutal and bruising final, which left the spectators gasping in awe, and occasionally wincing in pain. The London pair blitzed their way to a quick and comfortable win in the first game and, although Phil and John upped their game in the second, they simply could not resist the relentless power and athleticism of the defending champions.

Overall, though, it was a successful tournament for Manchester's Y Club, with John Beswick and Ben Taberner (partnered by Neil Roberts and Paddy d'Ancona respectively) also reaching the semi-finals. For John, losing at that stage was doubly tough: not only did he miss out on the chance to win back a title he has won four times, it also meant he had to get to Derby by 10.30 on Sunday morning to play for the Y Club in a first round Club Knockout match.

If the final stages of the tournament represented a triumph for experience, that's not to say the younger players were outclassed. BUSA champions Charlie Brooks and Alan Beverly had a fine win in the plate, for example, while London University students Dan Grant and Freddy Sjoström reached the quarter-finals of the main competition, and the St Paul's schoolboys Hay and Siegel put up a very creditable performance before losing to Matt Cavanagh and Chris Jones.

1st round: Grant & Sjostrom bt Bate & Hatton 11-15, 15-13, 15-12; Cavanagh & Jones bt Hay & Siegel 15-10, 15-13; Beverly & Brooks bt Stone-Lee & Wilson 15-10, 15-5; d'Ancona & Taberner bt Bowden & Sinton 15-2, 15-2

Quarter-finals: Buchanan & Perry bt Grant & Sjostrom 15-4, 15-4; Beswick & Roberts bt Hughes & Rew 15-4, 15-10; Bishop & Minta bt Cavanagh & Jones 15-8, 15-10; d'Ancona & Taberner bt Beverly & Brooks 15-7, 15-1

Semi-finals: Buchanan & Perry bt Beswick & Roberts 15-10, 15-8; Bishop & Minta bt d'Ancona & Taberner 15-8, 15-8

Final: Buchanan & Perry bt Bishop & Minta 15-2, 15-8

Plate: Beverly & Brooks

NATIONAL VETERANS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Christ's Hospital, Horsham, 1st/2nd April 2006

Neil Roberts marked his first appearance in the National Veterans' (over 45) Championships by winning both the singles and doubles titles.

His victory in the singles came just four years after his most recent win in the National Singles Championship, and demonstrated why he remains ranked in the top five. He was in super form throughout the first day of the tournament and took the final against defending champion Dave Hebden with some powerful hitting.

He then teamed up with Wayne Enstone (making his first appearance in this tournament since 1997) to reunite a pair that won the National Doubles title nine times in the 1990s. And, as in the singles, Neil's eventual victory was at the expense of former champions, in this case six-times champions Jeremy Schroeter and (on his welcome return to the competition after missing 2005's event) Ian Fuller.

True to form, the four players turned on the style in a magnificent match that would have graced any tournament. Ian and Jeremy edged a tight first game, but Wayne and Neil fought back to take the next two games and, with them, the title.

Indeed, tough finals were very much a theme of this year's tournament. Both plates were also decided only after gruelling three-game matches: Brian Nithsdale just edged out Tony Burrows to take the singles plate, while Stuart Kirby and Brian Kirk retained their Doubles Plate after a nail-biting three games against Robert Dalman and David Butlin.

Singles

1st round: N Roberts bt P King 11-0, 11-0; D Hebden bt J Hawke 11-1, 11-2

Quarter-finals: Roberts bt A Burrows 11-1, 11-1; N Butterfield bt B Nithsdale 11-2, 11-8; J Schroeter bt I Roberts 11-1, 11-0; Hebden bt G McIntyre 11-1, 11-1

Semi-finals: Roberts bt Butterfield 11-0, 11-1; Hebden bt Schroeter 11-2, 11-5

Final: Roberts bt Hebden 11-5, 11-2

Plate: Nithsdale

Doubles

1st round: Fuller & Schroeter bt Hawke & McIntyre 15-1, 15-2; Enstone & N Roberts bt Arnott & Wilkinson 15-3, 15-2; Hebden & Puckle bt King & I Roberts 15-5, 15-4

Quarter-finals: Fuller & Schroeter bt B Atkinson & Burrows 15-3, 15-2; P Atkinson & Nithsdale bt Kirby & Kirk 15-9, 15-9; Enstone & Roberts bt Butlin & Dalman 15-2, 15-1; Hebden & Puckle bt Andrews & Ross 15-5, 15-7

Semi-finals: Fuller & Schroeter bt Atkinson & Nithsdale 15-6, 15-6; Enstone & Roberts bt Hebden & Puckle 15-0, 15-6

Final: Enstone & Roberts bt Fuller & Schroeter 12-15, 15-4, 15-5

Plate: Kirby & Kirk

NATIONAL SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

St Paul's School, 3rd-6th April 2006

With wins in both the singles and doubles at Open and Under 16 level in the National Schools' Championships, St Paul's continued its dominance of schoolboy fives.

In the Open tournament, the results were a repeat of January's West of England Championships. The doubles title went to Chris Hay and Alex Seigel, while last year's Under 16 champion, Daniel Tristao, played fives of a quality and maturity rarely seen in so young a player to claim his second singles title of the season.

In the Under 16s tournament, Luke Rowland scored a memorable double, claiming the singles title with a win over Ackland (Alleyn's), before teaming up with Jamie Faber to win the doubles title as well.

As if to demonstrate the dominance of the school, in all of the above matches, not only were the winners from St Paul's, so were the runners-up.

However, that's not to say the other schools were outclassed. In the Open singles, for example, Leggett (Merchiston) did well to reach the semi-finals after winning a tough quarter-final in three games, while the Sherborne pair did likewise in the Open Doubles. And, with Plate wins going to boys from KCS Wimbledon, Christ's Hospital, Alleyn's and Winchester as well as St Paul's, it's clear the game is being played to a high standard in schools all over the country.

It was in the Under 14s tournament that the St Paul's stranglehold was finally broken. Boys from nine schools entered the competition, and the outstanding player was Peter Hanton (Alleyn's). He won the singles almost unopposed and then played a large part in the doubles, which he won with his partner David Bowden. His strongest singles challenge came in the semi-finals from Ashley Hill, the first ever entrant from Derby Moor Community School, but the St Olave's squad also performed with great credit in both singles and doubles.

Open Singles (Knockout stages only)

1st round: E Leakey (Sherborne) bt J Thompson (Tonbridge) 11-1, 11-8; D Tristao (St Paul's) bt A Horsewood (Winchester) 11-2, 11-3; E Emmett (St Paul's) bt E Hammond (Christ's Hospital) 11-2, 11-4; C Leggett (Merchiston) bt R Dadia (St Paul's) 11-0, 11-4; A Seigel (St Paul's) bt A Tong (Winchester) 11-1, 11-7; M Gibbor (St Paul's) bt I Acklem (Alleyn's) 11-2, 11-3; C Hay (St Paul's) bt A Lim (Winchester) 11-3, 11-6; D Ackland (Alleyn's) bt A Ladak (St Paul's) 11-9, 8-11, 11-2

Quarter-finals: Tristao bt Leakey 11-5, 11-1; Leggett bt Emmett 6-11, 11-5, 12-10; Gibbor bt Siegel 11-6, 11-7; Hay bt Ackland 11-2, 11-8

Semi-finals: Tristao bt Leggett 11-5, 11-8; Gibbor bt Hay 3-11, 11-8, 11-5

Final: Tristao bt Gibbor 11-3, 11-4

Plate 1: Kelly (Christ's Hospital)

Plate 2: Walsh (KCS Wimbledon)

Open Doubles

1st round: St Paul's I bt Tonbridge II 11-1, 11-0; Merchiston II bt KCS Wimbledon 11-7, 11-4; Merchant Taylors I bt Winchester II 10-12, 11-9, 11-7; Eastbourne I by Alleyn's I 11-9, 11-7; Eastbourne II bt Bradfield w/o; Sedbergh I bt Oundle II 11-2, 11-5; Bedford bt Christ's Hospital 10-12, 11-9, 11-8; St

Paul's IV bt Christ's Hospital III 11-3, 11-3; Merchiston I bt Oundle I 11-6, 11-4; Sedbergh II bt Winchester III 12-10, 11-2; Tonbridge I bt Alleyn's II 11-7, 10-12, 11-5; Winchester I bt Merchant Taylors II 11-2, 11-3

2nd round: St Paul's I bt Merchiston II 11-1, 11-1; Eastbourne I bt Merchant Taylors 11-6, 11-0; Sedbergh I bt Eastbourne II 11-3, 11-2; St Paul's III bt Bedford 11-6, 11-2; Merchiston I bt St Paul's IV 11-12, 12-10, 12-10; Sherborne bt Sedbergh II 11-5, 11-7; St Paul's II bt Tonbridge I 11-0, 11-1; Winchester I bt Christ's Hospital I 5-11, 11-6, 11-3

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I bt Eastbourne 11-1, 11-2; St Paul's III bt Sedbergh I 11-6, 12-11; Sherborne bt Merchiston I 11-8, 7-11, 12-10; St Paul's II bt Winchester I 11-6, 11-4

Semi-finals: St Paul's I bt St Paul's III 11-5, 11-6; St Paul's II bt Sherborne 11-2, 11-2

Final: St Paul's II (C Hay & A Seigel) bt St Paul's I 11-3, 11-1

Plate: Alleyn's I

Colts Singles (Knockout stages only)

1st round: J Gibbor (St Paul's) bt G Nodder (Tonbridge) 15-9; K Sloan (Merchant Taylors) bt C Danhurst (St Paul's) 15-6

Quarter-finals: I Ackland (Alleyn's) bt Gibbor (St Paul's) 11-9, 11-4; J Faber (St Paul's) bt N Simpson (Christ's Hospital) 11-2, 2-11, 11-8; L Rowland (St Paul's) bt Sloan 11-2, 11-3; P Winzeler (KCS Wimbledon) bt T Hoolaten 12-10, 3-11, 11-6

Semi-finals: Ackland bt Faber 11-9, 11-2; Rowland bt Winzeler 11-5, 11-5

Final: Rowland bt Ackland 11-5, 11-8

Plate 1: P Hanton (Alleyn's)

Plate 2: Squire-Smith (Winchester)

Colts Doubles

1st round: St Paul's I bt Sedbergh 11-0, 11-0; KCS Wimbledon II bt Merchant Taylors I 11-8, 11-7; Alleyn's II bt St Paul's III 11-3, 6-11, 11-3; Christ's Hospital I bt Tonbridge II 11-5, 11-5; Winchester I bt Eastbourne 11-4, 11-1; Alleyn's I bt Christ's Hospital II w/o; St Paul's II bt Merchant Taylors II 11-0, 11-2; Tonbridge I bt KCS Wimbledon 11-2, 11-7

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I bt KCS Wimbledon II 11-0, 11-1; Christ's Hospital I bt Alleyn's II 11-7, 8-11, 12-10; Alleyn's I bt Winchester I 11-5, 11-1; St Paul's II bt Tonbridge I 11-2, 11-1

Semi-finals: St Paul's I bt Christ's Hospital I 11-4, 11-1; St Paul's II bt Alleyn's I 11-8, 10-12, 11-0

Final: St Paul's II (L Rowland & J Faber) bt St Paul's I 11-6, 11-6

Plate: St Paul's III

Under 14 Singles (Knockout stages only)

Quarter-finals: P Hanton (Alleyn's) bt C Roberts (St Paul's) 11-0; A Hill (Derby Moor) bt G Suter (St Paul's) 11-1; J Elansei (St Olave's) bt T Chase (St Paul's) 11-1; J Lane (Winchester) bt D Bowden (Alleyn's) 11-8

Semi-finals: Hanton bt Hill 11-2; Lane bt Elansei 11-8

Final: Hanton bt Lane 11-0, 11-0

Plate 1: R Dunk (St Olave's)

Plate 2: D Tham (Winchester)

Under 14 Doubles

Pools: A - 1st Alleyn's I, 2nd St Paul's II, 3rd Merchant Taylor's II; B - 1st St Olave's I, 2nd Winchester II, 3rd Tonbridge; C - 1st St Paul's I, 2nd Christ's Hospital, 3rd Merchant Taylor's III; D - 1st Winchester I, 2nd St Olave's II, 3rd Merchant Taylor's I

Semi-finals: Alleyn's I bt Winchester I 15-1; St Olave's I bt St Paul's I 15-7

Final: Alleyn's I (D Bowden & P Hanton) bt St Olave's I 11-3, 11-3

Plate: St Olave's II (J Connell & M Hagreen)

NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP (WOOD CUP)

St Paul's, 8th/9th April 2006

"We thrashed them," was Conor Minta's verdict as Dad John and his Y Club team-mates beat the Alleyn Old Boys to win the National Club Championship for the first time since 2000. A more restrained, but no less delighted John Beswick simply picked up the Wood Cup and said, "Welcome home."

A series of last-minute withdrawals had depleted the number of competitors on the first day of the finals weekend, but there's no doubt the two top clubs reached the final. However, if the teams were expecting another close match between the two clubs that have dominated this championship for the last ten years, the reality could not have been more different.

Indeed, the top singles encounter was to prove an omen for the entire match: national champion Phil Bishop proved his mastery of the St Paul's courts by beating Hamish Buchanan to love. With John Minta and Ben Taberner also winning their singles matches comfortably, the Y Club took a healthy lead into the doubles. On one court, a repeat of the recent National Doubles final saw Hamish and Robin Perry share their two games with John Minta and Phil Bishop. But, next door, Ben and John Beswick showed no mercy, winning two games against Dave Hebden and Bruce Hanton for the loss of just three points, and effectively sealing the outcome of the match.

Once Phil and John had won their two games against Dave and Bruce, the result was in no doubt. Hamish and Robin won their first game against Ben and John but, with the Y Club by then in an unassailable lead, the Alleyn Old Boys had to concede defeat.

Overall, it was an excellent display by the Y Club, with one of the strongest foursomes to take part in this tournament in recent years. Little wonder, then, that the eventual result - 110 points to 60 - was the widest winning margins for some time.

Quarter-final: White Rose Club bt Executioners 130-111

Semi-finals: Alleyn Old Boys bt White Rose Club 119-70; Manchester Y Club bt RFA Club

Final: Manchester Y Club bt Alleyn Old Boys 110-60

NATIONAL VINTAGE AND MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Derby Moor, 22nd/23rd April 2006

The National Vintage (over 55) and National Masters (over 65) championships were held at Derby Moor for the first time in the hope of attracting entrants from all over the country. In the end 22 players came: from Manchester, Halifax, Derby, Bedford, London, Tonbridge, Horsham and Tiverton. There were no upsets: the defending champions won again in each case.

The Vintage Singles were played out by a small field before lunch. It fell to newcomer to the Vintage ranks, Robert Grey of the Derby Moor club, to take on David Hebden in the final, having beaten John Hawke in the semi, but even on his own courts Robert found David too much of a class act to handle. In the Plate John Hawke got the better of Grem McIntyre 16-14 in an all-Halifax final.

In the Masters Doubles Final David Bawtree won the cup he has donated for the fourth time, partnering Bernard Atkinson to victory over a wonderfully sprightly Jerry Cooper and his young partner Douglas Rice, who graciously volunteered to make up the pair so as to give the champions a run for their money.

The afternoon was devoted to the Vintage Doubles. In the first round a compelling three-game tussle between Martin Wilkinson & Neil Arnot and Bernard Atkinson & Douglas Rice was eventually determined by Bernard's greater firepower. Bob Dolby & Robert Grey, Stuart Endersby & Jim Denham and David Hebden & Keith Puckle also advanced to the semi-finals where the champions were too quick and powerful for Bernard and Douglas and where newcomers Endersby & Denham, seeded Number 2, demonstrated touch and length to get them to their first final. As expected, though, David and Keith were in no mood to concede their crown to the boys from Bedford.

In a spirited Plate competition things worked out in such a fashion that the last match was the decider: Martin and Neil duly despatched Roger Butterworth and Graham Hobbs from the Manchester Y Club.

Masters Doubles

Final: Bawtree & Atkinson bt Cooper & Rice 11-3, 11-5

Vintage Singles

Semi-finals: Hebden bt McIntyre 11-2, 11-1; Grey bt Hawke 11-6, 11-3

Final: Hebden bt Grey 11-1, 11-2

Plate: Hawke

Vintage Doubles

1st Round: Hebden & Puckle bt Butterworth and Hobbs 11-1,11-4; Atkinson & Rice bt Wilkinson & Arnot 6-11, 12-10, 11-2; Dolby & Grey bt Torkington & Bawtree 11-1, 11-1; Endersby & Denham bt McIntyre & Hawke 11-3, 11-9

Semi-finals: Hebden & Puckle bt Atkinson & Rice 11-1, 11-5; Endersby & Denham bt Dolby & Grey 11-4, 12-10

Final: Hebden & Puckle bt Endersby & Denham 11-1, 11-7

Plate: Wilkinson & Arnot

SCOTTISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Loretto School, Musselburgh, 29/30th April 2006

A glorious weekend in Musselburgh saw John Minta claim his first ever open singles title and, in a double victory for the Manchester Y Club, Kevin Henry retained his doubles title.

In an entry dominated by the YMCA and White Rose Club, it was left to Ian Purvis to fly the Caledonian flag and fly it he did, defeating Kevin Henry in the quarter-finals to reach the semis with Dave Fox, John Minta and John Beswick.

Dave Fox, having been overpowered by John Minta in the first, showed glimpses of his best form in the second game. However, John just had enough to clinch it 11-9. The other semi, between Ian Purvis and John Beswick, saw contrasting styles, with powerful hitting into the nicks from John and superb retrieval, interspersed with fantastic drop volleys and reverse angles, from Ian. John took the first game, but Ian stepped up a gear to win the second and third games against a tiring opponent.

The final followed a similar pattern, with John Minta using his power, and Ian retrieving and putting his opponent under pressure with some fantastic touch shots. Ultimately, after two grueling previous matches, Ian began to tire, and although he fought back to 9-7 from 9-2 down in the second, John hung on to claim his first major singles tournament win.

After a particularly convivial evening in the Woodside Hotel, where the absence of Jeff Thomas was

keenly felt, Sunday's Doubles tournament got underway under yet more Scottish blue skies.

Reinforcements arrived in the form of Ian Roberts and James Marshall, and the tournament was played as a round-robin. The first match saw Kevin Henry and James win a tough three-gamer against John Minta and Roger Butterworth, before going to win the rest of their matches, allowing Kevin to retain the title he won last year.

Singles

1st Round : B Nithsdale bt J Hawke 11-3, 11-4

Quarter-finals: D Fox bt W Harrison 11-3, 11-4; J Minta bt J Major 11-6, 11-8; I Purvis bt K Henry 11-3, 11-7; J Beswick bt B Nithsdale 11-3, 11-1

Semi-finals: Minta bt Fox 11-5, 12-10; Purvis bt Beswick 4-11, 11-5, 11-5

Final: Minta bt Purvis 11-7, 11-6

Plate: Henry

Doubles

Round Robin:

Minta & Butterworth bt Beswick & Hawke 2 games to 0; bt Major & Nithsdale 2-0; bt Harrison & I Roberts 2-0; lost to Henry & Marshall 1-2

Beswick & Hawke lost to Henry & Marshall 0-2; lost to Major & Nithsdale 0-2; lost to Harrison & I Roberts 0-2

Henry & Marshall bt Major & Nithsdale 2-0; bt Harrison & I Roberts 2-0

Major & Nithsdale bt Harrison & I Roberts 2-1

Champions: Henry & Marshall

NATIONAL WINCHESTER FIVES MIXED DOUBLES

Bradfield College, 7th May 2006

This year's event was particularly smooth-running. There were eight pairs on four courts, and almost everyone arrived on time, including a good Blundell's contingent, so a knock-out tournament was the ideal format.

The main tournament went much as expected, with no three-game matches; but as usual in this competition, there was a certain amount of unconventional fives as well as a lot of good-humoured effort.

Reigning champion Emma Seton had developed a new serve, which took veteran Bradfieldienne Denise Hall-Wilton by surprise in their first-round match; Ollie Beach found the nick repeatedly against Melanie Whitehead and then looked duly apologetic; Jessica Morton bravely came back from first-round injury to win the plate competition with her partner Richard Longstreet; and Alex Steel and Joe Lambert gave the eventual winners a good run for their money in the semi-finals.

The final of the main event was an extremely tight two-game match between two differing fives codes, neither of them Winchester. Emma Seton and Stuart Kirby from Derby Moor Rugby Fives Club - this year it was Emma's turn to arrive with a younger partner - played last year's finalists from Eton Fives, Dominique Redmond and Howard Wiseman.

As was to be expected, the Eton Fives pair used the buttress well, but the length game generally belonged to the Derby duo, and in the end it was Rugby Fives tactics which just prevailed, although ironically the

winning Derby shot found the buttress. That completed an amazing treble for Emma this season, adding the Mixed Doubles title to the singles and doubles Winchester Fives titles she holds already.

Sadly, this was Paula Smith's swansong as Winchester Mixed organiser - she started running the event ten years ago. She and her son Sean are still the only pair to have won it twice. At the end of the day, she handed in the bag of gloves she had used over the years to encourage others (from Vodafone and further afield) to play the game. But she retained her own pair - just in case!

Quarter-finals: E Seton & S Kirby bt D Hall-Wilton & A Lewis 15-4, 15-3; A Steel & J Lambert bt J Morton & R Longstreet 15-8, 15-4; M & M Whitehead bt B Menheneott & O Beach 15-4, 15-9; D Redmond & H Wiseman bt S Hartopp & E Lock 15-7, 15-6

Semi-finals: Seton & Kirby bt Steel & Lambert 15-11, 15-8; Redmond & Wiseman bt Whitehead & Whitehead 15-8, 15-4

3rd/4th place play-off: Steel & Lambert bt Whitehead & Whitehead 15-3, 15-4

Final: Seton & Kirby bt Redmond & Wiseman 15-13, 15-13

Plate: Longstreet & Morton

RFA CLUB SOUTH v NORTH

Oundle, 20th May 2006

12 players from the Veteran and Vintage ranks came to Oundle to play what might turn out to be the last match on the fine old 1930 courts, which are due to be replaced later this year by four new ones adjoining the Sports Centre. It was quite a nostalgic event, with three Oundle masters-in-charge (Roger Freebairn, Kevin Cobb and Tony Burrows) in the gallery, plus the retiring RFA Club manager Denise Hall-Wilton and a smattering of RFA past presidents, including Jerry Cooper from nearby Bedford.

The most entertaining single was the top match, in which the incredulous Bob Sandie went rapidly to 5-0 against a ring-rusty Dave Hebden. At 8-2, it looked as if the Yorkshireman was going to record a famous victory, but then Hebden found his touch and eventually took the game to 8. Said an exhausted Sandie afterwards: "I thought we were playing to 8. Whose idea was it to play to 11?"

South team manager Keith Puckle had packed his team with superstars, so the match result was reasonably predictable. But, the doubles were not all one-sided, with North 2 (Stuart Kirby and Brian Kirk) winning two of their games. North made up for it in other ways, too. On spotting Puckle's new shoes, Brian Nithsdale quipped: "Bit of a rash investment at your age, Keith?"

Many thanks to Tony Burrows and Oundle for hosting the event, which we hope will become an annual one. If the new courts are as true and fast as the old, the School will be fortunate indeed and fives will continue to flourish there.

Singles:

(South names first) D Hebden bt R Sandie 11-8; J Schroeter bt B Nithsdale 11-3; I Fuller bt S Kirby 11-1; S Endersby bt B Kirk 11-3

Doubles:

Fuller & Schroeter bt Sandie & Nithsdale 11-5, 11-8; bt Kirby & Kirk 11-2; bt G McIntyre & R Grey 11-2. Hebden & K Puckle bt Kirby & Kirk 11-6, 11-12; bt Sandie & Nithsdale 11-4; bt McIntyre & Grey 11-2. Endersby & J Denham bt McIntyre & Grey 11-3, 11-1; bt Sandie & Nithsdale 12-11; lost to Kirby & Kirk 7-11.

Result: South bt North 173-82

END OF SEASON RANKINGS

RFA, 5th June 2006

Hamish Buchanan has finished the 2005/06 season at the top of both the singles and doubles rankings, which were published today. This is the first time a player has topped both rankings at the end of a season since Neil Roberts achieved the feat in 2001, and the first time Hamish has ended a season as the top-ranked singles player since 2000.

His success comes after a season in which he won four of the seven Open singles championships, but he has only a narrow lead over Phil Bishop, who jumped to second position after wins in both the North West Open and National Singles. In fact, Phil is one of three Manchester Y Club members to make good progress up the rankings this year, with John Minta reaching the top ten for the first time after winning the Scottish Open singles, and Kevin Henry climbing 24 places to reach the top 20.

Also seeing the rewards for a good season were Johnny Nelmes (up to 9th), Chris Jones (12th) and Cambridge University's Alan Beverley, whose win in the Under 25s Championships helped him to a spot in the top 20. Highest new entrant was Hal Mohammed, winner of the Plate at the London Open.

In the doubles rankings, Robin Perry's win in the National Doubles saw him take second place behind his partner. But, as in the singles rankings, it was the Y Club members who made the most significant progress. John Minta and Phil Bishop's two tournament wins helped them jump up to third and fourth places respectively, while Kevin Henry retained his spot just outside the top ten after winning the Scottish Open doubles for the second year running.

Chris Jones, with two final appearances to his name this year, jumped up to 12th, while just behind him after two semi-finals this season were Jim Hughes and Alex Rew. Charlie Brooks climbed to 15th after his third successive BUSA doubles title, with his partner Alan Beverley not far behind in 20th.

RFA AGM

London, 14th June 2006

Ed Fuller was elected to the board of the RFA at the AGM in June, and takes over from Denise Hall-Wilton as RFA Club Manager.

Denise asked not to be considered for re-election to the board and, to mark her departure and to thank her for her hard work supporting Ladies Fives and managing the RFA Club, President John East presented her with a gift.

Alex Wilson also asked not to be considered for re-election, but the remaining board members were re-appointed as Directors. At the same time, the meeting also approved an increase in annual subscriptions to £30 for individuals and £40 for clubs and schools.

CFA ONE-WALL FIVES TOURNAMENT

Westway Sports Centre, London, 18th June 2006

On June 18th, the City Fives Association (CFA) held its first adult 1-wall Fives competition, bringing together Fives players of all codes as well as Irish and American Handball players. Also attending were the Irish National 1-Wall Champion, Dave King, and the Irish Handball Association's International Officer, Tom O'Connor.

In the men's competition, matches were timed, the winner being the player with the most points after 10 minutes. Using the International Big Blue Handball, there were interesting early encounters as the Rugby Fives players got used to playing over-arm shots above their heads, and the Eton players adapted to playing low, hard drives.

John Minta (RFA) and Dave Mew (EFA) met in a hard-hitting encounter, Chris Jones (RFA) lost in a very close match to American handballer Charlie White, and Rugby Fives doubles partners James Toop and Marcus Bate clashed in another quarter-final.

Having beaten a fellow Irish handballer in the quarter-finals, Dave King was joined by Pete Cohen (EFA), Dave Mew (EFA) and James Toop (EFA/RFA) in the semi finals. Despite having only played a few times, Pete pushed Dave King hard, albeit to no avail, and in the other semi final, James beat Dave Mew.

The final was played over 15 minutes and from the beginning Dave dominated. James managed to stay in the match but as soon as he got close, Dave upped his game with spinning serves and drives down the line, eventually winning 22-9.

In the ladies competition, Eton Fives doubles partners Dominique Redmond and Kerry White made it to the final beating some new Fives players from CFA schools in Croydon along the way. The match was very close, with Dominique coming through in the final minute to win.

The competition is the first of many 1-Wall competitions to come. Links have now been made to the American, Irish and Basque Handball Associations, and the CFA is trying to arrange more international matches and competitions. The other nations are keen to support 1-Wall Fives in England and this could be a fantastic way to get Fives players into international competition. Despite not having played before, everyone agreed that they picked the game up quickly and had an excellent time.

Look out for next year's competition and please get in touch with James Toop if you are interested in playing 1-wall Fives or supporting and learning more about the City Fives Association's work.

Men's Competition

Quarter-finals: Dave King (IHA) bt John McGrath 15-6; Pete Cohen (EFA) bt Charlie White (USHA) 9-8; Dave Mew (EFA) bt Sanjaya Ransinghe (EFA) 16-9; James Toop (EFA/RFA) bt Marcus Bate (RFA) 15-11

Semi-finals: Dave King bt Pete Cohen 16-7; James Toop bt Dave Mew 18-1

Final: Dave King bt James Toop 22-9

Ladies Competition

Quarter-finals: George Silk (CFA) bt Gemma Reece (CFA) 15-2; Ashley Lumbard (EFA) bt Becky Forni (CFA) 15-11; Dominique Redmond and Kerry White, bye

Semi-finals: Dominique Redmond bt Ashley Lumbard 16-7; Kerry White bt George Silk 17-4

Final: Dominique Redmond bt Kerry White 14-13

DERBY MOOR INVITATION DOUBLES TOURNAMENT

Derby Moor College, 18th June 2006

Won by Phil Bishop & John East in 2004 and by Hamish Buchanan & Stuart Kirby last year, this year's tournament was won by John Beswick and local Derby student Matt Orr. In the final they came up against Bob Sandie, partnered by Chris Burrows from Oundle School, who had knocked out fancied pair Stuart Kirby and Charlie Robinson in a hard-fought semi-final. For Matt, who has only been playing at Derby Moor for two seasons, it was a first taste of success in what one competitor deemed "the premier Fives event in the East Midlands".

Six pairs who went out in the early rounds contested two lively pools for the Plate. In the final it was the Derby Moor pairing of Robert Grey and young Ashley Hill, a semi-finalist in this year's National Schools U14 competition, who beat Clive Butler and Grem McIntyre to win the wooden spatulas.

In between matches Ian Roberts conducted an impromptu croquet competition on the grass surrounding the courts. John Beswick claims that the Y Club won that too!

Anyone wishing to be invited to play next year should contact either Stuart Kirby or Bob Dolby.