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SOUTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Blundell's School, Tiverton, 6/7th July 2013

On a weekend of fine sport and fine weather in Devon, Will Ellison reversed the events of 12 months ago, winning both the singles and (with Dan Grant) doubles titles at Blundell's.

In the singles, he beat his conqueror in last year's final, Dan Tristao – although, as is now expected of this pair, their match went down to the wire – and he then teamed up with Grant to regain the title from the pair he had lost to in 2012.

It was a fitting end to a remarkable tournament – remarkable not least because the tournament was played in glorious sunshine for the first time in several years. Beyond that, there was plenty of local interest, with Blundell's master-in-charge Chris Hedley-Dent taking part with pupil Toby Francis, while old Blundellian Alex Steel made history by becoming the first lady ever to take part in the championships.

Sadly, all three were unable to make it beyond their opening matches in the singles competition, and the top four seeds (Will Ellison, Dan Tristao, Dan Grant and Matt Cavanagh) made it comfortably through to the quarter-finals, where they were joined by Marcus Bate and Ed Hatton, as well as Jim Hughes and Tom Kiggell, who had come through tough matches against Andy Pringle and Gareth Price respectively.

Fittingly, these latter two won through to the Plate final, but an injury to Andy meant the game could not be played and the Dartington glassware went home with Gareth.

Back in the main competition, the top four seeds all won through to the semis fairly comfortably, and Will then made quick work of his match against Matt, conceding just four points on his way to victory. However, the match between the two Dans was much closer, full of excellent shot-making and superb retrieval. In the end, though, it was Dan T who closed out the second game 11-9 to seal the win and book his place in the final.

Dan T and Will have played out several titanic and closely fought matches in recent years, so the first game will have come as a shock to everyone: Will raced out of the blocks and took it without conceding a point. However, the inevitable happened, and Dan fought back to take the second game, sending the match into a deciding third game.

This was a fitting end to the match, with never more than a couple of points between the two players, and both displaying incredible reserves of energy on such a hot day, as well as the mixture of athleticism, power and resolute defence that has made them both worthy champions in the past. The match was tied at four-all for what seemed like an eternity, but gradually the scores rose and when Dan took a 9-8 lead, he had the momentum and seemed set to retain his title, but Ellison dug deep, fought back and took the title with an 11-9 win.

In the doubles championship, three of the top four seeds made it through to the semi-finals, but with some untried partnerships making it impossible to predict the result.

In the top half of the draw, Will Ellison and Dan Grant were partnering each other for the first time, but that didn't show as they dispatched the Executioners pair of Richard Dyke and Jez Sinton. However,

fellow club members Andy Pringle and Marcus Bate regained some pride, beating local stalwarts Lewis and Watson to reach the semis. Here they were joined by defending champs Price and Tristao, along with another untried partnership, Wayne Enstone and Jim Hughes, who had won through to the semis only after a tough match with Ed Hatton and Tom Kiggell.

Wayne and Jim went on to push Will and Dan hard in their semi, but in the end the younger pair won through. Meanwhile, the second semi was even tighter. Andy and Marcus were behind initially and saved several game points before winning the first game 12-10, only for Gareth and Dan to up their level, take the second game and force the match into a decider. Sadly, the game wasn't finished, as a nasty hand injury to Marcus meant he had to withdraw.

That meant Gareth and Dan could defend the title they had won before, but come the final, they simply didn't have an answer to the barrage they faced from Dan and Will – as Gareth would later describe it, they were 'Ellison-ed'. It's true that Will did play superbly in the final, displaying a match-winning mixture of power and angles with superb anticipation, but Dan's contribution must not be underestimated. His side-wall boasts pulled his opponents out of position, while his willingness to take shots early on the volley hurried them. Make no mistake, Gareth and Dan played extremely well, and would have beaten almost any other pair, but on this form Ellison and Grant were simply untouchable.

Scores

Singles

1st round: J.Hughes bt R.Warner 11-1, 11-2; A.Pringle bt T.Francis 11-0, 11-2; A.Smith bt A.Steel 11-4, 11-0; N.Geere bt C.Hedley-Dent 11-1, 11-0

2nd round: D.Tristao bt D.Hill 11-2, 11-1; Hughes bt APringle 12-10, 11-7; M.Bate bt R.Dyke 11-2, 11-4; D.Grant bt S.Watson 11-7, 11-3; M.Cavanagh bt J.Sinton 11-9, 11-0; E.Hatton bt Smith 11-4, 11-4; T.Kiggell bt G.Price 12-10, 11-6; W.Ellison bt Geere 11-1, 11-2

Quarter-finals: Tristao bt Hughes 11-5, 11-4; Grant bt Bate 11-8, 11-3; Cavanagh bt Hatton 11-2, 11-2; Ellison bt Kiggell 11-0, 11-4

Semi-finals: Tristao bt Grant 11-5, 11-9; Ellison bt Cavanagh 11-4, 11-0

Final: Ellison bt Tristao 11-0, 6-11, 11-9

Plate: Price

Doubles

1st round: Dyke & Sinton bt Hill & Kirk 11-6, 11-8; Enstone & Hughes bt Christie Jnr & Halligan 11-3, 11-4; Hatton & Kiggell bt Christie Snr & Kirby 11-7, 8-11, 11-8; Lewsi & Watson bt Warner & Steel 11-8, 11-4; Geere & Smith bt Francis & Hedley-Dent 11-0, 11-4

Quarter-finals: Ellison & Grant bt Dyke & Sinton 11-2, 11-2; Enstone & Hughes bt Hatton & Kiggell 11-5, 12-10; Bate & Pringle bt Lewis & Watson 11-3, 11-4; Price & Tristao bt Geere & Smith 11-4, 11-5

Semi-finals: Ellison & Grant bt Enstone & Hughes 11-7, 11-9; Price & Tristao bt Bate & Pringle 10-12, 11-6, 6-2 ret'd

Final: Ellison & Grant bt Price & Tristao 11-2, 11-4

Plate: Dyke & Sinton

American Doubles: Warner & Sinton

JEREMY SCHROETER

London, 12th July 2013

The RFA is sad to report the death of Jeremy Schroeter, who died this morning eighteen months after being diagnosed with inoperable bowel cancer. RFA President Dick Warner said, 'He never felt sorry for himself, and at no stage did he lose his anarchic sense of humour,' while David Parlby told us that it was 'a privilege' to have known Jeremy.

His widow, Ellie, said, 'He only became ill on Friday morning and was very well cared for by all the District, Hospice and Macmillan nurses throughout the day as well as his favourite Doctor. He only took to his bed for less than a day which was exactly what he wanted.'

During the course of his playing career, Jeremy won many titles, including – most recently – the National Vintage Doubles title in 2012. He was elected Deputy President of the Association in 2011, but stood down when he was diagnosed with the cancer.

Funeral details are yet to be announced, but a full tribute will be published in the forthcoming RFA Annual Review.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY COURTS

Cambridge, 16th August 2013

Bob Dolby, President of Cambridge University Rugby Fives Club and Deputy President of the RFA, has just sent us the excellent news that the three Rugby Fives courts in the new Cambridge University Sports Centre are finished.

Bob's fellow RFA board member Stuart Kirby – also a consultant on the project – took a group of boys from his Derby Moor Club to try out the courts, and they (Rob Whitehorn, Lewis Keates and John Halligan, as well as Stuart) pronounced them excellent.

Stuart said, "The walls look superb, including some visual texture so no problems with being able to see where they are. The floors are completely true during play and, although they are a bit more grippy than we are used to, we all agreed that they are very good.

"The lads were unconcerned about the glass backs, despite this being the first time that they had encountered them. And, although there were a few shots in which the ball had energy sapped out of it by the flexibility of the glass and did not bounce quite as usual, we all agreed that the effects of the back-wall being glass were minor."

Last, but not least, Stuart said that the viewing platform and flip-up seats work as expected and look very professional. They will allow an increased number of people to watch the game and also give players somewhere to put their bags!

Bob told us, "What makes these courts unique is their position on the first floor, fitted into the space afforded by the high roof of the Cambridge University Sports Centre. The benefits are enormous, not least the space to insert viewing facilities. The 4'10" glass back walls will make the game much higher profile

than if we had gone for traditional brick walls: I hope we shall see a big uptake of the game next term.”

You can see some photographs of the new courts in the Gallery, and we hope that there will be an official opening of all six courts (work on the three Eton Fives courts is yet to be completed) in due course.

LONDON OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Whitgift School, Croydon, 14/15th September 2013

The London Open kicked off the main part of the Fives season in fine style – which is more than can be said for the weather. As the players arrived on the Saturday morning, they were greeted by dark skies, incessant rain and an organiser frantically applying sawdust to the court floors to mop up the drips.

Still, once play was under way, the competition soon lifted the spirits; and, by the time the last winner was struck on Sunday afternoon, a couple of significant wins had been achieved. By taking the singles title, Dan Tristao completed his full house of singles titles: he has now won every regional singles title, although the big one – the National Singles title – still eludes him. Will Ellison also scored a notable win by teaming up with Dan to secure the doubles title. This means he has now won every doubles title since he lost in the final of this tournament in 2012 – including the National Doubles title, as well as the President’s Cup and the National Winchester Fives Doubles title for good measure.

Mind you, neither of these wins was achieved easily, and right from the first round of the singles, there were close games: Adam George and Richard Dyke had a topsy-turvy three-gamer, for instance, before Adam clinched a place in the second round.

In the end, though, it was the top eight seeds, who reached the quarter-finals, and the top four seeds made it through to the semis, although the second and fourth were made to fight hard. Fourth seed Matt Cavanagh needed three games to oust John Minta, while the second-seeded Will Ellison had a titanic battle with the lower-ranked Ed Kay, losing the first game. Sadly, the competition was denied a fitting climax to the game when a nasty hand injury forced Ed to retire.

The semis again went to form, with defending champion James Toop scoring an emphatic win over Matt, while Dan Tristao and Will Ellison delighted the crowd with another mammoth three-game encounter. This time, it was Dan who emerged the winner, with a strong run of points from 2-2 in the final game giving him a lead he would never lose.

The final was another yo-yo battle, with the first two games shared between Dan and James. However, it was Dan who won the day, using novel tactics (such as the lob) to disrupt James’ rhythm that allowed him to find the crucial winners and force errors.

The doubles tournament was equally close, and a three-game encounter in the first round between Tilston/Jefferies and Hanton/George had the organiser looking worriedly at his watch as the event threatened to run way over time. In the end, seventh seeds Hanton/George were consigned to the plate – but only after losing the third game 11-12!

Mind you, they weren’t the only seeds to lose in the first round. Eighth seeds Burrows/Maconie were also knocked out, losing in three games to the impressive young Pauline pairing of Beltrami and Arnold. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these two seeded pairs won through to the plate final, where Tom Maconie and

Chris Burrows eventually won.

In the main competition, after these ‘upsets’, it was the top four seeds who won through to the semis. Dan Tristao and Will Ellison were playing together for the first time, and although that lack of experience showed – there were occasional moments of confusion between the pair, with both running for the same shot, leaving much of the court unguarded – their individual skills were too much for former champions Hamish Buchanan and Robin Perry, who had recovered from surprisingly being taken to three games in the first round to score a fine win over James Toop and Marcus Bate in the quarter-finals.

The second semi was a thoroughly brutal affair, with the untried partnership of John Minta and Gareth Price taking on defending champions Charlie Brooks and Tom Dean. It was an orgy of powerful hitting interspersed with clever angles and amazing retrieval, but in the end Tom and Charlie came through in three tough games.

They carried on in the same vein in the final, but weren’t able to force the same number of mistakes from Will and Dan. As the match went on, they struggled with their opponents’ willingness to volley and hurry them, while Will and Dan’s sublime delicate shots around the front corners and great pace around the court were simply too much. Will and Dan did occasionally look human, with a few errors and occasional breakdown in communication, but in the end they deservedly took the title, and secured their place in the record books. come)

Scores

Singles

1st round: J Tilston bt J Malde 11-7, 11-4; T Maconie bt C Davey 11-2, 11-2; E Hatton bt J Walsh 11-2,11-8; A Pringle bt A Hamilton 11-6, 11-5; A George bt R Dyke 11-5,1-11,11-2; C Burrows bt S Russell 11-1,11-2; T Dean bt J Sinton 11-1,11-1; M Shaw bt H Jefferies 11-5,11-8

2nd round: J Toop by J Tilston 11-3,11-3; Maconie bt Hatton 11-4,11-8; J Minta bt A Pringle 11-8, 11-4; M Cavanagh bt A George 11-4,11-2; D Tristao bt J Brubert 11-2, 11-4; C Brooks bt Burrows 11-5,11-7; E Kay bt T Dean 11-7,11-3; W Ellison bt Shaw 11-3, 11-1

Quarter-finals: Toop bt Maconie 11-2, 11-1; Cavanagh bt Minta 11-3, 5-11, 11-4; Tristao bt Brooks 12-10, 11-9; Ellison bt Kay 6-11,5-1 retd

Semi-finals: Toop bt Cavanagh 11-2,11-2; Tristao bt Ellison 11-8,8-11,11-2

Final: Tristao bt Toop 11-3,2-11,11-6

Plate: Brubert

Doubles

1st round: W Ellison & D Tristao bt S Russell & R Law 11-2,11-0; B Beltrami & O Arnold bt C Burrows & T Maconie 11-7, 8-11, 11-7; J Toop & M Bate bt R Sutcliffe & J Walter 11-4,11-4; H Buchanan & R Perry bt J Malde & N Edmonds 11-7, 10-12, 11-4; J Minta & G Price bt T Hamilton & N Woolfenden 11-9, 11-5; E Hatton & A Pringle bt J Sinton & R Dyke 11-2,11-1; J Tilston & H Jefferies bt P Hanton & A George 9-11,11-7,12-11; T Dean & C Brooks w/o T Watkinson & B Chua

Quarter-finals: Ellison & Tristao bt Beltrami & Arnold 11-5, 11-1; Buchanan & Perry bt Toop & Bate 11-7,11-7; Minta & Price bt Hatton & Pringle 11-3, 11-8; Dean & Brooks bt Tilston & Jefferies 11-0,11-3

Semi-finals: Ellison & Tristao bt Buchanan & Perry 11-4,11-5; Dean & Brooks bt Minta & Price 11-4, 7-11, 11-2

Final: Ellison & Tristao bt Dean & Brooks 11-2, 11-6

Plate: Maconie & Burrows

RFA AGM London, 10th September 2013

At last week's AGM **Bob Dolby** was elected President in succession to Dick Warner. Bob learned his Fives at Alleyn's playing with some of the 'greats' of the 1950s: Bill Bailey, John Pretlove, Bob Smith and Roy Birmingham. Bob claims also to have taught the 13 year-old David Hebden "all he knew" on the courts at Townley Road.

Bob won his first national title in 1967: the British Universities Doubles, playing with the late Don Ellwood. "In those days we celebrated with a half of cider (10½d) in 'The Dog' and a Walt Disney cartoon at the Odeon, Camberwell Green." He twice won the Scottish Doubles with David Hebblethwaite – "I did the running, David did the talking – and also told the jokes." Bob went on later to win the Vintage Doubles with the evergreen Bernard Atkinson, whom he is delighted to welcome as his Deputy, and the Mixed Winchester Doubles with Denise Hall-Wilton and with Emma Seton. In addition he won various Plates, mostly with Rob Cleave ("almost as many as Dick Warner").

Bob has coached Eton and Rugby Fives at Berkhamsted School, Radley College and Derby Moor Community Sports College and looked after Cambridge University Rugby Fives since the death of the legendary Jock Burnet in 1989. Over the past 18 months he has spearheaded the campaign to raise nearly half a million pounds to finance the spectacular glass-backed courts in the Cambridge University Sports Centre – "New Portugal Place", as he calls them in homage to the Cambridge courts knocked down in 1995.

Bob promises that "Bernard and I will use our energy to continue Dick Warner's tireless missionary work, promoting the playing and coaching of fives and reinvigorating fives in dormant courts wherever we detect them. With tournaments now underway I raise my glass to all the players and coaches and wish them the very best of seasons playing our splendid game."

OWERS TROPHY

St. Paul's School, Barnes, 28th September 2013

The Old Paulines cemented their position as the strongest club in Rugby Fives by winning the Owers Trophy for a fourth time. However, this year it was not the manner of their victory that impressed – in fact, their win over the Alleyn Old Boys in the final was by the narrowest margin for some years – but the fact that they could be denied many of their top players, yet still had the strength in depth to win the title against what was the strongest AOBs team for some time.

Just as the 2013 National Doubles tournament proved, younger players are making a mark, and so it was that only one player in the final – former National champion Hamish Buchanan – was over 30 years old; the majority were under 25.

For some time, it had looked as if it could well be an all-Pauline final, as both Pauline teams won their groups in the round-robin stage. That left the same four semi-finalists as last year – the two Old Pauline teams, with the AOBs and Old Eastbournians – and the first semi-final (OPs I v OEs) was a repeat of last year's final. Indeed, the result was the same: an emphatic win for the OPs against rapidly tiring opposition. The second semi was a closer affair, but in the end it was the AOBs who won three of the four games and took their place in the final.

The final was a fitting conclusion to what the organiser said was the highest-quality Owers Trophy ever. The eight players have already proved their mettle at various levels, but it's testament to the Old Paulines' strength that they could not include Dan Tristao, Charlie Brooks or Ed Kay (who played in last year's winning team), but could still win. The four in the final were Tom Dean, Ben Beltrami, Matt Shaw and James Tilston, and they were able to win over a very experienced AOB team of Hamish Buchanan, Inigo Ackand, Peter Hanton and Adam George.

Last, but not least, the plate was won Derby Moor, again proving the strength of youth, claiming the silverware with a foursome all of whom were under 25 - and well under 25 in some cases!

Scores

Group stages

Group 1: Old Paulines bt Alleyn Old Boys 60-14, bt Old Bradfieldians 60-20; Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Bradfieldians 57-36

Group 2: Old Paulines II bt Old Eastbournians 60-23, bt Derby Moor 58-35; Old Eastbournians bt Derby Moor 47-43

Knockout stage

Semi-finals: Old Paulines I bt Old Eastbournians 60-18; Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Paulines II 59-28

Final: Old Paulines I bt Alleyn Old Boys 55-39

Plate: Derby Moor

YORKSHIRE OPEN DOUBLES

Giggleswick, 12/13th October 2013

The efforts made this year to attract the quality players to the Yorkshire Open Doubles paid off, with the pairings of Tristao and Price and Grant and Minta attempting to knock reigning champions Buchanan and

Ellison off their pedestal. Also, for the first time, we welcomed a lady to the Giggleswick tournament, as Alex Steel made the trip from London to the Frozen North. We look forward to seeing her and other ladies in future.

Play in the Cup competition lived up to expectations, with upsets to the seeding early on as Butler and Gravatt disposed of Beswick and Roberts in the quarter finals. Ed Hawke and Widdop also gave Buchanan and Ellison a hard first round, finally losing 16-15, 15-7; the closest anyone got to beating the top pair. Highlight of the day, however, was the semi final between Price and Tristao and Grant and Minta. A hard fought match, which could have gone either way up until the last few points, was eventually won by Price and Tristao 15-13, 13-15, 15-12.

Unfortunately, the damage wreaked on the bodies of the winning pair by this marathon made their final encounter with Buchanan and Ellison one mountain too many. They put up a brave and skilful challenge, eventually falling 15-9, 15-12 to the champions of the last few years.

As is the custom of the organiser, those not involved in the later rounds of the cup were thrown into the multiple plate competitions. The first plate, a knock-out competition, allowed Beswick and Roberts to depart with some pride, when they defeated a fatigued Ed Hawke and Widdop in the final. Those who fell in the early rounds of the first plate were then treated to the delights of a round-robin second plate tournament, which, after a long day and too many games of Fives, saw Harrison and Nithsdale beat Christie and Kirk to the trophy by a close margin.

On Sunday an American Tournament was held in conjunction with Rossall School, for the remnants of the Saturday participants who were still standing, and pupils and staff from Rossall. A day enjoyed by all who took part. The organiser is grateful to the Head Master and staff of Giggleswick School for their loan of the Fives courts for the weekend, and the use of their excellent changing facilities. Early enquiries indicate that they would be happy to host a full singles and doubles tournament in future!

Scores

Cup

Preliminary Round: E Hawke & Widdop bt Dyke & Ms Steel 15-0, 15-4; Butler & Gravatt bt Harrison & Nithsdale 15-1, 15-5; Baxter & Halligan bt J Hawke & Sandie 15-4, 15-13

1st Round: Buchanan & Ellison bt E Hawke & Widdop 16-15, 15-7; Butler & Gravatt bt Beswick & Roberts 15-5, 15-12; Price & Tristao bt Christie & Kirk 15-11, 15-9; Grant & Minta bt Baxter & Halligan 15-4, 15-3

Semi-finals: Buchanan & Ellison bt Gravatt & Butler; Tristao & Price bt Minta & Grant 15-13, 13-15, 15-12

Final: Buchanan & Ellison bt Tristao & Price 15-9, 15-12

Plate: Beswick & Roberts

1st Plate:

Preliminary Round: Harrison & Nithsdale bt Baxter & Halligan 15-6; E Hawke & Widdop bt J Hawke & Sandie 15-4; Dyke & Ms Steel bt Christie & Kirk 15-12

Semi-finals: Beswick & Roberts bt Harrison & Nithsdale 15-3; E Hawke & Widdop bt Dyke & Ms Steel 15-4

Final: Beswick & Roberts bt E Hawke & Widdop 15-13, 15-4

2nd Plate (Round Robin):

Dyke & Ms Steel bt J Hawke & Sandie 12-10; Christie & Kirk bt Baxter & Halligan 11-7; Christie &

Kirk bt J Hawke & Sandie 11-4; Christie & Kirk bt Dyke & Ms Steel 11-4; Baxter & Halligan bt Dyke & Ms Steel 12-10; J Hawke & Sandie bt Baxter & Halligan 11-7; J Hawke & Sandie bt Harrison & Nithsdale 11-8; Harrison & Nithsdale bt Baxter & Halligan 11-5; Harrison & Nithsdale bt Christie & Kirk 11-2; Harrison & Nithsdale bt Dyke & Ms Steel 11-4

Winners: Harrison & Nithsdale

NEW CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY COURTS

Cambridge, 19th October 2013

The first competitive match has taken place on the new Rugby Fives courts at Cambridge University. In theory, the match was to have been Cambridge University against the RFA Club (represented by Andy Pringle, Hamish Buchanan, Dick Warner, Will Ellison, Marcus Bate and Ed Hatton), but in the end, the two teams were mixed in an attempt to produce a closer tie – and it did just that.

However, what it also did was to ensure that no one really quite knew who was playing for who; and, with a couple of students having to leave early before the full series of planned matches was completed, the overall result soon became academic. Indeed, such was the complex planning involved, that there was a brief period when the players believed the outcome would depend on the result of a table tennis match between Marcus and Will.

In the end, the result was immaterial; what really mattered was that all 12 players – and the various spectators – were united in their praise of the new facilities. The courts played superbly well, and it was even suggested that they could host the National Singles Championship in a couple of years time. We now look forward to the ‘unofficial’ joint opening of the courts scheduled for November 9th, when the Eton Fives Association will also run an event

WEST OF ENGLAND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Clifton College, Bristol, 26/27th October 2013

Another successful weekend was held here at the Clifton courts, writes organiser Simon Werkshagen, with no injuries to report, just the traditional late arrivals for many of the players!

Both the singles and doubles saw a very strong entry with no weak players, this led to some very close and entertaining matches to watch. The highlight of the singles (apart from the final) being the semi-final match between Will Ellison and Dan Tristao, which ebbed and flowed throughout. Will looked in total control at 7:1 up in the first game, but Dan did his usual catch-up to nick the game 11-9, before taking the second by the same score.

Sunday morning saw the two finalists nearly being scratched for being 45 minutes late with an impatient audience waiting for their match. Once it was under way, Dan T won the first game fairly comfortably, but a strong second game performance from Dan G had us thinking we were to have a third game. In the end, though Dan T held on to take it 11-9 and secure the title.

In the doubles, the seedings went to form until the final where the singles finalists overcame last year’s winners Hamish and Will, putting to bed their embarrassment at the way they had performed in the previous year’s final.

Special thanks to must go to new RFA President Bob Dolby for being around to help with the silverware and for my bottle of wine, as well as the combination of Tom Kiggell, Jim Hughes, James Toop and Marcus Bate for being the only match that made their allotted time early!!

I reserve my special thanks to Laura (soon to be Dean) for yet another cake for us all to eat. I wish you both the best of luck for your wedding next year from all of us at the West of England Club and keep baking those cakes!!

Scores

Singles

1st Round: A Pringle bt F Thomas 11-7, 11-3; Marcus Bate bt Ben Smithson 11-6, 11-2; T Dean bt J Wren 11-5, 11-4; J Minta bt S Werkshagen 11-7, 11-1; H Jefferies bt A Rew 11-5, 11-9; D Grant bt M Lidgitt 11-3, 11-2; S Rolls bt J Aquilina 5-11, 11-1, 11-2; T Parker bt A George w/o; I Ackland bt B Baral 11-5, withdrawn due to injury; T Kiggell bt D Waller 11-6, 11-7; W Ellison bt S Russell 11-0, 11-0; J Gravatt bt J Hughes 11-6, 12-10; H Buchanan bt O Quarry 11-2, 11-8; P Hanton bt M Shaw 11-7, 11-4

2nd Round: J Toop bt A Pringle 11-1, 11-0; T Dean Bt M Bate 11-1, 11-3, J Minta bt H Jefferies 11-9, 11-4; D Grant bt S Rolls 11-1, 11-6; D Tristao bt T Parker 11-4, 11-6; I Ackland bt T Kiggell 11-6, 11-9; W Ellison bt J Gravatt 11-0, 11-1; H Buchanan bt P Hanton 11-7, 9-11, 11-6

Quarter-finals: J Toop bt T Dean 11-5, 11-8; D Grant bt J Minta 11-1, 12-10; D Tristao bt I Ackland 11-6, 11-5; W Ellison bt H Buchanan 11-2, 11-4

Semi-finals: D Grant bt J Toop 11-8, 11-9; Tristao bt Ellison 11-9, 11-9

Final: D Tristao bt D Grant 11-5, 11-9

Plate: Waller

Doubles

1st Round: Thomas & Jefferies bt Aquilina & Gravatt 12-11, 12-11; Ackland & Rolls bt Quarry & Russell 11-2, 10-12, 11-1; Minta & Dean bt Kirk and Ri Christie 11-1, 11-6; Toop & Bate bt Whitehorn & Ro Christie 11-5, 11-6; Kiggell & Hughes bt Wren & Smithson 11-4, 11-8; Parker & Shaw bt Pringle & Price 11-9, 11-0

Quarter-finals: Ellison & Buchanan bt Thomas & Jefferies 11-5, 11-6; Minta & Dean bt Ackland & Rolls 11-8, 11-2; Toop & Bate bt Kiggell & Hughes 11-5, 11-9; Tristao & Grant bt Parker & Shaw

Semi-finals: Ellison & Buchanan bt Minta & Dean 11-8, 11-1; Tristao & Grant bt Toop & Bate 11-5, 12-10

Final: D Tristao & D Grant bt W Ellison & H Buchanan 8-11, 11-5, 11-8;

Plate: Quarry & Russell

OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS

London, 30th October 2013

Following some significant results at the recent London and West of England Open Championships, James Toop has been overtaken at the top of the RFA singles rankings. In fact, fact following defeats to Dan Tristao in the final at Whitgift and to Dan Grant in the semi-finals in Clifton, the latest lists (prepared for the RFA by Dave Hebden) show that James has dropped to third. Dan Tristao is now on the top of the singles rankings for the first time, while Will Ellison returns to second place.

The new rankings are significant not just for the changes in position, but also because of the effect they

will have in the forthcoming National Singles Championship. In the last few years, James has benefited from top seeding, while Dan and Will have had a tough semi-final which – without wishing to take anything away from James’s triumphant performance – has impacted on the winner’s play in the final. With Dan now top seed for the championship, it may be argued that a potentially easier route to the final will make him favourite to take the title for the first time.

Meanwhile, in the doubles rankings, Dan and Will cement their first and second positions, but the major moves come from Dan Grant and Hamish Buchanan. Dan is up to third after winning the West of England Open title with Dan Tristao, while Hamish jumps two places to fourth after winning the Yorkshire Open and finishing as runner-up in Clifton (both with Will).

The full rankings should be displayed on the Fivesonline website, but while that is repaired after a hacking attack, you can view the full spreadsheets by clicking on the link below.

Singles Rankings			
Curr.	Prev.	Name	Points
1	2	D Tristao	93.3
2	3	W Ellison	89.7
3	1	J Toop	85.6
4	4	M Cavanagh	61.8
5	5	J Minta	60.1
6	6	D Grant	58.9
7	7	C Brooks	41.8
8	8	E Kay	33.7
9	9	H Buchanan	33.2
10	10	I Ackland	30.3
11	11	T Maconie	25.8
12	12	L Thomson	23.3
13	14	E Hatton	22.9
14	15	T Dean	22.5
15	13	M Bate	22.2
16	16	G Price	19.2
17	17	N Roberts	18.1
18	20	T Kiggel	18
19	18	C Burrows	17.7
	19	D Fox	17.7
21	22	R Murby	16.2
22	21	M Bowness	16
	23	G Rees	16
24	25	M Skogh	15.2
25	26	S Rolls	15
26	23	P Hanton	14.2
27	27	S Wyatt-Haines	13.9
28	29	J Brubert	13.8
29	28	T Widdop	13.3
30	31	J Hughes	12.1
31	33	A Pringle	11.5
32	33	A George	11.4

33	32	J Major	11.3
34	30	A Rew	10.8
35	35	D Butler	10.4
36	59	C Waller	10
37	42	J Gravatt	9.3
38	37	F Thomas	8.9
39	36	N Hillier	8.6
40	38	J Tilston	8.2
41	43	H Jefferies	7.7
42	39	S Fraser	7.4
43	40	J Aquilina	7.1
44	41	A Lee	6.8
45	44	T Parker	6
46	52	M Shaw	5.9
47	46	N Patel	5.6
	45	R Patel	5.6
49	47	J Malde	5.3
50	47	R Lamb	4.9
51	49	S Coffey	4.4
52	50	M Roberts	4.2
53	51	S King	3.4
54	53	A Bowden	2.3
55	54	G Barnes	2
56	55	N Austin	1.6
57	57	M Frost	1.3
	56	M Kemp	1.3
59	58	A Goodwin	0.9
60	60	J Wren	0.7

Doubles Rankings			
Curr.	Prev.	Name	Points
1	1	W Ellison	106.7
2	2	D Tristao	98.4
3	4	D Grant	89.7
4	6	H Buchanan	87.8
5	3	C Brooks	82.9
6	5	T Dean	79
7	7	J Minta	70.9
8	8	G Price	67.7
9	9	M Bate	53.4
10	10	E Kay	44.4
11	12	R Perry	40.6
12	11	A Pringle	40.2
13	17	J Toop	39.6
14	14	N Roberts	39.2
15	13	H Mohammed	38.7
16	15	P Hanton	36.4
17	16	M Skogh	30.9
18	18	M Kemp	30.5

19	20	J Hughes	30.3
20	19	J Aquilina	29.8
21	28	J Gravatt	26.4
	22	D Warner	26.4
23	21	C Burrows	25.8
24	23	E Hatton	25.5
25	26	I Ackland	25.3
	26	S Rolls	25.3
27	25	W Enstone	25
28	24	J Tilston	24.5
29	31	J Brubert	21.5
	31	R Pearson	21.5
	31	R Sandie	21.5
32	37	T Parker	20.9
	37	F Thomas	20.9
34	29	A Lee	20.2
35	30	J Hawke	20.1
36	35	J Marshall	19.7
37	40	J Beswick	19.2
38	36	A George	19
39	55	D Butler	18.8
40	34	L Thomson	18.7
41	39	M Frost	17.1
42	54	H Jefferies	16.7
43	41	A Rew	16.4
	43	T Widdop	16.4
45	43	T Maconie	16.1
46	41	A Goodwin	15.8
47	45	R Christie	15.3
48	57	T Kiggell	15.1
49	47	S Kirby	14.4
50	52	R Dyke	14.1
	52	J Sinton	14.1
52	46	M Cavanagh	13.7
53	48	C Brechin	12.8
	48	A Griffiths	12.8
	48	P Manning	12.8
56	51	T Chase	12.6
57	55	E Ronan	12.4
58	66	E Hawke	11.3
	57	S Watson	11.3
60	59	C Waller	10.8
61	60	H Akerman	10.2
62	61	O Arnold	10
	61	B Beltrami	10
	61	N Geere	10
	61	T Lewis	10
	~	O Quarry	10
	~	S Russell	10
	~	M Shaw	10
	61	A Smith	10

70	66	A Bowden	8.8
	66	S Hodgson	8.8
	66	K Kennerley	8.8
	66	M Mohammed	8.8
	66	J Spencer	8.8
	66	R W-Haines	8.8
	66	S W-Haines	8.8
	77	74	V Patel
78	75	J Malde	7.2
79	~	B Smithson	7.1
	~	J Wren	7.1
81	76	M Baxter	6.4
82	77	B Lowry	6.2
	77	R Sutcliffe	6.2
	77	O Thompson	6.2
	77	J Walter	6.2
86	81	N Austin	5.2
	81	H Aveston	5.2
	81	A Beverly	5.2
	81	C Butler	5.2
	81	S Coffey	5.2
	81	N Finney	5.2
	81	A Hanton	5.2
	81	N Hillier	5.2
	81	S King	5.2
	81	B Kirk	5.2
	81	R Lebon	5.2
	81	E Malone	5.2
	81	J Pearce-Smith	5.2
	81	J Savery	5.2
100	95	N Edmonds	3.7
	95	J Goodwin	3.7
	95	K Ward	3.7

NORTH OF ENGLAND WINCHESTER FIVES CHAMPIONSHIP

Sedbergh, 3rd November 2013

Work being carried out on the courts at Sedbergh has unfortunately forced the cancellation of the North of England Winchester Fives Championship, which was to have been held this weekend. The work will see the lighting sorted out, some heater elements replaced and the courts deep cleaned. Organiser Jon Lidiard says he hopes to rearrange the tournament for next term and adds that if anyone would like to come up to Sedbergh on tour next term or in the summer, the school would be delighted to host either a school or adult fixture.

SCHOOLS' WINCHESTER FIVES CHAMPIONSHIP

Winchester College, 10th November 2013

Eleven pairs entered the first Schools' tournament of the season at Winchester on a fine autumn Sunday, writes organiser David Barnes; and, although no matches went to three games, a lot of good fives was played. In the first round, Derby Moor II pipped Marlborough in the closest match of the day, while Derby Moor III looked immediately at home on the courts, defeating the local second pair.

The quarter-finals saw the four seeds, St. Paul's I and II, Derby Moor I and Winchester I, come through with some ease, the stoutest opposition coming from Radley I and the plucky Derby Moor III, who were eventually to contest the plate final. In one of the semifinals the top St. Paul's pair – already holders of the Rugby Fives Schools' doubles title – beat Winchester I comfortably in a match where the Wykehamists fought hard but failed to win many points. The other semi saw Derby Moor's experienced first pair give St. Paul's II a good match before succumbing to the Paulines' left and right partnership and better handling of the butress.

The final was a pleasure to watch, as the outstanding Beltrami and Arnold (St. Paul's I) dealt increasingly skilfully with the possibilities of the butress, while their second pair (Kahn-Pascual and Ashraf) retrieved well and hit the ball almost as hard but not quite as consistently or accurately. For two pairs unused to Winchester fives, the standard was extremely high and St. Paul's I thoroughly deserved their victory.

The plate competition was a most enjoyable one, with several pairs in with a chance of winning. Eventually Derby Moor III (Halligan & Singh) took the prize, beating a good pair from Radley in a close final. It was due reward for consistently good fives throughout the day.

Many thanks to Giles Munn for his help and to Winchester College for the use of their fine courts, which played as well as ever.

Scores:

Round 1: Derby Moor II bt Marlborough 16-15, 16-14; Winchester I bt St. Paul's III 15-3, 15-5; Derby Moor III bt Winchester II 15-3, 15-9

Quarter-Finals: St. Paul's I bt Derby Moor II 15-2, 15-0; Winchester I bt Radley II 15-1, 15-1; Derby Moor I bt Radley I 15-5, 15-4; St. Paul's II bt Derby Moor III 15-7, 15-3

Semi-Finals: St. Paul's I bt Winchester I 15-3, 15-2; St. Paul's II bt Derby Moor I 15-11, 15-11

Final: St. Paul's I (B Beltrami & O Arnold) bt St. Paul's II (Y Kahn-Pascual & B Ashraf) 15-2, 15-6

Plate winners: Derby Moor III (J Halligan & J Singh)

NATIONAL STUDENT/BUCS CHAMPIONSHIPS

To be held at Marlborough College, 22nd/24th November 2013

BUCS today published the draw for the National Student Championships, which are to be held at Marlborough College from November 22nd. Top seeds and defending champions are UCL's Dan Grant in the singles and the Cambridge pair of Ed Kay and Jacob Brubert in the doubles. The latter is particularly

welcome news as it means Ed has recovered from the nasty injury he sustained during the London Open.

However, it looks far from certain that the top seeds will have it all their own way, with Ed and Dan joined in the singles by experienced players such as Chris Burrows, David Butler, Inigo Ackland and Henry Jefferies. In the doubles, Ed and Jacob can expect tough challenges from the likes of Ackland & Rolls (Bristol) and Butler & Aquilina (Durham). Possible dark horses include Grant & Chase from UCL, while the St Paul's schoolboys, Beltrami and Arnold, could well spring a surprise, coming into the tournament fresh from their win in the Schools' Winchester Fives Championship. For full details, simply click on the link below to download the full singles and doubles draw. We'll have the results online as soon as possible after the tournament.

NATIONAL STUDENT/BUCS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Marlborough College, 22nd/24th November 2013

An entry of some 49 in the singles and 27 pairs in the doubles, pushed the organisers to their limits in order to finish the schedule on time. In fact only a minimal number withdrew – 2 from the singles and 1 pair. Combine this with the fact that a couple of the 1st round singles went to long three-game matches, and we were always likely to remain behind time, writes David Gardner.

Estimating the length of a match is always difficult and this year was no exception. In fact we played for 13 hours non-stop on 4 courts on day 1, followed by 12 hour on day 2! Even the finals went to 5 hours of play Sunday morning. Thus some 150 matches were played in the main Championships and Plate events, with a total of some 110 hours of play. A mammoth task which exhausted everyone.

However the standard was generally of a high quality – exceptionally good at the top end, with a very broad level in the middle order, which meant even more long matches. Even at the lower end there was much excitement. The arrival of a 'Squash' team from Brunel provided a breath of fresh air to the tournament, and there was much jubilation from everyone when they won their first-ever victory in a Plate match v. UCL. I trust that we will see them again next year.

It was also extremely pleasing to see Edinburgh represented after a break of a few years, and we hope that Matt Oddy will be able to re-build the Club in Scotland so that we are able to consider taking the event back North of the Border again in the near future.

The finals went to plan with the top seeds, Dan Grant (UCL) and Ed Kay & Jacob Brubert (Cambridge) both retaining their titles. Inigo Ackland & Sam Rolls, tried desperately hard to take the doubles, in their second successive final, in a long and gruelling three game match, where the level of play was top class, but, sadly, the levels of sportsmanship were not always of the standard that we have come to expect in our sport. Self regulation has always been a feature of Rugby Fives and we hope that will continue long into the future!

The Plate events provided more excitement with Durham capturing both events. Ollie Quarry defeated Alan Bowden in the singles, then combined with his opponent in the doubles to take a long gruelling three-game match and complete the 'double'.

Perhaps a particular feature was the feat of Alan Bowden, who, after nine years as a student, finally won a title in his last year. Well done!!

The facilities at Marlborough were, as always, excellent, and we are grateful to the College for giving us

hospitality for three days.

We look forward to the Representative match v Rugby Fives Association in March, which is being held on the excellent new courts at Cambridge. It would be good to see a sizeable turn out of spectators for this event, which commences at 1 pm on Sunday 9th March 2014.

• In the entirely unofficial 'team' championship, calculated by Dave Hebden, the winners were Cambridge University, who supplied the doubles champion and the singles runner-up. In second place were UCL, thanks chiefly to Dan Grant's singles title, while Bristol beat Durham to take fourth place. For the full details, click on the link below.

Singles

1st round: Esin (Ox) bt Wollard (Dur) 13-15, 15-9, 15-6; Z Brubert (Cam) bt Ward (Bru) 15-0, 15-0; Russel (Dur) bt Chandra (UCL) 15-0, 15-1; Ibbotson (UCL) bt Cook (Cam) 15-0, 15-1; Evan (Ox) bt Lamb (Dur) 15-13, 0-15, 15-13; Hanton (Law) bt R Mathias (Cam) 15-2, 15-5; Ader (Cam) bt Birney (Bru) 15-2, 15-0; Davey (Bir) bt Sedani (Bru) 15-1, 15-0; Page (Dur) bt Fowler (Bru) 15-1, 15-4; Bowden (Dur) bt Bury (Cam) 15-8, 15-12; Lau (Cam) bt Roach (Bru) 115-0, 15-0; Arnold (SP) bt Legget (Dur) 15-4, 15-4; Quarry (Dur) bt Houlden (Cam) 15-6, 11-15, 15-13; Oddy (Edi) bt Ancell (Bru) 15-0, 15-0; Law (Cam) bt Hick (Bru) 15-0, 15-1

2nd round: Grant (UCL) bt Esin 15-5, 15-3; Z Brubert bt Russell 15-11, 15-3; Beltrami (SPS) Ibbetson 15-0, 15-1; J Brubert (Cam) bt Evan 15-0, 15-2; Hanton bt Chen (UCL) 15-0, 15-0; Aquilina (Dur) bt Ader 15-2, 15-3; Gravatt (Dur) bt Chai (UCL) 15-0, 15-0; Burrows (Imp) bt Davey 15-6, 15-3; Kay (Cam) bt Page 15-1, 15-3; Parker (Bri) bt Bowden 15-7, 15-8; Thomas (Oxf) bt Lau 15-6, 15-0; Rolls (Bri) bt Arnold 15-12, 15-7; Butler (Dur) bt Mullan (Ox) 15-0, 15-0; Jefferies (Ox) bt Quarry 15-13, 15-3; Malde (Cam) bt Oddy 15-6, 115-9; Ackland (Bri) bt Law 15-0, 15-1

3rd round: Grant bt Z Brubert 15-8, 15-10; J Brubert bt Beltrami 16-15, 15-13; Aquilina bt Hanton 16-15, 15-5; Burrows bt Gravatt 11-15, 15-5, 15-8; Kay bt Parker 15-10, 15-6; Rolls bt Thomas 15-9, 15-5; Butler bt Jefferies 15-12, 16-14; Ackland bt Malde 15-8, 15-13

Quarter-finals: Grant bt J Brubert 15-2, 15-6; Aquilina bt Burrows 15-4, 15-1; Kay bt Rolls 15-5, 15-2; Ackland bt Butler 15-8, 15-8

Semi-finals: Grant bt Aquilina 15-4, 15-9; Kay bt Ackland 15-13, 7-15, 15-6

Final: D Grant bt E Kay 15-3, 15-13

Plate: O Quarry

Doubles

1st round: Legget/Woolard (Dur) bt Wilman/Wilman (Ox) 15-7, 15-8; Bury/Law (Cam) bt Fowler/Roach (Bru) 15-3, 15-0; Gravatt/Russell (Dur) bt Watkinson/Chua (Win) 15-7, 15-3; Jefferies/Thomas (Ox) bt Tugwell/Chandra (UCL) 15-6, 15-0; Mathias/Lau (Cam) bt Ward/Hick (Bru) 15-2, 15-0; Parker/Frossell (Bri) bt Penn/Ibbetson (UCL) 15-11, 15-9; Ganendra/Ader (Cam) bt Lamb/Page (Dur) 15-4, 15-3; Cook/Houlden (Cam) bt Chen/Nixley (UCL) 15-1, 15-1; Beltrami/Arnold (SPS) bt Esin/Roberts (Ox) 15-2, 15-0; Bowden/Quarry (Dur) bt Evan/Whitney (Ox) score unrecorded; Mullan/Hale (Ox) bt Binney/Punit (Bru) 15-5, 15-1

2nd round: Kay/Brubert (Cam) bt Legget/Woolard 15-6, 15-6; Gravatt/Russell bt Bury/Law 15-8, 15-5; Jefferies/Thomas bt Mathias/Lau 15-0, 15-2; Butler/Aquilina bt Parker/Frossell 15-9, 15-12; Grant/Chase (UCL) bt Ganendra/Ader 15-9, 15-11; Beltrami/Arnold bt Cook/Houlden 15-0, 15-0; Malde/Z Brubert bt Bowden/Quarry 15-8, 15-13; Ackland/Rolls (Bri) bt Mullan/Hale 15-0, 15-3

Quarter-finals: Kay/Brubert bt Gravatt/Russell 15-9, 15-7; Jefferies/Thomas bt Butler/Aquilina 13-15, 15-8, 15-8; Beltrami/Arnold bt Grant/Chase 15-9, 8-15, 15-6; Ackland/Rolls bt Malde/Z Brubert 15-7, 15-4

Semi-finals: Kay & Brubert bt Thomas & Jefferies ret'd; Ackland & Rolls bt Beltrami & Arnold 9-15, 15-13, 15-3

Final: E Kay & J Brubert bt I Ackland & S Rolls 14-16, 15-8, 15-12
Plate: Quarry & Bowden

NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Qualifying tournaments, regional, 16th November 2013; Final rounds, Barnes, 7th/8th December 2013

Organiser Charlie Brooks has published the draw for the last 16 of the National Singles Championship - and it looks a mouth-watering prospect, with a crop of excellent young players joining more seasoned campaigners. Mind you, given that this year has seen a record entry of 56 players, it's perhaps no surprise that we've ended up with a field of such high quality in the final rounds.

Perhaps most intriguingly, this is the first year for some time that James Toop (the defending champion and looking to extend his run of five consecutive national titles) is not seeded first. In fact, if the seedings hold true, he won't even reach the final, as Will Ellison now sits second in the rankings, meaning he is seeded second in this tournament. Top seed this year is Dan Tristao, who has won the last two singles titles to overtake James at the top of the rankings.

However, there can be no doubt that Dan will have to play well even to reach the final. His first opponent is Theo Parker and, if he wins to progress beyond that, he will face the winner of what looks like a cracking first-round tie between Tom Maconie and Ed Kay, who is continuing his comeback after a nasty injury at the London Open in September.

Such is the strength of youth in this tournament, you might even call Tom a veteran! But, with the likes of David Butler, Peter Hanton, Matt Shaw, Sam Rolls, Jabob Brubert and Henry Jefferies all in action, a casual observer might confuse this with the recent BUCS tournament. However, former champions Hamish Buchanan and Matt Cavanagh prove that there is life in the old(er) dogs yet.

For full details of the draw, click on the link below; and, come back here next week to see who has lifted the coveted Jesters Cup.

NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP for the Jesters Club Cup

Final rounds, Barnes, 7th/8th December 2013

Dan Tristao won his first National Singles title today, with a win over Will Ellison in the final, making Dan the first Old Pauline national singles champion since John East in 1969. It was a fitting culmination to a wonderful couple of days' play, which were notable for many reasons: the number of young players reaching this stage of the tournament bodes well for the future of the game, while this was the first time for six years that James Toop did not reach the final. Mind you, he came agonisingly close, only being knocked out by Will Ellison, who had lost to James in the last three finals, but came back from 5-11 down and saved some six match points before taking the third and deciding game of their semi-final this year 16-14.

The long battle took some of the energy out of Will's legs, but it was an irresistible start to the final by Dan; with a combination of deft hands, reverse angles and punishing line and length, he pushed his opponent all over the court to take an early 8-0 lead. Will managed to slow down the charge by capitalising on the few errors that Dan was making, but the deficit was too great and Dan took the game

15-4. At the start of the second it looked as though the match might turn into a classic, with the scores locked at 7-7 after some coruscating rallies, but Dan raised the bar again and marched on to a 15-7 victory and with it the Jesters Cup.

Once again, it was the semi-final between the second and third seeds that was the most exciting encounter of the tournament, and for the third time in a row it was Will who came through by a whisker in the final game. However, this year his opponent was James rather than Dan, who had a slightly easier route thanks to his number one seeding. Will got off to a storming start against James, racing to game ball for the loss of only two points before James fought back. Although he lost that opener, it gave James momentum going into the second which he took relatively comfortably. Both players then showed the fighting qualities that have served them so well over the last few seasons, with the decider going this way and that; the closer the winning line got, the harder it was for either player to score points, culminating in six match points saved by Will before he eventually managed to eke out the final point well over two hours after the match started.

The first two rounds had gone more-or-less according to the seedings – the exception in the first round was Tom Maconie (9) edging out Ed Kay (8), and in the quarter-finals Dan Grant (5) beat Matt Cavanagh (4). The latter result looked unlikely after Matt won the first to 5, but Dan managed to change tactics effectively to reach his first National Singles semi-final.

As ever with the National Singles, the plate competition was of a very high standard with some cracking matches taking place. It was won by Ed Kay, beating Matt Shaw in the final, who had scored notable wins in both the qualifying tournament and the plate. The plate was remarkable for the fact that every player is currently a student!

Finally, many thanks to those who organised the regional qualifying tournaments in Durham, Bristol and Cambridge – in doing so they helped to attract the largest entry to the tournament ever.

Scores:

1st Round: Tristao bt Parker 15-12, 15-7; Maconie bt Kay 15-7, 15-12; Grant bt Butler 15-3, 15-11; Cavanagh bt Hanton 15-1, 15-1; Toop bt Shaw 15-4, 15-1; Brooks bt Rolls 15-1, 15-2; Buchanan bt Brubert 15-2, 15-2; Ellison bt Jefferies 15-2, 15-4

Quarter-finals: Tristao bt Maconie 15-7, 15-7; Grant bt Cavanagh 5-15, 15-8, 15-8; Toop bt Brooks 15-9, 15-3; Ellison bt Buchanan 15-0, 15-4

Semi-finals: Tristao bt Grant 15-5, 15-5; Ellison bt Toop 15-8, 8-15, 16-14

Final: Tristao bt Ellison 15-4, 15-7

Plate: Kay

OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS

London, 10th December 2013

The RFA has today published its official year-ending singles and doubles rankings, prepared on its behalf by Dave Hebden. They are significant, as they reflect both the BUCS/National Student Championships, as well as the National Singles Championship.

In the singles rankings, new National Champion Dan Tristao consolidates his position at the top, ahead of runner-up Will Ellison and 2012 champion James Toop, who is now in third position. However, perhaps the most significant move comes from BUCS champion and National semi-finalist Dan Grant, who jumps into fourth place. Elsewhere, the other major moves come from the young players who so impressed in

the National Singles and BUCS. Jacob Brubert, Sam Rolls, Matt Shaw and David Butler all now sit between 20th and 30th, with the likes of Theo Parker, Henry Jefferies and Julian Aquilina all jumping more than 10 places.

By comparison, there is less movement in the doubles ranking – in fact, the top 16 places are unchanged. However, following the BUCS championships, again it's the young players who are making significant jumps. For instance, BUCS finalists Jacob Brubert, Inigo Ackland and Sam Rolls are now all inside the top 20, while David Butler and Henry Jefferies both climb five places.

The full rankings are now restored to the Fivesonline site, and you can see the full details by clicking on the link below. (NB Much of this site is still a Work in Progress following the hacking attack, so please ignore the current dominance of EFA articles. There is much work going on behind the scenes to rectify the situation)

RFA Rankings

Latest Singles positions

Current position shows position following: National Singles December 2013

Previous rank shows position after West of England Championships Oct 2013

Position	Name	Previous Points	Current Points
1	D Tristao	1	95.3
2	W Ellison	2	90.8
3	J Toop	3	83.8
4	D Grant	6	62.2
5	M Cavanagh	4	60.3
6	J Minta	5	57.3
7	C Brooks	7	42.9
8	H Buchanan	9	34.9
9	E Kay	8	34.8
10	T Maconie	11	31.1
11	I Ackland	10	24.2
12	L Thomson	12	20.6
13	T Dean	14	19.8
14	G Price	16	19.0
15	J Brubert	28	18.6
16	S Rolls	25	18.5
17	T Kiggel	18	18.0
	M Shaw	46	18.0
19	E Hatton	13	17.2
20	M Bate	15	16.9
21	N Roberts	17	16.6
22	D Fox	19	16.3

Position	Name	Previous Points	
23	C Burrows	19	15.5
	D Butler	35	15.5
25	G Rees	22	15.2
26	R Murby	21	15.0
27	P Hanton	26	14.7
28	S Wyatt-Haines	27	13.3
29	T Parker	45	12.9
30	H Jefferies	41	12.8
31	J Aquilina	43	12.5
32	M Skogh	24	12.3
33	J Hughes	30	12.2
34	T Widdop	29	12.1
35	M Bowness	22	11.9
36	A Pringle	31	10.9
37	A George	32	10.6
38	J Tilston	40	10.4
	C Waller	36	10.4
40	A Rew	34	9.8
41	F Thomas	38	9.7
42	J Gravatt	37	9.4
43	J Major	33	8.8
44	N Hillier	39	6.7
45	J Malde	49	5.6
46	S Fraser	42	5.5
	N Patel	47	5.5
48	A Lee	44	5.2
49	R Patel	47	4.3
50	M Roberts	52	3.6
51	O Quarry	~	3.5
52	S Coffey	51	3.4
53	S King	53	2.8
54	R Lamb	50	2.1
55	O Arnold	~	1.8
	B Beltrami	~	1.8
	R Houlden	~	1.8
58	G Barnes	55	1.7
59	O Evan	~	1.4
60	A Bowden	54	1.3
	M Frost	57	1.3
62	N Austin	56	0.8

Position	Name	Previous Points	
63	M Kemp	57	0.7
64	J Wren	60	0.6
65	A Goodwin	59	0.5

Latest Doubles positions

Current position shows position following: BUCS Championships Nov 2013

Previous rank shows position after West of England Championships Oct 2013

Position	Name	Previous Points	
1	W Ellison	1	105.7
2	D Tristao	2	97.5
3	D Grant	3	88.9
4	H Buchanan	4	86.9
5	C Brooks	5	81.9
6	T Dean	6	78.1
7	J Minta	7	70.1
8	G Price	8	67.2
9	M Bate	9	52.7
10	E Kay	10	50.2
11	R Perry	11	40.1
12	A Pringle	12	39.6
13	J Toop	13	39.2
14	N Roberts	14	38.6
15	H Mohammed	15	38.0
16	P Hanton	16	35.9
17	J Brubert	29	32.5
18	I Ackland	25	30.5
	S Rolls	25	30.5
20	J Aquilina	20	30.3
21	J Hughes	19	30.2
	M Skogh	17	30.2
23	M Kemp	18	30.1
24	J Gravatt	21	27.0
25	D Warner	21	26.1
26	C Burrows	23	25.2
27	E Hatton	24	25.1
28	W Enstone	27	25.0
29	J Tilston	28	24.3

Position	Name	Previous Points	
30	F Thomas	32	23.0
31	R Pearson	29	21.3
	R Sandie	29	21.3
33	T Parker	32	20.7
34	D Butler	39	20.0
35	J Hawke	35	19.6
	A Lee	34	19.6
37	H Jefferies	42	19.4
	J Marshall	36	19.4
39	J Beswick	37	18.8
	A George	38	18.8
41	L Thomson	40	18.2
42	M Frost	41	16.7
43	A Rew	43	16.3
44	T Widdop	43	16.0
45	T Maconie	45	15.9
46	A Goodwin	46	15.5
47	R Christie	47	15.1
48	T Kiggell	48	15.0
49	T Chase	56	14.2
	S Kirby	49	14.2
51	O Arnold	62	14.1
	B Beltrami	62	14.1
	R Dyke	50	14.1
	J Sinton	50	14.1
55	M Cavanagh	52	13.3
56	C Brechin	53	12.4
	A Griffiths	53	12.4
	P Manning	53	12.4
59	E Ronan	57	12.3
60	O Quarry	62	12.2
	S Russell	62	12.2
62	A Bowden	70	11.2
	E Hawke	58	11.2
	S Watson	58	11.2
65	C Waller	60	10.6
66	H Akerman	61	10.1
67	N Geere	62	10.0
	T Lewis	62	10.0
	J Malde	78	10.0

Position	Name	Previous Points	
	M Shaw	62	10.0
	A Smith	62	10.0
72	S Hodgson	70	8.7
	K Kennerley	70	8.7
	M Mohammed	70	8.7
	J Spencer	70	8.7
	R Wyatt-Haines	70	8.7
	S Wyatt-Haines	70	8.7
78	V Patel	77	7.2
79	Z Brubert	~	7.1
	B Smithson	79	7.1
	J Wren	79	7.1
82	M Baxter	81	6.2
83	B Lawry	82	6.1
	R Sutcliffe	82	6.1
	O Thompson	82	6.1
	J Walter	82	6.1
87	N Austin	86	5.1
	H Aveston	86	5.1
	A Beverly	86	5.1
	C Butler	86	5.1
	S Coffey	86	5.1
	N Finney	86	5.1
	A Hanton	86	5.1
	N Hillier	86	5.1
	S King	86	5.1
	B Kirk	86	5.1
	R Lebon	86	5.1
	E Malone	86	5.1
	J Pearce-Smith	86	5.1
	J Savery	86	5.1
101	N Edmonds	100	3.6
	J Goodwin	100	3.6
	K Ward	100	3.6

LADIES NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

St Paul's School, Barnes, 8th December 2013

This year, the Ladies Nationals went smoothly, albeit after a rocky start because of the organiser being stuck in traffic due to an accident. However, it was an excellent day of Ladies fives, full of varying abilities and amazing passion for the game, writes Alexandra Steel.

This year's participants spanned the country, Kathleen Briedenhann and Tessa Mills from Eastbourne, Alexandra Steel and Karen Hird from London, Maddy Raynor, Karina Valieva, Lora Misikova and Kate Shilina from Rossall, Melanie Whitehead from Devon and Amy Flood from Aldenham. I was especially impressed that the girls from Rossall changed their flight times home to accommodate the competition. It just goes to show the love of the game is ever growing!

The day started off with the doubles as per tradition! It was a round-robin due to only having 5 pairs. Each game was to 15 and all highly enjoyable to watch.

Melanie and Amy – newly paired together – worked well and enjoyed their games, getting used to each other's play within only a few games. Amy showed great potential with her hard hitting from her right hand and quick movements around the court. Certainly one to watch out for in the future.

Third and fourth place was fought out between Melanie & Amy against Lora & Maddy. This was a close game with good rallies and humour throughout the match. In the end Lora and Maddy won through. Well done to them.

The final of the doubles was between Alexandra & Karen and Kathleen & Tessa: two games of hard hitting, good rallies and great effort from both pairs. Kathleen and Tessa, an experienced pair, put to good use their known strengths against first-time partners Alexandra and Karen, who used their experience of volleying and turning shots to their advantage. The match was fought hard by both pairs and was a lot of fun. Kathleen and Tessa finally won 15-10 and 15-7.

The singles started during the final of the doubles, as a few ladies had to catch flights home. It was as exciting as the doubles, with all ladies showing a high standard of fives. The singles was a knock-out round with all girls playing one game to 11. The semi-finals were fought between Tessa and Alexandra (Eastbourne and London respectively) and Kathleen and Karen (Eastbourne and London). The former game was extremely well matched, with two friends showing strong power, similar styles and consistent hitting. It was a thoroughly exhausting game with the end result going to Alexandra 15-7. Karen played very well against Kathleen, but Kathleen's experience and hard hitting won out in the end and took the game 15-0.

There was a singles plate played by Maddy, Lora, Amy and Melanie, round-robin style, with Maddy emerging as the winner. Great stuff.

This year, the final was between two friends, Alexandra and Kathleen. It was an excellent match to watch as both girls tried to bring their different experience to the game to win the points. With both girls very well matched, points were hard to win, as extremely long rallies dominated the game. Alexandra hit some fast serves and back-wall shots, but Kathleen's amazing wrist flicks aimed the ball down the line fast into the corner, from where it was hard to return. Alexandra battled tenaciously and made it very hard for Kathleen to win, especially towards the end with seven long match points! Kathleen was relentless,

though, and eventually won 15-1, 15-2, but as many of the spectators and players said, the scores did not fully reflect the effort by both girls during this game. Well done Kathleen!

It was wonderful to see such talented young girls show so much enjoyment in the game and credit has to go to Kate Shilina from Rossall who played the whole day with a horrible cold. I hope to see them all enter more competitions in the future.

Well done, Ladies. A truly fantastic day of Fives.

Singles

Final: Briedenhann bt Steel 15-1, 15-2

Plate: Raynor

Doubles

Final: Briedenhann & Mills bt Steel & Hird 15-10, 15-7

Plate: Misikova & Raynor

RFA CLUB PRESIDENT'S CUP

Merchant Taylors' School, Northwood, 15th December 2013

President's Cup: James Tilston & Oliver Quarry beat Bob Sandie & Ben Beltrami

T Pot: Jay Gravatt & Tim Widdop beat Dan Grant & Jeremy Stubbs

Mates' Plate: Dan Tristao & Keith Kennerley beat Hamish Buchanan & Alex Steel

Love Mug: Tom Dean & Mark Kiteley beat John Minta & John Hawke

Also competed: Will Ellison & Grem McIntyre, Sam Russell & Chris Davey, Gareth Price & Richard Bridge, Chris Burrows & Alex Smith, Jacob Ader & Phil Atkinson, Tony Burrows & Anthony Goodwin, David Butler & Tom Webster, Aurelien Gueroult & Robin Perry.

WEST OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sherborne, 4/5th January 2014

There was a very healthy entry of 72 boys from 11 schools for the West of England Schools Championships, which again were held at Sherborne School, writes organiser Lionel Lawson.

All of the main trophies were won by St Paul's School, but there were challenging performances from Derby Moor, Winchester and Blundell's in particular.

In the Senior Singles, Ben Beltrami of St Paul's was a clear favourite and he progressed to the final conceding only 7 points in his first four games. Sam Wyatt-Haines from Blundell's, who was the second seed, made equally easy progress to the final and was particularly impressive in his semi-final win over Ollie Arnold of St Paul's with a display of controlled and effective hitting. In the final, however, Beltrami reigned supreme and was a totally convincing winner – he is certainly a player with a very bright future ahead of him.

In the Colts Singles, Harveer Mahajan of St Paul's was also an impressive winner after an equally trouble-free run to the final. Here he came up against the promising John Halligan of Derby Moor and the first game could have gone either way until Mahajan clinched it at 11-8. In the second game, Halligan's resistance fell away and Mahajan took the game away to win the title.

The Senior Doubles was inevitably won by the outstanding Beltrami and Arnold of St Paul's, who had too much fire power and all round skill for the Winchester pair of Chua and Watkinson.

There was a fascinating battle in the Colts Doubles final between St Paul's 1 (Mahajan and Heidrich) and Derby Moor (Halligan and Singh). Derby Moor won the first game comfortably to 5 and this was reversed with St Paul's taking the second game to 3. The third game was a thrilling encounter, which was greatly enjoyed by the packed gallery: St Paul's were on the verge of victory at 10-7, but Derby Moor came back at them to make it 11-all. It could have gone either way, but the final roll of the dice went to the St Paul's pair. The game was a great credit to all four young players involved.

Senior Singles

1st round: Fulford-Smith (Marlborough) bt Searle (Merchant Taylors') 15-7;

2nd round: Beltrami (St. Paul's) bt Chilcott (Blundell's) 15-0; Fulford-Smith bt Blunden (Derby Moor) 15-4; Prabhu (St. Paul's) bt Johnson D (Derby Moor) 15-2; Scott (Blundell's) bt Shah (Merchant Taylors') 15-3; Whitehorn (Derby Moor) bt Coles (Winchester) 15-4; Jopling (St. Paul's) bt Singh J (Derby Moor) 15-9; Webber (Blundell's) bt Baxter (Derby Moor) 15-5; Chua (Winchester) bt McFarlane (St. Paul's) 15-0; Arnold (St. Paul's) bt Green (Marlborough) 15-0; Tebboth (Merchant Taylors') bt Christie (Derby Moor) 15-13; Nunes (St. Paul's) bt Timney (Derby Moor) 15-1; Watkinson (Winchester) bt Corpe (Derby Moor) 15-7; Brady (Merchant Taylors') bt Taylor (Derby Moor) 15-5; Ashraf (St. Paul's) bt Grandfield (Blundell's) 15-3; Bhushan (St. Paul's) bt Smith (Winchester) 15-3; Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's) bt Higginson (Christ's Hospital) 15-0

3rd Round: Beltrami bt Fulford-Smith 15-1; Scott bt Prabhu 15-13; Whitehorn bt Jopling 15-3; Chua bt Webber 15-4; Arnold bt Tebboth 15-4; Watkinson bt Nunes 15-1; Ashraf bt Brady 15-4; Wyatt-Haines bt Bhushan 15-2

Quarter-finals: Beltrami bt Scott 11-1, 11-2; Whitehorn bt Chua 11-7, 11-1; Arnold bt Watkinson 11-2, 11-5; Wyatt-Haines bt Ashraf 11-2, 11-0

Semi-finals: Beltrami bt Whitehorn 11-1, 11-2; Wyatt-Haines bt Arnold 11-1, 11-0
Final: B Beltrami (St. Paul's) bt S Wyatt-Haines Blundell's) 11-1, 11-4
Plate: Christie

Senior Doubles

Preliminary Round: Derby Moor II bt Blundell's II 15-9

1st round: St. Paul's I bt Christ's Hospital 15-0; Winchester II bt Derby Moor III 15-2; Blundell's I bt St. Paul's IV 15-4; Derby Moor I bt Marlborough 15-7; St. Paul's II bt Derby Moor IV 15-1; Derby Moor II bt Merchant Taylors' I 15-6; St. Paul's III bt Merchant Taylors' II 15-0; Winchester I bt Derby Moor V 15-1

Quarter-finals: St. Paul's I bt Winchester II 11-0, 11-0; Derby Moor I bt Blundell's I 12-10, 11-9; St. Paul's II bt Derby Moor II 11-3, 12-11; Winchester I bt St. Paul's III 11-5, 11-9

Semi-finals: St. Paul's I bt Derby Moor I 11-0, 11-3; Winchester I bt St. Paul's II 11-4, 11-7

Final: St Paul's I (B Beltrami & O Arnold) bt Winchester I (T Watkinson & B Chua) 11-2, 11-1

Plate: St. Paul's IV (McFarlane & Bhushan)

Colts Singles

1st round: Guy (Malvern) bt Allan (Sherborne) 15-3; Mellor (Christ's Hospital) bt Starr (Backwell) 15-13; Burgess (Christ's Hospital) bt McLaurin (Blundell's) 15-2; Lockwood (Blundell's) bt King (Backwell) 15-1; Knowles (Blundell's) bt Werkshagen (Backwell) 15-5; Matley (Backwell) bt Callas (Christ's Hospital) 16-15; Kidner (Winchester) bt Klinkenberg (Blundell's) 15-13;

2nd round: Mahajan (St. Paul's) bt Tudor (Malvern) 15-3; Kim (St. Paul's) bt Luk (Malvern) 15-3; Jessell (Alleyn's) bt Guy 15-3; Steel (Winchester) bt Pyman (Sherborne) w/o; Mellor bt Singh B (Derby Moor) 16-14; Evans (St. Paul's) bt Burgess 15-0; Whitham (St. Paul's) bt Johnson S (Derby Moor) 15-0; Taylor (St. Paul's) bt Findlay (Sherborne) 15-1; Halligan (Derby Moor) bt Byers (Winchester) 15-7; Shaw (St. Paul's) bt Lockwood 15-4; Knowles bt Chapman (Christ's Hospital) w/o; Hanton (Alleyn's) bt Matley 15-1; Francis (Blundell's) bt Kidner 15-9; Kirwan (Alleyn's) bt Chai (Blundell's) 15-0; Hughes (St. Paul's) bt Song (Winchester) w/o; Heidrich (St. Paul's) bt Williams (Malvern) 15-0

3rd round: Mahajan bt Kim 11-3, 11-3; Steel bt Jessell 15-10; Evans bt Mellor 11-7, 11-3; Whitham bt Taylor 15-9; Halligan bt Shaw 11-2, 11-5; Hanton bt Knowles 15-0; Francis bt Kirwan 15-10; Heidrich bt Hughes 15-3

Quarter-finals: Mahajan bt Steel 11-3, 11-5; Whitham bt Evans 11-9, 11-3; Halligan bt Hanton 11-0, 11-2; Heidrich bt Francis 9-11, 11-8, 11-5

Semi-finals: Mahajan bt Whitham 11-1, 11-1; Halligan bt Heidrich 11-7, 11-0

Final: HS Mahajan (St. Paul's) bt J Halligan (Derby Moor) 11-8, 11--2

Plate: Hughes (St. Paul's)

Colts Doubles

1st round: Backwell I bt Malvern II 15-2

2nd round: St. Paul's I bt Backwell III 15-0; Backwell I bt Winchester I w/o; Christ's Hospital I bt Blundell's III 15-4; St. Paul's II bt Sherborne I w/o; St. Paul's II bt Malvern I 15-6; Alleyn's bt Backwell II 15-0; St. Paul's IV bt Blundell's I 15-2; Derby Moor bt Winchester II 15-3

Quarter-finals: St. Paul's I bt Backwell I 11-0, 11-2; St. Paul's III bt Christ's Hospital I 11-3, 11-1; St. Paul's II bt Alleyn's 4-11, 11-5, 11-3; Derby Moor bt St. Paul's IV 11-3, 11-9

Semi-finals: St. Paul's I bt St. Paul's III 11-4, 11-4; Derby Moor bt St. Paul's II 11-2, 11-9

Final: St. Paul's I (HS Mahajan & LM Heidrich) bt Derby Moor (J Halligan & B Singh) 5-11, 11-3, 12-11

Plate: Blundell's (Francis & Clarke)

NORTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Manchester, 18/19th January 2014

Firstly a big thanks to all the players for supporting the tournament once again, with a special thanks to Sedbergh School, Durham University and Derby Moor, writes organiser John Beswick.

In the first round of the singles. Butler from Durham had a good win against the elder statesman and restaurant guru Dave Fox; and, in the other side of the draw, Widdop showed some real Yorkshire grit, beating Beswick in three.

The last eight went to the seeded players, setting up two great semi-finals, Ellison beat Brooks in two, always having that extra gear. Toop beat Grant in three, showing his great resolve as a many-times Open champion in two sports!! Just seemingly knowing how to win.

The final was a game of great quality: Toop was all over the court, but Ellison was not going to be denied his first North West title, winning in two games, playing like a true champion, MOTWB (Master of the White Ball).

The plate tournament fought together in the final, after some hard fought games, Fox, a Sedbergh old boy and Butler from the 'David Barnes school of fives'. In a great game, Butler, the younger man won, even though he spent the most of the day complaining that his legs were cramping up!!

The doubles was retained by Ellison and Minta, beating Brooks and Dean in the final in two very fast and furious games of hard-hitting, high-quality fives. Well done to both pairs.

A mention has to also go to a new pairing – Grant and Widdop – who took Brooks and Dean to three games in the semis.

The final of the doubles plate was an all-Derby Moor event: Anthony Goodwin retained the plate trophy with a new partner, Robert Whitehorn, beating colt John Halligan and his coach Stuart Kirby.

And a big thank you from the RFA to John Beswick, who has now organised this tournament for 25 years. The contract for the next ten is in the post!

Singles

1st round: W Ellison bt T Robinson 11-0,11-2; D Butler bt D Fox 11-6,11-8; M Bate bt S Russell 11-4, 11-2; C Brooks bt B Lawry 11-1, 11-1; D Grant bt J Gravatt 11-6, 11-2; T Dean bt J Lidiard 11-0, 11-1; T Widdop bt J Beswick 8-11, 11-3, 11-3; J Toop bt G Wainwright 11-0, 11-3

Quarter-finals: Ellison bt Butler 11-3, 11-0; Brooks bt Bate 11-5, 11-4; Grant bt Dean 11-9, 11-3; Toop bt Widdop 11-0, 11-5

Semi-finals: Ellison bt Brooks 11-2, 11-4; Toop bt Grant 11-9, 4-11, 11-6

Final: Ellison bt Toop 11-6, 11-6

Plate: Butler

Doubles

1st round: W Harrison & B Nithsdale bt T Farmer & G Wainwright 11-0, 11-1; J Halligan & S Kirby bt

J Lidiard & C Wright 11-1, 11-2; A Goodwin & R Whitehorn bt B Lawry & T Robinson 11-5, 11-3
Quarter-finals: W Ellison & J Minta bt Harrison & Nithsdale 11-4, 11-0; J Beswick & N Roberts bt M Bate & G Price 11-9, 1-11, 11-9; C Brooks & T Dean bt Halligan & Kirby 11-1, 11-3; D Grant & T Widdop bt Goodwin & Whitehorn 11-6, 10-12, 11-8
Semi-finals: Ellison & Minta bt Beswick & Roberts 11-1, 11-1; Brooks & Dean bt Grant & Widdop 11-9, 11-6
Final: Ellison & Minta bt Brooks & Dean 11-7, 11-8
Plate: Whitehorn & Goodwin

MIDLANDS SCHOOLS' REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Bedford, 9th February 2014

Bob Dolby writes: The weather was kinder to us than last year, cold but dry, perfect Fives weather. Numbers were healthy, too, for this second running of the event: 19 for the U15 championship, 28 for the U18s.

In the U18 section, played at Bedford Modern School under the supervision of Stuart Kirby and Phil Smith, things largely went according to seeding. In the Doubles, played first, three of Derby Moor's pairs went through to the semi-finals accompanied by one pair from Rugby. The final was an all-Derby Moor affair, with the holders, Robert Whitehorn and Rob Christie, retaining the trophy against Derby Moor II, Craig Baxter and Jai Singh. The Doubles Plate went to Bedford I, with Gupta retaining it, this time with his partner, Shah.

The U18 Singles was dominated by Derby Moor and Rugby, with seven out of eight quarter-finalists between them, but it was Christie and Whitehorn who went through once more to an all-Derby Moor final, with Robert Whitehorn retaining his title. He will be looking to make it a hat-trick next year.

Over at Bedford School the morning's U15 Doubles tournament threw up a number of talented pairings and plenty of even matches. Two Rugby pairs made the semi-finals, along with Bedford I and Derby Moor I. The final was between Rugby I and Derby Moor I. The score sat for a while at 8-8 until the more powerful Rugby pair broke the resistance of their opposition. In the Doubles Plate the Bedford Modern first pair won all four of their matches to deny Bedford II the trophy.

The U15 Singles competition involved four pools from which eight visibly improved players emerged. The three stand-out performers were Suddaby and Skirokiy from Rugby and Attwood from Bedford Modern. Any one of them could have won, but on the day James Attwood proved the most dogged, winning his semi-final against Suddaby by 12-11, then the final against Skirokiy by 12-10.

Many thanks to Michael Croker and Phil Smith for laying on courts, transport, lunch and tea, and to Stuart Kirby for rejigging and running the U18 draw. And to Gareth Quarry, Jerry Cooper, Stuart Kirby, Matt Cavanagh and a modestly anonymous Old Oundelian for joining me in donating the trophies.

U18 Singles

Pool A: Qualifiers: Baxter (Derby Moor) and Hunter R (Rugby). Also played Rogers (Oundle), Johnson (Derby Moor)

Pool B: Qualifiers: Singh J (Derby Moor) and McKay (Rugby). Also played: Pitman (Oundle), Lelikov (Bedford)

Pool C: Qualifiers: Halligan (Derby Moor) and Bateson (Oundle). Also played: Brett (Bedford), Bennett (Rugby)

Pool D: Qualifiers: Romain (Rugby), Barlow (Oundle) and Singh B (Derby Moor). Also played: Keates (Derby Moor), Rees-Bidder (Bedford Modern)

1st round: Whitehorn (Derby Moor) bt Baxter 15-9; Barlow bt Hunter R 15-3; Singh J bt Summerfield (BMS) 15-0; Chadwick (Rugby) bt McKay 15-1; Christie (Derby Moor) bt Gupta (Bedford) 15-11; Halligan bt Manger (Oundle) 15-1; Singh B bt Shields (BMS) 15-4; Romain (Rugby) bt Bateson 16-14

Quarter-finals: Whitehorn bt Barlow 15-0; Chadwick bt Singh J 15-2; Christie bt Halligan 15-10; Romain bt Singh B 16-14

Semi-finals: Whitehorn bt Chadwick 15-11; Christie bt Romain 15-3

Final: RJ Whitehorn (Derby Moor) bt RAN Christie (Derby Moor) 15-10

Plate for losing semi-finalists: Chadwick (Rugby)

U18 Doubles

1st round: Derby Moor IV bt Oundle II 15-10; Bedford Modern II bt Oundle III scr.; Rugby II bt Bedford II 15-1; Derby Moor II bt Bedford I 15-2; Oundle I bt Rugby III 15-9; Derby Moor III bt BMS I 15-0

Quarter-finals: Derby Moor I bt Derby Moor IV 15-3; Rugby II bt BMS II 15-2; Derby Moor II bt Oundle I 15-5; Derby Moor III bt Rugby I 15-7

Semi-finals: Derby Moor I bt Rugby II 15-5; Derby Moor II bt Derby Moor III 15-6

Final: Derby Moor I (RJ Whitehorn & RAN Christie) bt Derby Moor II (C Baxter & J Singh) 15-11

Plate: Bedford I (K Gupta & A Shah)

U15 Singles

Pool A: Qualifiers: Rehman (Derby Moor) and Talsania (Bedford). Also played Colbert (BMS), Manners (Rugby), Harbottle (Rugby)

Pool B: Qualifiers: Skirokiy (Rugby) and Hutchings (Bedford). Also played: Ensor-Clinch (BMS), Ali (Derby Moor)

Pool C: Qualifiers: Attwood (BMS) and Jones (Bedford). Also played: Somervail (Rugby), Clark (Bedford Modern), Taylor-Durant (Derby Moor)

Pool D: Qualifiers: Suddaby (Rugby) and Sumner (BMS). Also played: Cox (Bedford), Beal (Rugby), Boyle (Derby Moor).

Quarter-finals: Sumner bt Rehman 11-7; Skirokiy bt Talsania 11-4; Attwood bt Hutchings 11-0; Suddaby bt Jones 11-4

Semi-finals: Skirokiy bt Sumner 11-8; Attwood bt Suddaby 12-11

Final: J Attwood (Bedford Modern) bt V Skirokiy (Rugby) 12-10

Plate for losing semi-finalists: M Suddaby (Rugby)

U15 Doubles

1st round: Rugby III bt BMS II 15-13

Quarter-finals: Rugby I bt Derby Moor II 15-0; Bedford I bt BMS II 15-2; Rugby II bt BMS I 15-13; Derby Moor I bt Bedford II 15-12

Semi-finals: Derby Moor I bt Rugby II 15-11; Rugby I bt Bedford I 15-2

Final: Rugby I (V Skirokiy & M Suddaby) bt Derby Moor I (H Rehman & A Ali) 15-8

Plate: Bedford Modern I (J Sumner & O Colbert)

SOUTH EAST REGIONAL SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Whitgift, February 8th 2014

On a wet blustery February day, Whitgift played host to the third SE regional fives competition, involving players from Tonbridge, St Dunstan's, Christ's Hospital, Whitgift and Eastbourne, writes Nick Morgan.

Frantic measures were in place to keep the courts playable, and the timely arrival of 20 towels courtesy of Ian Jackson from Tonbridge enabled us to play a full programme. In some toughly fought matches, Eastbourne dominated the U18 matches, and Whitgift the U16 ones. As ever it was played in a friendly but competitive spirit, and I hope everyone enjoyed their visit. Next year I suspect it will return to Tonbridge, but the whole day was judged a success despite the odd puddle on court!

U18 Singles Champion – J. Leale-Green (Eastbourne)

U18 Singles Plate – D. Hutt (Tonbridge)

U18 Doubles Champions – J. Leale-Green & P. Teterin (Eastbourne)

U18 Doubles Plate – M. Segun & O. Martyn (Tonbridge)

U16 Singles Champion – C. Mabbutt (Whitgift)

U16 Singles Plate – T. Aziz (Whitgift)

U16 Doubles Champions – C. Mabbutt & J. Grut (Whitgift)

U16 Doubles Plate – E. Towey & G. Williams (Eastbourne)

NATIONAL UNDER 25 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oundle, 8/9th February 2014

Singles

1st round: J Malde bt J Gravatt 15-9, 9-1 ret'd; T Parker bt N Whitney 15-1, 15-1; D Butler bt A Esin 15-5, 15-3; S Rolls bt R Law 15-8, 15-1; O Quarry bt A George 15-13, 15-7; J Tilston bt J Ader 15-7, 15-3; J Brubert bt O Even 15-1, 15-1; I Ackland bt W Lau 15-3, 15-13; C Waller bt S Russell 16-15, 15-7; J Aquilina bt L Cook 15-0, 15-1; M Shaw bt O Layton 15-0, 15-0; C Burrows bt A Meek 15-1, 15-6; H Jefferies bt J Goodwin 15-1, 15-1; F Thomas bt A Goodwin 15-2, 15-1; E Kay bt M Lidgitt 15-0, 15-1
2nd round: D Tristao bt Malde 15-4, 15-1; Butler bt Parker 15-12, 15-5; Quarry bt Rolls 15-10, 15-7; Brubert bt Tilston 15-8, 15-13; Waller bt Ackland 15-13, 15-12; Shaw bt Aquilina 15-7, 15-6; Jefferies bt Burrows 15-4, 15-12; Kay bt Thomas 15-3, 15-3

Quarter-finals: Tristao bt Butler 15-2, 15-6; Brubert bt Quarry 16-14, 15-9; Shaw bt Waller 15-3, 15-0; Kay bt Jefferies 15-3, 15-4

Semi-finals: Tristao bt Brubert 15-5, 15-4; Kay bt Shaw 15-6, 15-9

Final: Tristao bt Kay 15-3, 15-6

Plate: Russell

Doubles

Preliminary round: C Mckelvie & A Esin bt V Westwood & S Rolls 15-7, 15-8

1st round: D Tristao & E Kay bt Mckelvie & Esin 15-4, 15-3; B Beltrami & O Arnold bt S Russell & O Quarry 15-3, 15-2; D Butler & J Gravatt M Lidgitt & C Waller 15-4, 15-0; A George & I Ackland bt J Malde & J Ader 15-13, 15-11; J Aquilina & J Tilston bt R Law & W Lau 15-1, 15-1; H Jefferies & F Thomas bt L Cook & A Meek 15-0, 15-2; M Shaw & T Parker bt A & J Goodwin 15-6, 15-6; C Burrows & J Brubert bt O Even & N Whitney 15-2, 15-3

Quarter-finals: Tristao & Kay bt Beltrami & Arnold 15-12, 15-10; Ackland & George bt Butler & Gravatt 15-12, 15-12; Jefferies & Thomas bt Aquilina & Tilston 15-5, 12-15, 15-3; Shaw & Parker bt Burrows & Brubert 15-13, 15-11

Semi-finals: Tristao & Kay bt Ackland & George 15-9, 15-6; Shaw & Parker bt Jefferies & Thomas 12-15, 15-7, 15-10

Final: Tristao & Kay bt Shaw & Parker 15-8, 15-12

Plate: Malde & Ader

Report from organisr Chris Burrows: Over the weekend of Feb 8-9th, the best of the youth in the fives world travelled to Oundle for the National U25s. 31* came for the singles and 34 (17 pairs) for the doubles. Both the draws were very strong and the quality of fives was exceptional throughout even at the end of both days.*Note there were 32 entries for the singles; however one competitor could not make it till the afternoon and therefore ruined the perfect draw for an organiser.

Singles

There were not many easy games this year, noted by many; despite this none of the matches went to 3 games. Most of the first round went with seeding but there were two very close games. Firstly in the pick of the first round, Adam George was taken down by Oliver Quarry in a game with huge rallies and lots of rotation of the serve. Oli however managed to find the right shots at the right time in each of the games to win, 15-13, 15-7. In close second was the game between Chris Waller and Sam Russell, which had equally lengthy rallies. Chris Waller storming into a lead, 13-5, in the first only to let Sam back in, with Sam having several game points before closing it out 16-15. The second followed suit, with Chris again having a substantial lead before Sam started creeping back. This time Chris did not make the same mistake, closing the second out 15-7. Other notable wins in the first round: Jack Malde had a good win over Jay Gravatt 15-5, 9-1 ret. and Wilson Lau pushed 3rd seed Inigo Ackland 15-3, 15-13, Wilson having had a substantial lead in the second.

The second round had the tastiest match-ups with many of the spectators and competitors licking their lips in anticipation. In the top half of the draw, the match-ups were Theo Parker vs Dave Butler, Sam Rolls vs Oli Quarry, James Tilston vs Jacob Brubert. Theo against Dave, the 8th seed, was a clash of two contrasting games, Dave hitting line and length against the power and back nick game of Theo. Dave edged the first game, with Theo making too many mistakes, and triumphed 15-12, 15-5 as he was just too consistent for Theo. Oli Quarry continued his good form, upsetting 5th seed Sam Rolls, 15-10, 15-7, outpacing Sam with a good number of nicks and powerful round-the-angles shots. That left the most anticipated game in the half, James Tilston, a power hitter in good form, against Jacob Brubert (4th Seed), another form player with a good retrieval and line and length game. James started well, hitting some fantastic corner and side nicks but Jacob then Jacob started to put the ball deeper and won the first game fairly comfortably, 15-8. The second game was a closer affair, with James determined to play more sensibly, waiting for the right time to power his shots; however eventually mistakes crept in as Jacob kept retrieving shots and Jacob sneaked the second 15-13.

In the lower half most of the games went against seeding. Matt Shaw, 6th Seed, the only other seed to survive alongside Ed with a hard fought win over Julian Aquilina, with some exceptional retrieving. In the biggest upset of the round, Chris Waller defeated Inigo Ackland, 3rd seed. Chris grinding away till Inigo made enough mistakes to give him a well earned 15-12, 15-13 victory. Henry Jefferies then upset 7th Seed Chris Burrows, using good pace and width to wrong-foot his opponent, 15-4, 15-12. Dan Tristão and Ed Kay, the number 1 and 2 seeds, had fairly straightforward games against J Malde, 15-4, 15-1, and Francis Thomas, 15-3, 15-3, respectively.

The quarter finals were a fairly straightforward affair compared to other rounds. Oli Quarry, determined to try and upset another seed, pushed Jacob Brubert hard in the first game but eventually ran out of steam, losing 16-14, 15-9. Dave Butler tried to find a weakness in the Tristão fortress but came up short, being

outplayed in his own line and length game, 15-2, 15-6. Matt Shaw then dispatched the shattered Chris Waller, 15-3, 15-0 and Ed Kay then set a marker for the upcoming Varsity Match by beating his Oxford rival, Henry Jefferies, 15-3, 15-9.

The semifinals saw Matt Shaw against Ed Kay and Jacob Brubert against Dan Tristão. Jacob struggled against the varied pace and angles that Dan produced, succumbing 15-5,15-4. The second semi final pitted the young Matt Shaw against the also young but slightly older Ed Kay. Matt, as always showing his excellent retrieval skills was always in the lengthy rallies but never quite had enough to kill off the rallies, with Ed winning 15-6, 15-9.

Also happening at a similar time to the semis was the plate final between Adam George and Sam Russell. Having triumphed through some tough plate groups and plate semis both still managed to produce their best fives in a tight final, with Adam having several match points before Sam levelled on 14 all. Sam then went on to lead 15-14, which brought about several changes of serve that were nerve racking to watch; there were many oohs and ahhs from the gallery. Adam then drew level at 15-15 and it looked like his experience would take him over the line. But Sam produced two wonderful shots to clinch it, 16-14, and break the tension. Also special mention to Sam for his entertaining betting odds on several scenarios and games throughout the weekend. A possible avenue for fives for fives to expand into in the future?

This set up of a repeat of the last two finals, with the two top seeds, national champion Dan Tristão vs the current Cambridge No. 1 Ed Kay. Despite being played early on Sunday morning the match was of a very high quality. Dan showed exactly why he is the man to beat in the fives world at the moment, producing incredible shots that brought an attentive and large crowd. A variety of drop shots, deft angles, volleys and incredible court speed saw Dan take comfortable leads in both games. Ed earned his points with equally high quality fives but could not sustain it for any substantial period to threaten Dan. Dan won 15-3,15-6 to take his sixth consecutive National U25s singles title, record that is likely to stand for some time and deservedly so for a man with that much talent.

Doubles

After a showcase final with a large crowd to watch the doubles began the traditional way, late. In previous years, this has not been so much of a problem as generally there have only been a few strong pairs so early rounds happen quickly. However fortunately this year, just like the singles, the doubles was packed with strong pairs throughout the 17 that entered the draw, extending the day substantially more than in any other year.

Firstly in the preliminary round, Vicky Westwood paired up with Sam Rolls (many a bread pun to be found on twitter) to take on the Oxford and ex-Oxford pairing of Sasha (Alexander) Esin and Cameron Mckelvie. A good tussle with lengthy rallies being ended with good winners by all players, Sasha and Cameron eventually winning, 15-7,15-8.

This then gave Sasha and Cameron the pleasure of playing the two singles finalists Ed Kay and Dan Tristão, reigning champions and teaming up for the third year in a row; with Sasha and Cameron looking to take advantage of the fatigue from the Singles final. Unfortunately it is turned out that Dan and Ed were still fresh, taking the match 15-4,15-2. Elsewhere in the first round, the Derby Moor siblings pairing of Anthony “I have a big left hand” and Jimmy “I have a bigger left hand” Goodwin took on the old Pauline pair of Matt Shaw and Theo Parker. The Paulines playing steady against the barrage of power hitting winning 15-6, 15-6. The scratch “cambridgish” pairing of Cook and Meek played the Oxford top pair of Henry Jefferies and Francis Thomas, with Oxford in dominating form, winning 15-0, 15-2. Other lopsided games in the first round included Aquilina and Tilston (Durham and ex-Durham) vs Law and Lau (of Cambridge), 15-1, 15-1 to A & T; Butler and Gravatt (also Durham) vs Lidgitt and Waller (ex-

Clifton), 15-4, 15-0 to B & G; Oliver Arnold and Ben Beltrami (St. Paul's School - more on them later) vs Russell and Quarry (Durham again), 15-3, 15-2 to A & B, Burrows and Brubert (scratch pairing) vs Even and Whitney (Oxford), 15-2, 15-3. In the pick of the first round games, George and Ackland (ex-Alleyn's), the 4th seeds, took on the all Cambridge pair Malde and Ader, the latter being familiar with the courts, having had to travel to Oundle to train whilst their wonderful new courts were being built. This somewhat home court showed early on as Ackland and George continued their erratic form of the weekend, losing a series of early points in both games from some bizarre mistakes. However, the seeds eventually showed their experience, steadying their games forcing the Cambridge pair to go for too much, eventually grinding out the lengthy match 15-13, 15-11.

The quarter finals contained fantastic match-ups across the board. The top seeds had the tricky encounter with the much fancied pair Beltrami & Arnold. It became even trickier when the school boys showed some 'experienced' tactics, picking the ball for the match. The 'rocket' ball combined with arguably the fastest courts in the country and their hard hitting game made for the most enthralling match of the doubles. Watched by a large crowd, the schoolboys pushed their 'seniors', with terrific pace, angle and nicks. However, Dan and Ed showed their experience, nicking key points and stringing runs of points to win two hard fought games 15-12, 15-10. (As a side note, I wish I could write more on this game by all accounts a fantastic match, but unfortunately I was on court at the time.) In contrast to this game, the battle between George & Ackland (2) vs Butler & Gravatt became surprisingly a grinding affair. With both pairs struggling to find the nick, the rallies became extreme in length, eventually being finished when the ball strayed into a nick or a rare mistake was forced. George & Ackland eventually managing to force the game a bit more to win 15-12, 15-12.

In the bottom half of the draw both of the seeds fell to shock results. Firstly Shaw & Parker got the better of the number 2 seeds Burrows & Brubert. Matt producing some incredible serving throughout the match and this proved to be the deciding factor. With Burrows and Brubert only having 50% of the points to score on Shaw & Parker took early leads in both games. Mini comebacks in both games from the seeds made for some tense ending rallies but the young pair held on to win 15-13, 15-11. In the other quarter final game of the bottom half, the well established pair of Tilston & Aquilina took on the Oxford giants Jefferies & Thomas. In one of the only two 3-game matches of the tournament, there were some extraordinary momentum changes. Oxford blasted into a massive lead in the first game, with Aquilina & Tilston seemingly struggling to find each other and their games, -- 15-5 to Oxford. In the second game Tilston & Aquilina readjusted their compasses, fighting back to take a tight second 15-12. However once again the fog descended and Oxford stepped up securing a 15-5, 12-15, 15-3 victory.

In the first semifinal, Ackland & George tired from their previous round, succumbed to the number one seeds, Kay & Tristão who won comfortably 15-9, 15-6. The second semi-final was a rather different affair. Another 3-game match with long lengthy rallies as clear winners were difficult to come by. Oxford nicked the tight first game 15-12. However, in the next two games it became apparent that they were starting to feel the effects of their previous round, Shaw and Parker eventually breaking their opponents 12-15, 15-7, 15-10.

At the same time as the semi-finals, the Plate competition was drawing to a climactic close. Malde and Ader, who had pushed the 3rd seeds in the first round, were eventually victorious over the Durham pair of Russell and Quarry (both of whom had had a good weekend), 15-12, preventing Sam from doing the Plate double.

It was rather late in the day by the time the final commenced, with many tired faces around the courts among spectators and players. Despite this the final remained a high quality encounter. The assumption at the time between the spectators was that Shaw & Parker would fall away due to their tougher route through the draw. Initially this looked to be the case, with Kay & Tristão racing into a commanding lead

in the first game. Shaw & Parker dug deep but could only get back to 15-8. In the contrast to the first though, Shaw & Parker then produced some cracking fives to lead 12-3 in the second. Everything was set for a third game which could have made logistics difficult (the sports hall manager was breathing down my neck at this point). (un)Fortunately Ed & Dan showed their experience to reel in Matt and Theo and take the match 15-8, 15-12 and their third title.

Finally thank you to Oundle School for hosting again this year and providing great facilities as well as to Mike Case for making everything that much easier. Also thank you to everyone that attended for making it a great weekend of fives.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY RUGBY FIVES CLUB

Cambridge, 12th February 2014

To celebrate 65 years of the annual Past versus Present fixture, Cambridge University Rugby Fives Club is proud to announce the launch of a new website at www.cu-sparrows.net. The Sparrows are the former members of CURFC. The site contains a large amount of historical material documenting the history of the Club, which goes back to 1925 when the first Varsity Match was played.

RFA FACEBOOK PAGE

London, 13th February 2014

The RFA is happy to announce that it has launched a new page on social networking website Facebook. Developed by Dan Grant and replacing the old page that some members will already have seen, the new page will allow people to follow the most up-to-date news, post photos, add comments and build up a community feel. It will exist alongside the current RFA and Fivesonline websites, as well as including a Twitter link that updates instantaneously so people can see a play-by-play of each tournament.

All RFA members and fans of Fives are invited to 'like' the page, which can be found at www.facebook.com/rugbyfives and by clicking on the link below (NB You will need to log on to Facebook to access the page).

VARSITY MATCH 2014 : Past versus Present; Oxford versus Old Oxford

The weekend before the Varsity Match sees the traditional matches between Cambridge Present and Past, this year on the new Cambridge courts, and Oxford's VIII versus Old Oxford at St. Paul's. The Match Managers report:

Bob Dolby writes: A Cambridge team drawn from Ed Kay, Jacob Brubert, Jack Malde, Zach Brubert, Jacob Ader, Wilson Lau, Tom Bury, James Pinder and Richard Law achieved a second win in a row against the Past. Kay, Brubert J, Malde and Brubert Z went 17 points up after the Singles, where Charlie Brooks and Tom Chase recorded wins for the Past while Fred Kelly and Elliott Malone went down. The

Present increased their lead in the first round of Doubles, which saw Chris Jones & Rupert Walter, Paddy d'Ancona & Mick d'Ancona enter the fray for the Past. Pick of the contests was a 90 minute battle between Malde & Zach Brubert and Chase & Malone. In the second round of Doubles the Past threw in Charlie Brooks & Paddy d'Ancona, Martin Wilkinson & Joe Gribble and Chris Jones & Peter Judge, all three picking up points. Despite this traditional comeback by the Past there was a win for the Present by 242-206. The day ended with a gentlemen's foursome: Martin Wilkinson, Paul Reeder, Robert Rigg and Gareth Quarry combining for a game which ended something like 16-15 – what else?!

Dan Tristao reports: A 12-man Oxford team made up of Henry Jefferies, Francis Thomas, Alexander Esin, James Roberts, Drew Horsewood, Tom Hoskins, Ed Wilman, Henry Wilman, Ophir Even, Nick Whitney, Ed Birkett, and Will Yates came up against an unusually strong Past team that included 2 past national champions and a third top 10 player. Due to a surplus of players on the day, a couple of Past members volunteered their services for the Present, resulting in a 10-a-side main fixture, as well as a Beavers fixture. After the singles, the Present were 27 points ahead, with notable scalps from Henry Jefferies, who beat Marcus Bate, and Francis Thomas who beat Sam Roberts. In the doubles however, experience took over and the Past slowly pulled the lead back (as is typical in this fixture). After many hard-fought contests, the Past eventually triumphed 341-233. Despite the final tally, there were some very promising performances from the Present, with quality fives played right down the order; encouraging signs ahead of this Saturday's Varsity match.

Varsity Match

St. Paul's School, Barnes, 22nd February 2014

David Barnes writes: Cambridge, fresh from the first season's play on their new courts, recorded their fourth consecutive win in the Varsity Match at St. Paul's by a comfortable margin.

In a repeat of last year's top two singles, Cambridge's Kay and J Brubert again had the better of Jefferies and Thomas respectively, while Malde at 3 and freshman Z Brubert at 4 also recorded good wins to give Cambridge a commanding lead at lunch.

In the doubles, Jefferies and Thomas played excellent fives to best both Cambridge 1 and 2, but that was the summit of the Dark Blues' achievement, as all but one of the remaining twelve games went to Cambridge. Kay and Brubert showed their class as the reigning BUCS doubles champions in demolishing Oxford 2, while lower down the order Cambridge proved to have the stronger pairings, with both 3 (Ader and Law) and 4 (Pinder and Bury) showing more attacking power and sounder defence. Oxford 3 (Horsewood and Hoskins) fought hard to win their final game, but otherwise it was the Light Blues' day.

The reserves match was a well-contested affair, with the Cambridge Sparrows eventually building on their singles lead to win by 29 points overall. Each side was well led by an Eton fives player, and unusually the eight players all came from different schools.

We are most grateful to St. Paul's School, who have recently experienced difficulties with the ventilation and lighting of their courts, for ensuring that they were all in good condition for this match. And I am sure the players would like me to thank Champagne Pol Roger as well for their most welcome sponsorship of the event.

Oxford v Cambridge

Singles (Oxford names first): HKE Jefferies (St. Paul's & Oriol) (*Captain*) lost to EI Kay (St. Paul's & Emmanuel) 1-15; FR Thomas (St. Paul's & Brasenose) (*Hon. Sec.*) lost to JB Brubert (Alleyn's & Queens') (*Hon. Sec.*) 10-15; JW Roberts (Tonbridge & St. Edmund Hall) lost to JK Malde (St. Paul's & Clare) (*Captain*) 0-15; AD Esin (St. Paul's & Pembroke) lost to ZD Brubert (Alleyn's & Fitzwilliam) 7-15.

Doubles: Jefferies & Thomas bt Kay & J Brubert 10-15, 15-6; bt Malde & Z Brubert 15-7, 15-6. Roberts & Esin lost to Malde & Z Brubert 9-15, 9-15; lost to Kay & J Brubert 2-15, 0-15. AM Horsewood (Winchester & Harris Manchester) & TM Hoskins (Oundle & Lady Margaret Hall) lost to JS Ader (St. Paul's & Pembroke) & RB Law (St. Paul's & Pembroke) 7-15, 5-15; lost to JW Pinder (Winchester & Robinson) & T Bury (Kelly & Queens') 9-15, 15-10. OA Even (St. Paul's & New) & NA Whitney (Tonbridge & Magdalen) lost to Pinder & Bury 6-15, 5-15; lost to Ader & Law 9-15, 4-15.

Result: Cambridge bt Oxford 269-153

Oxford Beavers v Cambridge Sparrows

Singles (Oxford names first): MW Hale (Winchester & St. Hilda's) lost to R Houlden (Westminster & Christ's) (*Captain*) 11-15; HR Wilman (Giggleswick & Hertford) lost to RP Mathias (Christ's Hospital & Fitzwilliam) 9-15; EM Birkett (Charterhouse & Trinity) (*Captain*) bt WCK Lau (Tonbridge & Trinity) 15-6; WJ Yates (St. Paul's & Regent's Park PPH) lost to OJ Layton (Bradfield & Pembroke) 0-15.

Doubles: Hale & Birkett lost to Houlden & Mathias 13-15, 10-15; bt Lau & Layton 15-3, 15-1. Wilman & Yates lost to Lau & Layton 15-16, 6-15; lost to Houlden & Mathias 4-15, 4-15.

Result: Cambridge Sparrows bt Oxford Beavers 146-117

RFA RANKINGS February 2014

Latest Singles positions

Current position shows position following: North West and U25s Singles Feb 2014

Previous rank shows position after the National Singles Championships Dec 2013

Position	Name	Previous	Points
1	D Tristao	1	94.9
2	W Ellison	2	93.3
3	J Toop	3	82.0
4	D Grant	4	63.7
5	M Cavanagh	5	57.8
6	J Minta	6	54.5
7	C Brooks	7	47.5
8	E Kay	9	34.0
9	H Buchanan	8	33.6
10	T Maconie	10	31.4
11	D Butler	23	22.0
12	I Ackland	11	21.6

Position	Name	Previous	Points
13	T Dean	13	19.8
14	J Brubert	15	19.6
15	M Shaw	17	19.3
16	G Price	14	19.0
17	M Bate	20	18.2
18	T Kiggel	17	18.0
19	E Hatton	19	17.3
20	S Rolls	16	17.3
21	T Widdop	34	17.2
22	D Fox	22	16.6
	L Thomson	12	16.6
24	N Roberts	21	15.4
25	G Rees	25	14.3
26	C Burrows	23	14.1
	R Murby	26	14.1
28	P Hanton	27	14.0
29	H Jefferies	30	13.7
30	T Parker	29	13.4
31	S Wyatt-Haines	28	12.7
32	J Aquilina	31	12.5
	J Hughes	33	12.5
34	C Waller	38	12.1
35	J Tilston	38	10.6
36	A Pringle	36	10.5
37	J Gravatt	42	9.7
38	F Thomas	41	9.3
39	A George	37	9.1
40	A Rew	40	9.0
41	M Skogh	32	8.1
42	M Bowness	35	7.4
43	O Quarry	51	7.2
44	J Malde	45	6.7
45	J Major	43	6.6
46	N Patel	46	5.6
47	N Hillier	44	4.7
48	A Lee	48	4.0
49	S Russell	~	3.5
50	S Fraser	46	3.3
	R Patel	49	3.3
52	M Roberts	50	2.9

Position	Name	Previous	Points
53	S Coffey	52	2.3
	S King	53	2.3
55	B Beltrami	55	1.9
56	O Arnold	55	1.8
	R Houlden	55	1.8
	C Legget	~	1.8
59	R Lamb	54	1.6
60	G Barnes	58	1.4
	O Even	59	1.4
62	M Frost	60	1.3
63	A Bowden	60	1.1
64	M Kemp	63	0.7
65	A Goodwin	65	0.5
	J Wren	64	0.5

Latest Doubles positions

Current position shows position following: North West and U25s Doubles Feb 2014

Previous rank shows position after BUSA Championships Nov 2013

Position	Name	Previous	Points
1	W Ellison	1	101.8
2	D Tristao	2	94.0
3	D Grant	3	85.5
4	H Buchanan	4	83.4
5	C Brooks	5	81.5
6	T Dean	6	78.2
7	J Minta	7	73.9
8	G Price	8	65.4
9	E Kay	10	53.9
10	M Bate	9	49.9
11	N Roberts	14	38.8
12	R Perry	11	38.4
13	J Toop	13	37.5
14	A Pringle	12	37.1
15	H Mohammed	15	34.9
16	P Hanton	16	33.8
17	J Brubert	17	31.8
18	I Ackland	18	31.3
19	J Hughes	21	29.8

Position	Name	Previous	Points
20	S Rolls	18	29.7
21	J Aquilina	20	29.0
22	M Kemp	23	28.7
23	M Skogh	21	27.4
24	T Parker	33	26.3
25	J Gravatt	24	25.9
26	W Enstone	28	24.9
	D Warner	25	24.9
28	F Thomas	30	24.4
29	E Hatton	27	23.6
30	J Tilston	29	23.4
31	C Burrows	26	22.8
32	J Beswick	39	22.4
33	A George	39	20.5
34	R Pearson	31	20.3
	R Sandie	31	20.3
36	M Shaw	67	20.0
	T Widdop	44	20.0
38	D Butler	34	19.7
39	H Jefferies	37	19.2
40	J Marshall	37	18.5
41	A Goodwin	46	17.4
42	J Hawke	35	17.2
43	A Lee	35	16.8
44	L Thomson	41	16.0
45	A Rew	43	15.5
46	M Frost	42	15.2
47	T Maconie	45	15.0
48	T Kiggell	48	14.8
49	O Arnold	51	14.1
	B Beltrami	51	14.1
	R Christie	47	14.1
	R Dyke	51	14.1
	J Sinton	51	14.1
54	S Kirby	49	13.5
55	T Chase	49	13.2
56	O Quarry	60	12.2
	S Russell	60	12.2
58	M Cavanagh	55	12.0
	J Malde	67	12.0

Position	Name	Previous	Points
60	E Ronan	59	11.7
61	A Bowden	62	10.9
	E Hawke	62	10.9
	S Watson	62	10.9
64	C Brechin	56	10.6
	A Griffiths	56	10.6
	P Manning	56	10.6
67	C Waller	65	10.2
68	N Geere	67	10.0
	T Lewis	67	10.0
	A Smith	67	10.0
	R Whitehorn	~	10.0
72	H Akerman	66	9.4
73	S Hodgson	72	8.3
	K Kennerley	72	8.3
	M Mohammed	72	8.3
	J Spencer	72	8.3
	R Wyatt-Haines	72	8.3
	S Wyatt-Haines	72	8.3
79	J Ader	~	7.1
	Z Brubert	79	7.1
	B Smithson	79	7.1
	J Wren	79	7.1
83	V Patel	78	6.1
84	B Lowry	83	5.9
	R Sutcliffe	83	5.9
	O Thompson	83	5.9
	J Walter	83	5.9
88	M Baxter	82	5.3
89	N Austin	87	4.3
	H Aveston	87	4.3
	A Beverly	87	4.3
	C Butler	87	4.3
	S Coffey	87	4.3
	N Finney	87	4.3
	A Hanton	87	4.3
	N Hillier	87	4.3
	S King	87	4.3
	B Kirk	87	4.3
	R Lebon	87	4.3

Position	Name	Previous	Points
	E Malone	87	4.3
	J Pearce-Smith	87	4.3
	J Savery	87	4.3
103	N Edmonds	101	3.1
	J Goodwin	101	3.1
	K Ward	101	3.1

NORTH OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Durham, 1st/2nd March 2014

Despite a spirited effort by Dan Grant to take the final to a third game, the Singles tournament ended in a victory for Will Ellison by 11-4, 11-7. Thus Will carried off the Ferens Trophy for a third year in a row.

Earlier rounds went largely according to the seedings, though it took Dave Butler a fair while to get the better of Theo Parker in round 2 and Ed Hatton even longer to subdue Sam Russell. Hamish Buchanan had a bit too much power for John Beswick, and Richie Murby was likewise just a little too quick around the court for Marcus Bate. Marcus, Russell, Parker and Olly Quarry fought out the Plate semifinals, from which Olly and Marcus emerged victorious. Olly then won a tough final 15-10 which hinged on a long rally at 8-8.

In the Doubles on Sunday the pick of the early rounds was Bate & Hatton playing Butler & Parker, which went in straight games to the ex-Oxford pair. Durham Uni's first pair of Gravatt & Aquilina put up a game fight against top seeds Ellison & Dean in the semis, while Buchanan & Grant went through to the final comfortably against the resilient Hatton & Bate. The final was marked by hard hitting by all four players and frequent volleying from Ellison and Grant. So again, the win meant a hat-trick for Will and Tom.

The closest match all day and the one that drew the biggest crowd was the Plate Doubles final between Beswick & Roberts and Russell & Quarry. This time Quarry was denied a medal, largely by a characteristically determined display of length and line by John Beswick, with Neil Roberts getting to more cross-courts slams than anyone his age has a right to!

Singles

1st Round: O Quarry by E Wylde 11-1, 11-1; J Beswick bt D Murphy 11-3, 11-0 ; R Lamb bt S Page 12-10, 11-12, 11-4

2nd Round: W.Ellison bt Quarry 11-0, 11-3; D Butler bt T Parker 12-11, 11-3; E Hatton bt S Russell 11-3, 4-11, 11-5; T Dean bt A Bowden 11-6, 11-2; H Buchanan bt Beswick 11-9, 11-8; R Murby bt M Bate 12-11, 11-6; J Aquilina bt D Fox 11-8, 11-4; D Grant bt Lamb 11-2, 11-3

Quarter-finals: Ellison bt Butler 11-6, 11-5; Dean bt Hatton 11-4, 11-2; Buchanan bt Murby 11-3, 11-6; Grant bt Aquilina 11-2, 11-3

Semi-finals: Ellison bt Dean 11-2, 11-2; Grant bt Buchanan 11-2, 11-5

Final: Ellison bt Grant 11-4 11-7

Plate: Quarry

Doubles

1st round: Fox & Murby bt Russell & Quarry 11-6, 11-8

Quarter-finals: Ellison & Dean bt Lamb & Page 11-0, 11-3; Aquilina & Gravatt bt Beswick & N Roberts 11-4, 11-4; Bate & Hatton bt Butler & Parker 12-11, 11-9; Buchanan & Grant bt Fox & Murby 11-9, 11-7

Semi-finals: Ellison & Dean bt Aquilina & Gravatt 11-6, 11-7; Buchanan & Grant bt Bate & Hatton 11-4, 11-6

Final: Ellison & Dean bt Buchanan & Grant 11-2, 11-2

Plate: Beswick & Roberts

RFA v BUCS

Cambridge, 9th March 2014

David Gardner reports: Some 47 years ago, the first match between the Universities and the Rugby Fives Association took place at the old Cambridge courts in Portugal Place, writes David Gardner. It was, therefore, fitting that this year the match was played on the brand new spectacular glass back walled courts at the new Sports Centre in Cambridge.

A small reception was held prior to the match for guests and players which then transferred to the viewing area by the courts and provided continuous refreshment throughout the afternoon. Guests included the current RFA President, Bob Dolby; a number of Past Presidents and senior past players. It was worth noting that two of those present had played in the first match all those years ago - David Hebden as a student representing Cambridge, and myself playing for the RFA!

The match was initially well balanced with the students performing well in the Singles to take three out of the six matches and gain lots of points in those that they lost - ending with a nine point advantage - not really enough as the RFA traditionally pull back throughout the Doubles.

This proved to be the case, however it was close, and after the first round of the doubles BUCS still held a narrow five point lead, and even after the second round of matches the students only had a twelve point deficit after nearly three hundred points had been played ! Experience and pressure finally told in the final round, however, when the RFA comfortably demolished the students to take an overall victory by 230 points to 172.

The BUCS team, however, gave good account of themselves against a team that contained two former National Singles Champions; and the current National Doubles title holder. Our thanks are due to Cambridge for hosting the match and to the RFA for looking after the players and guests.

Singles

(BUCS names first): D Grant (UCL) bt C Brooks (RFA) 16-15; E Kay (Cambridge) bt M Cavanagh (RFA) 15-7; I Ackland (Bristol) lost to H Buchanan (RFA) 10-15; J Aquilina (Durham) lost to C Burrows (RFA) 14-16; J Brubert (Cambridge) lost to J Tilston (RFA) 12-15; S Rolls (Bristol) bt J Marshall (RFA) 15-5

Doubles

Kay & Brubert bt Buchanan & Burrows 15-8; lost to Marshall & Tilston 6-15; lost to Brooks & Cavanagh 4-15, 0-15.

Ackland & Rolls lost to Marshall & Tilston 10-15; lost to Brooks & Cavanagh 0-15; lost to Buchanan & Burrows 2-15, 10-15.

Grant & Aquilina lost to Brooks & Cavanagh 9-15; bt Buchanan & Burrows 15-8; lost to Marshall & Tilston 4-15, 15-6

RESULT: RFA bt BUCS by 230 points to 172

LADIES WINCHESTER FIVES CHAMPIONSHIPS

Bradfield College, 9th March 2014

STOP PRESS

The Ladies Winchester Fives Championships saw Kathleen Briedenhann win the singles title before teaming up with Alex Steel to win the doubles as well. This means that Kathleen now simultaneously holds both the Ladies Winchester and Rugby Fives titles, while Alex has added the Ladies Winchester Fives doubles title to the Mixed Doubles title she won last year.

(Full report below)

Denise Hall-Wilton writes: The organiser was quite gleeful at having sixteen entrants and two possible spares on the evening before the tournament. But on the day the head count revealed one player short and several names had changed. What's new?

There was a diverse range of skills, ages, home clubs and fives codes. The youngest player was a year 10 schoolgirl, the eldest was, well, senior! Rossall, Shrewsbury, Blundell's, Marlborough Club, Eastbourne and Sedbergh were all represented, as well as London-based venues.

Doubles were first on the agenda and it was the first group who had one of the best matches. Fiona Barnes and Karen Hird, last year's winners of the Bradfield Bowl, drew Anna Hanson and Madeline Raynor. It was well contested, but Anna and Maddy had a respectable loss and headed for the plate.

The rest of the first round matches were more clear-cut, as were the semifinals, with Alexandra Steel and Kathleen Briedenhann looking in ominous form. In the final, Alexandra and Kathleen were the eventual winners, beating Fiona and Karen 15-4 15-4.

Vicky Westwood found herself partnerless for the first round of the doubles plate. However, as Wendy Carling had been knocked out of the main competition by that stage, she paired up with Vicky to play in the plate. This was hardly conventional but didn't seem to upset the seeding.

Anna Hanson & Maddy made good use of their entry to the doubles plate, beating Polina Pavshinskya and Karina Valieva 15-6, and then Vicky and Wendy in the final by the closest score of the day, 15-11.

Next, a historical note. Although Winchester Fives is more of a doubles game, the first Winchester Ladies Tournament at Sedbergh in 1988, initiated by Michael Haslam (Melanie Whitehead's father), turned out to be a singles event, because only five brave souls, all from Bradfield, had made the long trip north. So the Crayke Cup, named after the Haslams' home village in Yorkshire, became a singles trophy with Melanie very supportive of Fives ever since.

Two years later, at Bradfield, enough players had been recruited to make a good doubles event, so the Bradfield Bowl was born. Both competitions have continued to be thoroughly enjoyed, and the Bowl has even been through two versions, as the space for the winners' names ran out!

The first round of the 2014 singles competition gave most contestants a chance to glow! A hearty 'round

robin' plate competition awaited those knocked out of the first round. This acted as a second tournament with a more relaxed emphasis, and it resulted in a decisive win for Vicky Westwood.

The main singles competition threw up the surprise of the tournament. Maddy Raynor survived a tough route to the final overcoming two seeded players along the way. And what a good final it was. She had the daunting task of playing against Kathleen Briedenhann, who does tend to win things!

Maddy hung on as if her life depended upon it and was never going to give up, but the inevitable happened, as Kathleen won a well-fought battle in style, 15-4 15-4.

Maddy runs Fives for girls at Rossall School, Fleetwood, and she brought a group of them along to play in the tournament. Immediately on their return home to Lancashire a message was received: "Thank you so much for a lovely competition today. All the girls thoroughly enjoyed it, but are very sore and tired now." The organiser felt much the same!

We don't normally have a guest to present the trophies, but as I was standing down from organising Fives competitions I invited a very special guest, Paula Smith, to do so. Paula had dominated ladies Fives including winning the Crayke Cup 15 times between 1988-2003, before she had to retire through injury. While records are made to be beaten, Paula's even greater achievement lay in recruiting large numbers of men and women to play Fives, and her example is truly one to follow.

Singles

1st Round: Karen Hird bt Karina Valieva 15-1; Madeline Raynor bt Wendy Carling 15-2; Rose Arnold w/o; Fiona Barnes bt Anna Hansen 15-0; Kathleen Briedenhann bt Polina Pavshinskaya 15-0; Melanie Whitehead bt Bella Temkina 15-0; Anna Marland bt Ashley Ibbitson 15-5; Alexandra Steel bt Vicky Westwood 15-8.

2nd Round: Madeline Raynor bt Karen Hird 15-12; Fiona Barnes bt Rose Arnold 15-9; Kathleen Briedenhann bt Melanie Whitehead 15-3; Alexandra Steel bt Anna Marland 15-3.

Semi-Final: Madeline Raynor bt Fiona Barnes 15-4; Kathleen Briedenhann bt Alexandra Steel 15-4

Final: Kathleen Briedenhann bt Madeline Raynor 15-4, 15-4

Plate: Vicky Westwood

Doubles

1st Round: Fiona Barnes & Karen Hird bt Anna Hansen & Madeline Raynor 15-6; Melanie Whitehead & Wendy Carling bt Polina Pavshinskaya & Varina Valieva 15-0; Anna Marland & Rose Arnold bt Ashley Ibbitson & Bella Temkina 15-2; Alexandra Steel & Kathleen Briedenhann bt Anna Marland & Rose Arnold 15-0

Semi-Final: Fiona Barnes & Karen Hird bt Melanie Whitehead & Wendy Carling 15-1 15-0; Kathleen Briedenhann & Alexandra Steel bt Anna Marland & Rose Arnold 15-0

Final: Alexandra Steel & Kathleen Briedenhann bt Fiona Barnes & Karen Hird 15-4, 15-4

Plate: Anna Hansen & Madeline Raynor

NATIONAL WINCHESTER FIVES DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Bradfield College, 16th March 2014

The 33rd edition of the Winchester Fives Doubles had a bit of everything, writes David Barnes: an extremely strong entry; unpredictably sweating courts at Bradfield on a beautiful early spring day; an Achilles tendon injury to one of the players; and the most entertaining and closest final for years, demonstrating Winchester fives of the very highest quality.

With such a talented field, there were some close matches in the first round. Akerman and M Mohammed had to play well to beat a solid pair in George and Tilston, while Butler and Parker had a mammoth encounter with Minta and Pearce-Smith, squeezing home by the odd point in the third game. 2013 Schools' champions Arnold and Beltrami from St. Paul's confirmed their ability by beating the canny Kiggell and Thomas in two good games.

The quarter-finals produced two more classic matches. Akerman and M Mohammed, champions here back in 2006, showed their mettle to come back from a game down to beat Buchanan and Grant in three, while Butler and Parker had another marathon match, this time against last year's runners-up Cavanagh and Fox, the older pair eventually emerging as narrow winners in the third game. Meanwhile the second seeds, Roberts and Tristão, were needing all their experience and court-craft to defeat the youthful Arnold and Beltrami, who hit the ball as hard as anyone in the competition.

After all this excitement, punctuated by regular sessions of sawdust-sweeping to restore the courts to something like playability, the semi-finals saw straightforward wins for the first and second seeds. Five-times champions Ellison and H Mohammed were finally able to play a full match after hours of inactivity through no fault of their own, and they duly dispatched their old rivals Akerman and M (Dad) Mohammed in two games. Roberts and Tristão also won their semi-final in style, defeating Cavanagh and Fox in straight games.

The final was a classic. After a fairly routine first game dominated by Ellison's astounding volleying and speed around the court, the holders came up against some forceful resistance from Roberts and Tristão, who took a substantial lead in the second game and managed to hold on to it – just – through a wonderfully skilful series of exchanges leaving the gallery gasping in disbelief at the attacking and retrieving on show. In the third, the pattern continued, with Roberts and Tristão again going into an early lead. This time, however, they came under heavier pressure in trying to defend it, although the pace of the game slowed as all the players began to feel the effect of the effort expended. As the score crept up, there was little to separate the pairs, and the odd error reminded the spectators that the players were human, after all. The result was in doubt until the final rally, but in the end Ellison and Mohammed managed to take the game 15-12 and retain their hold on the Barnes Bridge trophy, making it six in a row.

The plate was won by Minta and Pearce-Smith, beating Hughes and Rew in the final.

Many thanks are due to Bradfield College for providing us with lunch, and to Jeremy Ball in particular for all his help with the arrangements for the tournament and throughout the day itself..

Prelim. round: J Marshall & E Ronan bt T Watkinson & J Smith 15-1, 15-0.

1st round: W Ellison & H Mohammed w/o M Hale & N Whitney; Marshall & Ronan bt Hughes & Rew 15-2, 15-5; H Akerman & M Mohammed bt A George & J Tilston 15-12, 15-12; H Buchanan & D Grant

bt K Kennerley & B Kirk 15-1, 15-1; M Cavanagh & D Fox bt J Sinton & R Dyke 15-4, 15-7; D Butler & T Parker bt J Minta & J Pearce-Smith 10-15, 15-2, 16-15; O Arnold & B Beltrami bt T Kiggell & C Thomas 15-9, 15-11; S Roberts & D Tristão bt J McManus & G Munn 15-0, 15-9.

Quarter-Finals: Ellison & H Mohammed bt Marshall & Ronan 10-5 retd.; Akerman & M Mohammed bt Buchanan & Grant 6-15, 15-13, 15-10; Cavanagh & Fox bt Butler & Parker 15-13, 14-16, 15-12; Roberts & Tristão bt Arnold & Beltrami 15-8, 15-12.

Semi-Finals: Ellison & H Mohammed bt Akerman & M Mohammed 15-3, 15-8; Roberts & Tristão bt Cavanagh & Fox 15-6, 15-7.

Final: Ellison & H Mohammed bt Roberts & Tristão 15-9, 14-16, 15-12.

Plate: Minta & Pearce-Smith

COLQUHOUN TROPHY

Sherborne, Dorset, 23rd March 2014

The fifth Colquhoun Trophy – named in memory of the former Master-in-charge at Clifton College – saw several firsts: silverware for a boy from Bruton, every competing school represented in a main or Plate final, and a girls’ event running alongside the boys’.

As in previous years, the boys competed in two categories, Open and Colts, with a round-robin section followed by a knockout competition for both the main and Plate tournaments, with the seedings based on the performances in the round-robin.

In the Colts event, the second Pool turned out to be the stronger of the two, with Malvern’s Lucas Nelson finishing first and going on to meet second-placed (and defending champion) Tobias Francis of Blundell’s in the final. Both had had pretty comfortable semi-final wins (Tobias over Malvern’s Justin Luk, and Lucas over Marlborough’s Rupert Shingleton), and their final was every bit as keenly contested as their earlier game in the round-robin.

Although Lucas had won their first encounter, it was Tobias who quickly picked up a good lead in the first game and looked set to close it out. Lucas had other ideas, however, and ground his way back into the game, pegging Tobias back before going on to sneak the game 11-9. That seemed to rattle Tobias’ confidence, and although he battled hard to the end, Lucas held his nerve to take the second game 11-6, thereby winning the title.

In the end, it was a double for Malvern in the Colts, with Giles Williams (who had been in the same pool as Lucas and Tobias) securing the plate title with a narrow win over Blundell’s player Addie Chai, whose 16-15 semi-final win over Marlborough’s James Barrows was described by spectators as the ‘game of the tournament.’

In the Open competition, meanwhile, Pool 2 generated plenty of cheer for the ‘home’ team as Sherborne’s Henry Newman (2013 Colts runner-up) and Stephen Reed earned their places in the semi-finals. However, Pool 1 was nothing like as clear-cut, and the places hinged on the final game between Alastair Chilcott and Will Psian of Sherborne. In the end, it was Alastair who won, to seal a place in the semis alongside group winner Louis Fulford-Smith of Marlborough.

Louis had a 100% record in the group stages, and maintained his form in the semis, where he scored an emphatic win over Reed. Newman also scored a clear win over Chilcott, but sadly Alastair was hindered by a sprained ankle in the semis and couldn’t compete with Henry’s strength and speed.

That left Louis and Henry to slug it out in the final and the match didn't disappoint. Henry used his stronger left hand to great effect, but as the game wore on, tiredness seemed to creep in and Louis was able to retrieve more and more shots, as well as finding winners of his own. Louis edged the first game, but was a clearer winner in the second game, taking the title 11-9, 11-5. Meanwhile, the Plate was won by Bruton's Alex Gavrilov, who became the first boy from the school to win any silverware at this event.

Last, but not least, was the other first at this race: the girls' event. Malvern, Blundell's and Marlborough all sent girls along to compete, but in the end it was Malvern's Maggie Wong who emerged as the winner in the singles, before also taking the doubles. Such strong performances bode well for a successful School Girls' Championship in April.

Open

Round-robin section:

Pool 1: 1st Louis Fulford-Smith (Marlborough); 2nd Alastair Chilcott (Blundell's); 3rd Alex Gavrilov (King's Bruton); 4th Gregor Tims (Sherborne); 5th Will Pisani (Sherborne)

Pool 2: 1st Henry Newman (Sherborne); 2nd Stephen Reed (Sherborne); 3rd James Green (Marlborough); 4th Hector Michalopolous (Blundell's)

Knockout section:

Semi-finals: Fulford-Smith bt Reed 15-3; Newman bt Chilcott 15-5

Final: Fulford-Smith bt Newman 11-8, 11-5

Plate: Gavrilov (King's Bruton)

Colts

Round-robin section:

Pool 1: 1st Justin Luk (Malvern); 2nd Rupert Shingleton (Marlborough); 3rd Addie Chai (Blundell's); 4th Rory Buchanan (Malvern); 5th James Allan (Sherborne)

Pool 2: 1st Lucas Nelson (Malvern); 2nd Tobias Francis (Blundell's); 3rd Giles Williams (Malvern); 4th James Barrows (Marlborough)

Knockout section:

Semi-finals: Francis bt Luk 15-7; Nelson bt Shingleton 15-8

Final: Nelson bt Francis 11-9, 11-6

Plate: Williams (Malvern)

RFA Rankings March 2014

Latest Singles positions

Current position shows position following: North of England Championships March 2014

Previous rank shows position after the National Singles Championships Dec 2013

Position	Name	Previous	Points
1	D Tristao	1	93.8
2	W Ellison	2	91.5
3	J Toop	3	79.9
4	D Grant	4	65.2
5	M Cavanagh	5	56.0
6	J Minta	6	52.8
7	C Brooks	7	45.9
8	H Buchanan	8	38.6
9	E Kay	9	33.5
10	T Maconie	10	31.0
11	D Butler	23	25.1
12	T Dean	13	24.8
13	I Ackland	11	21.3
14	R Murby	26	20.2
15	J Brubert	15	19.5
16	M Shaw	17	19.3
17	G Price	14	18.6
18	E Hatton	19	18.5
19	T Kiggel	17	18.0
20	M Bate	20	17.5
21	S Rolls	16	16.8
	T Widdop	34	16.8
23	D Fox	22	16.0
24	C Waller	38	14.7
25	J Aquilina	31	14.6
26	G Rees	25	14.0
	L Thomson	12	14.0
28	P Hanton	27	13.7
	H Jefferies	30	13.7
	N Roberts	21	13.7
31	C Burrows	23	13.5
32	T Parker	29	13.4

Position	Name	Previous	Points
33	J Hughes	33	12.4
34	S Wyatt-Haines	28	12.3
35	J Tilston	38	10.3
36	A Pringle	36	10.2
37	O Quarry	51	9.8
38	J Gravatt	42	9.3
39	F Thomas	41	9.1
40	A George	37	8.7
	A Rew	40	8.7
42	J Malde	45	6.6
43	N Patel	46	5.3
44	M Skogh	32	5.2
45	M Bowness	35	4.8
46	J Major	43	4.3
47	S Russell	~	3.5
48	N Hillier	44	3.0
49	M Roberts	50	2.9
50	A Lee	48	2.6
51	S Fraser	46	2.1
	R Patel	49	2.1
53	B Beltrami	55	1.9
54	O Arnold	55	1.8
	R Houlden	55	1.8
	C Legget	~	1.8
57	S Coffey	52	1.5
	S King	53	1.5
59	G Barnes	58	1.4
	O Evan	59	1.4
61	A Bowden	60	1.1
62	R Lamb	54	1.0
63	J Wren	64	0.5

Latest Doubles positions

Current position shows position following: North of England Championships March 2014

Previous rank shows position after BUSA Championships Nov 2013

Position	Name	Previous	Points
1	W Ellison	1	99.8
2	D Tristao	2	92.3
3	D Grant	3	86.2
4	H Buchanan	4	81.6
5	T Dean	6	80.2
6	C Brooks	5	79.5
7	J Minta	7	72.4
8	G Price	8	64.5
9	E Kay	10	52.9
10	M Bate	9	49.5
11	N Roberts	14	39.0
12	R Perry	11	37.5
13	J Toop	13	36.7
14	A Pringle	12	35.8
15	H Mohammed	15	33.3
16	P Hanton	16	32.8
17	J Aquilina	20	31.7
18	J Brubert	17	31.5
19	I Ackland	18	31.0
20	J Hughes	21	29.6
21	S Rolls	18	29.3
22	J Gravatt	24	29.0
23	M Kemp	23	28.0
24	E Hatton	27	26.8
25	T Parker	33	26.0
26	M Skogh	21	25.9
27	W Enstone	28	24.8
28	D Warner	25	24.3
29	J Beswick	39	24.0
	F Thomas	30	24.0
31	J Tilston	29	22.9
32	C Burrows	26	21.5
33	A George	39	20.1
34	M Shaw	67	20.0

Position	Name	Previous	Points
35	R Pearson	31	19.8
	R Sandie	31	19.8
37	D Butler	34	19.5
38	T Widdop	44	19.3
39	H Jefferies	37	19.1
40	J Marshall	37	18.1
41	A Goodwin	46	16.9
42	J Hawke	35	15.8
43	A Lee	35	15.2
44	A Rew	43	15.1
45	L Thomson	41	14.8
46	T Kiggell	48	14.7
47	T Maconie	45	14.6
48	M Frost	42	14.4
49	O Arnold	51	14.1
	B Beltrami	51	14.1
	R Dyke	51	14.1
	J Sinton	51	14.1
53	R Christie	47	13.7
54	S Kirby	49	13.1
55	T Chase	49	12.7
56	O Quarry	60	12.2
	S Russell	60	12.2
58	J Malde	67	11.9
59	E Ronan	59	11.4
60	M Cavanagh	55	11.3
61	A Bowden	62	10.7
	E Hawke	62	10.7
	S Watson	62	10.7
64	N Geere	67	10.0
	T Lewis	67	10.0
	A Smith	67	10.0
	R Whitehorn	~	10.0
68	C Waller	65	9.9
69	C Brechin	56	9.6
	A Griffiths	56	9.6
	P Manning	56	9.6
72	H Akerman	66	9.0
73	S Hodgson	72	8.1
	K Kennerley	72	8.1

Position	Name	Previous	Points
	M Mohammed	72	8.1
	J Spencer	72	8.1
	R Wyatt-Haines	72	8.1
	S Wyatt-Haines	72	8.1
79	J Ader	~	7.1
	Z Brubert	79	7.1
	B Smithson	79	7.1
	J Wren	79	7.1
83	B Lawry	83	5.7
	R Sutcliffe	83	5.7
	O Thompson	83	5.7
	J Walter	83	5.7
87	V Patel	78	5.6
88	M Baxter	82	4.8
89	N Austin	87	3.9
	H Aveston	87	3.9
	A Beverly	87	3.9
	C Butler	87	3.9
	S Coffey	87	3.9
	N Finney	87	3.9
	A Hanton	87	3.9
	N Hillier	87	3.9
	S King	87	3.9
	B Kirk	87	3.9
	R Lebon	87	3.9
	E Malone	87	3.9
	J Pearce-Smith	87	3.9
	J Savery	87	3.9
103	N Edmonds	101	2.8
	J Goodwin	101	2.8
	K Ward	101	2.8

NATIONAL UNDER 13s CHAMPIONSHIPS

St Paul's School, Barnes, 16th March

Peter de Winton writes: With thirty nine competitors, it was a healthy field of players, with all the usual competitive spirit and enthusiasm. We missed having boys from Loretto, Oundle, Richmond Park Academy and Derby Moor, but were pleased to have Rossall back, plus a bigger entry from Allyn's, and a lone entrant from Sedbergh Junior School. There was plenty of variety in the experience, style and physical size of those competing.

In the pool stage of the Singles Hirth of Alleyn's emerged as the top player, losing no points in any of his games and impressing with his steadiness. Cochrane of Alleyn's ran him close, losing just three points.

The other pool winners all achieved maximum points, and the seconds and four top third-placed boys were entered in the knockout stage where seven schools were represented. Knowles of Blundell's and McGuire from Sedbergh both made short work of their opponents, so the final looked intriguing: an evenly matched contest with Knowles' extra height and all-round game pitched against McGuire's physicality. In the end Knowles showed consistency, composure and variety of shots to overcome his opponent decisively, 11-1, 11-3. The Plate was not staged in the usual way of involving the remaining players, in view of the need to sustain boys' energy for the afternoon Doubles, but it was resolved by the losing semi-finalists Hirth and Cochrane competing, with Hirth emerging as the winner.

We were able to start the Doubles soon after the half time break, though some pairs were frustrated as their opponents were still involved in knockout Singles action. Boys were clearly rested and ready for this section of the day, as typically the matches went on for longer and involved closer scores.

Of the eighteen pairs entered, this was gradually reduced to a quarter-final line up consisting of two each from Alleyn's, Blundell's, and Pilgrims, plus one from Merchant Taylors' and Shrewsbury House. Pilgrims looked to have the edge at the semi-final stage with both two pairs still competing, but unfortunately they both lost to Alleyn's and Blundell's respectively, and the Doubles final was a closely fought contest with the superior strength and physical presence of the Blundell's pair winning through. The Doubles Plate was also keenly contested, with 9 of the first game losers. Once again after a number of close games it was Blundell's against Alleyn's in the Final, and Blundell's collected their third win out of a possible four.

My thanks to St.Paul's for allowing us the use of the courts, to the coaches for their enthusiasm and flexibility, and to Frank Akerman and Dick Warner for their tireless support in helping to run the show. It is my fervent wish that one day we can run the championships over a weekend so that the full potential of the players in this age group can be realised. In this scenario, one could have bigger squads and players from more schools, and not be racing against the clock and worrying about the stamina of the boys. But I look forward to next year with confidence knowing that there is so much enjoyment of the game within this age group.

Singles

1st round: Hirth (Alleyn's) bt Martin (Pilgrims) 15-0; Fernando (Pilgrims) bt McMillan (Shrewsbury House) 15-7; Murphy (Merchant Taylors') bt Grassi (Pilgrims) 15-4; McGuire (Sedbergh) bt Hall-Tompkin (Blundell's) 15-0; Knowles (Blundell's) bt Bradshaw (Pilgrims) 15-0; Dautlich (Alleyn's) bt Powell (Pilgrims) w/o; Whittome (Pilgrims) bt Gair (Rossall) 15-11; Cochrane (Alleyn's) bt Le Gassick (Blundell's) 15-8

Quarter-finals: Hirth bt Fernando 15-8; McGuire bt Murphy 15-1; Knowles bt Dautlich 15-0; Cochrane bt Whittome 15-8

Semi-finals: McGuire bt Hirth 11-5, 11-7; Knowles bt Cochrane 11-5, 11-0

Final: B Knowles (Blundell's) bt McGuire (Sedbergh) 11-1, 11-3

Plate: Hirth (Alleyn's)

Doubles

1st round: Pilgrims II bt Rossall I 11-7; Blundell's IV bt Alleyn's III 11-4

2nd round: Pilgrims I bt Rossall II 11-2; Blundell's II bt Alleyn's II 11-2; Merchant Taylors' I bt Pilgrims III 11-2; Alleyn's I bt Blundell's III 11-5; Pilgrims II bt Alleyn's III 11-4; Shrewsbury House bt Blundell's IV 11-9; Alleyn's II bt Pilgrims IV 11-0; Blundell's I bt Merchant Taylors' II 11-1
Quarter finals: Pilgrims I bt Blundell's II 11-5; Alleyn's I bt Merchant Taylors' I 11-4; Pilgrims II bt Shrewsbury House 7-0 ret.; Blundell's I bt Alleyn's II 11-3
Semi-finals: Alleyn's I bt Pilgrims I 11-4; Blundell's I bt Pilgrims II 11-5
Final: Blundell's I (B Knowles & W Hall-Tompkin) bt Alleyn's I (A Cochrane & W Hirth) 15-10
Plate: Blundell's III (J Le Gassick and G Vickery) bt Alleyn's III (M Gill & H Turner) 11-8

NATIONAL VINTAGE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Cambridge, 23rd March 2014

The Vintage, over 55's Rugby Fives tournament was held on Sunday 23rd March on the courts at 'New Portugal Place', i.e. the Cambridge University Sports Centre. Once everyone had found their way to this new venue Singles play got underway in two pools containing nine players in all, an increase by two on last year

In Pool A there was immediately a tremendous tussle between Wayne Enstone and Stuart Kirby, from which Wayne emerged victorious by 16-15, but not before Stuart had held a game point against the defending champion. Bob Sandie and Trevor White subsequently found themselves playing for third and fourth spot in this pool.

In the second pool, containing 5 players, Ian Fuller proved dominant, though the score in his game with Tony Hamilton did not tell the full story of a lengthy match. Brian Nithsdale eventually came third to these two, thus – by a quirk of numbers – qualifying neither for the main competition nor for the Plate. There were those who envied him the rest! Dick Warner and John Hawke, to name but two.

In the semi-finals Wayne and Ian overcame Tony and Stuart respectively with relative ease and thus renewed an old rivalry in the final. Ian's cross-court shots proved the deciding factor in carrying off his first Vintage Singles title – but no trophy, as a very apologetic Wayne had managed to leave it in Devon.

Meanwhile in a predictably noisy Plate final Bob Sandie shaded Dick Warner 15-12. It was Bob's third time of winning the impressive silverware donated by John Hawke.

The Doubles was likewise contested in pool format, with 4 pairs in each. Enstone & Fuller emerged as top dogs from the first pool, accompanied by Hamilton & Spencer Beal (bare-handed, of course), while Kirby & Nithsdale defeated the defending champions Sandie & Richard Sutcliffe in Pool B. Bob & Richard subsequently endured the embarrassment of a bagel in the semis, while Kirby & Nithsdale by contrast had to fight out a 16-14 win over Hamilton & Beal in a match filmed by professional photographer brought along by Mark Kiteley. We look forward to seeing the edited highlights!

Kirby & Nithsdale could do little in the final to stop top seeds Enstone & Fuller winning the title – and this time there was a trophy to take away – , but next door a titanic struggle was developing between Warner & Euan Clarke and Hawke & David Hebden in the Plate final. It was David's first tournament outing since his hip operation. The two pairs had already met in the pool, with H&H winning. In a match even more chatty than the day's other plate final Dick & Euan reversed their earlier defeat by the narrow margin of 15-13.

Thus ended a physically exhausting day for all concerned, and as if to demonstrate how mentally exhausting it had been for those watching the President managed to award the Plate medals and boules to the wrong pair. Luckily David Hebden noticed and forestalled a diplomatic incident of warnerian proportions.

Singles

Pool A: W.Enstone bt R.Sandie 15-6; bt S.Kirby 16-5; bt T.White 15-7; S.Kirby bt R.Sandie 15-6; bt T.White 15-7; R.Sandie bt T.White 15-5

Pool B: I.Fuller bt R.Warner 15-2; bt J.Hawke 15-5; bt A.Hamilton 15-1; bt B.Nithsdale 15-1; A.Hamilton bt R.Warner 15-3; bt J.Hawke 15-2; bt B.Nithsdale 15-2; B.Nithsdale bt R.Warner 15-4; bt J.Hawke 15-0; R.Warner bt J.Hawke 15-1

Semi-finals: Enstone bt Hamilton 15-2; Fuller bt Kirby 15-7

Final: Fuller bt Enstone 15-6

Plate: Sandie

Doubles

Pool A: W.Enstone & I.Fuller bt A.Hamilton & S.Beal 15-9; bt M.Kiteley & P.Atkinson 15-9; bt T.White & N.Jarvis 15-3; A.Hamilton & S.Beal bt M.Kiteley & P.Atkinson 15-6; bt T.White & N.Jarvis 15-2; M.Kiteley & P.Atkinson bt T.White & N.Jarvis 15-2

Pool B: S.Kirby & B.Nithsdale bt R.Sandie & R.Sutcliffe 15-9; bt R.Warner & E.Clarke 15-7; bt J.Hawke & D.Hebden 15-8; R.Sandie & R.Sutcliffe bt R.Warner & E.Clarke 15-5; bt J.Hawke & D.Hebden 15-8; J.Hawke & D.Hebden bt R.Warner & E.Clarke 15-9

Semi-finals: Enstone & Fuller bt Sandie & Sutcliffe 15-0; Kirby & Nithsdale bt Hamilton & Beal 16-14

Final: Enstone & Fuller bt Kirby & Nithsdale 15-4

Plate: Warner & Clarke

NATIONAL SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

St Paul's School, Barnes, 5/6th April 2014

Peter King writes: This year's tournament was reduced to a weekend event by the temporary closure of the St Paul's courts and was initially contested only at Open and Colts levels; it is still hoped to find a date for the Under 14 event. Fifteen schools were represented, one other being ruled out by the slight alteration of dates, but the championships were overwhelmingly dominated by the host school. There was a high standard of play, especially in the Colts event which featured a large number of promising Under 15 players, and customary camaraderie and sportsmanship were very much in evidence.

The Open tournament was really the story of the Paulines Ben Beltrami and Oliver Arnold, already a pair known (and avoided) on the BUCS, Under 25 and adult circuit! We are not sure whether their achievement in winning the doubles without the loss of a single point has any precedent, but it certainly underlined the gap between them and the chasing pack.

In the singles semi-finals they disposed of last year's Colts finalists in straight games, and Oliver was pleased to take 8 points in the first game of the final before succumbing to the all-round strength of his partner. Those who have watched the boys in action this year have all been in awe of the power, consistency and maturity of their game. In truth there were few close games in the singles, although the plate final won by Jai Singh of Derby Moor against Marcus Hunter (Rugby) had two well-contested

games.

In the doubles SPS III (Sid Bhushan and Josh Robson) gave a good account of themselves in two three-game matches, beating Merchant Taylors' I, the eventual plate winners, and taking a game off semi-finalists Winchester; and SPS IV (Matthew Nunes and Zak Jopling) were pleased to avenge the narrow defeat by Derby Moor in last year's Colts final and then pip Winchester II for the semi-final spot.

The Colts' tournament contained more surprises, with West of England runner-up John Halligan defeated by West of England plate winner Nico Hughes (SPS) and former U14 champion Abdul Ahmed (CH) overturned by last year's U14 runner-up Dom Shaw (SPS). Hughes showed great fitness and retrieving skills as he went on to defeat fellow-Pauline Heidrich (a year his senior) in a three-game semi-final and with Shaw reached the doubles final (overturning Derby Moor in three in the quarter-final), but in both cases ran into the calm consistency of Harveer Mahajan, the Pauline top seed, who had met strong resistance in a three-game quarter-final against Kullavanijaya (Winchester) and in the semi against Whitham (SPS), which nearly went to three! As in the senior event the Plate final provided one of the closest encounter as Jussi Grut (Whitgift) edged through 11-9 in the third against Julian Hanton (Alley's).

Many thanks to all involved in organisation and support, especially with the problems caused by rearrangement.

Open Singles

Round 1: R.Christie (Derby Moor) beat M.Baldwin (Rossall) 15-1; S.Bhushan (St Paul's) beat D.Johnson (Derby Moor) 15-1; T.Robinson (Sedbergh) beat A.Wheal (Merchant Taylors') 15-4; R.Whitehorn (Derby Moor) beat D.Bateson (Oundle) 15-3; Z.Jopling (St Paul's) beat H.Andrews (Rossall) 15-1; B.Ashraf (St Paul's) beat L.Brady (Merchant Taylors') 15-1; B.Chua (Winchester) beat H.Howard (Rossall) 15-0; T.Watkinson (Winchester) beat A.Shah (Merchant Taylors') 15-1; M.Nunes (St Paul's) beat J.Singh (Derby Moor) 15-9; M.Blunden (Derby Moor) beat L.Brandon (Whitgift) 15-9; H.Rahim (St Paul's) beat M.Hunter (Rugby) 15-9; T.McFarlane (St Paul's) beat C.Baxter (Derby Moor) 15-2; T.Walters (Whitgift) beat J.Smith (Winchester) 15-9; E.Tebboth (Merchant Taylors') beat G.Wainwright (Sedbergh) 15-5; O.Arnold (St Paul's) beat A.Hsu (Rossall) 15-0.

Round 2: B.Beltrami (St Paul's) beat Christie 15-0; Bhushan beat Robinson 15-8; Whitehorn beat Jopling 15-3; Ashraf beat Chua 15-11; Watkinson beat Nunes 15-5; Rahim beat Blunden 15-11; Walters beat McFarlane 15-13; Arnold beat Tebboth 15-0.

Quarter-finals: Beltrami beat Bhushan 11-2, 11-0; Whitehorn beat Ashraf 11-3, 11-2; Watkinson beat Rahim 11-0, 11-1; Arnold beat Walters 11-1, 11-3

Semi-finals: Beltrami beat Whitehorn 11-4, 11-1; Arnold beat Watkinson 11-2, 11-4

Final: Beltrami beat Arnold 11-8, 11-1

Plate: J.Singh (Derby Moor)

Open Doubles

Preliminary round: Oundle beat Rossall II 15-1

1st round: St Paul's I beat Rossall I 11-0, 11-0; Tonbridge beat Derby Moor III 11-6, 12-10; St Paul's IV beat Derby Moor I 11-2, 11-7; Winchester II beat Sedbergh 11-8, 11-8; St Paul's II beat Merchant Taylors' II 11-0, 11-1; Derby Moor II beat Whitgift 11-7, 11-4; St Paul's III beat Merchant Taylors' I 11-6, 8-11, 12-11; Winchester I beat Oundle II 11-0, 11-1.

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I beat Tonbridge 11-0, 11-0; St Paul's IV beat Winchester II 11-1, 11-8; St Paul's II beat Derby Moor II 11-4, 11-1; Winchester I beat St Paul's III 11-1, 9-11, 11-2

Semi-finals: St Paul's I beat St Paul's IV 11-0, 11-0; St Paul's II beat Winchester I 11-4, 11-2

Final: St Paul's I (B.Beltrami/O.Arnold) beat St Paul's II (B.Ashraf/T.McFarlane) 11-0, 11-0 **Plate:** Merchant Taylors' I (Brady/Tebboth)

Colts Singles

Round 1: G.Barnard (Alleyn's) beat J.Attwood (Bedford Modern) 15-8; G.Bentley (Sedbergh) beat J.Lee (Rossall) 15-7; T.Aziz (Whitgift) beat J.Savage (Merchant Taylors') 15-10; J.Byford (Tonbridge) beat C.Rogers (Oundle) 15-7; B.Clarke (Blundell's) beat A.Armstrong (Whitgift) 15-1; A.Maree (Rossall) beat J.Manger (Oundle) 15-9; D.Burton (Whitgift) beat J.Malton (Tonbridge) 15-6; T.Barlow (Oundle) beat G.Hollings (Sedbergh) 15-7; A.Ahuja (St Paul's) beat J.Rees-Bidder (Bedford Modern) 15-2.

Round 2: H.Mahajan (St Paul's) beat Barnard 15-0; A.Tudor (Malvern) beat J.Grut (Whitgift) 16-14; P.Kullavanijaya (Winchester) beat Bentley 15-4; Aziz beat K.Jessel (Alleyn's) 15-5; A.Ahmed (Christ's Hospital) beat Byford 15-8; D.Shaw (St Paul's) beat B.Singh (Derby Moor) 15-3; D.Whitham (St Paul's) beat R.Kim (Winchester) 15-4; Clarke w/o H.Thompson-Green (Sedbergh) scr; L.Heidrich (St Paul's) beat Maree 15-2; R.Quinault (Winchester) beat J.Hanton (Alleyn's) 15-3; T.Francis (Blundell's) beat J.Kim (St Paul's) 15-4; G.Romain (Rugby) beat Burton 15-2; C.Mabbutt (Whitgift) beat Barlow 15-10; N.Hughes (St Paul's) beat T-J.Roberts (Christ's Hospital) 15-5; I.Jagger (Alleyn's) beat H.Russell (Whitgift) 15-12; J.Halligan (Derby Moor) beat Ahuja 15-2.

Round 3: Mahajan beat Tudor 15-0; Kullavanijaya beat Aziz 15-1; Shaw beat Ahmed 15-8; Whitham beat Clarke 15-0; Heidrich beat Quinault 15-1; Romain beat Francis 15-8; Hughes beat Mabbutt 15-5; Halligan beat Jagger 15-1.

Quarter-finals: Mahajan beat Kullavanijaya 11-6, 10-12, 11-1; Whitham beat Shaw 11-6, 9-11, 11-3; Heidrich beat Romain 11-0, 11-4; Hughes beat Halligan 11-2, 11-9

Semi-finals: Mahajan beat Whitham 11-6, 12-11; Hughes beat Heidrich 7-11, 11-3, 11-4

Final: Mahajan beat Hughes 11-6, 11-7

Plate: Grut (Whitgift)

Colts Doubles

Preliminary round: Oundle beat Whitgift III 15-3.

1st Round: St Paul's I beat Oundle 11-8, 11-3; Winchester beat Whitgift I 12-10, 11-6; Christ's Hospital beat Whitgift II 11-7, 11-8; Blundell's beat Alleyn's II 11-3, 11-4; Sedbergh beat Bedford Modern 11-1, 11-4; St Paul's II beat Alleyn's I 11-7, 11-8; St Paul's III beat Rossall 11-4, 11-0; Derby Moor beat Tonbridge 11-1, 11-5.

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I beat Winchester 11-3, 11-1; Blundell's beat Christ's Hospital 11-9, 12-11; St Paul's II beat Sedbergh 11-8, 11-4; St Paul's III beat Derby Moor 8-11, 11-4, 11-4

Semi-finals: St Paul's I beat Blundell's 11-3, 11-0. St Paul's III beat St Paul's II 11-5, 11-5;

Final: St Paul's I (H.Mahajan/L.Heidrich) beat St Paul's III (N.Hughes/D.Shaw) 12-11, 11-5

Plate: Whitgift I (Mabbutt/Grut)

National Under 14 Championships [postponed until November 2014]

St. Paul's, Saturday and Sunday November 1st and 2nd 2014

At the National U14 Championships postponed from April boys from Winchester College won both the Singles and the Doubles titles. In the Plate competitions there were successes for Alleyn's, Whitgift and St. Olave's.

43 players contested the U14 Singles. From the pools 14 players emerged to contest the main knock-out competition, among them last year's U13 champion from St. Olave's, Kameron Swanson. He was joined in the semi-finals by fellow Olavian Charlie Stocks and, from Winchester Tom Kidner and Seb Byers. It was the Wykehamists who won through to the final, where they fought out a high quality three-game match in which Byers finally showed the greater consistency and steadiness.

In the First Plate Cameron Low from Whitgift beat a fellow Whitgiftian convincingly, while in the Second Plate it was Olavian Sohayl Ujoodia who came through against Harry Chapman from Alleyn's.

In the Doubles, played on Sunday, pairs from Winchester, Whitgift and St. Olave's won their way through to the semi-finals. St. Olave's I there recorded a three-game victory over Whitgift I, while Winchester I likewise took three games to defeat the second pair from St. Olave's. The final proved to be one of the best we have seen in this competition: the greater physical and mental maturity brought by the 6 extra months showed in another tough match where the two boys from Winchester who had fought out the Singles final the previous day finally overcame the Olavians.

In the Plate Alleyn's I won a nail-biting final against St. Paul's I 16-14.

Scores

Under 14 Singles

Pool A: 1st S.Byers (Winchester); 2nd W.Hanley (Tonbridge); 3rd M.Cheveley (St Paul's); 4th A.Aoki-Seymour (Christ's Hospital)

Pool B: 1st M.Lane (St Olave's); 2nd H.Bunn (Marlborough); 3rd T.Liu (St Paul's)

Pool C: 1st F.Saeger (Winchester); 2nd S.Oliver (Bradfield); 3rd H.Chapman (Alleyn's)

Pool D: 1st K.Mackison (Winchester); 2nd D.Lister (St Paul's); 3rd F.Moore (Bradfield)

Pool E: 1st A.Chai (Blundell's); 2nd S.Prakash (Whitgift); 3rd W.Vickery (Winchester)

Pool F: 1st O.Colbert (Bedford Modern); 2nd S.Marsh (Christ's Hospital); 3rd T.McGowan (St Paul's)

Pool G: 1st C.Stocks (St Olave's); 2nd O.Rista-Brettler (Alleyn's); 3rd S.Mohanathasan (Whitgift)

Pool H: K.Swanson (St Olave's) 2nd J.Kim (St Paul's); 3rd J.McLaurin (Blundell's)

Pool I: 1st L.Dautlich (Alleyn's); 2nd J.Woodman (Winchester)

Pool J: 1st V.Amin (Winchester); 2nd F.Walter (St Paul's); 3rd R.Etwaroo (Whitgift)

Pool K: 1st J.Sumner (Bedford Modern); 2nd R.Jackson (St Paul's); 3rd W.Hirth (Alleyn's)

Pool L: 1st T.McCleery (Winchester); 2nd A.Cochrane (Alleyn's); 3rd B.Lederman (Marlborough)

Pool M: 1st H.Grainger (St Paul's); 2nd C.Hughes (Tonbridge); 3rd M.Ward-Perkins (Christ's Hospital)

Pool N: 1st T.Kidner (Winchester); 2nd C.Low (Whitgift); 3rd S.Ujoodia (Sat Olave's); 4th M.McDowall (St Paul's)

1st round: Saeger beat Lane 11-5; Mackison beat Chai 11-7; Stocks beat Colbert 11-0; Swanson beat Dautlich 11-1; Sumner beat Amin 11-3; McCleery beat Grainger 11-6

Quarter-finals: Byers beat Saeger 15-3; Stocks beat Mackison 15-4; Swanson beat Sumner 15-11; Kidner beat McCleery 15-4

Semi-finals: Byers beat Stocks 15-6; Kidner beat Swanson 15-1

Final: Byers beat Kidner 4-11, 11-3, 11-8

First plate: Low

Second plate: Ujoodia

Under 14 Doubles

1st round: St Paul's IV beat Alleyn's II 16-15; Blundell's beat Winchester IV 15-0; Tonbridge beat St Paul's III 15-8. 2nd round: Winchester I beat St Paul's IV 15-0; Whitgift II beat Marlborough 15-8; Blundell's beat St Paul's II 15-11; St Olave's II beat Christ's Hospital 15-0; Bedford Modern beat St Paul's I 15-9; Whitgift I beat Winchester III 15-4; Winchester II beat Alleyn's I 15-7; St Olave's I beat Tonbridge 15-3.

Quarter-finals: Winchester I beat Whitgift II 11-1, 11-1; St Olave's II beat Blundell's 11-6, 11-1; Whitgift I beat Bedford Modern 11-3, 11-7; St Olave's I beat Winchester II 12-10, 10-12, 11-3.

Semi-finals: Winchester I beat St Olave's II 8-11, 11-6, 11-7; St Olave's I beat Whitgift I 11-12, 11-7, 11-7

Final: Winchester I (Byers/Kidner) beat St Olave's I (Stocks/Walton) 11-2, 11-8

Plate: Alleyn's I (Chapman/Rista-Brettler)

NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Alleyn's School, 5/6th April 2014

Will Ellison and Charlie Brooks retained their National Doubles title, but not without a fight. Dan Grant and Dan Tristao - champions in 2012 and runners-up last year - won the first game of the final, before the defending champions hit back to win the second and third games and retain the title.

1st round: Butler & Marshall bt Shaw & Parker 15-9, 15-4; Burrows & Cavanagh bt Brubert & Brubert 15-4,15-5; Bate & Hatton bt Quarry & Russell 15-8, 15-10; Aquilina & Tilston bt Ader & Malde 15-11, 15-9

Quarter-finals: Ellison & Brooks bt Butler & Marshall 15-8, 15-2; Dean & Kay bt Burrows & Cavanagh 15-3, 15-6; Buchanan & Perry bt Bate & Hatton 15-7, 15-3; Grant & Tristao bt Aquilina & Tilston 15-10, 15-6

Semi-finals: Ellison & Brooks bt Dean & Kay 15-11, 15-3; Grant & Tristao bt Buchanan & Perry 16-14, 15-6

Final: Ellison & Brooks bt Grant & Tristao 14-16,15-5,15-7

Plate: Shaw & Parker

NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP (WOOD CUP)

St Paul's School, Barnes, 12/13th April 2014

Quarter-finals: Old Paulines II bt Derby Moor (131-66); Wessex bt Alleyn Old Boys; Executioners bt Christ's Hospital (132-45)

Semi-finals: Old Paulines I bt Old Paulines II (126-83); Wessex bt Executioners (132-52)

Final: Old Paulines I bt Wessex (107-84)

The 2014 Wood Cup saw Wessex re-emerge as a force to be reckoned with, in what was otherwise a similar entry to last year's tournament. It was the Old Paulines who started the tournament as favourites, with the OP Is getting a bye straight through to the semi-final. There they awaited the winner of an OP II team or Derby Moor. Anthony Goodwin kept Derby Moor in touch with an excellent singles victory against Theo Parker, but the OP doubles pairs had too much strength in depth and were able to extend the lead they built in the singles to set up a semi-final with the OP Is.

The other half of the draw contained previous winners Alleyn Old Boys, the Executioners, Wessex and Christ's Hospital. While the CH pairing of Ed Hatton and partner Hugh Aveston provided excellent comic value with their on-court bickering, their play was not enough to stop the Executioners racing away to a decisive victory. Their semi-final opponents played out their match at Alleyn's School, where Wessex overcame an AOB IV not able to take advantage of their home courts.

The semi-final in the bottom half of the draw saw last year's finalists, the Executioners, come up against Wessex. While both teams had the luxury of using a 'squad rotation system', it was the Wessex IV that had the greater strength in depth. Comprehensive wins in all the singles matches and a clean sweep in the

first round of doubles gave Wessex the victory and their first final appearance (in this organiser's memory!).

The other semi-final saw the two OP teams match up. Matt Shaw gave a great account of himself in taking eight points off National Singles Champion Dan Tristao, but the OP II cause wasn't helped when Theo Parker injured his right shoulder when only a point into his singles match with Charlie Brooks. OP Is were therefore able to take a healthy lead into the doubles, which OP IIs were never able to claw back. This was despite some excellent games of doubles where Shaw, with partner and schoolboy doubles champion Ollie Arnold, took games off both OP I pairs.

Sunday morning brought the final, which started ever so predictably. Dan Tristao arrived a little late and was last to take to the court for his match up with Will Ellison. Then, in the time it took Dan and Will to get to 2-1, all other singles matches had finished. Even more predictably, Dan and Will played out an extremely close game 12-10, with a particular highlight for the onlookers being Will smashing a volley well below the bar and screaming 'Don't do a Grant!'. In other games there were good wins for schoolboy singles champion Ben Beltrami, who won 11-0 against Giles Munn; Harry Akerman couldn't get his eye in to nail his famous drop shot, which helped Tom Dean win 11-6; and finally Charlie Brooks proved too strong for David Butler to win comfortably 11-3.

This gave the OPs a 45-19 lead after the singles, which was extended in the opening games of doubles and, despite a fightback from Ellison & Munn, the OPs held on to take their fourth Wood Cup in a row. The 107-84 win takes them a step closer to Manchester's record of five.

NATIONAL MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIP

Oundle, 26th April 2014

In the absence of Messrs Atkinson and Bawtree, due to recent surgical intervention, there were just the three pairs competing for the Admiral's Cup. Defending champions John East and Martin Wilkinson polished off new boys David Hebden and Grem McIntyre 15-3, 15-2 and then eased past former champions Douglas Rice and Bev Boag 15-1, 15-1 to secure their title for the third year in a row. Dave and Grem saw to it that Doug and Bev were awarded the non-existent wooden spoon by downing them 15-4, 15-9.

We look forward to a much enhanced entry next year: there may have to be preliminary rounds!

NATIONAL VETERANS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oundle, 26/27th April 2014

The Veterans' tournament was played this year at Oundle, with a good entry taking advantage of the generous support of the school. New faces included the youthful Johns, Minta and Beswick, who kept the older entrants on their toes. Missing for the first time in many years were the ever youthful Bernard Atkinson and Bob Sandie; we hope to see them back to full fitness in time for next year.

As ever, the standard of competition was high, with particularly fine performances coming from Stuart Kirby and John Beswick, both of whom avoided the rigours of the multitudinous plate games by being

knocked out in the semi-finals of the cup; Stuart by Hamish Buchanan and John by John Minta. This set up an exciting final. The first game was won at a canter by John Minta. He pulled away as quickly at the start of the second game, and looked set for an easy victory, until Hamish gave him a fright, winning a late series of rallies. Eventually, however, John was triumphant, winning in 2 games. This was his first national singles trophy.

The first of the plate competitions consisted of those knocked out in the first two rounds of the cup. This was another knock-out competition, with victory finally going to Neil Roberts, who defeated Tony Hamilton in the final. To complete off the first day of the tournament, those losing in the early rounds of the plate played a round robin competition for a bottle of beer. Victor in this event was Brian Nithsdale, who won all of his matches with apparent ease.

Competition for the doubles cup was fierce. Eleven pairs took part, with both the singles finalists also featuring in the doubles final. Hamish Buchanan and Bruce Hanton were victors, beating John Minta and Brian Nithsdale in two hard fought games.

The doubles plate competitions followed the same format as the singles, with those knocked out in the first two rounds of the cup playing in a knock-out plate competition for the plate, and those knocked out in the early rounds of that playing a round-robin for a bottle of beer. The plate final was the closest of the weekend, with Hamilton and Warner overcoming Sutcliffe and Walter 16-15, while the bottles of beer were won by Kennerley and Kirk, who were victors in all their round-robin matches.

By late Sunday afternoon, everyone appeared to have played a satisfying amount of Fives. Indeed, many of those who endured the rigours of the bottle of beer competitions on both days felt that they had played too much.

Singles

First Round: Christie bt Nithsdale 16-14, 15-11; Walter bt Atkinson P 15-4, 10-15, 15-11; Kirby bt Stubbs 15-1, 15-0; Roberts bt Kennerley 15-0, 15-0; Beswick bt Warner 15-1, 15-1; Hamilton bt Geere 15-6, 15-0

Quarter-finals: Buchanan bt Christie 15-1, 15-1; Kirby bt Walter 15-1, 15-1; Beswick bt Roberts 15-1, 15-0; Minta bt Hamilton 15-3, 15-3

Semi-finals: Buchanan bt Kirby 15-1, 15-5; Minta bt Beswick 15-8, 15-4

Final: Minta bt Buchanan 15-3, 15-11

Plate: Roberts

Second Plate: Nithsdale

Doubles

First Round: Kennerley & Kirk bt Hanton A & Stubbs 15-11, 15-12; Hamilton & Warner bt Hawke & Kiteley 15-5, 15-9; Burrows & Gunion bt Geere & McIntyre 15-1, 15-1

Quarter-finals: Buchanan & Hanton B bt Kennerley & Kirk 15-2, 15-2; Christie & Kirby bt Sutcliffe & Walter 15-12, 15-7; Beswick & Roberts bt Hamilton & Warner 15-5, 15-10; Minta & Nithsdale bt Burrows & Gunion 15-3, 15-7

Semi-finals: Buchanan & Hanton B bt Christie & Kirby 15-3, 15-9; Minta & Nithsdale bt Beswick & Roberts 15-12, 15-1

Final: Buchanan & Hanton B bt Minta & Nithsdale 15-5, 15-5

Plate: Hamilton & Warner

Second Plate: Kennerley & Kirk

NATIONAL SCHOOL GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Marlborough College, 27th April 2014

The fifth annual school girls tournament was notable not only for the highest ever number of girls entering, but for the highest quality of play seen by the organisers since the tournament began.

Some familiar faces from Rugby School, Christ's Hospital, Marlborough College, Aldenham and Rossall were joined by new arrivals Sedbergh and a strong contingent from Malvern College.

The senior (U18) category demonstrated the strength in depth of the school-girls game. There were fierce battles in each group but eventually the top 4 seeds won through to face runners-up in the Quarters. Neither were many knock-out games any easier. Each girl had a difficult passage to the final except for Shinan Zhang, first seed and rapidly demonstrating her superiority in overcoming the two Rugby girls Milly Richards and then Milly Browne without conceding a point. Meanwhile Louise Mathias met Amy Flood in the other side of the draw, the semi-final being a re-run of last year's U16 final, with the same result. In the final, Louise Mathias pushed Shinan in many of the rallies but had no answer for her opponent's strength and speed, Shinan deservedly taking this year's trophy. Third seed Amy Flood of Aldenham School came through a tough third-place play-off against Milly Browne of Rugby to win bronze.

In the U18 doubles, the Malvern pair of Shinan Zhang and Cassie Bedford impressed but the Rugby girls did get on the trophy list, having beaten a strong Christ's Hospital pair in the group. Malvern re-emphasised their strength by beating a strong Rugby pair (Millies Browne & Richards) in the final with some powerful hitting in the long rallies, whilst Christ's Hospital (Louise Mathias & Coralie Strong) overcame a plucky Sedbergh pair (Anna Marland & Steph Gardner) for the bronze.

Rugby School may have missed out on the top spots at U18, but they eventually dominated the U16 medals, which again was a very strong category where few games were easily won. In fact, so many singles games were so close in the groups rounds that the organisers were seriously worried for the schedule. First, second and third positions in groups were incredibly tight, sometimes just one point, and we hope that those that lost out were not too disappointed; in particular, the girls from Sedbergh who put up a great fight. As it was, only 8 girls could make it through and so through to the quarter finals were an incredibly strong eight: Lottie Harbottle (Rugby), Phoebe Thornhill (Christ's Hospital), Amelia Law (Malvern), Fern Nuttall (Sedbergh), Kirsty Martin (Rugby), Maggie Wong (Malvern), Cassie Bedford (Malvern) and Kirti Mehta (Rugby).

A testament of the quality of the U16 entry was that no player managed to win a Quarter-Final by more than six points, Kirsty Martin of Rugby taking that accolade with a powerful display of hitting. Kirsty won through impressively to the final, beating a strong challenge from Cassie Bedford of Malvern; meanwhile on the other side of the draw, Lottie Harbottle overcame Amelia Law in a very close and exciting semi-final 11-8; they had already met in their group where Lottie had just won 12-11, although Lottie in fact came second in her group having lost to Beatrix Crinnion of Christ's Hospital! The final was thus two Rugby girls, hitting with power and precision to the back corners throughout, and deservedly won by Kirsty. The bronze medal match was thus between the two Malvern girls, Amelia managing to snatch that from Cassie, who did not herself miss out as she shortly became the senior doubles champion.

In the U16 doubles, games were equally tight, but with all teams in the groups showing impressive determination and awareness of doubles tactics. The two Rugby pairs showed their overall strength and skill by topping their groups, with the Christ's Hospital and Malvern girls coming in second place. In the

final Kirsty Martin got the gold once more, with the top Rugby pair, of Kirsty and Nush Mehta, displayed their dominance over their schoolmates Lottie Harbottle and Kirti Mehta. The bronze medal game was rather closer, stalwarts Beatrix Crinnion and Phoebe Thornhill just losing 12-10 to the Malvern girls Maggie Wong and Amelia Law.

At U14 level it was yet another school's turn to dominate; this time, the hosts, Marlborough College. Before the competition the smart money had been backing the seasoned Christ's Hospital contingent, but the sporty and talented Marlborough girls, expertly coached by Mr Kiggell, were soon drawing impressed comments from the gallery. These two schools dominated the groups, as girls from Aldenham fought hard but could not win through. Cosima Bugel of Marlborough, rapidly becoming a favourite to win, dispatched Ynys Barnard-Masterson of Christ's Hospital before facing and beating her school-mate Isabella Lee in another fantastic display of athletic movement and accurate hitting. Meanwhile Stella Saunt-Hills of Christ's Hospital faced strong challenges from Molly Fisher followed by Stella Smith, both of Marlborough. So Cosi Bugel faced Stella Saunt-Hills in the final, and it was Cosi who won convincingly in the end, showing an impressive use of her experience from the day to come from behind and eventually make her accurate hitting on both sides count. Cosi was deservedly thrilled to win gold. The bronze medal match was between the two Marlborough girls Isabella and Stella, with Stella taking the bronze.

The doubles was a similar story; Aldenham was outclassed, and the top Marlborough pair re-asserted their ascendancy, taking the trophy. The Christ's Hospital pair beat the second Marlborough pair to take the silver, leaving their opponents with the bronze. The U14 trophies had never seen such good play; clearly these girls will be the ones to watch in the future.

At U13 level Rossall, Aldenham and Christ's Hospital provided a thrilling set of encounters, with girls from both Year 7 and Year 8 already showing a good sense of court awareness and shot selection. Through to the Quarter-Finals were Angelina Green, Helena Walsh and Zoe Brown of Christ's Hospital, Grace Gordon, Isabelle Woodman and Tayla Walkden of Rossall, and Emma Conway and Sasha Macdonald of Aldenham. Angelina used strong shots to the back of the court to dominate her side of the draw, beating first Isabelle and then Grace of Rossall to reach the final. On the other side, Emma showed tactical nous, graceful movement and some determination to reach the final, overcoming Zoe and then Helena of Christ's Hospital. In the final, Angelina's more powerful hitting made the difference, as she took the gold and Emma the silver. In the bronze medal match, Grace Gordon beat Sasha Macdonald to bring some silverware back for Rossall.

The doubles games developed a similar pattern; Aldenham met Christ's Hospital in the final, and again the powerful returning of Angelina made the difference, her and Helena winning Gold. Sasha and Emma gained a deserved silver, and meanwhile the Rossall girls repeated Grace's singles feat with a win in the plate to gain bronze.

A fantastic tournament showed the increasing prowess and popularity of the girls game, and we look forward to more of the same next year! Planes are afoot to involve more senior girls in the ladies' fives scene, with a First Lady's Cup of mixed pairs, to take place hopefully in October.

U18 Singles (Paula Smith Cup)

Group stages:

Group A: 1. L. Mathias (Christ's Hospital), 2. K. Shelina (Clifton), 3. S. Gardner (Sedbergh)

Group B: 1. S. Zhang (Malvern), 2. K. Broad (Rugby), 3. J. Urtasun (Marlborough)

Group C: 1. M. Browne (Rugby), 2. C. Strong (Christ's Hospital), 3. M. Dodd (Aldenham)

Group D: 1. A. Flood (Aldenham), 2. M. Richards (Rugby), 3. A. Marland (Sedbergh), 4. A. Davies (Marlborough)

Knock-outs:

Quarter Final: Mathias bt Broad, Flood bt Strong, Browne bt Shelina, Zhang bt Richards

Semi Final: Mathias bt Flood, Zhang bt Browne

Final: Zhang bt Mathias 15-2

3rd Place: Flood bt Browne 11-7

U18 Doubles (Simon Eckert Memorial Trophy)

Group stages:

Group A: 1. Rugby, 2. Christ's Hospital, 3. Marlborough

Group B: 1. Malvern, 2. Sedbergh, 3. Aldenham

Knock-outs:

Final: Malvern (Zhang & Bedford) bt Rugby (Richards & Browne) 11-8

3rd Place: Christ's Hospital (Mathias & Strong) bt Sedbergh (Marland & Gardner)

U16 Singles (Melanie Whitehead Cup)

Group stages:

Group A: 1. Phoebe Thornhill (Christ's Hospital), 2. Maggie Wong (Malvern), 3. Nush Mehta (Rugby), 4. Abi Quigley (Sedbergh)

Group B: 1. Amelia Law (Malvern), 2. Lottie Harbottle (Marlborough), 3. Rose Arnold (Sedbergh), 4. Beatrix Crinnion (Christ's Hospital)

Group C: 1. Kirsty Martin (Rugby), 2. Kirti Mehta (Rugby), 3. Emily MacMillan (Sedbergh), 4. Millie Ngai Lenoir (Eastbourne), 5. Nevada Ross (Aldenham)

Group D: 1. Cassie Bedford (Malvern), 2. Fern Nuttall (Sedbergh), 3. Tilly Wood (Eastbourne), 4. Jade Scott (Aldenham)

Knock-outs:

Quarter Final: Harbottle bt Thornhill 11-8, Law bt Nuttall 11-6, Martin bt Wong 11-5, Bedford bt Mehta 11-6

Semi Final: Harbottle bt Law 11-8, Martin bt Bedford 11-0

Final: Kirsty Martin (Rugby) bt Lottie Harbottle (Rugby) 12-11

3rd place: Amelia Law (Malvern) bt Cassie Bedford (Malvern)

U16 Doubles (Denise Hall-Wilton Trophy)

Group Stages

Group A: 1. Rugby I, 2. Christ's Hospital, 3. Sedbergh II, 4. Eastbourne

Group B: 1. Rugby II, 2. Malvern, 3. Sedbergh I, 4. Aldenham

Knock-out rounds

Final: Rugby I (Martin & N Mehta) I bt Rugby II (Harbottle & Mehta) 11-0

Plate: Malvern (Law & Wong) bt Christ's Hospital (Thornhill & Crinnion) 12-10

U14 Singles (Gardner Cup)

Group rounds:

Group A: 1.S. Saunt-Hills (Christ's Hospital), 2. C. Bugel (Marlborough), 3. S. Devendrarajah (Aldenham)

Group B: 1.S. Smith (Marlborough), 2. Y. Barnard-Masterson (CH), 3. S. Wheeler (Marlborough), 4. Phoebe Altman (Aldenham)

Group C: 1. Isabella Lee (Marlborough), 2. Molly Fisher (Marlborough) 3. Lauryn Edwell (Aldenham), 4. Charlotte Yeabsley (Aldenham)

Knock-out rounds:

Quarter Final: Bugel bt Barnard-Masterson, Saunt-Hills bt Fisher
Semi Final: Bugel bt Lee 11-1, Saunt-Hills bt Smith
Final: Cosi Bugel (Marlborough) bt Stella Saunt-Hills (Christ's Hospital)
3rd place: Smith (Marlborough) bt Lee (Marlborough)

U14 Doubles (Beaman Cup)

Group rounds: 1. Marlborough I, 2. Christ's Hospital, 3. Marlborough II, 4. Aldenham II, 5. Aldenham I
Winners: Marlborough I (Bugel & Smith)
Plate/Bronze: Marlborough II (Lee & Wheeler)

U13 Singles (Cambridge Cup)

Group A: 1. A. Green (Christ's Hospital), 2. E. Conway (Aldenham), 3. D. Newsham (Rossall)
Group B: 1. G. Gordon (Rossall), 2. T. Walkden (Rossall), 3. S. Odusote (CH)
Group C: 1. L. Walsh (Christ's Hospital), 2. S. Macdonald (Aldenham), 3. S. Mason (Rossall)
Group D: 1. Z. Brown (Christ's Hospital), 2. I. Woodman (Rossall), 3. S. Storm-Eckersley (Rossall)
Knock-out rounds:
Quarter Final: Green bt Woodman, Gordon bt Macdonald, Walsh bt Walkden, Conway bt Brown
Semi Final: Green bt Gordon, Conway bt Walsh
Final: Angelina Green (Christ's Hospital) bt Emma Conway (Aldenham) 11-2
3rd place: Grace Gordon (Rossall) bt Sasha Macdonald (Aldenham) 11-3

U13 Doubles (Oxford Cup)

Knock-out rounds:
Semi Final: Aldenham bt Rossall I 11-8, Christ's Hospital I bt Christ's Hospital II 11-5
Final: Christ's Hospital I (Green & Walsh) bt Aldenham 11-5
3rd place: Rossall I bt Christ's Hospital II 12-10

SCOTTISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Loretto School, Musselburgh, 3rd/4th May 2014

What was billed as possibly the last Scottish Fives Championships before Scotland gains independence from England took place in Musselburgh over the weekend of May 3rd - 4th. A strong entry from south of the border including the top two ranked singles players, a distinguished former president of the RFA and a dedicated group from Durham University who travelled north to lock horns with the cream of the local Scottish talent.

In the singles competition, there were no major surprises in the early rounds although special praise should go to the youthful enthusiasm of Ben Boyd from Edinburgh Academy for taking the age and experience of tournament organiser Neil Roberts to 3 games in the first round.

The semi-finals saw Dan Tristao overcome local coach and Caledonian club stalwart Richie Murby while, in what was possibly the game of the day, Dan Grant eventually triumphed 11-7 in the third against former title holder Will Ellison in a match of exceptional quality whose outcome was in doubt until the very last rally had been completed.

In the final featuring the two Dans, a very close first game was edged 12-11 by Dan (Tristao) who, with Dan (Grant) beginning to tire after his exertions in the previous round, went on to retain the Cuthbertson quaiche by winning the second game 11-4 at 8.20pm.

The doubles competition the following day produced some close and entertaining matches, Adam George and Ed Hatton eventually defeating defending champions Will Ellison and Mike Kemp in the final. Dick Warner made up for his disappointment of not winning the singles and being disqualified from the singles plate by partnering Dan Grant to victory in the doubles plate.

Many thanks should go to Loretto School for allowing us to use the school facilities to host the tournament, which is always an enjoyable weekend..

Singles

Prelims: N.Roberts bt B.Boyd 11-6, 9-11, 11-3; Guthrie bt Jordan 11-7, 11-4

1st round: Russell bt Roberts 11-5, 4-11, 11-4; Murby bt Guthrie 11-0, 11-1; Hatton bt Brechin 11-0, 11-3; George bt Tansay 11-2, 11-0; Butler bt Warner 11-3, 11-5

Quarter-finals: Tristao bt Russell; Murby bt Hatton 11-2, 11-9; Grant bt George 11-6, 11-9; Ellison bt Butler 11-7, 11-6

Semi-finals: Tristao bt Murby 11-9, 11-6; Grant bt Ellison 11-1, 3-11, 11-7

Final: Tristao bt Grant 12-11, 11-4

Plate: Butler

Doubles

Round-robin: Tristao & Brechin lost to Grant & Warner 14-16, lost to Ellison & Kemp 10-15, bt Murby & Roberts 15-13, lost to Hatton & George 4-15; Grant & Warner lost to Ellison & Kemp 6-15, bt Murby & Roberts 15-12, bt Hatton & George 15-13; Ellison & Kemp bt Murby & Roberts 15-6, lost to Hatton & George 6-15; Murby & Roberts lost to Hatton & George 4-15

Final: Hatton & George bt Ellison & Kemp 11-6, 12-10

Plate: Warner & Grant

WINCHESTER FIVES MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Bradfield College, 11th May 2014

The Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles Championship produced its usual mix of fun, banter and high-quality Fives, with defending champions Alex Steel and Andy Pringle eventually retaining their title against the Christ's Hospital pair of teacher Ed Hatton and pupil Coralie Strong.

Truth be told, Andy and Alex had looked the pair to beat right from the word go, with their experience and balance as a pair telling, as they won all their round-robin matches - most by substantial margins - to claim a place in the final. It was perhaps only to be expected that their opponents would be the pair that had pushed them hardest in these initial matches, Ed and Coralie.

As was only to be expected, Ed was the dominant player in the partnership, but Coralie (a quarter-finalist in the recent School Girls' Championships) was not overawed and provided invaluable back-up. They lost just the one game in the round-robin, but showed their strength and determination to overcome a couple of stern challenges. In the final, though, the match was a repeat of the round-robin encounter between the two pairs: Andy and Alex had the better balance, giving their opponents fewer opportunities to find winners, and both were able to hit the buttress more frequently than their opponents; indeed, Alex hit a couple of crucial service winners into the buttress just when a comeback seemed on the cards. It was a hard-fought game, but Andy and Alex deservedly finished as winners, and wrote their names into the record books, as the first pair ever to successfully defend the title.

Throughout the event, the matches were extremely hard fought, and there's no better proof of that than the final two matches of the day - the 3rd/4th place play-off and the plate final. In the former, the Eton Fives pairing of Gareth Hoskins and Karen Hird just edged out Dick Warner and Sarah Greasley, while in the Plate final, the Rossall pair of Maddy Raynor and Lee Hodgetts won through against another Eton Fives pairing, Harriet Asquith and Ralph Morgan.

Round-robin: Pringle & Steel bt Warner & Greasley 15-3, bt Hatton & Strong 15-10, bt Asquith & Morgan 15-3, bt Raynor & Hodgetts 15-1, bt Hoskins & Hird 15-4; Warner & Greasley lost to Hatton & Strong 14-16, bt Asquith & Morgan 15-8, bt Raynor & Hodgetts 15-11, lost to Hoskins & Hird 2-15; Hatton & Strong bt Asquith & Morgan 15-4, bt Raynor & Hodgetts 15-4, bt Hoskins & Hird 15-8; Asquith & Morgan lost to Raynor & Hodgetts 10-15, lost to Hoskins & Hird 8-15; Raynor & Hodgetts lost to Hoskins & Hird 6-15

Final: Pringle & Steel bt Hatton & Strong 15-8, 15-4

3rd/4th place play-off: Hoskins & Hird bt Warner & Greasley 11-9, 11-5

Plate final: Raynor & Hodgetts bt Asquith & Morgan 11-8, 11-3

End of Season Rankings May 2014

Current positions – after Scottish Championships, May 2014
Previous positions – after North of England Championships, March 2014

SINGLES

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	3	D Tristao	93.0
2	2	W Ellison	86.3
3	1	J Toop	78.3
4	6	D Grant	70.1
5	5	M Cavanagh	54.8
6	4	J Minta	51.4
7	7	C Brooks	44.7
8	8	H Buchanan	37.7
9	9	E Kay	33.1
10	12	T Maconie	30.7
11	30	D Butler	27.1
12	22	R Murby	26.8
13	13	T Dean	24.5
14	10	I Ackland	21.2
15	32	J Brubert	19.5
16	14	E Hatton	19.3
~	55	M Shaw	19.3
18	16	G Price	18.2
19	~	T Kiggell	18.0
20	15	M Bate	17.2
21	25	S Rolls	16.9
22	26	T Widdop	16.4
23	20	D Fox	15.4
24	58	C Waller	14.7
25	38	J Aquilina	14.5

26	36	H Jefferies	13.7
~	24	G Rees	13.7
28	23	P Hanton	13.4
~	44	T Parker	13.4
30	16	C Burrows	12.9
31	41	J Hughes	12.3
32	19	N Roberts	11.9
~	27	S Wyatt-Haines	11.9
34	11	L Thomson	11.1
35	31	A George	10.5
36	40	J Tilston	10.1
37	34	A Pringle	10.0
38	~	O Quarry	9.8
39	42	J Gravatt	8.9
~	34	F Thomas	8.9
41	28	A Rew	8.4
42	49	J Malde	6.6
43	~	S Russell	5.8
44	45	N Patel	5.3
45	48	M Roberts	2.9
46	~	B Beltrami	1.9
47	~	O Arnold	1.8
~	~	R Houlden	1.8
~	~	C Legget	1.8
50	51	G Barnes	1.4
~	~	O Evan	1.4
52	51	A Bowden	1.1
53	59	J Wren	0.5

DOUBLES

Current position – after Scottish Championships, May 2014
Previous positions – after BUSA Championships, November 2013

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	1	W Ellison	99.5
2	2	C Brooks	88.3
~	3	D Tristao	88.3
4	6	D Grant	86.6
5	4	H Buchanan	75.5
6	5	T Dean	74.2
7	7	J Minta	64.8
8	8	G Price	60
9	9	E Kay	57.4
10	15	R Perry	45.8
11	10	M Bate	43
12	23	E Hatton	37.4
13	38	A George	33.5
14	34	T Parker	33.2
~	12	N Roberts	33.2
16	19	J Aquilina	32.8
17	17	J Toop	32.4
18	18	M Kemp	31.6
19	29	J Brubert	30
~	~	M Shaw	30
21	23	I Ackland	29.2
~	14	A Pringle	29.2
23	42	J Hughes	28.7

24	51	D Butler	27.4
~	13	P Hanton	27.4
~	23	S Rolls	27.4
27	23	J Gravatt	26.5
28	28	J Tilston	26
29	33	J Marshall	25.5
30	67	W Enstone	24.5
~	11	H Mohammed	24.5
32	21	D Warner	23.5
33	34	F Thomas	22.4
34	34	J Beswick	21.2
~	20	C Burrows	21.2
36	55	H Jefferies	18.7
37	42	M Cavanagh	17.3
~	29	R Pearson	17.3
~	29	R Sandie	17.3
~	15	M Skogh	17.3
41	39	T Widdop	15.8
42	~	O Arnold	14.1
~	~	B Beltrami	14.1
~	~	R Dyke	14.1
~	40	A Goodwin	14.1
~	67	T Kiggell	14.1
~	~	J Sinton	14.1
48	41	A Rew	13.2
49	48	T Maconie	12.2
~	~	O Quarry	12.2
~	~	S Russell	12.2
52	47	R Christie	11.2

~	50	S Kirby	11.2
~	65	J Malde	11.2
55	55	A Bowden	10
~	48	T Chase	10
~	34	M Frost	10
~	~	N Geere	10
~	55	E Hawke	10
~	~	T Lewis	10
~	51	E Ronan	10
~	~	A Smith	10
~	67	S Watson	10
~	~	R Whitehorn	10
65	53	C Waller	8.7
66	~	J Ader	7.1
~	53	H Akerman	7.1
~	~	Z Brubert	7.1
~	23	J Hawke	7.1
~	55	S Hodgson	7.1
~	55	K Kennerley	7.1
~	55	M Mohammed	7.1
~	~	B Smithson	7.1
~	55	J Spencer	7.1
~	29	L Thomson	7.1
~	~	J Wren	7.1
~	55	R Wyatt-Haines	7.1
~	55	S Wyatt-Haines	7.1
79	67	B Lawry	5
~	67	R Sutcliffe	5
~	67	O Thompson	5

DERBY MOOR INVITATION DOUBLES

Derby, 29th June 2014

Ten pairs contested the 11th Derby Moor Invitation Doubles. Sadly, this year no Bob Sandie (due to injury) or Dickie Warner (due to a communications cock-up) to enliven proceedings but an ever stronger group of youngsters from the home club.

Previous winners Ashley Hill and Matt Orr were back from the Army and university respectively, and they joined Jay Gravatt in graduation mode from Durham, as well as regulars Grem McIntyre, John Hawke, Tim Widdop (Halifax), Brian Nithsdale, Wayne Harrison (Manchester), Trevor White (Rugby, sadly injured in his first game) and newcomer Mark Kiteley (Bedford) to add experience to the mix.

Brian Kirk had paired people up à la President's Cup with, where possible, a guest paired with a Derby player, to ensure close matches in the early stages and some spice in the Plate. The four seeded pairs went through to the semi-finals as expected. There, last year's winner Anthony Goodwin & Brian Nithsdale beat Wayne Harrison & Jai Singh, while in the other semi Ashley Hill & Tim Widdop were too strong for Jay Gravatt & Craig Baxter.

The final proved to be probably the longest yet and perhaps the best we have seen: it took a good one and a half hours, went to three games and saw hard-hitting Ashley and rather subtler Tim win 15-3, 14-16, securing victory in the third, 15-12. It is often said modern young players "hit the skin off the ball" and this was certainly the case in the final during which the ball had to be repaired or replaced four times due to splitting seams.

As if they hadn't had enough Fives, Jay & Craig and Jai & Wayne decided to have a third place play-off, with Jay & Craig winning through – Jay got the beer, Craig got the Mars Bar!

As ever, the Plate proved exciting, with two pools of 3 leading to a final between Stuart Kirby & Mark Kiteley, now playing regularly with the new Cambridge City Club, against Matt Orr & Bally Singh. Experience overcame youth, with Kirby and Kiteley winning 11-7, 12-11 and taking the one boule that had been returned from last year! A brilliant day's Fives, with the usual warm weather (bar a ten-minute downpour!) and food to feed an army.