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## South West Open Championships 2024

Blundell's School, Tiverton,  
Saturday/Sunday, 1-2 July 202

**STOP PRESS** Ed Kay won his fourth South West Open Singles title in five seasons, following it with his third Doubles title, won twice previously with Ollie Arnold but this year with Ben Beltrami, whom he had defeated in the Singles final.

Both Singles and Doubles were played on the Saturday, with the Singles final early on Sunday morning, while the later stages of the Doubles were continued thereafter, followed by a small tournament of American Doubles which was won by Julian Aquilina and Shinan Zhang.

On Saturday Charlie Brooks presented Wayne with a framed collage of photos from the RFA Photographic Archive to celebrate 40 years of the South West Open and to thank Wayne and Lesley for their extraordinary commitment to this event, which Wayne initiated in 1984.

**Wayne Enstone reports:** I feel it is most appropriate of me to begin this year's report with a heart-felt thanks to the RFA and Exeter Fives Club and all those involved in sourcing the FABULOUS Photo Collage and engraved glassware presented to Lesley and me for our 40<sup>th</sup> Tournament. I can't tell you how many very happy and fond memories those photos bring back to us both. I can assure you all they will certainly take pride of place in our home. I would truly wish that I could do another 40; however, that has always been one of my problems, but hey, what's wrong with dreaming!!

As for the 2024 Championship report, to say the first round Singles matches produced fireworks at 10am in the morning is an understatement. There two great three-game matches to kick us off: Terry McElvaney against Anthony Goodwin, both talented shotmakers and powerful hitters, Terry taking the first, then Anthony managing to rally in the second, and eventually winning the third game to an unlikely 1 point; the other impressive match was Marcus Cloke Browne, his first appearance on these courts, playing Penn Chai, last year's Plate winner, with Marcus winning the first and Penn coming back to take the second. However, Marcus's defensive agility and consistent shot play won him the third to 3. Alex Hopkins, new to the Blundell's courts, played an in-form Lewis Keates and, whilst playing the courts well, couldn't quite match Lewis's powerful hitting, with Lewis winning in two games. A hard-hitting Ed Grant didn't get any change out of Charlie Brooks, but despite gaining just 1 point Ed's first time performance at Blundell's was very respectable. Peter Grant reminded me that his first appearance at these championships was in 1986; Peter played a very in-form Julian Aquilina, doing well to get 2 and 1. Nick Geere never ceases to amaze and gave Theo Parker two good warm-up games. And Shinan Zhang had two lively games against Ben Beltrami, our National Singles Champion, but Ben being so hard for anyone to get a ball past, well done to Shinan for winning so many rallies despite losing the match.

The Singles quarter-final matches, whilst hard-fought, saw all the seeds win through to the semi-finals after many entertaining rallies, with the losers all putting in fine performances and showing promise for the future. I felt for Theo as he eventually pushed Julian in the second game and whilst Marcus didn't get the reward in a lot of rallies, he did consistently put Ben under pressure. Lewis is certainly developing his game and made Charlie work for the win in both the games, whilst Anthony still produced winners against Ed's brilliant defence.

The semi-finals again resulted in the seeding holding up, with Charlie doing his best to put Ed under pressure and win many rallies but not enough, as Ed won through in two; and, similarly, Ben did to Julian what he had done to Theo. However, no doubt about it, Julian has improved since I watched him last season and his fitness is not in question, but Ben's attacking play is just too tough to handle. That concluded Singles play and lined up the final between Ed and Ben on the Sunday morning.

Whilst the Singles rounds took place so did the Doubles, interspersed among them, and fortunately for me there were no three-gamers to report. A first-round match could have gone to three between a father & son pairing, Peter & Ed Grant, versus Nick Geere & Andy Landon, with Nick & Andy narrowly winning both games. In the quarters again the seeds won through, with Terry & Penn giving Ed & Ben a good match, and similarly Julian & Lewis had their moments of glory against Charlie & Theo but couldn't break them down. The final was set to be played after the Singles on Sunday morning.

As usual, the Plate competitions both took the form of a round robin. As it worked out the last matches were in effect final. In the Doubles a mixed doubles pairing of Shinan & Anthony played a young pairing of Alex & Marcus to battle it out for the prize, experience winning through after a very enjoyable last game of the afternoon. In the Singles Plate Penn was the defending champion and one could see he wanted to retain the title: Terry did his best to prevent it happening; however, despite playing some excellent shots, Terry had to concede and Penn took his second Plate Singles title.

As usual the Plate prizes of vases from the Devon Glassmakers Dartington were presented after our excellent Saturday evening meal at the Butterleigh Inn.

The Singles final started proceedings on Sunday morning and yet again one had to be at Blundell's to understand the quality of play that Ed and Ben produced. It really was a privilege and pleasure to score this final. In the first game Ed had obviously come to defend his title, attacking Ben from the first rally and moving to a 6-0 lead after many changes of service, one point being gained after six changes. It then took Ben six changes to gain his first point and this set the scene for Ben to claw back the score to 6-4. At this point Ed reversed the winning of rallies in his favour going 9-4 up but only after eight changes at 8-4. Ben gained another point but Ed managed to produce a sequence of winning shots to close the first game out 11-5. One had to wonder how they could match that first game for variety of shots, precision, accuracy, power and ability to return a ball that didn't rise in such a way that their opponent could attack again. In the second Ed again took the lead 2-0, but this appeared to fire Ben up to power the ball even harder, and Ben slowly moved into a somewhat surprising 8-2 lead. Ed did bring it back 8-4. However, Ben managed to consolidate and moved the score on to finish the game 11-4. Amazingly, neither player looked as though the physical energy they had both expended in those games had taken anything out of them. It left us spectators not really knowing who would win the third game? The pattern of score in the third was initially the same as game two; however at 2-all Ed was the player that moved ahead. As with the previous two games the score became 8-4 to Ed, and again whilst we witnessed many rallies that could have been won by either player, with some breathtaking returns, Ed managed to hold on to win the third and retain his title, thereby winning his 4<sup>th</sup> South West Singles. Considering the tension and pressure each player put the other under yet again in the course of all those fantastic rallies there were only three lets, and each player called several balls down that we spectators may have thought up, maintaining the spirit and wonderful standard of fairness we have in this fantastic game.

Once we had all come down after the Singles final we had the 'double' pleasure and treat of watching the Doubles final, which whilst being fast and furious was one the most entertaining I have watched at the South West Champs. I did feel for Charlie & Theo as they had to get up to speed against Ben & Ed, who appeared as fresh as ever and raring to go. Every rally contained lots of variety of shots with both pairs continually attacking their opponents. Charlie & Theo did get back to 4-2 down but Ben and Ed kept steadily moving the score on, though at 10-2 Charlie & Theo did get a consolation point but lost the first 11-3. Ben & Ed were really ruthless in the second and moved to 7-0 up and continued their dominance to clinch the match 11-1, taking the 2024 Doubles, Ben's first and Ed's third.

Presentation of Trophies followed, with Ed Kay doing the 'Double' again. Thanks as always went to all the players for supporting the Championships.

**A final Thanks to all who have attended over the past 40 Years.** Do remember all are welcome to next year's South West Open Championship 2025.

## **Singles**

**1st round:** A Goodwin bt T McElvaney 9-11, 11-6, 11-1; L Keates bt A Hopkins 11-2, 11-2; C Brooks bt E Grant 11-0, 11-1; J Aquilina bt P Grant 11-2, 11-1; T Parker bt N Geere 11-5, 11-3; M Cloke Browne bt P Chai 11-5, 7-11, 11-3; B Beltrami bt S Zhang 11-2, 11-1

**Quarter-finals:** E Kay bt Goodwin 11-4, 11-1; Brooks bt Keates 11-8, 11-6; Aquilina bt Parker 11-1, 11-7; Beltrami bt Cloke Browne 11-2, 11-0

**Semi-finals:** Kay bt Brooks 11-4, 11-6; Beltrami bt Aquilina 11-2, 11-2

**Final:** Kay bt Beltrami 11-5, 4-11, 11-5

**Plate: 1st** Chai; **2nd** McElvaney

## Doubles

**1st round:** N Geere & A Landon bt E Grant & P Grant 11-6, 11-7

**Quarter-finals:** B Beltrami & E Kay bt Geere & Landon 11-1, 11-3; P Chai & T McElvaney bt M Cloke Browne & A Hopkins 11-2, 11-5; J Aquilina & L Keates bt D Hill & D Murdoc 11-4, 11-2; C Brooks & T Parker bt A Goodwin & S Zhang 11-4, 11-7

**Semi-finals:** Beltrami & Kay bt Chai & McElvaney 11-7, 11-7; Brooks & Parker bt Aquilina & Keates 11-4, 11-7

**Final:** Beltrami & Kay bt Brooks & Parker 11-3, 11-1

**Plate:** 1st Goodwin & Zhang; 2nd Cloke Browne & Hopkins

**American Doubles:** Aquilina & Zhang

## Third Basque Rugby Fives (Doubles) Championship

San Ignazio municipal sports center, Bilbao, August 7 2024

The RFA is delighted to report the latest in a series of competitions held in the Basque Country: the third Basque Rugby Fives Doubles Championship was played on 7th August on the squash court of the San Ignazio municipal sports centre in Bilbao, Spain.

Three pairs participated:

1: Egoitz Campo/ Joseba Fernández

2: David Cea/ Mikel Torde

3: Lander Campo/ Luis Getxo

There was a semi-final between the second and third-seeded pairs, and then a final between the winner of that match and the top seeds – each match being played as a single game to 25 points! Newcomer David Cea played very well in both games, and offered a stern challenge to the current doubles champion Egoitz Campo and his new doubles partner Joseba Fernandez

### Results:

**Semi-final:** David Cea/ Mikel Torde bt Lander Campo/Luis Getxo 25-5

**Final:** Egoitz Campo/Joseba Fernández bt David Cea/ Mikel Torde 25-15

## South East Open Championships

Christ's Hospital, Horsham

Saturday, 17th August 2024

STOP PRESS Ed Kay successfully defended his South East Open Singles title in the latest of a series of finals against Dan Tristao. They had beaten Theo Parker and Julian Aquilina respectively in their semi-finals. It is the fourth time Ed has won the title. Charlie Lacewing from Christ's Hospital won a fiercely contested three-game Plate Singles final against Patrick Harrison from the Edward Alleyn Club.

In the Doubles Seb Ion & James Tilston overcame Max Bolt & Lewis Keates in a long and hard fought three-game final. It is James's third success, having previously won with Ben Chua and Rupert Mathieu. Theo Parker & Theo Vernacchio won the Plate by virtue of their performance in the group stages.

Michael Lacewing reports: The SE Open was small but perfectly formed, with 5 of the top 10 players in attendance. As expected, the quality was very high throughout. Ed Kay and Dan Tristao won through to the Singles final, which was a masterpiece in shot-making. The Plate was fiercely contested, with Charlie Lacewing finding answers to the power of Dwight Murdoc in the group stage and the skill and determination of Patrick Harrison in the final. In the Doubles, James

Tilston & Seb Ion overcame tough opposition in their group to meet Lewis Keates & Max Bolt in the final, which proved a marathon of 3 games. In the end, Tilston and Ion triumphed through greater consistency.

## Singles

**1st round:** S Ion bt O Wallace-Vorberg 11-0, 11-6

**2nd round:** E Kay bt Ion 11-0, 11-2; E Thursfield bt C Lacewing 11-5, 11-4; T Parker bt T Vernacchio 11-0, 11-2; L Keates bt P Harrison 11-4, 11-4; J Aquilina bt A Hopkins 11-0, 11-1; J Tilston bt M Bolt 11-1, 11-1; P Chai bt D Murdoc 11-1, 11-4; D Tristao bt S Zhang 11-1, 11-3

**Quarter-finals:** Kay bt Thursfield 11-1, 11-2; Parker bt Keates 11-9, 3-11, 11-1; Aquilina bt Tilston 6-11, 11-7, 11-5; Tristao bt Chai 11-1, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Kay bt Parker 11-0, 11-1; Tristao bt Aquilina 11-6, 11-2

**Final:** Kay bt Tristao 11-8, 11-6

**Plate:** Lacewing bt Harrison 11-3, 6-11, 11-9

## Doubles

**Group 1:** Ion & Tilston 33 pts; Parker & Vernacchio 28 pts; Harrison & Lacewing 23 pts; Evans & Murdoc 7 pts

**Group 2:** Bolt & Keates 22 pts; Aquilina & Wallace-Vorberg 19 pts; Hopkins & Piekos 4 pts

**Final:** Ion & Tilston bt Bolt & Keates 9-11, 11-9, 11-4

**Plate:** Parker & Vernacchio

## Yorkshire Open

Derby Moor Academy, Littleover

Saturday/Sunday, 14-15 September 2024

**STOP PRESS** Ben Beltrami won his first Yorkshire Open Singles title, beating Julian Aquilina in the final, while Ander Iraizoz beat Emrys Thursfield in the Plate, with both finals won in straight games. The 2nd Plate went to three games, with Gwydion Wiseman beating Marcus Cloke Browne 11-4, 7-11, 11-1.

The Doubles looked to be a question of who would challenge Ben & Theo in the final, and in the end it was Oscar McIntyre & Gwydion Wiseman. These first-time finalists did not disgrace themselves in their two-game defeat. Marcus Cloke Browne & Emrys Thursfield meanwhile won a competitive Plate.

Thanks go to the Derby Moor team who managed to keep the courts playable in increasingly humid conditions. Above all a huge thank you to John Hawke for the 14 years he has organised (and catered for!) this event, introducing a Singles competition in 2014 and thereby raising its profile and attracting top players every year.

*John Hawke reports:* Once again the Yorkshire Open was hosted by the Derby Moor Club, as the courts at Giggleswick School and at Halifax Heath have fallen into disuse. The Derby courts have the advantage of being easily accessible from many parts of the country, especially London, so the large entry this year was partly facilitated by the ease of travel, but mainly due to the efforts and arm twisting by Lewis Keates, work much appreciated by the nominal organiser.

Saturday singles got off to a timely start, necessary due to the 14 entrants. Fate attempted to derail the timetable as an accident closed the M1 and delayed those travelling by car from the capital, but some plate matches got underway during the wait. Just as the organiser was about to tear out some of his remaining hair the missing contingent appeared, having had an interesting tour of Bedfordshire in their attempts to avoid the motorway queues.

Once the remaining participants had arrived the Cup proceeded apace, with results following the seedings. The most notable match was that between Theo Parker, seeded 4, against Oscar McIntyre. Oscar gave Theo a hard time, eventually losing 12-11, 11-8.

Ben Beltrami then triumphed in a hard fought final, winning 11-2, 11-2 against Julian Aquilina in a match which seemed far closer than the score suggested.

In order to make the entry and the trip worthwhile for those knocked out in the early rounds, two plate competitions were run, one for the six first round losers and the second for those knocked out in the quarter-finals. Two round robins of 3 participants each formed the first plate, with the winners of each facing off for a best of three to eleven final. Emrys Thursfield topped one round robin and Ander Iraizoz the other. Ander, a visitor from Spain currently based in Oxford, won the final 11-8, 11-2, his dogged determination and incredible energy keeping him running hard until the end, when he had almost melted into the court floor.

Gwydion Wiseman and Marcus Cloke Browne topped the four-way round robin of the second round losers competition and played off for a best-of-3 final, which turned out to be the only match of the day which went to three games. Gwydion eventually took the laurels, winning 11-4, 7-11, 11-1.

An excellent day of Fives was topped off by a convivial meal arranged by Lewis at the Derby Club's local pub.

And so to Sunday. 9 pairs contested the doubles, with a round robin plate for the fives pairs knocked out in the first round. Unlike the singles, the cup did not go strictly to the seeding, with McIntyre & Wiseman knocking out Keates & Singh, the second seeds, in the semi-finals. After lunch the weather turned to rain and the courts started to sweat and become slippery. This threatened to spoil the final, as the outside walls of both courts were showing large wet patches. Heroic efforts by the host club, led by the indefatigable Lewis Keates, brought a massive fan into use. This, coupled with multiple dehumidifiers, reduced the damp patches to insignificance and allowed the final to be played in excellent conditions. A hard fought match was played, which again belied the scores, Beltrami & Parker defeating McIntyre & Wiseman 11-3, 11-1.

The plate saw clear winners in Cloke Browne & Thursfield, who won all their games, with runners-up Fikhter & Davins, who lost only to the champions.

So a highly enjoyable weekend brought my reign as organiser to a close. In the fourteen times that I have run the tournament we have seen it grow from a doubles only event held at Giggleswick School to a proper regional tournament with a large entry gracing the Derby courts. I only hope that those who have taken part have enjoyed the experience as much as I have. I must thank the whole Fives community for providing me with so much pleasure. From now on Lewis Keates will be the man in the hot seat. He could be in line to take command for the next forty, or more, years!

## Singles

**1st round:** B Beltrami bt D Wright 15-0; G Wiseman bt E Thursfield 15-5; O McIntyre bt V Fikhter 15-7; T Parker bt D Swinbank 15-4; L Keates w/o A Hopkins; M Cloke Browne w/o K Davins; A Goodwin bt D Murdoc 15-11; J Aquilina bt A Iraizoz 15-4

**Quarter-finals:** Beltrami bt Wiseman 11-0, 11-1; Parker bt McIntyre 12-11, 11-8; Keates bt Cloke Browne 11-3, 11-6; Aquilina bt Goodwin 11-1, 11-5

**Semi-finals:** Beltrami bt Parker 11-6, 11-4; Aquilina bt Keates 11-6, 11-0

**Final:** Beltrami bt Aquilina 11-2, 11-2

**Plate:** Iraizoz bt Thursfield 11-8, 11-2

**2nd Plate:** Wiseman bt Cloke Browne 11-4, 7-11, 11-1

## Doubles

**1st round:** K Davins & V Fikhter bt D Swinbank & D Wright 15-2

**Quarter-finals:** B Beltrami & T Parker bt Davins & Fikhter 15-5, 15-6; M Frost & A Goodwin bt Cloke Browne & Thursfield 15-5, 15-9; O McIntyre & G Wiseman bt B Kirk & C Yates 15-0, 15-0; L Keates & B Singh bt R Christie & S Kirby 15-4, 15-2

**Semi-finals:** Beltrami & Parker bt Frost & Goodwin 15-5, 15-10; O McIntyre & G Wiseman bt Keates & Singh 15-7, 15-8

**Final:** Beltrami & Parker bt McIntyre & Wiseman 11-3, 11-1

**Plate:** 1st Cloke Browne & Thursfield 60 pts; 2nd Davins & Fikhter 54 pts; 3rd Christie & Kirby 48 pts

## London Open Championships

Alley's School, Dulwich; Saturday/Sunday, 28-29 September 2024

**Stop Press** Ed Kay won his third Singles title of the season, beating Julian Aquilina in the final. Aquilina had beaten National U18 Champion Freddie Hammond Giles from St Paul's School in the semi-final, who had upset seeding in beating top ten player Lewis Keates in their quarter-final. In the Plate, run in four groups for all early round losers, Gwydion Wiseman won his second plate of the season in beating organiser Penn Chai 16-15 in a predictably close contest.

In a small entry of 10 pairs defending champions Charlie Brooks & Dan Tristao duly retained their title against Ed Kay & Theo Parker in an all-Pauline final. A five-pair Plate competition was won by Penn Chai & Terry McElvaney, who won all four of their matches in a round robin.

### Singles

**1st round:** Y Negyal bt S Ion 11-7, 11-4; G Wiseman bt J Chan 11-4, 11-2; R Houlden bt A McCreath 11-1, 11-1; A Iraizoz bt P Harrison 12-10, 4-11, 11-7; S Scott bt J Garratt 11-0, 11-2; J Smith bt T Vernacchio 11-4, 11-8; J Toop bt C Lacewing 11-0, 11-1; D Murdoc bt A Hopkins 11-0, 11-3; F Hammond Giles bt N Geere 11-2, 11-0

**2nd round:** E Kay bt Negyal 11-0, 11-0; Houlden bt Wiseman 8-11, 11-2, 11-9; T Parker bt Iraizoz 11-3, 11-1; J Tilston bt S Scott 11-7, 11-3; J Aquilina bt Smith 11-1, 11-2; Toop bt P Chai 11-3, 11-2; L Keates bt Murdoc 12-10, 11-1; Hammond Giles bt T McElvaney 11-4, 11-2

**Quarter-finals:** Kay bt Houlden 11-0, 11-0; Parker bt Tilston 11-8, 11-4; Aquilina bt Toop 11-7, 12-11; Hammond Giles bt Keates 11-4, 11-7

**Semi-finals:** Kay bt Parker 11-0, 11-3; Aquilina bt Hammond Giles 11-4, 12-11

**Final:** Kay bt Aquilina 11-2, 11-4

### Plate

**Semi-finals:** Chai bt McCreath 11-4; Wiseman bt McElvaney 11-2

**Final:** Wiseman bt Chai 16-15

### Doubles

**1st round:** J Ferro & F Hammond Giles bt C Lacewing & Y Negyal 11-5, 11-5; P Harrison & S Ion bt E Efthimiou & T Ritchie 11-4, 12-10

**Quarter-finals:** C Brooks & D Tristao bt Ferro & Hammond Giles 0-11, 11-1, 11-4; J Toop & G Wiseman & bt P Chai & T McElvaney 11-7, 11-8; E Kay & T Parker bt Harrison & Ion 11-0, 11-0; J Tilston & L Keates bt T Hebblethwaite & J Smith 11-3, 11-1

**Semi-finals:** Brooks & Tristao bt Toop & Wiseman 11-8, 11-3; Kay & Parker bt Keates & Tilston 11-6, 11-6

**Final:** Brooks & Tristao bt Kay & Parker 11-7, 12-10

**3rd/4th play-off:** Keates & Tilston bt Toop & Wiseman 15-11

**Plate:** Chai & McElvaney

# 100 Years of Fives at Westways, Maine, USA

October 2024

Competitive Rugby Fives has recently returned to the Fives courts in Maine for the first time in decades. The current owners hosted a group of enthusiasts from Boston at their house and staged a tournament in order to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the unique court. This is seen as exciting news for the small community of Fives lovers in the US, who are next hoping to do a trip to play on the block of courts at Groton School, Massachusetts.

*Trevor Jones writes:* Rugby Fives has officially been played in Maine for 100 years!

This weekend, Fives enthusiasts from Maine, Boston, and England marked the centennial anniversary of the Rugby Fives court at the Westways compound on Lake Kezar in Lovell, ME with an invitational tournament.

After the game was formally introduced to the United States in 1890 by Endicott Peabody, who built eight courts at Groton School in Massachusetts, the Maine court was built circa 1924-26 as part of the Westways corporate retreat for the Diamond Match Company under the direction of then-President, William Armstrong Fairburn, who hailed from England. To commemorate this most special of anniversaries, a small invitational tournament was organized 100 years later to ensure Fives play would live on in Lovell.

The court is owned by Neale Attenborough, a member of the Union Boat Club, who also owns abutting property around the lake. Neale and his son-in-law, Nick Margitza, generously invited and hosted a group of players up from Boston for the weekend. Aside from Nick and Neale having the odd practice session on the court every now and again, the court lies mostly dormant. Thus, this was confirmed to be the most play on the court in at least 50 years, if not longer.

While the court may not be actively in use on a regular basis, it has remained in remarkable condition. The exterior of the building is in very strong shape, which only goes to highlight the incredible condition that the interior is in. Walking in, you will see a sign next to the door that notes this building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (the application was sent in by David Woods in 2017), meaning it cannot be torn down or significantly altered. The viewing corridor behind the court is tight, and half of it is taken up by a very old heating system. There is a small back wall, probably about four feet tall, that has a saloon door that opens to the court. Once stepping foot on the court, the overwhelming sense one gets is RED, as the court is painted in a striking shade of vermillion, and the years have done nothing to wear down its vibrant hue.

For tournament play, rules were almost identical to those used at the Union Boat Club, with some slight variations. Games were played to increasing scores as the rounds went on (the first round went to 7 points, then 9, next 11, and 15 points in the final), with a significant variation being that players must win the game by two points. Servers have as many tosses as they need to get a good serve in, while receivers may decline as many tosses that are not to their liking as they choose; however, if the receiver takes a swing at the serve and misses it, they only have two more chances to return (or — in keeping with UBC traditions and if the server is feeling particularly gentlemanly — three more chances). Other than that, it's Rugby Fives played as everyone knows it

There was an eight-person draw, with losers of the first round moving into the “B Bracket”, and losers of that moving into the “B Consolation Bracket”, meaning everyone was guaranteed at least a couple of matches. The first rounds were pretty decisive, but as the draw advanced, quality of play enhanced. All rounds except for the final were played on Saturday, with the final being played Sunday morning. Some fun doubles took place early before the final to warm up the court (which was an interesting experience given how narrow the court is), and then it was time for the climax. The final was played first to 15, win by two, and was contested between Drew Bard, of the UBC in Boston, and Jacob Knight, an Eton Fives player out of Westway in London.

The match got off to a lopsided start, with Drew racing out to a commanding lead. However, as play progressed and the rallies started to get longer and longer, Jacob did well to cut the lead down. Onlookers were treated to some marvelous points, and everyone watching was thoroughly enjoying the match (and loudly demonstrated it!). After being behind in points for most of the match, Jacob used the win-by-two format to his advantage, taking the first opportunity he got to turn

a tied score into a leading score. His first lead of the match was also the first championship point opportunity. But the American had other ideas, hitting an excellent return to win back service. The next couple points were grueling, but Bard was able to hold his nerve and push balls deep into the court, winning both of the drawn-out rallies, thus securing the match 16-14 and winning the tournament. Both men demonstrated impressive play and were generous with lets, making it a truly amiable affair.

Impressively, the corridor behind the court was jam-packed with spectators for the final. Outside of the other players whose eyes were glued on the competition, family members — and even neighbors from around the Westways compound — came around to check out the action. Babies and dogs were in tow for the standing-room-only marquee affair, and onlookers were thrilled to see this building that has existed in their neighborhood for a century getting tons of use (even if they didn't understand exactly what it was being used for).

As successful as the weekend was for Fives, it was just as successful for the extracurriculars. Friday kicked things off with a small cookout. Play was wrapped up on Saturday with lunch at Ebenezer's Pub, which (oddly enough for this location, being dozens of miles in any direction from even a trace of cell service) has been voted Best Beer Bar in America and Best Beer Destination in the World multiple times over. Following that, we were treated to the famed "sauna run", which includes spending 15-20 minutes inside the blaringly hot sauna at the Attenboroughs' house, then sprinting 100 yards down to the lake to cool off. The evening concluded with a boat ride and another cookout. Most special, though, was the sunset sendoff: Neale dusted off his trumpet and treated us to a rendition of "Taps", which was followed by Nick firing off the canon. It was a truly special way to cap off a wonderful weekend.

Neale Attenborough generously hosted everyone at his impressive 1908 lakefront estate, Garcelon. He and Nick Margitza both did so much, not just to organize and host this amazing tournament, but to ensure that the best possible time was had by all participants. A full recap of the weekend would not be complete with the utmost gratitude going to Neale and Nick. Thank you both for helping keep the sport of Fives alive in Maine!

## West of England Open

Sherborne School, Dorset

Saturday/Sunday, 26-27 October 2024

**STOP PRESS** The scheduled knock-out draw for Singles and Doubles was abandoned in favour of round robins, so as to give as much playing time to the competitors as possible. In the Singles these produced four players to contest two semi-finals, from which Ben Beltrami and Theo Parker emerged to play each other in the final. It was a repeat of the Yorkshire Open of the previous month, with Ben winning in straight games once more to claim his second singles title of the new season. Meanwhile JP Cheng beat his fellow Wykehamist Jeffery Chan in the Plate.

10 pairs contested the Doubles in two groups, from which four pairs emerged to play semi-finals. These produced a final featuring Ben Beltrami & Penn Chai versus Lewis Keates & Theo Parker. The match was predictably close, with Ben notching up his third doubles title of the season and Penn Chai his first ever regional title. The Plate went to the experienced pair of Ed Brooke & Chris Jones.

### Singles

#### Group A

**1st** B Beltrami 60/60 pts; **2nd** C Lacewing 48 pts; **3rd** J Cheng 41 pts; **4th** N Geere 24 pts; **5th** A Upton 10 pts

#### Group B

**1st** T Parker 76/76 pts; **2nd** L Keates 74/75 pts; **3rd** J Chan 49 pts; **4th** A Rackham 33 pts; **5th** R Mason 26 pts; **6th** R Beard 10 pts

**Semi-finals:** Beltrami bt Keates 11-5, 11-1; Parker bt Lacewing 11-3, 11-7

**Final:** Beltrami bt Parker 11-5, 11-0

**Plate:** Cheng bt Chan 11-7, 11-1

## Doubles

### Group A

**1st** B Beltrami & P Chai; **2nd** J Chan & J Cheng; **3rd** E Brooke & C Jones; **4th** B Baral & K Kennerley; **5th** P Grant & R Mason

### Group B

**1st** L Keates & T Parker; **2nd** K Brice & C Low; **3rd** N Geere & A Landon; **4th** D Brooke & S Brooke; **5th** R Beard & A Upton

**Semi-finals:** Beltrami & Chai bt Brice & Low 11-3, 11-4; Keates & Parker bt Chan & Cheng 11-0, 11-7

**Final:** Beltrami & Chai bt Keates & Parker 11-8, 11-8

**Plate:** **1st** Brooke & Jones; **2nd** Baral & Kennerley; **3rd** Brooke & Brooke; **4th** Grant & Mason; **5th** Geere & Landon

## National Men's U25 Championships

St Paul's School, Barnes

Saturday/Sunday, 2-3 November 2024

**STOP PRESS** The weekend began for organiser Joe Sumner with a major rewrite of the Singles draw after the regrettably late withdrawal of players. Seeding had been done according to the RFA Rankings but surprises were on the cards from the beginning, and so it turned out, as unseeded National U18 champion Freddie Hammond Giles eliminated injury-affected defending champion Isaac Weaver in the quarter-finals, then familiar foe JP Cheng in the semis and eventually British Universities champion Marcus Cloke Browne in the final.

In various parts of the draw there were other tough and unpredictable battles, most notably in the second round, with Julian Hanton defeating Stuart Scott in three eventful games and Theo Vernacchio and Joe Sumner wearing each other out in another three-gamer. Freddie, though, never looked seriously troubled in his progress to the title, the youngest by far in the history of the event since its inception in 1985 and, most remarkably, the first schoolboy to lift the cup.

The Singles Plate was fought out in increasingly hot and demanding conditions for players, from whom a relatively fresh Taylor McGuire and a decidedly tired Emrys Thursfield emerged to play out a final. Taylor, the Schools U18 champion in 2019, who has returned to an increasingly committed role in Fives in London after some years of Fives-free tertiary studies, was delighted to return to winning ways with a straightforward win in the final game of the Plate.

The Doubles draw also underwent some changes in personnel. There were several tough and lengthy contests but in the end the defending champions, Cameron Low and Archie McCreath, had an easier passage to the final than the young pairing of JP Cheng and Freddie Hammond Giles. After two three-gamers in the quarter- and semi-finals JP and Freddie were visibly tiring by the time the final was played out against the experienced and relatively fresh Cameron and Archie. The young pair did, however, manage some serious resistance in the second game despite JP suffering badly from cramp.

The Plate also was not without its excitement and suspense, as the final game of the round robin proved to be the decider. With accumulated points equal Teddy Monro-Davies and Louis Odgers won their contest against Alex Goodwin and Yarin Negyal 16-15 — some years in age difference but little in ability on the day.

Joe Sumner did a superb job in coping with all that was thrown at him during the day, including a collision with the side wall that briefly incapacitated Julian Hanton. We are fortunate to have Joe again next year and thank him most warmly for the vital role he plays in running this most important of competitions for young players around the schools, universities and clubs.

## Singles

**1st round:** W Hanley bt L McKnight 15-0; J Cheng bt Walton 15-3; S Ion bt M Ord 15-4

**2nd round:** I Weaver bt Hanley 15-0, 15-0; F Hammond Giles bt T McGuire 15-0, 15-2; J Milburn bt Y Negyal 16-14, 15-9; Cheng bt E Thursfield 15-13, 15-6; M Cloke Browne bt Alex Goodwin 15-0, 15-5; J Hanton bt S Scott 15-10, 5-15,

15-12; T Vernacchio bt J Sumner 15-7, 7-15, 15-13; Ion bt A Whitham 15-15-4, 15-2

**Quarter-finals:** Hammond Giles bt Weaver 15-3, 15-1; Cheng bt Milburn 15-10, 15-7; Cloke Browne bt Hanton 15-3, 15-6; Ion bt Vernacchio 15-4, 15-2

**Semi-finals:** Hammond Giles bt Cheng 15-1, 15-2; Cloke Browne bt Ion 15-1, 15-2

**Final:** Hammond Giles bt Cloke Browne 15-4, 15-4

**Plate:** McGuire bt Thursfield 15-3

## Doubles

**1st round:** J Milburn & T Vernacchio bt N Jerome & S Kendrick 15-9, 15-5; P Harrison & I Weaver bt A Piekos & S Richarz 15-0, 15-1; J Hanton & A Hutchinson bt L McKnight & M Ord 15-1, 15-1; J Cheng & F Hammond Giles bt Alex Goodwin & Y Negyal 15-6, 15-2

**Quarter-finals:** C Low & A McCreath bt Milburn & Vernacchio 15-4, 15-8; Harrison & Weaver bt T Monro-Davies & L Odgers 15-6, 15-5; J Sumner & E Thursfield bt Hanton & Hutchinson 15-10, 15-11; Cheng & Hammond Giles bt M Cloke Browne & S Scott 15-13, 6-15, 15-7

**Semi-finals:** Low & McCreath bt Harrison & Weaver 15-4, 15-3; Cheng & Hammond Giles bt Sumner & Thursfield 11-15, 15-8, 15-10

**Final:** Low & McCreath bt Cheng & Hammond Giles 15-3, 15-8

**Plate:** 1st Monro-Davies & Odgers 46 pts; 2nd Goodwin & Negyal 45 pts; 3rd McKnight & Ord 16 pts; 4th Piekos & Richarz 16pts

## National Women's U25 Championships

St Paul's School, Barnes

Saturday/Sunday, 2-3 November 2024

**STOP PRESS** An entry of 10 for the Singles, including a squad of 5 from Cambridge Past and Present, contained neither of the winners from the past two years, Zara Elliot and Camille Beattie, both still eligible but not entered. A new name was therefore bound to be inscribed on the trophy. We were delighted to have four likely contenders for the title: Kirsten Bell, a previous captain of Fives at Durham University; Savanna Leboff, the 2021 winner of the U23 Doubles; Sophie Lundie, returning to the senior game in London to pick up where she left off at the Edinburgh Academy, and Jemima Mitchell, the current National Schools U18 champion in Singles and Doubles. It was no surprise that these four contested the semi-finals, with Kirsten nearly taken to three games by Savanna and with Jemima a little more consistent than Sophie over the course of their two games.

The final was very much a match of two halves, with Kirsten forcing persistent errors from Jemima in a very one-sided first game. The second game looked to be no different until Kirsten found Jemima whittling away her substantial lead and even briefly getting ahead. There was a very real possibility of a third game and a second schoolgirl after Camille in 2022 reaching the final — and perhaps even lifting the trophy —, but Kirsten rallied and fought her way home in two.

While the later stages of the knock-out were being contested, the Plate was played out and also produced a nail-biter in Group B between Harriet and Juliana, which allowed Harriet to go through 16-15 to an all-Cambridge final against Catherine, which the latter won in two games.

On the Sunday the Doubles were staged, with four pairs contesting a round robin. Two pairs stood out as likely winners: Kirsten Bell & Sophie Lundie and Harriet Fearon & Jemima Mitchell, and in the event it was Kirsten and Sophie who won the key match between those two pairs, enabling Kirsten to do the golden double. Juliana Murphy & Catherine Abercrombie came third, thus winning the Plate medals, which meant that Catherine likewise did the bronze double.

Unfortunately Oxford captain Abbie Evans was prevented by injury from taking part but did an immaculate job of organising the two-day competition, for which the RFA thanks her warmly.

## Singles

**1st round:** Harriet Fearon bt Charlotte Bruce 15-2; Iona Chorley bt Lottie Merrylees 15-8

**Quarter-finals:** Kirsten Bell bt Catherine Abercrombie 15-0, 15-1; Savanna Leboff bt Fearon 15-0, 15-0; Sophie Lundie bt Chorley 1-5, 15-0; Jemima Mitchell bt Juliana Murphy 15-0, 15-1

**Semi-finals:** Bell bt Leboff 15-7, 15-13; Mitchell bt Lundie 15-8, 15-6

**Final:** Bell bt Mitchell 15-2, 16-14

## Plate

**Group A:** 1st Abercrombie 30 pts; 2nd Bruce 15 pts; 3rd Merrylees 11 pts

**Group B:** 1st Fearon 31 pts; 2nd Murphy 30 pts; 3rd Chorley 8 pts

**Final:** Abercrombie bt Fearon 15-11, 15-2

## Doubles

**1st** Kirsten Bell & Sophie Lundie 90 pts; **2nd** Harriet Fearon & Jemima Mitchell 70 pts; **3rd** Catherine Abercrombie & Juliana Murphy 36 pts; **4th** Iona Chorley & Lottie Merrylees 8 pts

## Updated National Rankings

November 2024

The RFA is pleased to publish the latest National Rankings, as compiled by Will Ellison and Charlie Brooks, after the West of England Open in October.

In the **Singles**, headed by Ed Kay, there is no change in the top ten. In the top 20 there is upward movement for Isaac Weaver, Ben Jourdan, James Tilston, Dan Grant and Anthony Goodwin. Thereafter there is significant progress for Charlie Lacewing, who moves up to #26, for Freddie Hammond Giles from #140 to #31, for Ander Iraizoz on #38 and for Riki Houlden, who enters at #47.

In **Doubles** Dan Tristao remains at number one, with no new entrants in the top ten. Penn Chai moves up from #21 to #14, Seb Ion from #37 to #28, Nick Geere from #41 to #33 and Andy Landon from #42 to #36. Jeffrey Chan and JP Cheng are new entrants at #44=.

## Qualifying rounds for the National Singles

November 2024

### Results from the 3 venues

#### London, St Paul's School

**Quarter-finals:** Brooks bt Toop; Tilston bt Low; Cloke Browne bt McCreath; Hammond Giles bt Parker

**Semi-finals:** Tilston bt Brooks; Hammond Giles bt Cloke Browne

**Final:** Hammond Giles bt Tilston 12-10, 11-7

#### Rugby School

**Semi-finals:** Keates bt Beattie; Iraizoz bt Sumner

**Final:** Keates bt Iraizoz 11-5

#### Scotland, Fettes College

**1st** Richie Murby; **2nd** Andrew Boyd; **3rd** Ben Jourdan

A total of 43 players entered the National Singles Championships this year, with a particularly strong turnout in London. Incredibly, this event was won by 16 year-old Freddie Hammond Giles, who defeated four of the top eight seeds along the way. Lewis Keates won in the Midlands event, which was played on the courts of Rugby School, beating Ander Iraizoz in the final – Ander will make his first appearance at the finals. Up in Scotland, Richie Murby continued his qualifiers

winning streak and will venture down south to take on the others. The Finals are taking place over the weekend of November 23/24 on the wonderful courts and facilities at Oundle School. Qualifying for the draw are:

**Automatic:** Ed Kay, Dan Tristao, Ben Beltrami and Julian Aquilina

**London:** Freddie Hammond Giles, James Tilston, Marcus Cloke Browne, Charlie Brooks, Theo Parker, Archie McCreath, James Toop and Penn Chai

**Midlands:** Lewis Keates, Ander Iraizoz and Joe Sumner

**Edinburgh:** Richie Murby

## Schools Winchester Fives Doubles Championship

Winchester College

Sunday, 17th November 2024

STOP PRESS 16 players from 6 schools competed in the first staging of the Schools Winchester Fives Doubles Championship on the new courts at Winchester College. A familiar game for those from Winchester and Radley, less so for the competitors from Alleyn's, Marlborough, St Paul's and Stamford.

Over the course of a busy day, with four courts at the organiser's disposal, there was time for the main knock-out competition, and for a first and a second Plate, all dominated by Winchester and St Paul's. It was the St Paul's 1st pair who carried off the trophy at Winchester's top pair's expense, 22 years after the competition was inaugurated by David Barnes, who was present to witness this new phase of the competition.

### Scores

**1st round:** St Paul's 1 bt Radley 3 15-0; Alleyn's 2 bt Radley 1 15-7; Winchester 2 bt Marlborough 2 15-0; Stamford 1 bt Radley 2 15-1; Alleyn's 1 bt Winchester 4 15-2; Winchester 3 bt St Paul's 2 15-4; Marlborough 1 bt Alleyn's 3 15-5; Winchester 1 bt Stamford 2 15-0

**Quarter-finals:** St Paul's 1 bt Alleyn's 2 11-0, 11-2; Winchester 2 bt Stamford 1 11-2, 11-2; Alleyn's 1 bt Winchester 3 11-6, 11-3; Winchester 1 bt Marlborough 1 11-0, 11-0

**Semi-finals:** St Paul's 1 bt Winchester 2 11-6, 11-5; Winchester 1 bt Alleyn's 1 11-1, 11-5

**Final:** St Paul's School 1 (J Ferro & F Hammond Giles) bt Winchester College 1 (J Chan & A Cloke Browne) 11-4, 10-12, 11-2

**1st Plate:** Winchester College 4 (T Munaretto Day & D Vorobev) bt St Paul's School 2 (N Cortas & Z Okada) 11-9, 11-5

**2nd Plate:** 1st Winchester College 3 (Z Goulding & P Mannion-Miles); 2nd Stamford 1 (C McNaughton & C Sharpe)

## National Singles Finals

Oundle School

Saturday/Sunday, 23-24 November 2024

**STOP PRESS** At the National Singles Championship 2024 Dan Tristao won his 8th title, beating defending champion Ben Beltrami in an extraordinarily close semi-final and then four-time finalist Ed Kay in a three-game final. It was Dan's 9th appearance in the final and it was the first time Dan had beaten Ed since 2019.

In the Plate Lewis Keates from Derby Moor Fives met Cambridge University captain Marcus Cloke Browne after completion of two round robins. There Lewis also won a three-gamer and thus retained the David Gardner 'Longboat' which he first won last year.

*Charlie Brooks reports:* Dan Tristao fought his way to an 8th National Singles title, beating Ed Kay 8-15, 15-12, 15-7 in a scintillating final, played at Oundle School. Both players displayed a magical touch and breathtaking speed in a match that swayed one way and then the other – a pleasure to watch from start to finish.

The day had begun with the 16 qualifiers going head to head in the first round. It was, as ever, an impressive lineup, with surely one of the largest ever age ranges on show at the finals. Amongst the more experienced players were James Toop, six-time winner, Richie Murby, proudly representing Scotland, and organiser Charlie Brooks. At the other end of the spectrum, Freddie Hammond Giles and Marcus Cloke Browne brought their youthful exuberance to the weekend. Another notable debutant was Ander Iraizoz, taking advantage of his Basque Pelota background to qualify in the Midlands.

Pick of the opening round was the clash between Penn Chai and Julian Aquilina. On paper, many expected the fourth seed to progress, but Penn was not to be intimidated by his opponent's ranking. In fact, for long periods it was Julian who was on the back foot – not a great place to be when short serves were the order of the day. Julian won the first, but with the advantage in game two, it was unfortunate that Penn's great serving went slightly off the boil. Julian pounced and took it 16-15, thankful to scramble into the quarters.

It's not often that the top match (seed 1 vs 16) brings so much intrigue. Both James Toop and Ed Kay can feel slightly aggrieved at their draw, but with James not having played a huge number of singles tournaments recently, his position as 16th seed pitted him against top dog Ed. Many a long rally ensued as they pushed each other all over the court. Ed came through 15-7, 15-9, but is this the start of a Toop resurgence?

In the end, there was only one result that went against the seeding. Rising teen star Freddie Hammond Giles beat last year's Plate winner Lewis Keates to make the quarter-finals in his first appearance; another great result to add to a breakthrough season.

Onto the quarters, where the big three – Kay, Tristao and defending champ Beltrami – flexed their muscles. They swept aside their opponents (Parker, Hammond Giles and Brooks respectively) with power and precision, rarely letting up or offering any kind of opportunity. Bosh.

Fortunately, there was a closer contest developing between Aquilina (4th seed) and Murby (5th). Richie stormed ahead in the first game and won it comfortably. Julian was determined to reverse that in the second. His superior fitness was starting to pay dividends, and at 14-11 ahead, he very much looked the favourite to grab the game and even the whole match. Steely Scottish resolve was to have the final say though; a tense few points followed as Richie saved game balls, won a point or two and repeated the trick enough times to come out on top 16-14.

The semi-finals saw wildly different matches – Ed continued his march into the final with a dominant performance against a tiring Richie, whilst Dan and Ben went head to head in a titanic clash. It was a repeat of last year's semi, but would the result be the same?

The two players have contrasting statures, with playing styles reflecting that. When Ben connects with a series of power-shots he seems impossible to beat, but Dan's agility around the court would put a cheetah to shame. Unsurprisingly, this drew the biggest crowd of the weekend, and enthralled they were. It was impossible to pick a winner; even the armchair pundits were reluctant to call the match as first one player edged ahead before the other produced a flash of brilliance to pull it level. On they went, matching each other blow for blow. Ben reached game ball first but couldn't capitalise; Dan's first opportunity came and went. Eventually it was Dan who held firm and won 16-15 after 50 nail-biting minutes.

The pattern continued as they started the second; as soon as an advantage was gained, it was snuffed out. As the players tired, there was only a minimal drop off in quality, and absolutely no change to how finely balanced the outcome was. This time it was Dan who reached game ball first, with what seemed to be a healthy lead at last. But Ben drew level at 14-all and it was down to the wire again. His momentum slowed at the critical time though, and Dan triumphed 16-15, 16-14. Fives at its best!

A third final between Dan and Ed, after meetings in 2018 and 2019, was set for Sunday morning. Ed had also made it to last year's final, coming up just short against an in-form Beltrami.

Dan was fast out of the blocks, betraying the after-effects of the epic semi-final the night before. But from 7-3 ahead, he suddenly found himself floundering in the wake of Ed's unrelenting intensity. Time after time he forced Dan into an error and steam-rolled his way to 15-8 – a remarkable turnaround.

When Ed continued this form and took 6-3 and 9-5 leads in Game 2, with Dan appearing somewhat ragged, it seemed the semi-final might be taking its toll after all. But anyone who's witnessed Dan's previous finals will recognise Dan's extraordinary ability to battle, dig deep and find his best when it matters most. Slowly but surely he clawed back the points, getting to parity at 11-11, and then got his nose in front. Ed fought hard but couldn't prevent Dan levelling the match.

Heading into a decider, it was anyone's to win. From early in the game, Dan wrested the initiative despite continued dogged retrieval from Ed, and eked out an advantage. Then came the rally of the match. 5-11, Ed behind, needing something special. Shot-making of the highest order, determination not to cede an inch, covering every corner of the court, being pulled this way and that. It seemed to last forever until, rather anticlimactically, Dan hit the ball into himself – he is human after all! However, it was not to be a catalyst for a turnaround, and soon afterwards Dan secured a 15-7 score, and with it, the coveted title.

The Plate was a tasty affair. Two pools of four players, with Keates and Cloke Browne topping them. Lewis had close games against both Penn and James Toop, whilst Marcus hit form to only concede 13 points in his three games.

So the 7th and 9th seeds played out the final. Lewis was now finding a consistent line and length after so many hours on court, taking the opener 15-6. Marcus fought back though and got the better of Lewis in the second, 15-9, to force a decider... It was never going to be easy! Perhaps drawing on his superior Plate final experience, Lewis pulled through in the third to defend his Plate crown and join a select few with that achievement!

You can watch the full semi-final between Dan and Ben, as well as the final, on the RFA's YouTube site – a record of a truly phenomenal weekend of Fives.

## Scores

**1st round:** E Kay (1) bt J Toop 15-7, 15-9; T Parker (8) bt M Cloke Browne 15-9, 15-5; R Murby (5) bt J Tilston 15-2, 15-8; J Aquilina (4) bt P Chai 15-11, 16-15; B Beltrami (3) bt A Iraizoz 15-2, 15-2; C Brooks (6) bt J Sumner 15-4, 15-7; F Hammond Giles bt L Keates (7) 15-5-15-4; D Tristao (2) bt A McCreath 15-5, 15-4

**Quarter-finals:** Kay bt Parker 15-0, 15-2; Murby bt Aquilina 15-6, 16-14; Beltrami bt Brooks 15-1, 15-5; Tristao bt Hammond Giles 15-0, 15-2

**Semi-finals:** Kay bt Murby 15-1, 15-3; Tristao bt Beltrami 16-15, 16-14

**Final:** Tristao bt Kay 8-15, 15-12, 15-7

**Plate Group A:** 1st Keates W3 45 pts; 2nd Toop W2 36 pts; 3rd Chai W1 31 pts; 4th Sumner 6 pts

**Plate Group B:** 1st Cloke Browne W3 45 pts; 2nd McCreath W2 32 pts; 3rd Tilston W1 31 pts; 4th Iraizoz 25 pts

**Plate Final:** Keates bt Cloke Browne 15-6, 9-15, 15-5

## Durham Women's Championships

Durham University

Saturday/Sunday, 30th November-1st December 2024

**STOP PRESS** Players from the City of Durham Fives, the University Club and the Edinburgh Academy contested this year's Durham Women's Championships. The event was played out in festive mood, with ample sustenance and characteristic good spirits.

The Open Singles was dominated by the two players from the University Club, and was won by first-year student Phoenix Fleming, who learned her Fives at Marlborough College, at the expense of Club captain Megan Wells. As is traditional,

competitions were staged at U16 and U14 level, which allowed for victory for young players from the Academy, Amelie Hurwitz and Zoe Armstrong respectively.

Doubles was played initially as two round robins comprising 10 pairs. Thereafter semi-finals and a final were contested, from which the University pair of Phoebe Fleming & Megan Wells emerged as winners against the Edinburgh Academy first pair, Isabella Davidson & Amelie Hurwitz. The Academy carried off both the Plate and the Bowl.

*Hector McFarlane reports:* Two days of superb Women's Fives took place at the Racecourse Courts in Durham. 'Singles Saturday' was split into an Open knock-out competition and round-robins within the Adult, U16 and U14 age categories.

15 competitors from the City of Durham Club, Durham University and The Edinburgh Academy were in the draw. The match of the first round was an all E.A. affair as Isabella D (U16) came back from 14-11 down to edge out Zoe A (U14) 16-15. The quarter-finals all went to seedings to leave two University of Durham vs E.A. semi-finals. Experience won the day in both as students Phoenix F and Megan W both won 15-3 against Isabella D and Amelie H (U16). The sweating courts led to very challenging conditions, with slippery floors and unconventional bounces off the walls requiring quick reactions and adjustments.

The final between Phoenix and Megan saw a clash between the placed lobs of Megan and the flat power of Phoenix. Long rallies ensued, but it was Phoenix who won out 15-4. A thoroughly deserved winner but a scoreline that didn't represent the game itself. Phoenix dropped only 9 points across her four first-to-15 bouts.

In the age-categories Amelie H won the U16s, scoring a cumulative total of 56 points, whilst only conceding 6. Zoe A, from E.A., won the U14s contest. The points in the group stage highlighted how even the contest was — Zoe A (45), Daisy F (38), Charlotte S (35) and Sofia M (29).

Sunday Doubles saw the 15 competitors from Saturday joined by a crack bunch of City of Durham players. Two groups of five pairs battled it out to see who qualified for the Cup, Plate and Bowl competitions. The match of the group stage was undoubtedly organiser Julie McIntyre & U16 UK Singles Champion Eleonora V versus Amelie & Isabella from E.A. — a gruelling contest was edged 11-9 by the Scottish pair to see them top the group.

The Cup semi-finals saw Amelie & Isabella dispatch youngsters Daisy & Zoe 15-2, whilst Megan & Phoenix were made to work for a tight 15-11 victory over the increasingly impressive Eleonora & Julie. The students raced to a 7-0 lead in the final before a brief fightback from the school-girls had the match poised at 7-5 for some time. Experience won out as the University pair produced fewer unforced errors and deservedly won the final 15-7. The Plate and the Bowl went back to Edinburgh with wins for Charlotte S & Sofia M and Anya R & Connie L.

Huge thanks must go to Julie McIntyre and Tom Wakelam for organising the event!

### **Championship Singles**

**1st round:** I Davidson bt Z Armstrong 16-15; A Robertson bt M McQuin 15-5; M Wells bt D Fox 15-8; J McIntyre bt B Strang 15-4; C McWilliam bt C Lonie 15-1; P Fleming bt S McWilliam 15-1; C Smith bt I Derry 15-6

**Quarter-finals:** Davidson bt Robertson 15-8; Wells bt McIntyre 15-4; Fleming bt C McWilliam 15-1; Hurwitz bt Smith 15-1

**Semi-finals:** Wells bt Davidson 15-3; Fleming bt Hurwitz 15-3

**Final:** Fleming bt Wells 15-4

**U16 Singles final:** A Hurwitz H bt I Davidson 11-0. **U16 Singles Plate:** C McWilliam bt B Strang 15-7

**U14 Singles final:** Z Armstrong bt D Fox 15-2. **U14 Singles Plate:** S McWilliam bt C Smith 12-10

## Championship Doubles

**Group A:** 1st I Davidson & A Hurwitz 44 pts; 2nd J McIntyre & E Vallasca 42 pts; 3rd S McWilliam & C Smith 28 pts; 4th C Lonie & A Robertson 18 pts; 5th E Hodgson & E Terry 17 pts  
**Group B:** 1st P Fleming & M Wells 44pts; 2nd Z Armstrong & D Fox 37 pts; 3rd C McWilliam & B Strang 33 pts; 4th I Derry & M McQuin 20 pts; 5th E Ranson & S Vallasca 19 pts

**Semi-finals:** Davidson & Hurwitz bt Armstrong & Fox 15-2; Fleming & Wells bt McIntyre & E Vallasca 15-11  
**Final:** Fleming & Wells bt Davidson & Hurwitz 15-7

**Plate:** S McWilliam & Smith  
**Bowl:** Lonie & Robertson

## Challenger Singles at Manchester Y Club

Manchester Y Club  
Sunday, 1st December 2024

**STOP PRESS** 10 players fought out the first Challenger of the season, played on the courts of the Manchester Y Club. Two round robins produced semi-finals for 4 players while the remaining 6 contested the Plate.

The semi-finals produced very hard fought matches in which former Schools Open Champion Taylor McGuire beat home player Marco Skogh in two close games, while Christ's Hospital number one Charlie Lacewing battled over three games to beat Executioner Terry McElvaney. Charlie and Taylor then engaged in an impressively close fought final consisting of three games, with Charlie emerging a commendable winner.

In the Plate another schoolboy, National U16 Champion Val Fikhter, flew the flag for the Y Club, beating fellow club member Dave Fox in the final.

### Scores

**Group A:** 1st T McGuire W4 44 pts; 2nd T McElvaney W 3 37 pts; 3rd V Fikhter W2 32 pts; 4th M Suddaby W1 18 pts; 5th O Wallace-Vorberg 12 pts  
**Group B:** 1st C Lacewing W4 44 pts; 2nd M Skogh W3 42 pts; 3rd D Fox W2 38 pts; 4th A Hopkins W1 18 pts; 5th M Bolt 3 pts

**Semi-finals:** McGuire bt Skogh 15-13, 15-10; Lacewing bt McElvaney 15-12, 11-15, 15-10  
**Final:** Lacewing bt McGuire 15-11, 8-15, 15-5

### Plate

**Quarter-finals:** Hopkins bt Wallace-Vorberg 15-6; Suddaby bt Bolt 15-3  
**Semi-finals:** Fikhter bt Hopkins 15-0; Fox bt Suddaby 15-5  
**Final:** Fikhter bt Fox 15-4

## The President's Cup

Marlborough College  
Sunday, 15th December 2024

**STOP PRESS** Tim Hebblethwaite won the President's Cup for a second time, having won with Emrys Thursfield in 2021, and Shinan Zhang became the third woman to have held the trophy after Martha Nugent in 2018 and Helena Tunks in 2022. In a traditionally long and full day of social but competitive Fives there were plenty of surprises and several three-gamers to report. In a further boost to Mixed Doubles, three of the four competitions were won by mixed pairs.

*Hamish Buchanan reports:* Sixty-six years after the inaugural President's Cup we were treated to one of the most even competitions seen in any era, with the pundits struggling to achieve any consensus on the top four contenders, let alone the winners. Two three-game matches in the first round were followed by seven more in the whole day and there were many more close games throughout all four competitions.

The final of the main Cup was contested over two high quality games, with Tim Hebblethwaite & Shinan Zhang almost taking it to the wire in beating Alex Goodwin & James Hughes 15-13, 15-12. The second game pivoted on an extremely tense passage at 12-12, which could have swung the balance in favour of the eventual runners-up, but saw the eventual champions hold their nerve under pressure to take the Cup: Tim's second win and Shinan's first on her debut. That debut appearance required some arm-twisting from the organiser and we hope that she will be returning for many more once the President's Cup bug has taken hold.

Another first-time participant and trophy winner was Ed Carr, taking the T-Pot with Harvey Bishop against Chris Jones and emergency sub Hamish Buchanan (replacing long-time doubles partner Bruce Hanton, who suffered a calf injury in the semi-final) in an epic with a 16-14 third game. Ed later reported "Was in a state yesterday, but really enjoyed it, great fun". A perfect tag line for the tournament.

The Love Mug was won by Holly Nugent & Lewis Keates in another three-game final against Ashwin Ahuja & Will Bishop, who managed to make this their third three-gamer of the day. It would seem that some players just can't spend enough time on court.

Finally the Mate's Plate was won, of course in three games, by Lizzie Ware & Theo Parker. Last year Theo was disappointed to exit in three matches, this year he complained that the final was his "fifth match of the day!" It seems that, for some, the amount of Fives played on one day has to be just right. Meanwhile Lizzie just got on with it.

Many thanks to Marlborough College and Tom Kiggell for the use of their courts.

Postscript: President's Cup veteran, Guy Matthews, was disappointed in his effort to become the sixth member of the Grand Slam club, a place reserved for those who have won all four trophies. Guy has yet to win the elusive T-Pot and was on a mission to claim this rare thing, a trophy hidden behind a labyrinthine draw developed by Tom Wood. Nevertheless, Guy had a plan, which in the second round involved many, many late calls of 'yours' delivered at an almost impossible last second for his partner Dave Butler to cover. Dave struggled and they lost the match. The plan was coming together and now the path to the T-Pot was clearly defined: it was simple, keep winning and the Grail was there to be won. What could go wrong? They lost in the next match to Alex Smith and Penn Chai. Some say that Dave's heart was never in this quest, others that the quest is too hard for the average Fives player. We know that Guy will be back, a man cannot be separated from his destiny.

## **Selected Results**

**President's Cup:** Tim Hebblethwaite & Shinan Zhang bt Alex Goodwin & Jim Hughes 15-13, 15-12

**Love Mug:** Lewis Keates & Holly Nugent bt Ashwin Ahuja & Will Bishop 15-9, 11-15, 15-6

**T-Pot:** Harvey Bishop & Ed Carr bt Hamish Buchanan & Chris Jones 14-16, 15-8, 16-14

**Mate's Plate:** Theo Parker & Lizzie Ware bt Tom Kiggell & Nick Whitney 15-11, 7-15, 15-7

**Also played:** Sarthak Garella & Quentin Hoad; Dave Butler & Guy Matthews; Freddie Hammond Giles & Adam Piekos; Nick Geere & Ben Yass; Chris Davey & Helena Tunks; Bruce Hanton & Chris Jones; Penn Chai & Alex Smith; Julian Aquilina & Abbie Evans; Savanna Leboff & Tom Maconie

## 2024 Hilario Azkarate Memorial Tournament

14<sup>th</sup> December 2024, San Ignacio municipal sports centre, Bilbao

The RFA is delighted to report on the latest Rugby Fives event held in Bilbao.

The second playing of this tournament, named in honour of a famous Basque pelota player, was held on the squash courts of the San Ignacio sports centre in Bilbao on 14 December 2024. This time it was a singles tournament only. Matches last 10 minutes and so often don't reach 15 points. Six contestants played in two groups of three players, with the winner of each group playing the final and those finishing second contesting a playoff for third and fourth places.

The tournament was won, as in 2022, by Egoitz Campo.

The results are as follows:

Group A: Egoitz Campo 15-4 Joseba Zubiaurre; David Bilbao 12-8 Joseba Zubiaurre; Egoitz Campo 14-7 David Bilbao

Group B: Jon Ander Gil 12-9 Galder Etxebarria; Jon Ander Gil 12-7 Daniel Barrientos; Daniel Barrientos 13-10 Galder Etxebarria

Third/fourth play-off: David Bilbao 14-5 Daniel Barrientos

Final: Egoitz Campo 16-4 Jon Ander Gil

## End Of Year Rankings

January 2025

*Charlie Brooks reports:* The RFA end of year rankings have now been published, with the results of the National Singles Championship reflected. Ed Kay remains at the top of the pile despite Dan Tristao's victory in the Nationals, thanks to his consistency over the past three years. Dan closes the gap, but will need a strong second half of the season if he's to regain the number one spot. There's plenty of movement elsewhere in the top ten though. Most notably, Richie Murby moves to a career-high 4th after reaching his first ever National Singles semi-final. Rumour has it that he's the first ever Scot in the top four.... Julian Aquilina also moves up and now sits 5th (a joint-best for him). Outside the top ten, the most significant progress is made by Freddie Hammond Giles. He stormed up to 13th after winning the London qualifier and then getting to the quarter-finals on his Nationals debut. Other strong performances in qualifying and the Nationals were also rewarded, as Marcus Cloke Browne, James Tilston and Andrew Boyd close in on the top ten.

We also have a new rankings-rise record to report: Julian Hanton has climbed a remarkable 156 places, up to 58th. Bravo!

The second half of the season promises much – another titanic battle to end the season on top... a great chance for new entrants to make it into the top ten... and more rising stars to climb higher than ever. Bring it on!

## West of England Schools Championships

Sherborne School, Dorset

Saturday/Sunday, 18-19 January 2025

STOP PRESS Players from St Paul's School and Winchester College dominated this event, winning the four main titles between them, Freddie Hammond Giles successfully defended his U18 Singles title by beating Charlie Lacewing from Christ's Hospital and then, with partner Josh Ferro, their U18 Doubles title against Alleyn's School. In the U16s Nadim Cortas from St Paul's won the Singles by beating Plum Mannion-Miles from Winchester College, but was then runner-up with partner Alex Ponte to the Winchester pair of Mannion-Miles & Felix Coleman. Other silver and bronze medals were distributed among 6 schools, including Stamford and Derby Moor. It was good to see young contingents from Mount Kelly and Radley as well.

The RFA's customary warm thanks go to our hosts Sherborne School and to organiser Sam Roberts.

*Sam Roberts reports:* Players from St Paul's School and Winchester College dominated this event, winning the four main titles between them. There was a large entry this year – with 31 playing in the U16s and 37 in the U18s. Great to have so many playing, but it meant a long Saturday, with considerable gaps between matches for some and the need for rally scoring to complete the plates, which was not universally popular!

In the U18 Singles final, defending champion Freddie Hammond Giles (St Paul's) faced Charlie Lacewing (Christ's Hospital), by which time Charlie had recovered his form after losing the first game of his semi-final 11-0 against Anthony Cloke Browne of Winchester. The final was a wonderful spectacle. In any other year, Charlie would have been a worthy champion, but Freddie's retrieving was astonishing and his serve often unreturnable. Anything but a perfect length or dead nick was returned by Freddie with interest, in a high paced match. Freddie won 11-0, 11-0 – quite possibly the first time any player has closed out a school tournament final without conceding. His team mate Tom Ritchie was the only player to get any points off Freddie in the entire tournament – losing his semi-final 11-0, 11-1.

In the U18 Singles Plate, Jack Chen from Radley, who had been improving all day, faced Rory Jones of Stamford, with Rory winning 11-8.

The U18 Doubles produced several high quality matches in the quarter- and semi-finals, with St Paul's 2 (Tom Ritchie and Elyas Efthimiou) defeating Winchester 2 (Theo Munaretto-Day and Daniil Vorobev) to set up an intense semi against St Paul's 1 (Freddie Hammond Giles and Josh Ferro), coming away with 9 hard fought points. In the other semi, Alleyn's 1 (Alex Goodwin and Yarin Negyal) swept aside Winchester 1 (Arthur James-Duff and James Kennedy) with an impressive display of power, particularly from Alex on the left. In the final, Freddie and Josh were pushed hard by Yarin's retrieving and Alex's ability to hit low and hard onto the back wall, but the defending champions came through in two games. The bronze medal match went to the wire, with Winchester 1 winning 16-14 against St Paul's 2, who couldn't quite maintain the level they had found in the semi-final.

The U18 Doubles plate produced some close matches, with Stamford 2 (Rory Jones & Euan Hunter) losing 15-13 in the semi to Alleyn's 3 (Skye Richarz and Gabriel Louet), only for Winchester 3 (Zach Goulding and Noah Wong) to beat Alleyn's in the final.

In the U16 Singles, almost half the players were U15 or U14. The round of 32 was fairly one-sided apart from two matches. U15 Finlay Schelin (Radley) edged past U14 Joey Hammond Giles (St Paul's) 15-12 by putting a few more into the corners, and U15 Alex Ponte (St Paul's) couldn't quite deal with the destructive left hand of U15 Rumi Kohashi-Khan (Alleyn's), losing 15-13. U14 Bear Robinson from Winchester made an impressive debut, making it to the last eight. In the semis, Nadim Cortas (St Paul's) calmly won against a harder hitting but error-prone Felix Coleman (Winchester), and Plum Mannion-Miles (Winchester) used his experience and variety of shots to beat Rumi, who had been softened up by a three-game quarter-final against Michael Zhang (Winchester). The final was closely fought between the two left-handers, Plum and Nadim. In the end, despite Plum's power, Nadim was steadier on the right and more clinical with his left, winning in two games.

The U16 Singles Plate was a straight knockout format, with rally scoring making for some very close matches. In the final, Fred McAllister (Alleyn's) made fewer errors and was slightly more accurate than Alex Ponte (St Paul's), winning 11-9. They are both U15 so will certainly feature in the main competition next year.

The U16 Doubles featured two U14 pairs from Mount Kelly, getting a taste of tournament fives for the first time. Thanks go to their Head Master, Guy Ayling, for promoting fives at the school and for bringing the players from Devon. The quarter-finals produced two three-game epics with some high quality rallies – Winchester 3 (Ludo Carnegie and Michael Zhang) eventually defeated Winchester 2 (Bear Robinson and Casper Wilson) by three points in total, and Alleyn's 1 (Rumi and Fred) beat St Paul's 2 (Zen Okada & Ranvir Puri) by four points overall. The top seeds and early favourites were Plum and Felix from Winchester, a hard hitting left/right combo. In the final against Nadim and Alex from St Paul's, Winchester were at 10-4 in the first game before St Paul's cut out the errors, found the side walls and recovered to win 12-10 against an increasingly anxious Winchester. After some wise words from their coaches, Winchester calmly took the second game, before finishing off a tiring St Paul's.

In the U16 Doubles Plate, Derby Moor (Max Staryk and Zachary Winson Yates) won their group to face the other group winners St Paul's 3 (Neev Bansal and Joey Hammond Giles) in the final. The teams were evenly matched all the way, with Zach's hard hitting finally making the difference for Derby Moor.

The RFA's customary warm thanks go to Sherborne School for hosting the tournament and to Nick Scorer and the many other Sherborne staff who gave up their weekends to oversee the courts.

### **U18 Singles**

1st round: J Graham (Sher) bt M Gooding (Marl) 15-6; G Louet (WinC) bt R Jones (Stam) 15-11; T Fergusson (WinC) bt S Khurana (All) 16-14; A Djordjevic (Rad) bt L Branney (CHosp) 15-5; N Wong (WinC) bt W Horton (Sher) 15-7; J Liu (WinC) bt T Moesel (Sher) 15-13

2nd round: F Hammond Giles (StP) bt Graham 15-0; C McNaughton bt L Wyman (Marl) 15-12; M Arie (All) E Efthimiou (StP) 15-2; J Kennedy (WinC) bt J Chen (Rad) 15-3; A James-Duff (WinC) bt Louet 15-1; T Munaretto-Day (WinC) bt I Corrie (Marl) 15-6; Z Goulding (WinC) bt S Richarz (All) 15-1; T Ritchie (StP) bt Fergusson 15-2; A Cloke Browne (WinC) bt Djordjevic 15-7; A Dowling (CHosp) bt J Mitchell (Blun) 15-12; M di Gleria (Marl) bt D Vorobev (WinC) 15-5; Y Negyal (All) bt Wong 15-0; A Goodwin (All) bt T Hudson (CHosp) 15-0; J Ferro (StP) bt J Moesel (Sher) 15-1; C Sharpe (Stam) bt A Shaw (All) 15-4; C Lacewing (CHosp) bt Liu 15-4

3rd round: Hammond Giles bt McNaughton 15-0; Kennedy bt Arie 15-6; James-Duff bt Munaretto-Day 15-1; Ritchie bt Goulding 15-9; Cloke Browne bt Dowling 15-0; Negyal bt di Gleria 15-0; Goodwin bt Ferro 15-13; Lacewing bt Sharpe 15-0

Quarter-finals: Hammond Giles bt Kennedy 11-0, 11-0; Ritchie bt James-Duff 11-9, 11-9; Cloke Browne bt Negyal 11-8, 11-6; Lacewing bt Goodwin 11-5, 11-2

Semi-finals: Hammond Giles bt Ritchie 11-0, 11-1; Lacewing bt Cloke Browne 0-11, 11-1, 11-8

Final: F Hammond Giles (St Paul's) bt C Lacewing (Christ's Hospital) 11-0, 11-0

1st Plate: R Jones (Stamford) bt J Chen (Radley) 11-8

2nd Plate: J Liu (Winchester) bt Vorobev (Winchester) 15-1

3rd Plate: M Arie (Alleyn's) bt T Munaretto-Day (Winchester) 15-7

### **U18 Doubles**

1st round: Stamford 2 bt Sherborne 2 15-11

2nd round: St Paul's 1 bt Stamford 2 15-0; Alleyn's 2 bt Sherborne 1 15-8; St Paul's 2 bt Radley 1 15-1; Winchester 2 bt Christ's Hospital 2 15-4; Alleyn's 1 bt Winchester 4 15-3; Christ's Hospital 1 bt Alleyn's 3 15-9; Stamford 1 bt Winchester 3 15-4; Winchester 1 bt Alleyn's 4 15-3

Quarter-finals: St Paul's 1 bt Alleyn's 2 11-0, 11-1; St Paul's 2 bt Winchester 2 11-8, 11-4; Alleyn's 1 bt Christ's Hospital 1 11-0, 11-0; Winchester 1 bt Stamford 1 11-3, 11-3

Semi-finals: St Paul's 1 bt St Paul's 2 11-4, 11-5; Alleyn's 1 bt Winchester 1 11-0, 11-5

Final: St Paul's 1 (J Ferro & F Hammond Giles) bt Alleyn's 1 (A Goodwin & Y Negyal) 11-1, 11-7

Plate: Winchester 3 (Z Goulding & N Wong) bt Alleyn's 3 (S Richarz & G Louet) 15-9

### **U16 Singles**

1st round: T Green (All) bt Z Winson Yates (DerM) 15-6; M Staryk (DerM) bt I Baijal (StP) 15-11; B Robinson (WinC) bt F Carian (Rad) 15-1; L Carnegie (WinC) bt F Mason (Rad) 15-0; N Bansal (StP) bt H Koma (Rad) 15-3; M Zhang (WinC) bt A Bhalodia (StP) 15-2; H Fletcher (Marl) bt H Franks (WinC) 15-2; R Kohashi-Khan (All) bt A Ponte (StP) 15-13; F McAllister (All) bt R Fletcher (WinC) 15-8; C Wilson (WinC) bt Z Okada (StP) 15-9; F Schelin (Rad) bt J Hammond Giles (StP) 15-12

2nd round: N Cortas (StP) bt Green 15-4; Robinson bt Staryk 15-2; Carnegie bt R Puri (StP) 15-5; F Coleman (WinC) bt Bansal 15-0; Zhang bt E Hunter (Stam) 15-9; Kohashi-Khan bt Fletcher 15-6; Wilson bt McAllister 15-10; P Mannion-Miles (WinC) bt Schelin 15-1

Quarter-finals: Cortas bt Robinson 1-2, 11-1; Coleman bt Carnegie 11-2, 11-2; Kohashi-Khan bt Zhang 6-11, 11-3, 11-7;

Mannion-Miles bt Wilson 11-3, 11-0

Semi-finals: Cortas bt Coleman 11-6, 11-1; Mannion-Miles bt Kohashi-Khan 11-3, 11-0

Final: N Cortas (St Paul's) bt P Mannion-Miles (Winchester) 11-6, 11-7

Plate: F McAllister (Alleyn's) bt A Ponte (St Paul's) 11-9

## U16 Doubles

1st round: St Paul's 4 bt Mount Kelly 1 15-7; St Paul's 2 bt Radley 1 15-7; Alleyn's 1 bt Mount Kelly 2 15-0; Winchester 2 bt Radley 2 15-1; Winchester 3 bt St Paul's 3 15-10; Winchester 4 bt Derby Moor 1 16-15

Quarter-finals: Winchester 1 bt St Paul's 4 11-0, 11-0; Alleyn's 1 bt St Paul's 2 11-8, 9-11, 11-8; Winchester 3 bt Winchester 2 3-11, 11-2, 11-9; St Paul's 1 bt Winchester 4 11-2, 11-4

Semi-finals: Winchester 1 bt Alleyn's 1 11-2, 11-8; St Paul's 1 bt Winchester 3 11-8, 9-11, 11-4

Final: Winchester 1 (F Coleman & P Mannion-Miles) bt St Paul's 1 (N Cortas & A Ponte) 10-12, 11-6, 11-0

Plate: Derby Moor (M Staryk & C Winson Yates) bt St Paul's 3 (N Bansal & J Hammond Giles) 15-13

## North West Open Championships

Derby Moor Academy, Derby

Saturday/Sunday, 25-26 January 2025

**STOP PRESS** Dan Tristao did the double for the second time, registering his 7th North West Open Singles title and his 3rd Doubles title, this time with Dan Grant, in a three-game epic against Ben Beltrami & Charlie Brooks. National Schools U16 champion Val Fikhter won the Singles Plate, beating Julian Hanton, while home pairing Richard Christie & Lewis Keates beat Alleyn Old Boys pair Patrick Harrison & Gwydion Wiseman in the Doubles Plate final.

The RFA's thanks go to Lewis and the Derby Moor team for taking on this event after the recent flooding of the Manchester Y Club courts.

## Singles

**Preliminary round:** Z Winson Yates bt M Staryk 7-11, 9-11, 7-11

**1st round:** D Tristao bt Winson Yates 11-1, 11-0; D Murdoc bt N Geere 11-1, 11-2; D Grant bt D Wright 11-0, 11-0; J Tilston bt V Fikhter 11-5, 12-10; L Keates bt P Harrison 11-2, 11-6; G Wiseman bt J Hanton 11-2, 11-4; S Beattie bt J Smith 11-8, 11-8; J Aquilina bt D Fox 11-1, 11-1

**Quarter-finals:** Tristao bt Murdoc 11-5, 11-6; Grant bt Tilston 12-10, 11-4; Wiseman bt Keates 11-9, 10-12, 12-10; Aquilina bt Beattie 11-0, 11-2

**Semi-finals:** Tristao bt Grant 12-11, 11-7; Aquilina bt Wiseman 11-4, 11-0

**Final:** Tristao bt Aquilina 11-6, 11-5

**Plate:** Fikhter bt Hanton 15-11

## Doubles

**Group A:** 1st Beltrami & Brooks 9 pts; 2nd Aquilina & Tilston 6 pts; 3rd Christie & Keates 3 pts; 4th Staryk & Winson Yates 0 pts

**Group B:** 1st Grant & Tristao 6pts; 2nd Fikhter & J Smith 3 pts; 3rd P Harrison & Wiseman 0 pts

**Semi-finals:** Beltrami & Brooks bt Fikhter & Smith 11-1, 11-4; Grant & Tristao bt Aquilina & Tilston 11-8, 11-4

**Final:** Grant & Tristao bt Beltrami & Brooks 8-11, 11-2 11-8

**Plate:** Christie & Keates bt Harrison & Wiseman 15-12, 15-9

# Women's National Championships

Oundle School

Saturday/Sunday, 25-26 January 2025

*Bob Dolby reports:* Despite the absence of a number of leading players like multiple champion Louise Mathias (working in Australia), former Schools champions Martha Nugent (studying in the USA) and Ibby Lee, as well as Martha's sister Holly and Phoenix Fleming, the general standard of play at this year's championships was extremely high and in the final stages perhaps the highest yet seen. It was particularly appropriate that play on Sunday was witnessed by the legendary, 11-time National Champion Paula Smith, who did so much along with the late Denise Hall-Wilton to promote the women's game in the 1980s and 1990s.

In this year's championships the Singles title was won for a second consecutive year by Camille Beattie, currently studying at Sheffield University and playing her Fives at the City of Durham Fives Club. In the final Camille beat Shinan Zhang, also a former Schools champion, who now plays with the Executioners and organises the London Fives League.

Shinan duly got her revenge in the Doubles, partnering Helena Tunks in a successful defence of their title, a trophy which Shinan has now won 6 times. In the final Helena and Shinan defeated Camille and a new partner, Sophie Lundie, now playing regularly in London and building on her skills learned at the Edinburgh Academy.

The Singles Plate was won by City of Durham Club's Eleonora Vallascas, who is the current Schools U16 Singles champion. The Doubles Plate was won by the current Schools U18 Singles and Doubles champion Jemima Mitchell playing with another former Schools Champion Phoebe Thornhill, who is now based back in Oxford.

The success of so many schools champions past and present just goes to underline the vital role played by the various schools competitions held in London, Durham and Edinburgh. The RFA's warm thanks go to those coaches who promote girls' Fives in their clubs and schools.

Our thanks also go to Oundle School for hosting this national event at short notice after an administrative error led to a transfer from the Cambridge University Sports Centre.

## Singles

**1st round:** Emily Hodgson bt Charlotte Bruce 15-0, 15-0; Eleonora Vallascas bt Katie Perry 15-0, 15-0; Sophie Lundie bt Lauren Osborne-Patterson 15-0, 15-0; Julie McIntyre bt Lottie Merrylees 15-0, 15-0; Charlie Roberts bt Iona Chorley 15-0, 15-0; Evelyn Terry bt Catherine Abercrombie 15-0, 15-0

**2nd round:** Camille Beattie bt Emily Hodgson 15-0, 15-0; Phoebe Thornhill bt Jemima Mitchell 11-15, 15-3, 15-2; Kirsten Bell bt Eleonora Vallascas 15-1, 15-2; Lizzie Ware bt Sophie Lundie 15-0, 15-6; Savanna Leboff bt Julie McIntyre 15-1, 15-1; Helena Tunks bt Charlie Roberts 15-1, 15-2; Zara Elliot bt Rachel Wood 15-0, 15-0; Shinan Zhang bt Evelyn Terry 15-1, 15-0

**Quarter-finals:** Beattie bt Thornhill 15-0, 15-0; Bell bt Ware 15-8, 15-6; Tunks bt Leboff 15-6, 16-14; Zhang bt Elliot 15-8, 15-7

**Semi-finals:** Beattie bt Bell 15-2, 15-1; Zhang bt Tunks 15-0, 15-8

**Final:** Beattie bt Zhang 15-6, 15-8

**Plate:** 1st Eleonora Vallascas +58pts; 2nd Sophie Lundie +48pts; 3rd Rachel Wood +46pts

## Doubles

**1st round:** Alison Hutchison & Iona Chorley bt Catherine Abercrombie & Juliana Murphy 15-0, 15-0; Jemima Mitchell & Phoebe Thornhill bt Lottie Merrylees & Katie Parry 15-0, 15-0; Rachel Wood & Charlie Roberts bt Evelyn Terry & Emily Hodgson 15-0, 15-4; Eleonora Vallascas & Julie McIntyre bt Charlotte Bruce & Lauren Osborne-Patterson 15-0, 15-0

**Quarter-finals:** Helena Tunks & Shinan Zhang bt Alison Hutchinson & Iona Chorley 15-0, 15-0; Savanna Leboff & Zara Elliot bt Jemima Mitchell & Phoebe Thornhill 15-2, 15-8; Kirsten Bell & Lizzie Ware bt Rachel Wood & Charlie Roberts

15-1, 15-1; Camille Beattie & Sophie Lundie bt Eleonora Vallascas & Julie McIntyre 15-4, 15-0  
**Semi-finals:** Tunks & Zhang bt Leboff & Elliot 15-8, 15-13; Beattie & Lundie bt Bell & Ware 15-8, 15-6  
**Final:** Tunks & Zhang bt Beattie & Lundie 15-6, 15-10  
**3rd place play-off:** Leboff & Elliot bt Bell & Ware 16-14, 15-8  
**Plate:** Mitchell & Thornhill bt Vallascas & McIntyre 15-5

## British Universities Championships

Cambridge University Sports Centre  
Saturday/Sunday, 1-2 February 2025

**STOP PRESS** With players from 9 universities — Bristol, Cambridge, Derby, Durham, Edinburgh, Oxford, Oxford Brookes, Warwick and West of England — co-organisers Andrew Boyd and Ben Jourdan achieved a long overdue double, with Andrew winning the Open Singles title at the expense of defending champion Marcus Cloke Browne, and with Ben and Andrew then securing the Doubles trophy. Phoenix Fleming and Megan Wells from Durham University followed up their recent success at the Durham Women's Championships by winning the Women's Singles (Phoenix) and then the Doubles together. Players of both sexes from Cambridge had a very much silver and bronze medal day, and a new pairing from Warwick, Isaac Weaver and Patrick Harrison, made it to the final of the Open Doubles.

Warm thanks to Ben and Andrew in their last year as organisers, to the Cambridge University Club for hosting, and to all the players for making it through two long days of impressively competitive Fives with some very protracted contests in all areas.

### Open Singles

**1st round:** A Whitham (Oxf) bt J Pyman (Cam) 15-3, 15-1; S Wu (Oxf) bt M Ord (Cam) 15-5, 15-3; T Vernacchio (Bri) bt J Milburn (Cam) 15-11, 16-14; P Harrison (War) bt J Hughes (UWE) 15-5, 15-6; S Ion (Oxf) bt R-A Menhart (Cam) 15-0, 15-0; K Bremner (Oxf) bt L Walton (Cam) 15-5, 15-2; S Scott (Dur) bt I Mellis-Glynn (Cam) 15-0, 15-3; C Low (Bri) bt M Morgan (Dur) 15-0, 15-3; E Thursfield (Cam) bt A Deshmukh (Oxf) 15-8, 15-1; J Hanton (Oxf) bt W Milne (Dur) 15-3, 15-4

**2nd round:** L Keates (Der) bt Whitham 15-5, 15-1; Wu bt Vernacchio 15-3, 15-5; G Wiseman (OxBro) bt Harrison 15-5, 15-6; A Boyd (Edi) bt Ion 15-2, 15-2; I Weaver (War) bt Bremner 15-2, 15-1; B Jourdan (Edi) bt Scott 15-8, 4-15 15-11; Low bt Thursfield 15-4, 15-8; M Cloke Browne (Cam) bt Hanton 15-4, 15-9

**Quarter-finals:** Wu bt Keates 15-8, 9-15, 15-3; Boyd bt Wiseman 15-3, 15-9; Weaver bt Jourdan 15-10, 15-9; Cloke Browne bt Low 15-12, 15-3

**Semi-finals:** Boyd bt Wu 15-5, 15-0; Cloke Browne bt Weaver 15-8, 15-7

**Final:** Boyd (Edinburgh) bt Cloke Browne (Cam) 15-3, 15-5

**Plate Semi-finals:** Milburn bt Hughes 11-6; Morgan bt Deshmukh 11-3

**Plate Final:** Milburn (Cam) bt Morgan (Dur) 11-4

**2nd Plate:** Scott (Dur) bt Vernacchio (Bri) 11-1

### Women's Singles

**1st round:** Juliana Murphy (Cam) bt Yasmine Amirouch (Oxf) 11-1, 11-2; Megan Wells (Dur) bt Iona Chorley (Cam) 11-1, 11-0

**Quarter-finals:** Phoenix Fleming (Dur) bt Katie Parry (Cam) 15-1, 15-0; Catherine Abercrombie (Cam) bt Alison Hutchinson (Cam) 11-0, 11-1; Murphy bt Lottie Merrylees (Cam) 15-8, 15-3; Wells bt Sophie Winter (Oxf) 15-2, 15-0

**Semi-finals:** Fleming bt Abercrombie 15-1, 15-0; Wells bt Murphy 15-2, 15-1

**Final:** Fleming (Dur) bt Wells (Dur) 15-6, 15-6

**Plate Semi-final:** Chorley bt Parry 11-7; Merrylees bt Hutchinson 11-3

**Plate Final:** Chorley (Cam) bt Merrylees (Cam) 11-4

## Open Doubles

**1st round:** J Buchan & G Wiseman (OxBro) bt R-A Menhart & J Pyman (Cam) 15-0; C Low & T Vernacchio (Bri) bt M Morgan & S Scott (Dur) 15-2; K Bremner & S Wu (Oxf) bt J Hughes & W Milne (UWE/Dur) 15-9; J Hanton & A Whitham (Oxf) bt I Mellis-Glynn & M Ord (Cam) 15-1

**Quarter-finals:** A Boyd & B Jourdan (Edi) bt Buchan & Wiseman 11-6, 11-3; Low & Vernacchio bt Bremner & Wu 11-9, 11-8; P Harrison & I Weaver (War) bt J Milburn & L Walton (Cam) 11-2, 11-8; M Cloke Browne & E Thursfield (Cam) bt Hanton & Whitham 11-8, 11-4

**Semi-finals:** Boyd & Jourdan bt Low & Vernacchio 11-6, 8-11, 11-6; Harrison & Weaver bt Cloke Browne & Thursfield 8-11, 11-8, 11-4

**Final:** Boyd & Jourdan (Edi) bt Harrison & Weaver (War) 11-3, 11-0

**Plate:** Morgan & Scott (Dur) bt Hughes & Milne (UWE/Dur) 15-10

**2nd Plate:** Buchan & Wiseman (OxBro) bt Bremner & Wu (Oxf) 15-13

## Women's Doubles

**Group A:** 1st Fleming & Wells (Dur); **2nd** Bruce & Hutchinson (Cam); **3rd** Amirouch & Winter (Oxf)

**Group B:** 1st Chorley & Murphy (Cam); **2nd** Merrylees & Parry (Cam)

**Final:** Fleming & Wells (Dur) bt Chorley & Murphy (Cam) 15-0, 15-0

**Plate:** Bruce & Hutchinson (Cam)

## Northern Schools Championships

Durham University Fives Courts

Sunday, 2nd February 2025

*Julie McIntyre reports:* Good on-court conditions greeted players from Sedbergh, Manchester and the City of Durham club this year, and the kettle was on as we got underway. A few dropouts, a burst pipe in the toilet block and a lock failure on the day did not stop us though, as we overcame hurdles to enjoy a splendid day of play.

We had a large age (and size) range so we segregated age groups into 18, 16 and 13s again. We even had our first U13 girls singles played by two novice players, Ellie and Florence from City of Durham, won, by a close margin by Ellie, the older of the two.

It was an all-Durham Under 13 Singles competition which was filled with keen year 8s and a novice year 7, Ranveer, who played outstandingly. Lucas' natural talent won through, but there were some very impressive rallies amongst the youngsters who are keen to enter the National Under 13s in London soon.

At the other end of the scale were Ollie, Phoenix and Val who slugged it out in the Under 18 section. Val being last year's Under 16 National Champion was very tough competition and this showed as he won this category.

Toby of Sedbergh was the top player in the Under 16s, with Eleonora of Durham giving him a competitive game to come 2nd.

Toby played with Val in the Under 18 Doubles against the power of Sedbergh 1, and won through; however the gold medal went to the school pairing, as the rules prohibit scratch pairs from winning overall. Good experience for all concerned.

That left Hector and Fred in Under 16 gold medal position after playing the older boys.

Lucas and James were in good form in the Under 13 Doubles; however Sam and Ranveer stepped up to give them a challenging game, in a difficult group for the new girls!

Many thanks go to Tom Wakelam for doing the tricky draw, to Patrin Maddison for managing the scoring and running things, to Rupert Follett from Sedbergh for his support and advice, and to Tony and Geoff for supporting everything!

### **Singles Results**

**U18 Singles:** **1st** V Fikhter (Manchester Y Club) 60 pts; **2nd** O Griffin (Sedbergh) 31 pts; **3rd** P Ogilvie-Robertson (Sedbergh) 9pts

**U16 Singles:** **1st** T Follett (Sedbergh) 33pts; **2nd** E Vallascas (City of Durham) 31 pts; **3rd** F Leslie (Sedbergh) 13pts; **4th** H Maclean (Sedbergh) 9 pts

**U13 Singles:** **1st** L Manzi (City of Durham) 45 pts; **2nd** J Tingle (City of Durham) 35 pts; **3rd** S Stokes (City of Durham) 29 pts; **4th** R Singh Jandoo (City of Durham) 19 pts

**U13 Girls:** E Ranson (City of Durham) bt F Byng (City of Durham) 15-11

### **Doubles Results**

**Open Doubles:** **1st** Fikhter & Follett (Manchester/Sedbergh); **2nd** Griffin & Ogilvie-Robertson (Sedbergh); **3rd** F Leslie & Maclean (Sedbergh)

**U13 Doubles:** **1st** Manzi & Tingle (City of Durham); **2nd** Singh Jandoo & Stokes (City of Durham); **3rd** Byng & Ranson (City of Durham)

## **South East Schools Championships**

Christ's Hospital, Horsham  
Saturday, 8th February 2025

*Michael Lacewing and Ed Hatton report:* Following the absence in recent years of historical attendees Whitgift, St Dunstan's and St Olave's to the South East Regional Schools championships, last year's participating schools – Tonbridge, Christ's Hospital and Eastbourne – opened the competition to Alleyn's School as well. It was just as well, as in the end Eastbourne were unable to attend. The quality of fives was truly excellent in the later rounds, grit and determination at all levels were on display from the start, and a notable camaraderie marked the whole occasion.

In the Open Singles the first seed, and last year's champion, Charlie Lacewing (CH) was able to proceed to the final relatively smoothly, meeting friend and rival Lucas Saunders-Aroma in the semis. With the addition of Alleyn's, last year's runner-up Oliver Woolf (Tonbridge) faced a greater challenge in Alleyn's Yarin Negyal, seeded 2<sup>nd</sup> this year. An almighty battle displaying great power and persistence ensued, which ended with a win for Negyal to match up against Lacewing in the final. It was the first time these two friends had met competitively. From the start, the display of precision and rally-building was exceptional. Lacewing had the best of the first game, winning 11-3, but Negyal came back very strongly in the second, consistently remaining a point or two ahead until 10-9. The last four points were nailbiting, pushing both players to their limits. With just slightly greater precision in his length, Lacewing finally won 12-11.

The Plate matches were no less fiercely contested, with notable battles between Ed Scott of Tonbridge and two CH players in succession – first Tallak Hudson, and then Kyle Lewis. Lewis managed to beat Scott to win through to the final, where he faced S Khurana from Alleyn's, who had faced his own challenging semi against CH's Anthony Dowling. With a greater display of precision and shot selection, Khurana came through to win the Plate 11-0, 11-3.

In the Open Doubles, various injuries and missing students led to some quick reshuffling of teams, with 7 pairs playing in the end, including one that mixed Tonbridge and CH. Yarin Negyal & Milo Arie (Alleyn's) were the favourites to win, but had to earn their place in a fierce and highly competitive semi against Tonbridge's Lucas Saunders-Aroma & Oliver Carroll. Charlie Lacewing & Anthony Dowling (CH) managed to beat Tonbridge's first pair of Oliver Woolf & Oliver Wilson in their semi, and so the stage was set for Alleyn's to secure revenge on CH for the result of the singles. And so it proved, with Negyal & Arie proving the more consistent pair to win 11-7, 11-2.

The Open Plate took the form of a round robin with three pairs. Every game was hard-fought and close, and the final scores were 22, 20 and 17. The winners were Oscar Zhou & Kyle Lewis from CH.

In the U16 Singles there were some competitive first round matches but ultimately Thomas of Tonbridge made confident and largely untroubled progress into and through an all-Tonbridge final to become champion. Players from CH and Tonbridge fought well in the Singles Plate but in an all-Alleyn's final Green emerged the winner. The U16 Doubles was more closely contested and ended with a high quality Alleyn's/Tonbridge final. Scores and rallies went back and forth, but Tonbridge's Gustard & Haigh emerged as comprehensive winners in the 3<sup>rd</sup> game of the final. Their fellow Tonbridgians Chiavirini & Seddon won the Doubles Plate.

### Open Singles

**1st round:** C Lacewing (CH) bt J Ho (All) 11-0; M Arie (All) bt E Scott (Ton) 11-0; L Saunders-Aroma (Ton) bt T Hudson (CH) 11-0; O Carroll (Ton) bt A Dowling (CH) 11-3; O Woolf (Ton) bt S Khurana (All) 11-0; A Shaw (All) bt K Lewis (CH) 11-1

**Quarter-finals:** Lacewing bt O Wilson (Ton) 11-1; Saunders-Aroma bt Arie 11-9; Y Negyal (All) bt Carroll 11-2; Woolf bt Shaw 11-0

**Semi-finals:** Lacewing bt Saunders-Aroma 15-1; Negyal bt Woolf 15-7

**Final:** C Lacewing (CH) bt Y Negyal (All) 11-3, 12-11

**Plate:** S Khurana (All) bt K Lewis (CH) 11-0, 11-3

### Open Doubles

**Quarter-finals:** Carroll & Saunders-Aroma (Ton) bt Lewis & Zhou (CH) 15-3; Wilson & Woolf (Ton) bt Ho & Khurana (All) 15-6; Dowling & Lacewing (CH) bt Hudson & Scott (CH/Ton) 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Arie & Negyal (All) bt Carroll & Saunders-Aroma (Ton) 15-6; Dowling & Lacewing (CH) bt Wilson & Woolf (Ton) 15-6

**Final:** Arie & Negyal (All) bt Dowling & Lacewing (CH) 11-7, 11-2

**Plate:** K Lewis & O Zhou (CH)

### U16 Singles

**1st round:** H Severino (All) bt G Chiavirini (Ton) 11-5; J Seddon (Ton) bt L Pun (CH) 11-2; M Gustard (Ton) bt T Green (All) 11-6; O Zhou (CH) bt T-R Foo (All) 11-8; H Thomas (Ton) bt F McAllister (All) 11-7; G Shilton (All) bt T Hudson (CH) 11-8; H Haigh (Ton) bt Q Lord (CH) 11-4

**Quarter-finals:** Severino bt Seddon 11-2; Gustard bt Zhou 11-4; Thomas bt Shilton 11-7; Haigh bt Dodds (Ton) 11-4

**Semi-finals:** Gustard bt Severino 16-14; Thomas bt Haigh 15-3

**Final:** Thomas (Ton) bt Gustard (Ton) 11-3, 11-1

**Plate:** Green (All) bt McAllister (All) 11-8

### U16 Doubles

**Quarter-finals:** Hudson & Lord (CH) bt Foo & McAllister (All) 11-4; Green & Severino (All) bt Chiavirini & Seddon (Ton) 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Gustard & Haigh (Ton) bt Hudson & Lord (CH) 11-4; Green & Severino (All) bt Dodds & Thomas (Ton) 11-6

**Final:** Gustard & Haigh (Ton) bt Green & Severino (All) 11-4, 2-11, 11-1  
**Plate:** Chiavirini & Seddon (Ton) bt Foo & McAllister (All) 11-6, 9-11, 11-3

## Midlands Schools Championships

Oundle School

Sunday, 9th February 2025

**STOP PRESS** 5 schools took part in this year's event with its customary Open and U15 categories. Rugby dominated the Open Singles, providing both finalists, while the Plate went to the Oundle player in a very close final. The Open Doubles was won by the experienced Stamford 1st pair, who beat the two Singles finalists in the final, while the Plate was won by the Derby Moor pair. The U15 competition was a small one, with the Singles won by a single point by the player from Rugby in the course of a round robin. The U15 Doubles likewise was a straight contest between two pairs who played out a three-gamer, which finally went the way of the Rugby pair.

There was a small additional Girls Singles competition won by Annie Anslow from Stamford, beating Sophie Bourne from Oundle in the final. They then joined forces to beat Ellie Morris and April Dennison, both from Stamford, in a one-off match.

### U18 Singles Knock-out

**Quarter-finals:** V Barnes (Rug) bt C Sharpe (Stam) 11-5; L Marsden (Ound) bt F Morgan (Bedf) 11-3; C McNaughton (Stam) bt R Jones (Stam) 12-10; J Skailes (Rug) bt S McMurrin (Bedf) 12-10  
**Semi-finals:** Barnes bt Marsden 15-4; Skailes bt McNaughton 15-2  
**Final:** J Skailes (Rugby) bt V Barnes (Rugby) 11-6, 10-12, 11-1

### U18 Singles Plate

**1st round:** S Smallwood (Bedf) bt A Turner (Ound) 11-1; E Holtby (Ound) bt R Vines (Stam) 11-1  
**Semi-finals:** H Cubitt (Ound) bt Smallwood 11-6; M Saryk (DerM) bt Holtby 11-4  
**Final:** H Cubitt (Oundle) bt M Saryk (Derby Moor) 15-13

### U18 Doubles

**Quarter-finals:** Oundle 1 bt Stamford 2 15-7; Stamford 1 bt Derby Moor 15-7; Bedford bt Oundle 2 15-2  
**Semi-finals:** Rugby bt Oundle 1 15-12; Stamford 1 bt Bedford 15-11  
**Final:** Stamford 1 (C McNaughton & C Sharpe) bt Rugby (V Barnes & J Skailes) 15-10  
**Plate:** 1st Derby Moor (M Saryk & Z Winson Yates); 2nd Stamford 2; 3rd Oundle 2

### U15 Singles

**1st** H Turner-Linke (Rugby) 44pts; **2nd** Z Winson Yates (Derby Moor) 43 pts; **3rd** M Hunter (Stamford) 36 pts  
Also played: E Park (Stamford) and H Skailes (Rugby)

### U15 Doubles

**Final:** Rugby (H Skailes & H Turner-Linke) bt Stamford (M Hunter & E Park) 9-11, 11-2, 11-1  
No Plate competition

## London League, 20th February 2025

As the colder winter weather (hopefully) gives way to a warmer spring, competition is hotting up in this season's London League. And it's last year's champions, the Edward Alleyn Club, who are leading the way again.

Although the EAC has only played two matches so far, its 100% record means it sits in top spot in the league table, ahead of its rivals, the Executioners, the UCS Old Boys and the Stoke Newington Swifts (SNS).

After wins over UCS and SNS, the Executioners sit in second place – where they finished last season – with Stoke Newington and UCS in third and fourth place, respectively.

Inspired – and organised – by Shinan Zhang, the league sees home and away matches between the four clubs being played over a 12-month season. The encounters take the form of a standard four-a-side match, with singles and doubles matches counting towards an overall match score.

Keep an eye on the RFA's social media feeds for details of the subsequent matches as they happen – all of which will be recorded on the league's dedicated page on this website.

## Oxford and Cambridge Past versus Present

St Paul's School and Cambridge University Sports Centre  
Saturday, 15th February 2025

*Nick Whitney reports for Oxford:* The 39th Edition of the Oxford Past vs Present match took place at St Paul's School on Sunday, 15th February.

In the men's match, the top 8 were evenly matched in singles with some close games across the order resulting in a 88-84 lead to the Past going into the doubles. This included a 16-15 epic between Louis Odgers (Past) and Seb Ion (Present), and a gruelling 15-13 battle between brothers Dan Whitham (Past) and Aiden Whitham (Present Captain) in which Dan came out on top. This took the Whitham brothers' head to head results over the past few years to a 3-0 clean sweep to Dan, much to Aiden's chagrin.

In the doubles, the Past's top pair of Peter Hanton & Sam Roberts, reversed their singles losses to win both games against the Present's top pairing of Ander Iraizoz & Seb Ion. The second Present pair of Julian Hanton & Aiden Whitham were able to beat the first Past pair to win back some points in the second familial match up of the day. With a total of four Hantons in the fixture (3 Past, 1 Present), there were plenty of family rivalries being played out on court all day.

The depth of the Past came to the fore in the doubles, and despite a handful of very close games decided by 1 or 2 points including several for the Present's 3rd pair of Aaditya Deshmukh & Michael Hawkey, the Past extended their lead to win the Mackenzie Bowl with a score of 217-176

In the women's match the teams were competing for a newly minted trophy named the Warner Tower in honour of Dick Warner – the Club's Senior Member and stalwart of the PvP fixture. The result was decided solely by the singles contest, as the Past and Present sides mixed together in the doubles for an Owers Tournament style competition. Phoebe Thornhill's Past side edged an overall win, with some close scores across the order including a tense 15-12 battle between the Past's Viola King Forbes and Present captain Abbie Evans, with Abbie coming out on top.

The day was rounded off by the Beavers' fixture (Past securing a comfortable win), some enjoyable exhibition games, and the traditional dinner at Queen's Club where the Past wished the Present good luck ahead of this weekend's Varsity Match.

*Bob Dolby reports for Cambridge:* The 76<sup>th</sup> Past v Present consisted of a Match played on the new courts at the University Sports Centre and the Jock Burnet Dinner at Pembroke College.

Ian Jackson took charge this year of organising the three contests played out over the day, and did so with his customary magisterial but compassionate touch. In the 8-a-side PvP the Past got off to a good start, winning 5 of the Singles matches. Stand-out contests were Charlie Brooks's 15-12 win over Marcus Cloke Browne, matched by freshman Leo Walton's 15-7 win over the Past's George Crawley. The needle contests between Sarthak Garella and Emrys Thursfield (OMTs) and Ashwin Ahuja and Ben Yass (Old Paulines) both went the Present's way.

The first round of Doubles produced three close contests, but the greater experience and guile of Andy Pringle & Ian Jackson told in the 4th match, and enabled the Past to open up a substantial lead at the turn.

Ian introduced the mighty left hand of James Birch for the final doubles, which didn't stop Marcus Cloke Browne & Ben Yass winning a morale-boosting couple of games. This helped considerably in reducing the margin of the Past's overall victory to 250-183.

Meanwhile on Court 2 what can be loosely termed to be a Mixed Doubles tournament was held for the Ted Isaacs Trophy. Here we saw a welcome return to the fixture by Rustom Irani and a first ever appearance by Sean Egan, plus a more familiar sight in Jon Abecassis and Rupert Mathieu, these four triumphantly representing the non-playing-Gareth-Quarry team, while Ian Steed & Helena Tunks plus Stuart Kirby & Richard Kemp honoured the spirit of the match's name.

In the Women's match the gulf in experience between the Past players – Holly Nugent, Savanna Leboff, Cassi Henderson, Harriet Fearon, Cat Bar and Cameron Roker – and Catherine Abercrombie's new squad meant that it made better sense to equalise things by creating two matching teams. Hence a contest was set up in which the Past and Present were mixed up and Cat Bar's VI eventually beat Cameron Roker's VI, the present squad gaining valuable experience in the context of a full match of Singles and Doubles.

60 people attended the Dinner. After the predictably delicious meal "a few words" were spoken, firstly by the new President, Gareth Quarry, who spoke with great generosity of his predecessor's 35 years of involvement in running the fixture, asking Ian Jackson to present Bob with an impressive original Fives-themed artwork (see below) to complement a trophy awarded him last year.

Marcus Cloke Browne, in his second year of captaincy, spoke with typical modesty of the Club's progress and achievements over the past 12 months and looked forward to a rewarding contest in a week's time. The Women's Captain, Catherine Abercrombie, also spoke with great warmth of her pride in what Cambridge Women's Fives was achieving over the course of the past 10 years.

Bob Dolby then paid tribute to Tony Lemons, former Head of the CU Physical Education Department, who had died last year. Without Tony's constant support our Club would not have had the chance to raise the necessary money to build courts after 17 years in the wilderness. Bob then recounted the achievements of our players past and present over the last year, adding 22 titles to the list published on [www.cu-sparrows.net](http://www.cu-sparrows.net), 536 of them since 1925.

Finally, Ian Jackson awarded the Trapnell Tankard to Charlie Brooks, the Ted Isaacs Trophy to Sean Egan and the Bob Dolby Trophy to Cat Bar. Whereupon a very large number of photographs were taken!

## **95<sup>th</sup> Varsity Match**

St Paul's School, Barnes

Saturday, 22nd February 2025

*Bob Dolby reports:* In the Men's Match Cambridge had the better of the Singles, winning 5 of the 8, but so tight were 6 of the games that Oxford came out a single point ahead, by 96-95.

The Doubles proved equally close particularly in the top half. It was in the bottom half that results fluctuated and did so eventually in Cambridge's favour – by a mere 7 points overall, a close, but by no means closest, result in the contest's 100-year history. Cambridge were delighted to end Oxford's seven-year winning streak and grasp the Jock Burnet Trophy in the centenary year of the fixture.

A slightly rejigged Cambridge Women's IV had a similar experience to the Men, finding themselves very much in the hunt, just 5 points down, after the Singles. The Doubles also balanced out, with each side consisting of an experienced pair and a less familiar pairing, and it was one particular game that enabled Oxford to accrue a further 5 points and thus retain the Silver Salver by 121-111 in the closest match since the fixture was initiated in 2015.

Oxford Beavers continued the pattern of recent years in dominating their match with the Cambridge Sparrows, showing greater experience in both Singles and Doubles, but the Cambridge 1st pair had the satisfaction of preventing an Oxford clean sweep by winning their final two games decisively. Sadly, not for the first time, there was no Fist of Iron to award to the Dark Blues.

A vote of thanks goes to our new organiser, Viola King Forbes, one of the small but distinguished group of players to have represented both universities. Our thanks also in his absence to her predecessor, Marcus Bate, who took over from David Barnes in 2020, for his generous service to the fixture. And to St Paul's for their hosting of this most competitive but congenial annual event.

## **Scores**

### **Men's Match (Oxford names first)**

#### **Singles**

1. S Wu (St Hilda's) bt MJN Cloke Browne (Downing) 15-6
2. JOS Hanton (Reuben) lost to ED Thursfield (Fitzwilliam) 12-15
3. SC Ion (Magdalen) lost to JI Milburn (Jesus) 12-15
4. AH Whitham (Oriol) bt BS Yass (Downing) 15-12
5. KB Bremner (Christ Church) lost to FJA Kottler (Trinity) 12-15
6. AK Deshmukh (Christ Church) bt R-A Menhart (Peterhouse) 15-2
7. ET Arie (Balliol) lost to JTA Pyman (Emmanuel) 4-15
8. C Ng (Trinity) lost to LS Walton (St John's) 11-15

**[Total 96-95]**

#### **Doubles**

1. Bremner & Wu bt Cloke Browne & Yass 16-14, 15-8; bt Milburn & Thursfield 14-16, 15-11
2. Hanton & Whitham bt Milburn & Thursfield 12-15, 15-8; lost to Cloke Browne & Yass 15-9, 8-15
3. Deshmukh & Ion lost to Kottler & Pyman 15-13, 2-15; bt Menhart & Walton 15-3, 15-9
4. Arie & Ng lost to Menhart & Walton 15-12, 6-15; lost to Kottler & Pyman 0-15, 7-15

**[Total 185-193]**

**Cambridge Men won 288-281**

### **Women's Match (Oxford names first)**

#### **Singles**

1. A Evans (Keble) bt CJ Abercrombie (Caius) 15-9
2. EJ Butler (St Hugh's) bt JK Murphy (Caius) 15-4
3. SF Winter (Balliol) bt IDK Chorley (St Edmund's) 16-15
4. Y Amirouch (Wadham) lost to LJ Osborne-Patterson (Fitzwilliam) 2-15

**[Total 48-43]**

#### **Doubles**

1. Butler & Evans bt Abercrombie & Chorley 15-3, 15-2; bt Murphy & Osborne-Patterson 15-1, 15-2
2. Amirouch & Winter lost to Murphy & Osborne-Patterson 9-15, 1-15; lost to Abercrombie & Chorley 1-15, 2-15

**[Total 73-68]**

**Oxford Women won 121-111**

## **Oxford Beavers versus Cambridge Sparrows**

### **Singles**

1. AJT Cliff (St Anne's) bt MR Ord (Fitzwilliam) 15-5
2. RGE Millard (University) bt IJ Mellis-Glynn (Caius) 15-3
3. AHJ Barnett (Jesus) bt A German (St John's) 15-10
4. EC Dunning (Pembroke) bt D de Castro Silva (Trinity) 15-1

**[Total 60-19]**

### **Doubles**

1. Cliff & Millard bt Mellis-Glynn & Ord 15-1, 15-3; bt de Castro Silva & German 15-1,15-2
2. Barnett & Dunning bt de Castro Silva & German 15-7, 15-8; lost to Mellis-Glynn & Ord 6-15, 7-15

**[Total 103-52]**

**Oxford Beavers won 163-71**

## **Challenger Singles**

Rugby School

Saturday, 22nd February 2025

*Chris Blakeley reports:* We had a great day of Fives at Rugby. Two courts in continuous use from just after 10am until soon after 5pm concluding with, appropriately, two former Rugbeians playing the deciding match in the Plate, William Milne getting the better of Arthur Noble.

In the main draw the pick of the QFs was the close encounter between Ander Iraizoz and Theo Vernacchio, with Theo winning 15-12 and then going on to win a topsy-turvey semi against the #2 seed Charlie Lacewing. The Bowl featured four strong players (QF losers), with the last game between the two players who had won both of their previous games. Val Fikhter coming back from. 3-6 to win 11-9.

In the Main Final, despite Theo Vernacchio's excellent play throughout the day to defeat both the #3 and #2 seeds Terry McElvaney found a way to win with a display of powerful hitting, consistent with the way he had despatched his earlier opponents and fully justified his top seeding.

Thanks to all the players for turning up on time, and for demonstrating the flexibility required to keep to the schedule. Thanks also to Herman Fikhter for setting up cameras in both courts to record the whole day's events. We look forward to the edited highlights which will appear later on the RFA YouTube account. Finally, thanks to Ben Lane and Rugby School Sports Centre for hosting us and for providing sandwiches, cakes, tea and coffee to keep us sustained.

### **Scores**

**1st round:** V.Fikhter bt A.Noble 15-0; D.Schultz bt D.Wright 15-7; T.McGuire bt M.Wells 15-1; A.Iraizoz bt W.Milne 15-3; T.Vernacchio bt A.Hutchinson 15-1; P.Harrison bt B.Lane 15-2

**Quarter-finals:** T.McElvaney bt Fikhter 15-4; McGuire bt Schultz 15-9; Vernacchio bt Iraizoz 15-12; C.Lacewing bt Harrison 15-2

**Semi-finals:** McElvaney bt McGuire 11-7, 11-9; Vernacchio bt Lacewing 11-7, 2-11, 11-6

**Final:** T.McElvaney bt T.Vernacchio 11-5, 11-6

**Plate:** 1st W.Milne; 2nd A.Noble

**Bowl:** 1st V.Fikhter; 2nd A.Iraizoz

## South East Girls Regional Championships

Christ's Hospital, Horsham  
Thursday, 27th February 2025

A small but traditionally enjoyable tournament with three schools competing in three age categories, dominated this year by young players from Alleyn's School. Several of those involved will compete in the Girls Schools National Championships at Marlborough College in late March.

### Selected Results

#### U18 Singles

Winner: T-R Foo (Alleyn's); Runner-up: D Dunkley (Eastbourne)  
Plate: D Barrow (Eastbourne); 2nd Plate: A Williams (Eastbourne)

#### U18 Doubles

Winners: Alleyn's 1 (T-R Foo & D Tiwari); Runners-up: Eastbourne 1 (D Barrow & D Dunkley)  
Plate: Eastbourne 2 (N Bathard-Smith & A Williams)

#### U16 Singles

Winner: A Brown (Alleyn's); Runner-up: S McFarlane (Eastbourne)  
Plate: E Helm (Eastbourne)

#### U16 Doubles

Winners: Alleyn's 1 (S Antonova & A Brown); Runners-up: Alleyn's 2 (I De Soyza & K Eley)  
Plate: Eastbourne 1 (E Helm & S McFarlane)

#### U14 Singles

Winner: A Ratto (Alleyn's); Runner-up: I Lewis (Alleyn's)  
Plate: E Butler (Alleyn's); 2nd Plate: G Anyanwu (Christ's Hospital)

#### U14 Doubles

Winner: Alleyn's 3 (S Antonova & F Dorman); Runners-up: Alleyn's 1 (E Butler & I Lewis)  
Plate: Alleyn's 2 (H Hay & A Ratto)

## North of England Open

Durham University Fives Courts  
Saturday/Sunday, 1-2 March 2025

**Stop Press:** Unfortunately, train cancellations caused several players from London to drop out, reducing the entry to 14 Singles players and just 5 pairs for the Doubles. In Saturday's Singles, matches went with seeding, but not before Val Fikhter and Simon Beattie had taken Stuart Scott and Lewis Keates respectively to three games. Both semi-finals and the final itself were comfortable two-game victories, and the strong favorite, Ben Beltrami, duly won the event. The two plates were competitive, with first-round-loser William Milne showing his increasing strength in beating Dan Swinbank and with Val Fikhter winning all three games in the 2nd Plate arranged for losing quarter-finalists.

In the Doubles a ten-match round robin produced a medal match between Aquilina & Beltrami and Fikhter & Keates, won comfortably and predictably by the former pairing. The Plate went to home players Beattie & Scott.

Huge thanks as ever to organiser Julian and to hosts, the City of Durham Club.

### Singles

**1st round:** R Guthrie bt A Noble 11-4, 11-3; V Fikhter bt P Fleming 11-2, 11-0; S Scott bt P Maddison 11-3, 11-0; L Keates bt M Wells 11-0, 11-0; S Beattie bt W Milne 11-2, 11-2; J Smith bt D Swinbank 11-1, 11-8

**Quarter-finals:** B Beltrami bt Guthrie 11-0, 11-3; Scott bt Fikhter 12-10, 6-11, 11-5; Keates bt Beattie 9-11, 11-3, 11-2; J Aquilina bt Smith 11-8, 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Beltrami bt Scott 11-1, 11-0; Aquilina bt Keates 11-7, 11-3

**Final:** Beltrami bt Aquilina 11-5, 11-2

**Plate:** Milne bt Swinbank 11-9, 11-4

**2nd Plate:** 1st Fikhter W3; 2nd Beattie W2; 3rd Smith W1

## Doubles

**Group:** 1st Aquilina & Beltrami; 2nd Fikhter & Keates; 3rd Beattie & Scott; 4th Milne & Noble; 5th Fleming & Wells

**Final:** Aquilina & Beltrami bt Fikhter & Keates 11-5, 11-7

**Plate:** Beattie & Scott

## Colquhoun Trophy

Marlborough College

Sunday, 2nd March 2025

*Giles Munn reports:* In this year's Colquhoun Trophy tournament, despite some last minute drop-outs due to illness and injury, we had a total of 23 players from Marlborough College, Marlborough Town, Sherborne and Winchester. All four finalists may well have been from Winchester College, but there was strong competition, in particular from Marlborough's top U16 H Fletcher and U18 M Di Gleria, who both lost out in hard fought 3-set semi-finals. In the U18 final T Munaretto-Day played against fellow Wykehamist P Mannion-Miles in a repeat of last year's U16 final. However, this time Munaretto-Day came out victorious. In the U16 final F Coleman beat a tired but determined M Zhang. The U18 Plate was an all-Sherborne affair, and the two U16 Plates went to players from Winchester.

## U18 Results

**Group A:** P Mannion-Miles (WC) 4 wins, 44pts; T Munaretto-Day (WC) 3 wins, 38pts; J Moesel (Sher) 2 wins, 33pts; J Graham (Sher) 1 win, 11pts; I Corrie (Marl) 0 wins, 19pts.

**Group B:** M Di Gleria (Marl) 4 wins, 44pts; Z Goulding (WC) 3 wins, 37pts; J Liu (WC) 2 wins, 30pts; L Wyman (Marl) 1 win, 26pts; T Moesel (Sher) 0 wins, 24pts.

**Semi-Finals:** P Mannion-Miles (WC) bt Z Goulding (WC) 11-6, 11-7; T Munaretto-Day (WC) bt M Di Gleria (Marl) 1-11, 11-6, 11-8

**Final:** T Munaretto-Day (WC) bt P Mannion-Miles (WC) 11-8, 11-4.

**Plate:** J Moesel (Sher) bt T Moesel (Sher) 11-2.

## U16 Results

**1st round:** H Franks (WC) bt A Wilson (Sher) 15-1; W Ashley (Marl Twn) bt W Lee (WC) 15-8; M Zhang (WC) bt A Tursi (Sher) 15-3; C Wilson (WC) bt R Xie (Marl) 15-1; R Fletcher (WC) bt H Bishop (Sher) 15-0.

**Quarter-Finals:** F Coleman (WC) bt H Franks (WC) 11-7, 11-2; L Carnegie (WC) bt W Ashley (Marl Twn) 11-6, 11-5; M Zhang (WC) bt C Wilson (WC) 11-2, 12-10; H Fletcher (Marl) bt R Fletcher (WC) 11-7, 11-8.

**Semi-Finals:** F Coleman (WC) bt L Carnegie (WC) 11-1, 11-5; M Zhang (WC) bt H Fletcher (Marl) 11-9, 5-11, 11-8.

**Final:** F Coleman (WC) bt M Zhang (WC) 11-7, 11-4.

**1st Plate:** W Lee (WC) 4 wins, 44pts; A Tursi (Sher) 3 wins, 42pts; R Xie (Marl) 2 wins, 29pts; A Wilson (Sher) 1 wins, 23pts; H Bishop (Sher) 0 wins, 16pts.

**2nd Plate:** C Wilson (WC) 3 wins, 33pts; W Ashley (Marl Twn) 2 wins, 30pts; H Franks (WC) 1 win, 28pts; R Fletcher (WC) 0 wins, 23pts.

## RFA Mixed (Equaliser) Doubles

Alleyn's School, Dulwich

Sunday, 2nd March 2025

*Savanna Leboff reports:* On a day filled with fives and fun and sunshine, nine pairs, roughly balanced in ability in this mixed doubles equaliser tournament, played in the group stages.

Aroop Bhattacharya & Kirsten Bell/Helena Tunks (a mid-group handover due to injury) and Adam Hutchinson & Lizzie Ware convincingly won their respective groups. Second place in both groups was hotly contested, with Abhishek Bhattacharya & Sophia Breese and Joe Garratt & Sophie Lundie narrowly reaching the semi-finals on points difference.

In the semi-finals, the group stage winners maintained their good form and made it to the final in straight games. The final was a thriller, with Aroop & Helena winning the first game 11-9, but they ultimately lost the subsequent two games against Adam Hutchinson & Lizzie Ware to 6.

The Plate had a round robin format, with the cumulative points determining the winner. Sarthak Garella & Cat Bar beat Ed Carr & Eimear McKnight by 1 point, earning them the glory (if not the physical manifestation) of the Plate.

### Scores

**Group A:** 1st Ar.Bhattacharya & K.Bell; 2nd Ab.Bhattacharya & Sophia Breese; 3rd W.Hanley & S.Leboff; 4th I.Ackland & E.McKnight.

**Group B:** 1st A.Hutchinson & L.Ware; 2nd B.Baral & H.Tunks; 3rd J.Garratt & S.Lundie; 4th E.Carr & E. van Els; 5th C.Bar & S.Garella.

**Semi-finals:** Bhattacharya & Bell/Tunks bt Garratt & Lundie 11-5, 11-7; Hutchinson & Ware bt Bhattacharya & Sophia Breese 11-5, 11-5.

**Final:** Adam Hutchinson & Lizzie Ware bt Aroop Bhattacharya & Helena Tunks 9-11, 11-6, 11-6.

**Plate:** 1st Catherine Bar & Sarthak Garella; 2nd Ed Carr & Eimear McKnight; 3rd Will Hanley & Savanna Leboff.

## National U13 Championships

St Paul's School, Barnes  
Sunday, 9th March 2025

As ever, a busy and very successful day overall, and particularly so for Berkhamsted. Their number one seed, Oscar Moss, was the standout player of the tournament – comfortable on the left and able to hit winning side nicks with the right whenever he was allowed to come forward. He won the Singles and with his partner, Oli Culpan, also won the Doubles, having already won the Eton Fives Championship last week – despite being still an Under 12! Lucas Manzi, from Durham, made it to the quarter-finals where he lost to Oscar, but took more points off him than anyone else in the tournament. Freya Dornan, from Alleyn's, also made it to the last eight, losing very narrowly to the hard hitting Harry Leiper from Merchiston Castle. Freya had great tactical awareness and calm determination. Nick Pereira Nentwich, also from Alleyn's, showed phenomenal fitness and focus, overcoming Archie McCulloch from Merchiston and then beating Sam Cooper-Rolfe from Berkhamsted in the semi-final in a marathon 15-13. The Doubles final was a hard hitting affair, with Archie and Harry from Merchiston not quite accurate enough to keep the ball off Oscar's strong right hand.

In all 10 schools were represented and 50 players took part. It was a welcome return after some years for both Bloxham and Mount Kelly (formerly Kelly College), who acquitted themselves well and gained valuable experience of tournament play and conditions. The same can be said for the players from Pilgrims', a Fives-playing school who have had success in previous years, enjoying support this year from the President of the RFA. It was also good to see the continuing presence of players from Stoke Newington, of whom Wilf Gilbody was the stand-out. We are always pleased to see players from Scotland venture down to St Paul's, and this year we saw a very promising squad from Merchiston making their mark in both competitions. Likewise the ever keen young players from the City of Durham Club.

The event was excellently managed by Sam Roberts, ably assisted by Alex Smith and Michael Lacewing. Our thanks as ever to St Paul's for the use of their facilities.

Schools and Clubs represented: Alleyn's School, Berkhamsted School, Bloxham School, Christ's Hospital, City of Durham Club, Merchiston Castle School, Mount Kelly, Pilgrims' School, Stamford School and Stoke Newington School.

## U13 Singles

**1st round:** O Moss (Berk) bt D Northmore (MtKel) 11-0; L Manzi (Dur) bt D White (Merc) 11-8; F Dornan (All) bt S Stokes (Dur) 11-6; H Leiper (Merc) bt M Usselmann (All) 11-3; A McCulloch (Merc) bt J Tingle (Dur) 11-0; N Pereira Nentwich (All) bt M Boyd (Merc) 11-2; A Bhakoo (Berk) bt T Dreher (MtKel) 11-3; S Cooper-Rolfe (Berk) bt J Walker (Merc) 11-1

**Quarter-finals:** Moss bt Manzi 11-6; Leiper bt Dornan 12-10; Pereira Nentwich bt McCulloch 11-6; Cooper-Rolfe bt Bhakoo 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Moss bt Leiper 15-2; Pereira Nentwich bt Cooper-Rolfe 15-13

**Final:** O Moss (Berkhamsted) bt N Pereira Nentwich (Alleyn's) 11-2, 11-5

**Third-place match:** S Cooper-Rolfe (Berkhamsted) bt H Leiper (Merchiston Castle) 11-5

## Plate

**1st round:** L King (Stam) bt W Cornish (Blox) 11-10; O Walden (MtKel) bt B Cato (Blox) 11-8

**2nd round:** King bt T Vines (Stam) 11-1; L Pippet (Dur) bt O Culpan (Berk) 11-4; J Wright (CHosp) bt F Rai (All) 11-10; J Hartwright (Pilg) bt K Mills 11-6; W Gilbody (StoNew) bt C Line (Blox) 11-3; J Kapil (All) bt H Miller (Dur) 11-6; H Coleman (Pilg) bt M Rogerson (CHosp) 11-7; S Antonova (All) bt Walden 11-2

**Quarter-finals:** Pippet bt King 11-3; Wright bt Hartwright 11-3; Gilbody bt Kapil 11-3; Coleman bt Antonova 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Pippet bt Wright 15-10; Coleman bt Gilbody 15-8

**Final:** L Pippet (City of Durham) bt H Coleman (Pilgrims') 15-8

**3rd-place match:** W Gilbody (Stoke Newington) bt J Wright (Christ's Hospital) 15-7

## U13 Doubles

**1st round:** Merchiston 1 bt Christ's Hospital 2 11-0; Pilgrims' 1 bt City of Durham 1 11-7; Merchiston 2 bt Alleyn's 2 11-3; Stoke Newington 1 bt Alleyn's 4 15-4; Mount Kelly 1 bt Christ's Hospital 1 11-1; Berkhamsted 2 bt Stamford 1 11-1; Alleyn's 1 bt Merchiston 3 15-7; Berkhamsted 1 bt Bloxham 2 11-0

**Quarter-finals:** Merchiston 1 bt Pilgrims' 1 15-0; Merchiston 2 bt Stoke Newington 1 15-1; Berkhamsted 2 bt Mount Kelly 1 15-4; Alleyn's 1 bt Berkhamsted 1 15-10

**Semi-finals:** Merchiston 1 bt Merchiston 2 15-6; Berkhamsted 2 bt Alleyn's 1 15-5

**Final:** Berkhamsted 2 (Culpan & Moss) bt Merchiston Castle 1 (Leiper & McCulloch) 11-6, 11-6

## Plate

**1st round:** Mount Kelly 2 bt Christ's Hospital 3 11-3; Alleyn's 3 bt Stamford 2 11-4; Bloxham 2 bt Pilgrims' 2 12-10; Christ's Hospital 1 bt Durham 1 11-6; Merchiston 3 bt Alleyn's 2 11-7; Durham 2 bt Stamford 1 11-1; Bloxham 1 bt Pilgrims' 3 11-9; Alleyn's 4 bt Christ's Hospital 2 11-4

**Quarter-finals:** Mount Kelly 2 bt Alleyn's 3 15-9; Bloxham 2 bt Christ's Hospital 1 11-9; Durham 2 bt Merchiston 3 15-10; Alleyn's 4 bt Bloxham 1 11-5

**Semi-finals:** Mount Kelly 2 bt Bloxham 2 15-7; City of Durham 2 bt Alleyn's 4 15-8

**Final:** City of Durham 2 (Manzi & Tingle) bt Mount Kelly 2 (Anthony & Northmore) 11-6

## Open Winchester Fives Doubles Championship

Winchester College

Sunday, 16th March 2025

After victories in 2015 and 2023 Dan Grant and Dan Tristao pulled off a hat-trick at the first National Winchester Fives Doubles Championship to be played on the new courts at Winchester College, popularly known as the Barnes Bridge — named after the magnificent trophy. In the final they beat new pairing Ed Kay and Dave Butler. Winchester College pupils Jeffrey Chan and Anthony Cloke Browne won a very competitive Plate for first-match losers, and Lewis Keates and Tom Maconie won a tough three-gamer against Freddie Hammond Giles and Sam Roberts in the 2nd Plate for quarter-final losers. The Plate final, for 1st-round-of-the-Plate losers, was an all-Cambridge contest won by Savanna Leboff and Emrys Thursfield.

*Organiser Harry Akerman reports on A Thrilling Day of Winchester Fives at the Barnes Bridge*

A busy day on the stunning new Winchester College Fives courts saw 52 players battle for the Barnes Bridge and various plate competitions. After over 10 hours of intense play, top seeds Dan Tristao & Dan Grant emerged victorious, overcoming third seeds Ed Kay & Dave Butler in a high-quality final.

The tournament featured countless exciting matches. Round two nearly saw two seeds fall, as Steve Coffey & Ben Hale stunned fourth seeds Julian Aquilina & James Tilston by racing to a 7-0 lead. However, Julian and James fought back to edge a 15-13 win. Meanwhile, Sam Roberts & Freddie Hammond Giles sought revenge against Shinan Zhang & Penn Chai, who had beaten them in last year's plate final. This time, Sam and Freddie prevailed 16-14 in a sadly single-game contest.

In the quarter-finals, Julian and James again struggled early on, losing the first game 11-1 to Tom Maconie & Lewis Keates. A tense second game saw match points for Tom and Lewis, but the fourth seeds clawed through 12-10 before sealing victory 11-3. The semi-finals saw Dan and Dan overcoming Julian and James reasonably comfortably, while Ed and Dave battled second seeds Ben Beltrami & Theo Parker in a gripping encounter. The momentum swung back and forth, but despite some dazzling play from Ben and Theo, Ed and Dave edged through 16-14, 3-15, 15-12.

The opening game of the final could have gone either way, with Ed and Dave earning six game points, three of which were won by unreturnable serves from Dan Grant. The second game was more controlled by the Dans, who secured a hard-fought 16-14, 15-10 victory.

### Plate Competitions

Twice defending plate champions Shinan & Penn fell to Steve Coffey & Ben Hale in a thriller (11-9, 12-10), but that left Steve and Ben spent for the final, where Winchester schoolboys Jeffrey Chan & Anthony Cloke Browne triumphed 11-7, 11-3.

A quarter-finalists' plate saw Simon Fraser & Richard Guthrie push Tom and Lewis to three games before falling in the decider. Tom and Lewis then edged Sam and Freddie in another marathon 3-game match (11-5, 5-11, 11-9). Meanwhile, the 'PlatePlate' (for first-round plate losers) featured an all-Cambridge showdown, where Emrys Thursfield & Savanna Leboff defeated Helena Tunks & Sarthak Garella.

This was a fantastic day of Winchester Fives in a world-class new sporting facility. Typically, pre-tournament worries revolve around sweating courts, but now the challenge is figuring out how to host a regular Winchester event while keeping the Barnes Bridge on tour!

A huge thank you to all 52 players and their supporters who travelled from Scotland, Manchester, Leeds, Derby, Cambridge, London... And, a special thanks for those who made it for the post-tournament curry!

**Relive it all again!** For those wanting to watch the video of the **semi-final** and **highlights** of Ben & Theo versus Ed & Dave, and also the full video of the **final**, plus **highlights**, go to [www.wessexfivesclub.org.uk](http://www.wessexfivesclub.org.uk)

### Scores

**1st round:** K Bremner & S Ion bt S Leboff & E Thursfield 15-8; J Birch & T Hebblethwaite bt S Garella & H Tunks 15-7; S Fraser & R Guthrie bt G Matthews & R Wilson 15-0; J Chan & A Cloke Browne bt R Beard & A Upton 15-3; S Coffey & B Hale bt R Christie & R Thompson 15-11; J Smith & L Walton bt H Fearon & M Ord 15-3; P Chai & S Zhang bt D Sheppard & D Spiegal 15-1; JP Cheng & E Hawke bt Ab Bhattacharya & Ar Bhattacharya 15-1; D Fox & J Minta bt B Callaghan & C Lacewing 15-8; A James-Duff & R James-Duff bt N Arnott & M Studdard 15-0

**2nd round:** D Grant & D Tristao bt Bremner & Ion 15-2; Fraser & Guthrie bt Birch & Hebblethwaite 15-6; L Keates & T Maconie bt Chan & Cloke Browne 15-10; J Aquilina & J Tilston bt Coffey & Hale 15-13; D Butler & E Kay bt Smith & Walton 15-1; F Hammond Giles & S Roberts bt Chai & Zhang 16-14; Cheng & Hawke bt Fox & Minta 15-7; B Beltrami & T Parker bt James-Duff & James-Duff 15-1

**Quarter-finals:** Grant & Tristao bt Fraser & Guthrie 125-4, 15-1; Aquilina & Tilston bt Keates & Maconie 1-11, 12-10,

11-3; Butler & Kay bt Hammond Giles & Roberts 11-5, 11-1; Beltrami & Parker bt Cheng & Hawke 11-1, 11-2  
**Semi-finals:** Grant & Tristao bt Aquilina & Tilston 15-8, 15-5; Butler & Kay bt Beltrami & Parker 16-14, 3-15, 15-12  
**Final:** Grant & Tristao bt Butler & Kay 16-14, 15-10

**Plate:** Chan & Cloke Browne bt Coffey & Hale 11-7, 11-3  
**2nd Plate:** Keates & Maconie bt Hammond Giles & Roberts 11-5, 5-11, 11-9  
**PlatePlate:** Leboff & Thursfield bt Garella & Tunks 8-11, 11-6, 11-5

## The National Schools Girls Championships

Marlborough College  
Sunday, 23rd March 2025

**STOP PRESS** The senior pair from Blundell's, Mitchell and Talbot, did the double once more, winning the Singles and Doubles as they had done last year at Oundle. The substantial squad from Alleyn's dominated the three younger categories, winning Singles and Doubles titles at U16, U14 and U13. Congratulations go to Barrow and Dunkley for their efforts in the U18 contests, to the lone player from Bloxham who picked up the 3rd place in the U16 Singles, and to the young players from Eastbourne, Stamford and Marlborough who defied the onslaught of players from South East London to pick up medals and plates in both Singles and Doubles.

### Scores

#### U18 Singles

**Group A:** 1st D Tiwari (All); 2nd D Dunkley (Eastb); 3rd N Talbot (Blun); 4th X Barton (Marl)  
**Group B:** 1st D Barrow (Eastb); 2nd A Guo (All); 3rd S Fellows (Eastb)  
**Group C:** 1st E Erdmeier (All); 2nd I Steed (Eastb); 3rd L Fitzherbert (Blun)  
**Group D:** 1st J Mitchell (Blun); 2nd J Ho (All); 3rd N Bathard-Smith (Eastb)

**Quarter-finals:** Mitchell bt Guo 11-6; Erdmeier bt Dunkley 11-5; Tiwari bt Steed 11-3; Barrow bt Ho 11-0  
**Semi-finals:** Mitchell bt Erdmeier 15-0; Barrow bt Tiwari 15-10  
**Final:** J Mitchell (Blundell's) bt D Barrow (Eastbourne) 15-9  
**3rd place match:** D Tiwari (Alleyn's) bt E Erdmeier (Alleyn's) 15-8  
**Plate:** N Bathard-Smith (Eastbourne)

#### U18 Doubles

**Quarter-finals:** Eastbourne 1 bt Eastbourne/Blundell's 15-4; Alleyn's 2 bt Eastbourne 2 15-4  
**Semi-finals:** Eastbourne 1 bt Alleyn's 1 15-10; Blundell's 1 bt Alleyn's 2 15-6  
**Final:** Blundell's (J Mitchell & N Talbot) bt Eastbourne 1 (D Barrow & D Dunkley) 15-5  
**3rd place match:** Alleyn's 2 (J Ho & D Tiwari) bt Alleyn's 1 (E Erdmeier & A Guo)  
**Plate:** Eastbourne 2 (S Fellows & I Steed) bt Eastbourne/Blundell's (N Bathard-Smith & L Fitzherbert)

#### U16 Singles

**Group A:** 1st T-R Foo (All); 2nd I de Soyza (All); 3rd N Brown (Blox)  
**Group B:** 1st A Brown (All); 2nd F Hebblethwaite (All); 3rd K Eley (All)

**Semi-finals:** A Brown bt N Brown 15-3; Foo bt Hebblethwaite 15-0  
**Final:** A Brown (Alleyn's) bt T-R Foo (Alleyn's) 11-7, 11-7  
**3rd place match:** N Brown (Bloxham) bt F Hebblethwaite (Alleyn's) 15-7  
**Plate:** K Eley (Alleyn's) bt I de Soyza (Alleyn's)

**U16 Doubles:** 1st Alleyn's 1 (A Brown & F Hebblethwaite); 2nd Alleyn's 2 (K Eley & I de Soyza); 3rd Marlborough (B Davies & D Michaelis)

#### **U14 and U13 Singles [Group stage combined; knock-out separate]**

**Group A:** 1st S Antonova (All); 2nd F Dornan (All); 3rd E Morris (Stam)

**Group B:** 1st A Ratto (All); 2nd A Dennison (Stam); 3rd T Cannon (All); 4th S Vasdev (Eastb)

**Group C:** 1st I Lewis (All); 2nd E Butler (All); 3rd A Kasar (Eastb)

#### **U14 Singles**

**Final:** A Ratto (Alleyn's) bt A Kasar (Eastbourne) 15-1

**Bronze:** S Vasdev (Eastbourne)

**Plate:** A Dennison (Stamford)

**U14 Doubles:** 1st Alleyn's (I Lewis & A Ratto); 2nd Marlborough (M Grader & D Scott); 3rd Eastbourne (A Kasar & S Vasdev)

#### **U13 Singles knock-out**

**Quarter-finals:** E Butler (All) bt A Dennison (Stam) 11-7; F Dornan (All) bt S Antonova (All) 11-8; E Morris (Stam) bt T Cannon (All)

**Semi-finals:** I Lewis (All) bt Butler 11-6; Dornan bt Morris 11-1

**Final:** F Dornan (Alleyn's) bt I Lewis (Alleyn's) 11-9

**Bronze** E Butler (Alleyn's) bt E Morris (Stamford) 11-6

**Plate:** S Antonova (Alleyn's) bt A Dennison (Stamford) 11-7

**U13 Doubles:** 1st Alleyn's 1 (S Antonova & F Dornan); 2nd Stamford (A Dennison & E Morris); 3rd Alleyn's 2 (E Butler & T Cannon)

## **National Schools Championships**

St Paul's School, Barnes

29-31 March 2025

*Organiser Theo Parker reports:* Approximately 130 players from 18 schools and clubs took part in the National Schools Championships held, as usual, at St Paul's School across their reliable 6 courts. Whilst the weather outside was sunny, the indoor viewing gallery remained packed throughout, with players, teachers, parents and other interested supporters all keen to take in as much of the high quality and fiercely contested fives as possible.

In the U14s, organiser Alex Smith had his work cut-out trying to squeeze 47 singles and 23 doubles entries playing across two main and three plate competitions into only three courts over two days. But the seemingly impossible was made possible – despite Alex's 3hr+ commute – and the result was a festival of fives, with many players experiencing competitive tournament match play for the first time.

The standard in the singles competition was high, with the Scottish contingent from Edinburgh Academy and Merchiston dominating much of the latter stages. Three players from Edinburgh Academy reached the semi-finals – J. Taylor, F. Derry, and L. Clark (the latter having overcome a notably long quarter-final against Robinson from Winchester) – but were joined by W. Gordon from Merchiston, who had reached the same stage a year young last year and looked like he would take some stopping with powerful play off both hands. And so it proved, with Gordon dispatching Derry in one semi before taking on Clark in the final. Clark, however, displayed a huge amount of tenacity and running, able to soak up pressure and looking to wear Gordon down. The first game was very close, but Gordon just held on to win it 12-10. The second game was equally hard-fought, but with the one game advantage, Gordon's superior power, enabling him to find back nicks, eventually told and he was able to win and claim the title, 12-10 11-6. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> place play-off (an innovation

for 2025), Taylor beat Derry 11-5. In the plate singles, other schools all made progress, including Mount Kelly, who have only just started to play fives once more and acquitted themselves admirably. In the plate final, S. Lim from St Paul's beat another solid Academy player, A. Ligertwood, 15-12.

In the U14 doubles, again the Scottish schools looked strong. Edinburgh Academy 1 (Taylor & Derry) overcame their opponents in an epic three-game semi-final against Merchiston 1 (Gordon & McKean) which lasted for over an hour and had many twists and turns. Through to the final, their opponents were St Paul's 1 (J. Hammond Giles & T. Outred), who had themselves got through a tight semi-final, this time in two games against Winchester's pair of B. Robinson & B. Tucker). The final was a mixture of competing styles, left-handed and right-handed players in both pairs. Hammond Giles' right hand was a weapon to contend with, but ultimately Taylor & Derry were able to display a superior all-round game throughout and came through deserved winners 11-4 11-2. In the plate competition, another all-Scottish final took place, this time with Edinburgh Academy 2 overcoming Merchiston 2 in the final (11-11-0). And in the bowl (for quarter-final losers), it was fantastic to see Stoke Newington School – another relative newcomer to competitive fives – win, beating Stamford 1 11-7 11-5 in the final.

We now look forward to welcoming back many of the U14s for the U16 championships next year.

In the U16s, with last year's singles winner, V. Fikhter from Manchester Y Club, still eligible for the competition, the question was whether anyone was going to be able to challenge him. Fikhter, already an experienced player in regional adult tournaments, made serene progress to Monday morning's final, beating players from Alleyn's and Edinburgh Academy (including this year's U18 Scottish Singles Champion, J. Lawrie) along the way. Lawrie had himself come through an epic three-game quarter-final against F. Coleman from Winchester (10-12 12-10 11-6). On the other side things were a bit harder to predict, with N. Cortas (SPS), this year's West of England Schools U16 winner, meeting W. Henry (last year's U14 National Champion) in the semi-final. It was a close game, but Cortas's clean left-hand hitting and home court advantage told with an 11-8 11-6 win. Which brings us to the final. In front of the packed gallery at 9am on Monday, many spectators thought that Fikhter might win comfortably. Initially, this opinion looked misplaced, with Cortas putting a huge amount of pressure on Fikhter in the early stages, with precise hitting down the left wall and a number of right wall nicks. However, Fikhter composed himself, cut out any unforced errors, and began to impose his game upon Cortas. Hitting powerfully with both hands, and in particular targeting Cortas's weaker right hand, Val was able to remain in control throughout most of the rest of the final, winning both games to 5. It was a great final, and we look forward to watching both players move into the U18s next year.

In the doubles, the smart money was on Edinburgh Academy, made up of the two singles SF losers Lawrie & Henry (who will be playing their singles 3<sup>rd</sup> place play-off back home!). And so it proved, with EA reaching the final comfortably. On the other side, both SPS 1 and Winchester 1 looked strong. However, with SPS 1 taken to three games by Winchester 2 in the quarter-final, it was perhaps unsurprising that Winchester 1 proved too strong for them in the SF. And so to the final, which on paper (based on singles results) looked like an EA win. But doubles and singles are very different games (as the organiser is often keen to stress) and it was immediately clear that this was going to be an incredibly close final. In the first game EA scraped through 11-8 only for Winchester 1 (F. Coleman & C Wilson) to reverse this scoring in the second game, with Coleman in particular hitting some fantastic right-hand winners. So it came down to a 3<sup>rd</sup> game and again it was standing room only on the balcony, with many teachers and parents hardly able to take the pressure! Eventually, however, Lawrie & Henry managed to get a lead which they held onto, despite many rotations of serve inbetween, to take the title 11-5 in the third.

Finally, in the plate competition, we had another all-Scottish affair, much anticipated, between Fettes and Edinburgh Academy, this time with the Fettes pair of McCreath & Fraser coming through 15-13.

Which leaves, last but certainly not least, the U18 competitions. As with the U16s, we had a set of returning defending champions: F. Hammond Giles (St Paul's) in the singles and with his partner, J. Ferro, in the doubles.

Starting with the singles, it was soon clear that Hammond Giles was the player to beat, not only as the defending U18 Singles Champion but moreover as this year's U25 Singles Champion. And so it proved, with no player able to get more than one point off him across the whole championships. Such dominance is testament to Hammond Giles's unusual skill

and gameplay maturity, particularly for a school-age player, as well as his dedication to continue improving his game in the year since his last win. Hammond Giles still has one more year left, and will be aiming for an unprecedented treble of U18 singles and doubles wins. But his opponents, notably Y. Negyal (Alleyn's) in the semi-final and C. Lacewing (Christ's Hospital) in the final on Monday morning, shouldn't consider this as an indictment of their own game. Far from it, as Wayne Enstone emphasized when kindly handing out the trophies, they – along with the other losing semi-finalist, J. Chan (Winchester) – may well have had a good chance of being champion in any other year. And Wayne knows a thing or two about fives!

In the plate final, S. McMurrin (Bedford) overcame a packed field of closely fought matches to win against C. Sharpe of Stamford, 15-5, but then promptly left without collecting his winner's medal – it will be on its way to him soon!

In the doubles, Hammond Giles & Ferro once again proved too strong for all opponents. As a left-hand/right-hand combination they are formidable at school level, with winners coming from both sides of the court, Ferro's power and accuracy off the left a real highlight for spectators and reminding some of another exceptional SPS right/left school pairing from a few years back, Arnold & Beltrami. In the final, they were ultimately too strong for Chan & Cloke Browne of Winchester, but the Winchester pair should be proud of their skill and efforts, not least in the incredibly high quality semi-final – certainly one of the matches of the tournament – which they won against Alleyn's 1 12-11, 11-9. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> place play-off Alleyn's 1 (Negyal & Goodwin) were able to hold off SPS 2 and in the plate doubles there was another close contest between Tonbridge 1 and Fettes 1, with the former (Saunders-Aroma & Carroll) winning 15-12.

The organiser would like to end by thanking St Paul's School for being such generous hosts – particular thanks to MiCs Sam Roberts and James Harrison for all their hard work in setting up and closing down. This year, parents and teachers benefitted from an additional space to relax and have tea and coffee between matches, and this was much appreciated. Thanks also to RFA General Secretary Chris Blakeley and Alex Smith for help with draws and organising various main and plate competitions. Finally, thank you to all the teachers and parents for giving up weekends and holidays to bring their players to London, some from many hundreds of miles away. Looking forward to next year's tournament already!

## Results

### U18 Singles

**1<sup>st</sup> round:** N Wong (Win) bt S Stevenson (Ton) 15-5; S Kurana (All) bt E Scott (Ton) 15-3; T Blythe (All) bt R Jones (Stam) 15-10; F Morgan (Bedf) bt R Fortune (Ton) 15-1  
**2<sup>nd</sup> round:** F Hammond Giles (SPS) bt Wong 15-0; Z Goulding (Win) bt T Jarrold (EdAc) 15-10; L Saunders-Aroma (Ton) bt A Borthwick (Lor) 15-1; M Duncan (Fett) bt A Shaw (All) 15-6; Y Negyal (All) bt X Arkotxa-Lakha (EdAc) 15-0; G Maclay (Fett) bt G Louet (All) 15-8; A Cross (Lor) bt S Richarz (All) 15-13; A Cloke Browne (Win) bt Kurana 15-1; J Chan (Win) bt Blythe 15-0; J Liu (Win) v T Williams (SPS) 15-5; T Ritchie (SPS) bt S McMurrin (Bedf) 15-4; A Goodwin (All) bt E Efthimiou (SPS) 15-0; J Ferro (SPS) bt C Sharpe (Stam) 15-4; O Carroll (Ton) bt B Loughran (Fett) 15-0; C Lacewing (CH) bt Morgan 15-0  
**3<sup>rd</sup> round:** Hammond Giles bt Goulding 11-0, 11-0; Saunders-Aroma bt Duncan 11-3-11-0; Negyal bt Maclay 11-2, 11-0; Cloke Browne bt Cross 11-1, 11-0; Chan bt Liu 11-2, 11-0; Ritchie bt Tang (Fett) 11-1, 11-0; Ferro bt Goodwin 11-8, 2-11, 11-7; Lacewing bt Carroll 11-2, 11-0  
**Quarter-finals:** Hammond Giles bt Saunders-Aroma 11-0, 11-1; Negyal bt Cloke Browne 10-12, 11-2, 11-8; Chan bt Ritchie nsr; Lacewing bt Ferro 11-0, 11-0  
**Semi-finals:** Hammond Giles bt Negyal 11-0, 11-1; Lacewing bt Chan 11-5, 11-0  
**Final:** F Hammond Giles (SPS) bt C Lacewing (CH) 11-1, 11-0  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Place match:** Y Negyal (Alleyn's) bt J Chan (Winchester) w/o  
**Plate:** S McMurrin (Bedford) bt C Sharpe (Stamford) 15-5

### U18 Doubles

**1<sup>st</sup> round:** UCS 1 bt Loretto 15-2; Bedford bt Alleyn's 3 16-15; SPS 3 v UCS 2 15-5  
**2<sup>nd</sup> round:** SPS 1 bt Stamford 2 15-0; YClub/Alleyn's bt EdAc 15-6; SPS 2 v Tonbridge 1 15-9; UCS 1 bt Fettes 1 15-10;

Winchester 1 bt Bedford 15-2; Stamford 1 bt Alleyn's 2 15-4; Winchester 2 bt Fettes 2 15-7; Alleyn's 1 bt SPS 3 15-0  
**Quarter-finals:** SPS 1 v YClub/Alleyn's 11-2, 11-2; SPS 2 bt UCS 1 11-7, 11-5; Winchester 1 bt Stamford 1 11-2, 11-1; Alleyn's 1 bt Winchester 2 11-0, 11-2  
**Semi-finals:** SPS 1 bt SPS 2 11-3, 11-6; Winchester 1 bt Alleyn's 1 12-11, 11-9  
**Final:** SPS1 (J. Ferro & F. Hammond Giles) bt Winchester 1 (J. Chan & A. Cloke Browne) 11-2, 11-2  
**Third place match:** Alleyn's 1 (A Goodwin & Y Negyal) bt SPS 2 (T Ritchie & E Efthimiou) 15-7  
**Plate Final:** Tonbridge (L Saunders-Aroma & O Carroll) bt Fettes 1 (M Duncan & G Maclay) 15-12

## U16 Singles

**1<sup>st</sup> round:** O Graham Maw (SPS) bt J Maxwell-Clark (Fett) 11-8; M Russell (EdAc) bt A Bhalodia (SPS) 15-10; A Brook (Fett) bt O Khanapurkar (SPS) 11-2; T Green (All) bt D Thompson (Ton) 11-0; E Hunter (Stam) bt F Brown (EdAc) 11-1; P Jesuarul (EdAc) bt O Maxwell-Clark (Fett) 11-0; B Mahoney-Muir (Cal) bt I Baijal (SPS) 11-8; W Lee (Win) bt A Brown (All) 11-3; O Zhou (CH) bt B Weir (Fett) 12-11; M Staryk (DerbM) bt E Iacuzzi (All) 11-8; H Franks (Win) bt F Murray (EdAc) 11-6; M Mitchell (EdAc) bt R Taylor (All) 11-5; F Aird (Fett) bt Z Winson Yates (DerbM) 11-1; J Duff (EdAc) bt C Allen (All) 11-0; H Lawrie (EdAc) bt E Scott (All) 11-7  
**2<sup>nd</sup> round:** V Fikhter (ManY) bt Graham Maw 15-0; Russell bt F McAllister (All) 11-8; L Carnegie (Win) bt Brook 15-4; Green bt F James (EdAc) 15-8; F Coleman (Win) bt Hunter 15-7; R Puri (SPS) bt Jesuarul 15-6; C Wilson (Win) bt Mahoney-Muir 15-13; J Lawrie (EdAc) bt Lee 15-3; W Henry (EdAc) bt Zhou 15-7; Z Okada (SPS) bt Staryk 15-7; L McCreath (Fett) bt Franks 15-10; A Ponte (SPS) bt Mitchell 15-5; H Severino (All) bt Aird 15-8; L Fraser (Fett) bt Duff 15-8; H Fletcher (Marl) v O Zbikowski (EA) 15-4; N Cortas (SPS) bt Lawrie 15-2  
**3<sup>rd</sup> round:** Fikhter bt Russell 11-0, 11-0; Green bt Carnegie 11-4, 11-1; Coleman bt Puri 11-1, 11-6; Lawrie bt Wilson 11-8, 11-4; Henry bt Okada 11-7, 8-11, 11-6; Ponte bt McCreath 11-6, 11-7; Fraser bt Severino 11-2, 6-11, 11-5; Cortas v Fletcher 11-2, 11-1  
**Quarter-finals:** Fikhter bt Green 11-0, 11-0; Lawrie bt Coleman 10-12, 12-10, 11-6; Henry bt Ponte 11-5, 11-3; Cortas bt Fraser 11-3, 11-0  
**Semi-finals:** Fikhter bt Lawrie 11-1, 11-3; Cortas bt Henry 11-8, 11-6  
**Final:** V Fikhter (Manchester Y Club) bt N Cortas (St Paul's) 11-5, 11-5  
**Plate:** F McAllister (Alleyn's) v O Zbikowski (Edinburgh Academy) 15-10

## U16 Doubles

**1<sup>st</sup> round:** Fettes 3 v Tonbridge 15-6; EdAcademy 3 bt SPS 3 15-10; Fettes 2 bt Alleyn's 3 15-9; EdAcademy 4 bt SPS 4 15-0; Winchester 2 bt CalClub 15-7; EdAcademy 5 bt Alleyn's 4 15-0;  
**2<sup>nd</sup> round:** EdAcademy 1 bt Fettes 3 15-1; Derby Moor bt Win/Fettes 15-9; Alleyn's 1 bt EdAcademy 3 15-3; SPS 2 v Fettes 2 15-9; Winchester 1 bt EdAc 4 15-1; EdAc 2 bt Alleyn's 2 16-15; Winchester 2 bt Fettes 1 15-7; SPS 1 bt EdAcademy 5 15-6  
**Quarter-finals:** EdAcademy 1 bt DerbyM 11-5, 11-2; SPS 2 bt Alleyn's 1 11-1, 11-9; SPS 1 bt Winchester 2 11-8, 2-11, 11-4; Winchester 1 bt EdAcademy 4 11-0, 11-7  
**Semi-finals:** EdAcademy 1 bt SPS 2 11-0, 11-8; Winchester 1 bt SPS 1 11-5, 11-3  
**Final:** Edinburgh Academy 1 (W Henry & J Lawrie) bt Winchester 1 (F Coleman & C Wilson) 11-8, 8-11, 11-5  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Place Match:** SPS 1 (N Cortas & Z Okada) bt SPS 2 (R Puri & A Ponte) 15-9  
**Plate Final:** Fettes 1 (L McCreath & L Fraser) bt EdAcademy 5 (P Jesuarul & M Mitchell) 15-13

## U14 Singles

### Group stage

A: 1<sup>st</sup> J Taylor (EdAc); 2<sup>nd</sup> R Kinnear (All); 3<sup>rd</sup> M White (Stoke)  
B: 1<sup>st</sup> K Trichur (SPS); 2<sup>nd</sup> M Whyte (EdAc); 3<sup>rd</sup> T Walton (Stam)  
C: 1<sup>st</sup> L McKean (Merc); 2<sup>nd</sup> J Walker (EdAc); 3<sup>rd</sup> S Lim (SPS)  
D: 1<sup>st</sup> E O'Shea (SPS); 2<sup>nd</sup> R Jamieson (EdAc); 3<sup>rd</sup> H Durnall (MoK)  
E: 1<sup>st</sup> M Hunter (Stam); 2<sup>nd</sup> J Agostino (SPS); 3<sup>rd</sup> R Scanlin (Merc)  
F: 1<sup>st</sup> F Derry (EdAc); 2<sup>nd</sup> D Moon (All); 3<sup>rd</sup> T Vines (Stam)

G: 1<sup>st</sup> T Outred (SPS); 2<sup>nd</sup> M Teague (EdAc); 3<sup>rd</sup> L King (Stam)  
H: 1<sup>st</sup> B Robinson (Win); 2<sup>nd</sup> A Roux (All); 3<sup>rd</sup> A Norton (MoK)  
I: 1<sup>st</sup> W Gordon (Merc); 2<sup>nd</sup> E Hamilton-Boyle; 3<sup>rd</sup> L Scott-Tucker (MoK)  
J: 1<sup>st</sup> T Kininmonth (Stoke); 2<sup>nd</sup> A Ratto (All); 3<sup>rd</sup> A Ligertwood (EdAc)  
K: 1<sup>st</sup> M Khan (Ton); 2<sup>nd</sup> H Dyson (MoK); 3<sup>rd</sup> O Streater (Stam)  
L: 1<sup>st</sup> L Clark (EdAc); 2<sup>nd</sup> B Knight (MoK); 3<sup>rd</sup> E Sampson-Gray (Ton)  
M: 1<sup>st</sup> N Valentine (EdAc); 2<sup>nd</sup> A Tang (Merc); 3<sup>rd</sup> F Whybrow (MoK)  
N: 1<sup>st</sup> B Tucker (Win); 2<sup>nd</sup> D Gilbody (Stoke); 3<sup>rd</sup> H Brooks (SPS); 4<sup>th</sup> M Usselmann (All)  
O: 1<sup>st</sup> J Hammond Giles (SPS); 2<sup>nd</sup> S Luthra (Ton); 3<sup>rd</sup> N Pereira-Nentwich (All)

## Knock-out stage

**1<sup>st</sup> round:** Taylor bt Scott-Thomas 11-0; Tang bt Agostino 11-0; Valentine bt Dyson 11-8; Outred bt Luthra 11-6; Robinson bt Teague 11-1; Kininmonth bt Jamieson 11-0; McKean bt Ratto 11-5; Clark bt Roux 11-0; Hammond Giles bt Moon 11-0; Walker bt Khan 11-4; Tucker bt Durnall 11-0; Derry bt Kinnear 11-0; Gordon bt Whyte 11-1; O'Shea bt Knight 11-1; Gilbody bt Trichur 11-8; Hunter bt Hamilton-Boyle 11-3

**2<sup>nd</sup> round:** Taylor bt Tang 15-3; Valentine bt Outred 15-10; Robinson bt Kininmonth 15-1; Clark bt McKean 15-8; Hammond Giles bt Walker 15-0; Derry bt Tucker 15-4; Gordon bt O'Shea 15-3; Hunter bt Gilbody 11-6

**Quarter-finals:** Taylor bt Valentine 15-1; Clark bt Robinson 15-13; Derry bt Hammond Giles 15-5; Gordon bt Hunter 15-2

**Semi-finals:** Clark bt Taylor 15-4; Gordon bt Derry 15-5

**Final:** W Gordon (Merchiston) bt L Clark (Edinburgh Academy) 12-10, 11-6

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place Match:** J Taylor (EdAc) bt F Derry (EdAc) 11-5

**Plate Final:** S Lim (SPS) bt A Ligertwood (EdAc) 15-12

## U14 Doubles

**1<sup>st</sup> round:** Tonbridge 1 bt Mount Kelly 15-6; Merch. 2 bt Alleyn's 3 15-11; SPS 3 bt Alleyn's 2 15-0; EdAcademy 3 bt SPS 4 15-3; EdAcademy 5 bt Mount Kelly 2 15-5; EdAcademy 4 bt Stamford 2 15-4; Tonbridge 2 bt Alleyn's 1 16-14

**2<sup>nd</sup> round:** EdAc 1 bt Tonbridge 1 15-0; SPS 2 bt Merch 2 16-14; Stamford 1 bt SPS 3 15-5; Merch 1 bt EdAc 3 15-6; SPS 1 bt Tonbridge 2 15-0; Mount Kelly 1 bt EdAc 4 15-13; StokeN bt EdAc 2 15-13; Winchester bt EdAc 5 15-1

**Quarter-finals:** EdAc 1 bt SPS 2 15-2; Merch 1 bt Stamford 1 15-0; SPS 1 bt Mount Kelly 1 15-0; Winchester bt StokeN 15-0

**Semi-finals:** EdAc 1 bt Merch 1 12-10, 3-11, 11-6; SPS 1 bt Winchester 11-6, 11-7

**Final:** Edinburgh Academy 1 (F Derry & J Taylor) bt St Paul's 1 (J Hammond Giles & T Outred) 11-4, 11-2

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place match:** Merchiston 1 (Gordon & McKean) bt Winchester (Robinson & Tucker) nsr

**Plate:** Edinburgh Academy 2 (L Clark & M Whyte) bt Merchiston 2 (A Tang & R Scanlin) 11-8, 11-0

**Bowl:** Stoke Newington School (D Gilbody & T Kininmonth) bt Stamford 1 (M Hunter & O Streater) 11-7, 11-5

## Updated Women's Rankings

4th April 2025

New Women's Rankings in Singles and Doubles, kindly compiled by Chris Burrows, reveal significant gains by young players after the recent National Schools Girls Championships. Jemima Mitchell from Blundell's School, twice a winner of the Singles and Doubles competitions, enters the Top 10 in Singles at #9 and rises from #42 to #18 in the Doubles. Her partner Natalia Talbot rises likewise to #24 in Doubles. Other players from Alleyn's School enjoy substantial progress: Diva Tiwari, Annie Guo and Emily Erdmeier in Singles particularly, plus Daisy Barrow from Eastbourne College. Camille Beattie, Shinan Zhang and Helena Tunks continue as the dominant senior players, with Kirsten Bell, Lizzie Ware, Zara Elliot and Savanna Leboff progressing well in Singles and Sophie Lundie along with Kirsten and Savanna again in Doubles.

The full rankings for over 70 players can be seen at <https://therfa.uk/rankings/>

# Scottish Schools U18 and U16 Championships 2025

Fettes College, February-March 2025

Richie Murby reports on the three Scottish Schools Championships 2025

## The Boyd Trophy for U18 Singles

### Group Stages

*Group A* – 1st: Reggie H (MCS); 2nd: Monty D (Fettes); 3rd: Freddie J (EA); 4th: Ben L (Fettes)

*Group B* – 1st: Jock L (EA); 2nd: Chris T (Fettes); 3rd: Archie B (Loretto); 4th: Jamie D (EA)

*Group C* – 1st: Archie F (Fettes); 2nd: Tom J (EA); 3rd: James R (MCS); 4th: Max R (EA)

*Group D* – 1st: Weems H (EA); 2nd: Geordie M (Fettes); 3rd: Oscar Z (EA); 4th: Nazar B (Loretto)

*Quarter-finals:* Reggie H (MCS) bt Chris T (Fettes) 15-11; Geordie M (Fettes) bt Archie F (Fettes) 15-10; Jock L (EA) bt Monty D (Fettes) 15-11; Weems H (EA) bt Tom J (EA) 15-13

*Semi-finals:* Reggie H (MCS) bt Geordie M (Fettes) 15-13; Jock L (EA) bt Weems H (EA) 15-13

*Final:* Jock L (EA) bt Reggie H (MCS) 11-4, 11-4

### McKeown Plate Competition for U18 Singles

*Quarter-finals:* Freddie J (EA) bt Jamie D (EA) 11-6; James R (MCS) bt Nazar B (Loretto) 11-2; Archie B (Loretto) bt Ben L (Loretto) 11-5; Max R bt Oscar Z (EA) 11-6

*Semi-finals:* James R (MCS) bt Freddie J (EA) 11-6; Max R (EA) bt Archie B (Loretto) 11-3

*Final:* Max R (EA) bt James R (MCS) 15-13

### A banner day for the Edinburgh Academy... and for left-handers!

*Richie Murby reports:* 16 players from four schools donned the gloves for this, the 8th instalment of the Boyd Cup. The draw felt wide open this year, and so it proved — every quarter-final was won by 5 points or fewer, and both semi-finals were won and lost by only two points. This degree of parity made for an unpredictable and highly entertaining day of fives.

With Merchiston's top player Lucas F out with an injury sustained on the eve of the tournament, it was left to Reggie H and James R to fly the flag for their school. James, the youngest player at the tournament and a balanced striker of the ball, did well to reach the Plate final — but he was pipped by EA's creative left-hander, Max R.

Meanwhile Reggie, having sailed through the groups with his high-octane hitting and sharp retrieval, had to fight resolutely to fend off two Fettes opponents in succession; first, the vastly improved Chris T played his best-ever fives to run Reggie close; then in the semi-final Geordie found an escalator of his own, constructing rallies superbly and bringing himself back from 5-12 down to almost take the match. But Reggie held firm and managed to break the 13-13 deadlock to win by two points.

His opponent in the final, EA's Jock L, had come through the groups relatively smoothly, and faced his first stern test against Monty D in the quarter-finals. Monty's big right hand, zany angles and measured inside-out drives down the line caused problems, but Jock was canny enough to make the necessary adjustments.

In the semi-final Jock was run close by fellow EA player Weems, who hit plenty of low, hard fizzers into the corners, but at times undid some of that great work with unforced errors against a slightly more consistent opponent.

Jock's dominant hand, his left, was now swollen and his fingers bruised, but if it was bothering him, it didn't show in the final. He was able to get on top of Reggie's serve, and he played intelligent, patient but aggressive fives against the excellent defending of his opponent, who began to tire under the pressure. He competed valiantly but Jock was too steady

to let his lead in either game slip — and he was able to close out the match 11-4, 11-4, to claim the trophy and become the EA's first Boyd Cup champion.

## **The U18 Doubles Championship**

*Quarter-finals:* Ludo C & Josh T (EA) bt Ben L & Chris T (Fettes) 15-9; Monty D & Geordie M (Fettes) bt Jack D & Lyall R (MCS) 15-7; Prannav J & Murray M (EA) bt Archie B & Jakob S (Loretto) 15-2; Reggie H & Lucas F (MCS) bt Archie F & Tom M (Fettes) 15-4

*Semi-finals:* Monty D & Geordie M (Fettes) bt Ludo C & Josh T (EA) 15-8; Reggie H & Lucas F (MCS) bt Prannav J & Murray M (EA) 15-3

*Final:* Monty D & Geordie M (Fettes) bt Reggie H & Lucas F (MCS) 9-11, 11-5, 11-5

### **Plate Competition**

*Semi-finals:* Jack D & Lyall R (MCS) bt Ben L & Chris T (Fettes) 15-3; Archie F & Tom M (Fettes) 15-4 bt Archie B & Jakob S (Loretto) 15-0

*Plate Final:* Jack D & Lyall R (MCS) bt Archie F & Tom M 16-14 (Fettes) 16-14

*Richie Murby reports:* Fettes was the venue once more for a Scottish Schools competition — this time the U18 doubles. A flurry of call-offs from EA's senior squad handed two of the school's U15 pairings the chance to pit their wits against older opponents. Nor were they satisfied to just make up the numbers, as both pairings won their quarter-finals convincingly — Ludo & Josh overcoming a spirited Fettes III, and Prannav & Murray bossing matters against Loretto.

Despite EA's efforts, Fettes I and Merchiston I were favourites to meet in the final – and were not to be denied. The two EA pairings played well in their respective semi-finals but found themselves boxed out by older opponents and rocked back onto their heels. This made them vulnerable both to cross-court drives and to running-balls, and they learned the hard way how crucial positional astuteness is when you're in a fast game against heavy hitters.

In the first set of the final, Merchiston's Lucas F & Reggie H used excellent high-octane hitting to similar effect as in the semi-finals, as Fettes' Monty D & Geordie M positioned themselves too deep and too upright to be able to spring forward and pick up Lucas F and Reggie H's impressive running-ball attacks, and too static to track down their drives round the walls.

By the time Fettes had tuned into this the first set was gone, but they returned for the second confident that they had made the right adjustments. And so it proved, as they were increasingly able to get into phase with Merchiston's pace and begin to get on the front foot, turning defence into attack and finding widths and nicks. As Merchiston mistakes crept in and home-court muscle-memory kicked in for Monty & Geordie, the latter were able to bring the ship home 9-11, 11-5, 11-5.

Archie F and Tom M looked poised to complete a Fettes Cup and Plate double, up 14-4 as they were in the one-to-fifteen Plate final against Merchiston II. The latter, consisting of the impressive young Colt Jack D and his tough partner Lyall R, survived umpteen game balls through a combination of their own tenacity and the profligacy of Fettes. As the rallies wore on the deficit closed, and with unease growing, the red bar became a magnet for Fettes; Merchiston, meanwhile, minimised their error count and pressed patiently, playing the percentages and keeping their cool to score a famous 16-14 comeback victory.

## **The U16 Doubles Championship**

### **Main Competition**

*Quarter-finals:* Louis M & Lochie F (Fettes) bt Jack R & Nazar B (Loretto) 15-2; Max R & Jamie D (EA) bt James R & Hamish F (MCS) 16-14; Oscar Z & Weems H (EA) bt Jonty C-W & Felix U (Fettes) 15-4; Freddie A & Beau W (Fettes) bt Angus R & Logan M (MCS) 15-13

*Semi-finals:* Oscar Z & Weems H (EA) bt Freddie A & Beau W (Fettes) 15-5; Louis M & Lochie F (Fettes) bt Max R & Jamie D (EA) 15-8

Final: Oscar Z & Weems H (EA) bt Louis M & Lochie F (Fettes) 11-8, 11-2

## Plate

*Semi-finals:* James R & Hamish F (MCS) bt Jack R & Nazar B (Loretto) 15-2; Angus R & Logan M (MCS) bt Jonty C-W & Felix U (Fettes) 15-5

*Final:* James R & Hamish F (MCS) bt Angus R & Logan M (MCS) 15-7

*Richie Murby reports:* As is the traditional format for this competition, 8 pairs from four schools made up the draw and gathered for an evening of knockout fives at the Fettes College courts.

Both EA pairings looked strong from the outset. EA II, comprising Jamie D & Max R, sprang something of an upset against a capable MCS I outfit, squeezing through a tense match by a score of 16-14. They fell at the next hurdle, however, as Fettes I, in the form of Lochie & Louis, played a smart tactical game in the semi-final, finding ways to exploit the opposing pair's left-hander/right-hander dynamics, including at times consciously overruling the classic coaching instruction not to hit the ball down the middle!

Meanwhile, on the other side of the draw, Weems H & Oscar Z, despite not being a regular partnership previously, found themselves in sharp form as a unit. The accurate hitting of Weems and the steady work of the experienced Oscar, cannily playing an "anchorman" role, proved decisive as they marched into the final, overcoming a somewhat green but potential-filled Fettes third pair in the form of Felix & Jonty, and then fending off a lively effort from the increasingly confident and gelling Fettes II pairing of Freddie A & Beau W in the semis.

In the final, then, EA I found themselves playing a Fettes team for the third time in three matches. The latter played well and found themselves in strong positions in many of the rallies – but couldn't always find the shots to convert pressure into points, particularly with the quality of Oscar's defending. Weems, aided by the intelligent support play of his partner, was able to produce pressure and winners at the right times, and the two won an entertaining final 11-8, 11-2.

In the Plate competition, MCS I recovered from their early cup exit by beating Loretto's technically and organisationally developing duo of Nazar & Jack, and setting up an all-Merchiston final. With a solid 15-7 victory over their teammates they secured bragging rights down at the Merchiston courts, and, almost as significantly, the Plate itself!

## National Doubles Championship (Cyriax Cup)

Alleyn's School, Dulwich

Saturday/Sunday, 5-6 April 2025

**STOP PRESS** Defending champions Ed Kay and Dan Tristao made it three in a row and four times in total, beating fellow Old Paulines Ben Beltrami and Theo Parker in a repeat of the 2023 final, thus retaining the coveted Cyriax Cup. In their semi-final Ben and Theo had met Cameron Low and Archie McCreath, who had pulled off the upset of the day in beating Charlie Brooks and Dave Butler in the quarter-finals in straight games.

In an 8-pair Plate competition featuring a substantial number of Alleyn Old Boys Julian Hanton and Ben Kirwan took away the impressive trophy at the expense of Ed Carr and Tom Maconie.

## Scores

**1st round:** E Kay & D Tristao bt JP Cheng & S Ion 15-10, 15-1; P Chai & T McElvaney bt E Carr & T Maconie 15-12, 15-9; G Wiseman & J Toop bt T Hebblethwaite & J Smith 15-2, 15-13; J Aquilina & J Tilston bt C Lacewing & Y Negyal 15-1, 15-6; C Brooks & D Butler bt Al Goodwin & H Wiseman 15-0, 15-4; C Low & A McCreath bt J Hanton & B Kirwan 15-11, 15-6; F Hammond Giles & L Keates bt L Milner & T Vernacchio 15-6, 15-4; B Beltrami & T Parker bt P Harrison & S Scott 0-15, 15-5, 15-4

**Quarter-finals:** Kay & Tristao bt Chai & McElvaney 15-10, 15-9; Aquilina & Tilston bt Toop & Wiseman 15-10, 15-12; Low & McCreath bt Brooks & Butler 15-4, 15-13; Beltrami & Parker bt Hammond Giles & Keates 15-11, 15-2  
**Semi-finals:** Kay & Tristao bt Aquilina & Tilston 5-8, 15-7; Beltrami & Parker bt Low & McCreath 15-9, 15-7  
**Final:** Kay & Tristao bt Beltrami & Parker 15-7, 15-13

**Plate Group A:** 1st Carr & Maconie; 2nd Lacewing & Negyal; 3rd Milner & Vernacchio; 4th Hebblethwaite & Smith  
**Plate Group B:** 1st Hanton & Kirwan; 2nd Harrison & Scott; 3rd Cheng & Ion; 4th Goodwin & Wiseman

**Plate Semi-finals:** Carr & Maconie bt Harrison & Scott 15-7; Hanton & Kirwan bt Lacewing & Negyal 15-8  
**Plate Final:** Hanton & Kirwan bt Carr & Maconie 15-9

## National Veterans Championships

Marlborough College, Dorset  
Saturday/Sunday, 12-13 April 2025

**STOP PRESS** Tom Maconie did the double at this year's Over 45 Championships, winning the Singles in a final against three-time champion John Minta on Saturday, then on Sunday the Doubles, with Tim Hebblethwaite, versus defending champions Andy Pringle & Morgan Spillane. Both Plates went to the Marlborough Town Club, with Jim Hughes winning the Singles and Harvey Bishop & Tom Kiggell the Doubles.

### Singles

**Quarter-finals:** Dave Fox bt Nick Geere 11-3, 11-5; John Minta bt Jim Hughes 6-11, 11-7, 11-1; Tom Maconie bt Chris Jones 11-4, 11-7; Sam Roberts bt Tim Hebblethwaite 11-2, 9-11, 12-11

**Semi-finals:** Minta bt Fox 11-2, 11-2; Maconie bt Roberts 11-4, 11-2

**Final:** Maconie bt Minta 15-11, 15-0

**Plate:** 1st Hughes; 2nd Jones

### Doubles

**1st round:** B Baral & A Smith bt A Dakin & M Patterson 15-5; H Buchanan & S Roberts bt S Brooke & P Grant 15-4; H Carpenter & P Folland bt N Geere & A Landon 16-15

**Quarter-finals:** A Pringle & M Spillane bt Baral & Smith 11-1, 11-0; J Hughes & C Jones bt H Bishop & T Kiggell 11-6, 11-6; T Hebblethwaite & T Maconie bt Buchanan & Roberts 11-6, 11-2; D Fox & J Minta bt Carpenter & Folland 11-2, 11-4

**Semi-finals:** Pringle & Spillane bt Hughes & Jones 15-2, 15-6; Hebblethwaite & Maconie bt Fox & Minta 15-6, 15-1

**Final:** Hebblethwaite & Maconie bt Pringle & Spillane 15-11, 15-6

**Plate Semi-finals:** Buchanan & Roberts bt Geere & Landon 11-4; Bishop & Kiggell bt Brooke & Grant 11-2

**Plate final:** Bishop & Kiggell bt Buchanan & Roberts 11-1

**Second Plate:** 1st Baral & Smith; 2nd Carpenter & Folland; 3rd Dakin & Patterson

## National Masters and Grand Masters Doubles Championships

Marlborough College, Dorset  
Saturday, 12th April 2025

**STOP PRESS** It was all change in the Masters (65+) and Grand Masters (75+) as we saw competitions without the late Tony Hamilton, his long-standing partner Spencer Beal and multiple title-holder Bernard Atkinson. This opened the door to Stuart Kirby & organiser Brian Kirk to win the Masters trophy in a four-pair round robin and for Neil Arnott & Chris Horrocks to have their names added to the records for the Grand Masters Championship at the expense of Bev Boag & Giles Stimson. To afford the assembled players from both competitions some further convivial Fives Brian organised a

Legends' Grande Mêlée composed of 7 random pairs, from which a final emerged between John East & Leslie Jenkinson and a victorious Chris Blakeley & Andy Passey.

### **The Masters Doubles**

**1st Won 3 / 45 pts:** Stuart Kirby & Brian Kirk beat Passey & Spiegel 15-10; bt Blakeley & Sutcliffe 15-3; bt Hillman & Jenkinson 15-3

**2nd Won 2 / 40 pts:** Andy Passey & David Spiegel beat Blakeley & Sutcliffe 15-4; bt Hillman & Jenkinson 15-3

**3rd Won 1 / 22 pts:** Chris Blakeley & Richard Sutcliffe beat Hillman & Jenkinson 15-0

**4th Won 0 / 6pts:** Tom Hillman & Leslie Jenkinson

### **The Grand Masters Doubles**

**Final:** Neil Arnott & Chris Horrocks beat Bev Boag & Giles Stimson 15-12

### **The Legends' Grande Mêlée**

**Group A:** 1st East & Jenkinson; 2nd Brown & Horrocks; 3rd Hillman & Spiegel; 4th Kirk & Stimson

**Group B:** 1st Blakeley & Passey; 2nd Arnott & Sutcliffe; 3rd Boag & Kirby

**Final:** Chris Blakeley & Andy Passey bt John East & Leslie Jenkinson 15-3

## **Updated National Rankings**

April 2025

The latest official [Open Rankings](#) have just been released after the North of England Championships and the National Doubles Championship, and there's plenty of movement throughout. Kay, Tristao and Beltrami keep a vice-like grip at the top of both Singles and Doubles, but the rest of the top ten shuffle around. Gwydion Wiseman jumps to a career high of 16 in Singles, with McCreath and Low making strong gains in the Doubles.

Val Fikhter continues to impress and catapults up both standings. And once again, Julian Hanton, fresh from record-breaking in the Singles rankings last time out, climbs 68 places in the Doubles. But it's Carr (up 108 places) and Maconie (new entrant at 48) who are the biggest movers in Doubles, and Will Milne (up 116 places) in Singles — impressive stuff!

## **The Wood Cup**

St Paul's School, Barnes and Alleyn's School, Dulwich  
Saturday, 26th April 2025

*Tom Maconie reports:* The Old Paulines retained The Wood Cup after a long day of fives played across two venues in London: Alleyn's and St Paul's School.

A variety of factors, a transatlantic flight and a sauna booking among them, meant that the games between eight teams were split between the two venues to try and get all games completed in one day. Was it a logistical masterstroke or a rookie tournament organiser mistake? Perhaps the jury is still out on that!

In the early rounds at St Paul's both Old Paulines 1 and the Executioners were in imperious form, dropping only 17 and 32 points across eight sets against West of England 3 and Old Paulines 2 respectively. Meanwhile, in South East London, the West of England 1 and Edward Alleyn Club had good wins over Derby Moor and West of England 2 after a slightly delayed start.

Into the semi-finals, where the Executioners probably left themselves a bit too much to do after the singles against a strong Old Paulines first team. The OPs pushed their advantage in the doubles to make it through to the final. Over at Alleyn's, the West of England 1 team emerged victorious against the Edward Alleyn Club after some hard-hitting doubles ("heavy metal fives") saw them 47 points clear with the singles still to play. With a maximum of 44 points on offer per team in the singles the EAC graciously conceded and West of England 1, after a few hurried phone calls to discuss travel options, hit the South Circular to drive to St Paul's and play the final. They were followed by Derby Moor, who recorded a good win over West of England 2 to reach the plate final.

In the final, the Old Paulines 1 produced an excellent performance against a tiring West of England 1 team who, despite taking a 6-point advantage from the singles into the doubles, couldn't match the intensity and consistency of the Old Paulines' doubles play.

In the plate final, Derby Moor scored a convincing win against Old Paulines 2 by getting 45 points ahead after the doubles, which were played first, making the singles a dead rubber.

A huge thanks to both Alleyn's and St Paul's for letting us use their facilities and to Hamish Buchanan, Chris Blakeley, Tom Watkinson, and Charlie Brooks for their invaluable advice and support leading up to and on the day.

### **Teams in Singles order**

**Derby Moor Fives:** Lewis Keates, Anthony Goodwin, Val Fikhter, Richard Christie

**Edward Alleyn Club:** Gwydion Wiseman, Yarin Negyal, Inigo Ackland, Edward Carr

**Executioners:** Penn Chai, Christian Blackaby, Toby Chan, Wyman Chan

**Old Paulines 1:** Charlie Brooks, Theo Parker, Freddie Hammond Giles, Josh Ferro

**Old Paulines 2:** Teddy Monro-Davies, Sam Roberts, Ben Roberts, Ben Pymont

**West of England Club 1:** Tom Watkinson, Cameron Low, Archie McCreath, Tom Maconie

**West of England Club 2:** Dwight Murdoc, Theo Vernacchio, Jeremy Hughes, Kevin Brice

**West of England Club 3:** Nick Geere, Ed Grant, Robert Mason, Peter Dickinson

### **Scores**

**Quarter-finals:** Old Paulines 1 beat West of England 3 by 104-17 (Singles 44-6; Doubles 60-11); Executioners beat Old Paulines 2 by 104-32 (Singles 44-8; Doubles 60-24); West of England 1 beat Derby Moor 97-36 (Singles 37-15; Doubles 60-21); Edward Alleyn Club beat West of England 2 by 98-44 (Singles 37-21; Doubles 61-23)

**Semi-finals:** Old Paulines 1 beat Executioners 114-78 (Singles 33-17; Doubles 81-61); West of England 1 bt Edward Alleyn Club 88-41 (Doubles only)

**Final:** Old Paulines 1 beat West of England 1 by 100-81 (Singles 28-34; Doubles 72-47)

### **Plate**

**Semi-finals:** Derby Moor Fives beat West of England 2 by 128-74 (Singles 38-24; Doubles 90-50); Old Paulines 2 bt West of England 3 by 120-76 (Singles 40-30; Doubles 80-46)

**Final:** Derby Moor Fives bt Old Paulines 2 by 60-15 (Doubles only)

## **Basque Rugby Fives tournaments in 2025**

The Basque Association of Beach Tennis and Minority Sports has again organised singles and doubles Fives tournaments on the squash court of sports centre of San Ignacio, Bilbao, with all local players.

On the 11th of March, it was the second Hilario Azkarate Memorial doubles tournament (honouring a famous Basque Pelota player). This consisted of a round-robin tournament of single games between 3 pairs, to 15 points, all the games being close.

**Results:**

Egoitz Campo/Daniel Barrientos bt David Bilbao/Joseba Zubiaurre 15-11

David Bilbao/Joseba Zubiaurre bt Jan Dabi Romero/Jon Proaño 15-8

Egoitz Campo/Daniel Barrientos bt Jan Dabi Romero/Jon Proaño 15-12

**Classification**

1st: Campo/Barrientos, 2nd: Bilbao/Zubiaurre, 3rd: Romero/Proaño

A month later, 11th April, the Basque Singles Championship was played, again with six local players with an initial round-robin in groups of three, with one player eliminated. This was followed by semi-finals, and a third/fourth place play-off to give a final classification. Scoring was based on time limited play.

**Results:**

**Group A:** Egoitz Campo bt Joseba Zubiaurre 10-4; Joseba Zubiaurre bt Daniel Barrientos 19-8; Egoitz Campo bt Daniel Barrientos 15-4

**Group B:** Mikel Torde bt Jon Ander Gil 10-9; Mikel Torde bt Jon Proaño 11-9; Jon Ander Gil bt Jon Proaño 16-9

**Semifinals:** Campo bt Gil 9-3; Zubiaurre bt Torde 15-7

**Final:** Campo bt Zubiaurre 9-2

**Third/fourth place play-off:** Gil bt Torde 19-7

**Final classification:** 1: Egoitz Campo, 2: Joseba Zubiaurre, 3: Jon Ander, Gil 4: Mikel Torde, 5: Jon Proaño, 6: Daniel Barrientos

A doubles tournament is planned for the summer

**National Schools Mixed Doubles Championship**

Oundle School

Sunday, 27th April 2025

**Stop Press** With just three schools represented in this second staging of the final schools championship of the season, it was Alleyn's who dominated in both categories, providing both finalists in each competition and also winning the two Plates.

**Seniors (U18) Knockout**

**Semi-finals:** E Erdmeier & Y Negyal (Alleyn's) bt M-A Skinner & H Cubitt (Oundle) 15-0; A Guo & A Goodwin (Alleyn's) bt A McAllister & M Arie (Edward Alleyn Club) 11-0, 12-10

**Final:** Erdmeier & Negyal (Alleyn's) bt Guo & Goodwin (Alleyn's) 11-8, 11-4

**Plate Final:** McAllister & Arie (Alleyn's) bt Skinner & Cubitt (Oundle) 11-9, 11-9

**Juniors (U15) Knockout**

**Semi-finals:** A Brown & T Green (Alleyn's) bt A Dennison & L King (Stamford) 11-1; A Ratto & F McAllister (Alleyn's) bt I De Soyza & S Negyal (Alleyn's) 11-1

**Final:** Brown & Green (Alleyn's) bt Ratto & McAllister (Alleyn's) 11-6, 11-3

**Plate Final:** De Soyza & Negyal (Alleyn's) bt Dennison & King (Stamford) 11-4, 11-0

**Also competed:** E Morris & T Walton (Stamford)

**Scottish Open Championships**

Fettes College, Edinburgh

Saturday/Sunday, 3-4 May 2025

**Stop Press** It was a weekend of firsts at the Scottish Open Championships. Dan Grant achieved a well-deserved and long-awaited first regional Singles title, beating Universities Singles champion Andrew Boyd in the final, and Penn Chai &

Lewis Keates teamed up to win the Doubles title, against Andrew and his partner Ben Jourdan, the current Universities Doubles champions. It was Lewis's first open title, hopefully the first of many for this stalwart of the Derby Moor Club; for Penn it was a second successive title in Scotland. In the Plates Ben Jourdan just pipped Penn Chai in the Singles, while Enrique Castillo Carbonell & Simon Fraser took the Doubles.

## Singles

**1st round:** B Hale bt P Maddison 11-2, 11-6

**Quarter-finals:** J Aquilina bt Hale 11-2, 11-3; D Grant bt B Jourdan 11-5, 12-10; A Boyd bt P Chai 11-5, 11-9; L Keates bt S Scott 12-10, 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Grant bt Aquilina 12-10, 11-2; Boyd bt Keates 11-4, 11-4

**Final:** Grant bt Boyd 11-8, 11-7

**Plate:** 1st Jourdan; 2nd Chai; 3rd Scott; 4th Hale; 5th Maddison

## Doubles

**Group A:** 1st P Chai & L Keates; 2nd J Aquilina & D Grant; 3rd E Lee & H McFarlane; 4th H Akerman & P Maddison

**Group B:** 1st A Boyd & B Jourdan; 2nd B Hale & J Sinton; 3rd EC Carbonell & S Fraser

**Semi-finals:** Chai & Keates bt Hale & Sinton 15-6, 15-7; Boyd & Jourdan bt Aquilina & Grant 12-10, 7-11, 11-7

**Final:** Chai & Keates bt Boyd & Jourdan 11-3, 11-6

**Plate:** 1st Carbonell & Fraser; 2nd Akerman & Maddison; 3rd Lee & McFarlane

## National Vintage Championships

Cambridge University Sports Centre

Sunday, 18th May 2025

A historic day for Andy Pringle and Morgan Spillane, who faced each other in the final of the Over 55s championship, with Andy there claiming his first Singles title. They then went on together to win their third successive Doubles title.

Andy did it the hard way, beating former champion Ian Jackson in the quarters, much-fancied John Minta, only recently runner-up in the Veterans Championship, in the semi-final, and then, in the final, his partner and another former champion, Morgan Spillane, who had suffered a strength-sapping semi-final against defending champion Dave Fox.

There were a number of good matches in the Plate but Sam Roberts deservedly got his name on the Salver for the first time, overcoming Ian Jackson and Richard Christie to do so.

There were 4 fancied pairs in the Doubles, and organiser Brian Kirk got the groups right as those four pairs emerged to contest the semi-finals. There was a titanic battle in one, where Harvey Bishop & Tom Kiggell, in their first appearance, very very nearly got the better of defending champions Pringle & Spillane. In the final, first-time competitors Hamish Buchanan & John Minta found Morgan's powerful left-handed onslaught difficult to negate and made rather more errors than they would have liked. Andy & Morgan thus walked away with a hat-trick of titles. Can they next year match David Hebblethwaite & Geoff Prigmore's 4 in a row, which kicked off this competition from 1988/89?

## Singles

**Quarter-finals:** D Fox bt R Christie 15-7; M Spillane bt S Roberts 15-4; A Pringle bt I Jackson 15-4; J Minta bt B Baral 15-4

**Semi-finals:** Spillane bt Fox 16-14; Pringle bt Minta 15-7

**Final:** Pringle bt Spillane 15-2

**Plate:** 1<sup>st</sup> S Roberts 33 pts; 2<sup>nd</sup> I Jackson 28 pts; 3<sup>rd</sup> R Christie 25 pts; 4<sup>th</sup> B Baral 7 pts

## Doubles

**Group A:** 1<sup>st</sup> H Buchanan & J Minta 30 pts; 2<sup>nd</sup> H Bishop & T Kiggell 18 pts; 3<sup>rd</sup> B Baral & I Jackson 18 pts

**Group B:** 1<sup>st</sup> A Pringle & M Spillane 30 pts; 2<sup>nd</sup> D Fox & S Roberts 23 pts; 3<sup>rd</sup> R Christie & J Stubbs 8 pts

**Semi-finals:** Buchanan & Minta bt Fox & Roberts 15-2; Pringle & Spillane bt Bishop & Kiggell 16-14

**Final:** Pringle & Spillane bt Buchanan & Minta 15-8

**Plate:** Baral & Jackson bt Kirby & Kirk 15-5; bt Christie & Stubbs 15-10

## National Women's Winchester Fives Championships

Bradfield College, Saturday, 31st May 2025

**Stop Press** Shinan Zhang wins her third Women's Winchester Fives Singles title, beating Helena Tunks in the final. In the morning the two of them had teamed up to win their third Doubles title together, this time against Kirsten Bell & Lizzie Ware.

## Singles

**Quarter-finals:** Shinan Zhang bt Leonie Brown 15-0; Savanna Leboff bt Lizzie Ware 16-15; Helena Tunks bt Sophie Lundie 15-5; Maddy Raynor bt Kirsten Bell 16-15

**Semi-finals:** Zhang bt Leboff 11-2, 11-4; Tunks bt Raynor 11-9, 12-10

**Final:** Zhang bt Tunks 15-2, 15-10

**Plate:** Lizzie Ware

## Doubles

**Group Stage:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tunks & Zhang; 2<sup>nd</sup> Bell & Ware; 3<sup>rd</sup> Leboff & Lundie; 4<sup>th</sup> Brown & Raynor

**Final:** Tunks & Zhang bt Bell & Ware 16-14, 15-6

**Plate:** Leboff & Lundie bt Brown & Raynor 15-3, 15-2

## National Open Mixed Doubles Championship

Alleyn's School, Dulwich, Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**STOP PRESS** 7 pairs contested a single round robin, at the end of which a final was held between the two most successful pairs. This involved Camille Beattie & Ed Kay versus Shinan Zhang & Penn Chai, already beaten in the group stage by Camille & Ed. The final produced the same result, confirming Camille & Ed as the worthy winners. 3 pairs also contested the Plate, from which Phoebe Thornhill & Patrick Harrison emerged winners.

## Group Stage

**1st:** Camille Beattie & Ed Kay bt Zhang & Chai 11-7, 11-5; bt Leboff & Boyd 11-0, 7-11; bt Thornhill & Harrison 11-5, 11-4; bt Tunks & Low 11-4, 11-5; bt Fearon & Ord 11-0, 11-1; bt Butler & Irastorza-Fadrique 11-0, 11-1.

**2nd:** Shinan Zhang & Penn Chai bt Butler & Irastorza-Fadrique 11-4, 11-0; bt Thornhill & Harrison 11-3, 11-6; bt Fearon & Ord 11-0, 11-0; bt Leboff & Boyd 11-3, 11-10; bt Tunks & Low 11-5, 11-3.

**3rd:** Savanna Leboff & Andrew Boyd bt Fearon & Ord 11-0, 11-0; bt Tunks & Low 11-10, 11-5; bt Butler & Irastorza-Fadrique 11-5, 11-3; bt Thornhill & Harrison 11-5, 11-4.

**4th:** Helena Tunks & Cameron Low bt Thornhill & Harrison 11-7, 11-6; bt Fearon & Ord 11-1, 11-2; bt Butler & Irastorza-Fadrique 11-5, 11-3.

**5th:** Phoebe Thornhill & Patrick Harrison bt Butler & Irastorza-Fadrique 11-5, 11-7; bt Fearon & Ord 11-5, 11-1.

**6th:** Freya Butler & Aitor Irastorza-Fadrique bt Fearon & Ord 11-7, 11-3. **7th:** Harriet Fearon & Matt Ord.

**Final:** Camille Beattie & Ed Kay bt Shinan Zhang & Penn Chai 11-3, 11-9

**Plate Final:** Phoebe Thornhill & Patrick Harrison bt Freya Butler & Aitor Irastorza-Fadrique 11-6

## End-of-season National Rankings

27th June 2025

Charlie Brooks writes: It's the moment we've all been waiting for.... How have our efforts from this season translated into ranking points? Have I climbed up or tumbled down? Who are the big movers? There are now 214 players ranked in the Open Singles and 224 in the Open Doubles.

### Top 10

**Singles:** Ed Kay, Dan Tristao and Ben Beltrami keep their spots at one, two and three respectively, with Ed's greater consistency keeping him just ahead. Julian Aquilina (4), Richie Murby (5), Lewis Keates (6) and Theo Parker (8) have their best ever end of season ranking, all being rewarded for the breadth of tournaments they play.

**Doubles:** Dan and Ed have their singles rankings reversed in the doubles, well clear of the chasing pack after retaining the Nationals. Once again, quite a few of the top ten find themselves higher than ever – Ben Beltrami (3), James Tilston (7) and Cameron Low (10) join Julian (6) and Lewis (8), who repeat their singles successes in doubles.

### Top Movers

**Singles:** Freddie Hammond Giles leaps up to 14th after a breakthrough season, whilst there's lots of movement in the Top 25, with the likes of Boyd, Cloke Browne, Grant, Wiseman, Chai and Lacewing heading northwards. There are significant gains elsewhere, notably Theo Vernacchio (47th, up by 60) and Julian Hanton (51st, up by 161).

**Doubles:** Plenty vying for the crown of top mover in doubles, but the standout performer has to be Val Fikhter (20th, up by 101), although Penn Chai (up 16 places to 11th) might have something to say about that.... Freddie Hammond Giles, Seb Ion and Patrick Harrison also storm into the top 40.

### Top Newbies

**Singles:** Seb Ion, James Toop (ever heard of him?) and JP Cheng are the highest placed 'new' entrants, all squeezing into the Top 40; of course, James isn't really new to the rankings, he just fell off after three years conserving his energy. Riki Houlden also makes it into the Top 50.

**Doubles:** Julian Hanton and JP Cheng (again!) are the highest ranked newbies. Similar to James in the singles, Kevin Brice and Tom Maconie re-enter the fold, straight into the Top 50.

Superb effort everyone, and if you don't see your name in the rankings, make sure to enter some tournaments next season!

## Derby Moor Invitational Doubles

Derby Moor Academy, Littleover  
Sunday, 29th June 2025

Bob Dolby reports: Organiser Brian Kirk believes in getting plenty of Fives for your money (not that there's an entry fee for the Derby Invitational Doubles!), and so it was for the 9 pairs who contested the 21st edition of this unique Club tournament. In the initial Group stage it was two games to eleven, followed by semi-finals best-of-3 to 15, one of which lasted one and a half hours, a final which lasted two hours, and a Plate competition where the five pairs involved played another set of two games to 11 against each other. Somehow or other, though, Oscar & Dan and Hamish & Simon were allowed to get away with not playing a third place play-off. When play finished at 7.30 there were tired legs and bruised hands, but plenty of smiles, some radiant, some rueful.

In the end it was Richard Christie & Val Fikhter who emerged from the same group as Lewis Keates & Dean Ali to contest the final. Their group match had already been a 16-15 win for Richard & Val, so it was no surprise that the final

went to three games, the second of which was memorable for involving 10 changes of hand at 15-15 (Oscar was counting!) i.e. 20 rallies, to complete the game and set up a third. Perhaps by this time Lewis and Dean (playing for the first time in 5 years), having had a three-game semi-final also, offered less resistance in the final game as Val demonstrated why he is the outstanding player of his year and Richard belied his years in an extraordinary display of consistency on the right-hand side. First time winners both.

While Court 1 was occupied by the final the Plate was played out next door and saw the home pair of Dylan Wright & Stuart Kirby mix power with subtlety to win all eight of their games.

Thanks as ever to those who came from afar to play, commiserations to those who intended to play but were prevented by circumstance, thanks to Lewis for communications, to Dylan for statistics, to Stuart for catering, and to Brian for putting everyone through the mill with so much fun on such a hot day.

## Group Stage

**Group A:** 1st Oscar McIntyre & Dan Swinbank W3 45 pts; 2nd Simon Beattie & Hamish Buchanan W2 38 pts; 3rd Stuart Kirby & Dylan Wright W1 28 pts; 4th Brian Kirk & Craig Wilbourne 9pts

**Group B:** 1st Richard Christie & Val Fikhter W4 61 pts; 2nd Dean Ali & Lewis Keates W3 60 pts; 3rd Max Staryk & Jacob Woods W2 36 pts; 4th Zack Winson Yates & Chris Woods W1 33 pts; 5th Chris Blakeley & Burt Cundy 10 pts

**Semi-finals:** Ali & Keates bt McIntyre & Swinbank 11-15, 15-12, 15-11; Christie & Fikhter bt Beattie & Buchanan 15-8, 15-5

**Final:** Christie & Fikhter bt Ali & Keates 13-15, 16-15, 15-7

**Plate:** 1st: Kirby & Wright 88 pts; 2nd Winson Yates & C Woods 72 pts; 3rd Staryk & J Woods 65 pts; 4th Blakeley & Cundy 54 pts; 5th Kirk & Wilbourne 35pts

## Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles Championship

Malvern College, Saturday, 2nd August 2025

The fixture was rearranged and featured just 5 pairs, with the defending champions Shinan Zhang & Penn Chai winning all their games in a round robin to retain the title.

Report to follow

**1st** Shinan Zhang & Penn Chai 88 pts; **2nd** Helena Tunks & Stephen Coffey 75 pts; **3rd** Phoebe Thornhill & Terry McElvaney 57 pts; **4th** Lizzie Ware & Adam Hutchinson 50 pts; **5th** Sophie Lundie & Alex Lundie 30 pts

## End-of-Season Women's Rankings

3rd August 2025

The end-of-season Women's Rankings as kindly compiled by Chris Burrows demonstrate the clear existence of a Big Three: Camille Beattie, Shinan Zhang and Helena Tunks, who occupy the top three slots in both Singles and Doubles. The Women's U25 Singles and Doubles champion Kirsten Bell sits at number 4, poised to join them.

There being relatively few ranking events in Women's Fives there are fewer possibilities of making radical progress. However, there is welcome upward movement in the top 20 for Savanna Leboff in both Singles and Doubles, for Maddy Raynor and Sophie Lundie in Singles, and for Lizzie Ware in Doubles.

There are 73 players ranked in Singles and 69 ranked in Doubles.

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## **2024-25 RESULTS ROUND-UP**

Full details of these events can be found on [www.therfa.uk](http://www.therfa.uk)

### **SOUTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024**

Singles: E.Kay

Doubles: B.Beltrami & E.Kay

### **SOUTH EAST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024**

Singles: E.Kay

Doubles: S.Ion & J.Tilston

### **YORKSHIRE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024**

Singles: B.Beltrami

Doubles: B.Beltrami & T.Parker

### **LONDON OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024**

Singles: E.Kay

Doubles: C.Brooks & D.Tristao

### **WEST OF ENGLAND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024**

Singles: B.Beltrami

Doubles: B.Beltrami & P.Chai

### **NATIONAL U25 CHAMPIONSHIPS 11/2024**

Singles: F.Hammond Giles

Doubles: C.Low & A.McCreath

### **WOMEN'S U25 CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024**

Singles: K.Bell

Doubles: K.Bell & S.Lundie

### **SCHOOLS WINCHESTER FIVES DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2024**

St Paul's School (J.Ferro & F.Hammond Giles)

### **DURHAM WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024**

Singles: P.Fleming

Doubles: P.Fleming & M.Wells

### **CHALLENGER SINGLES Manchester 12/2024**

C.Lacewing

### **NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2024**

D.Tristao

### **RFA PRESIDENT'S CUP 2024**

T.Hebblethwaite & S.Zhang

### **WEST OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

U18 Singles: F.Hammond Giles (St Paul's School)

U18 Doubles: St Paul's School (J.Ferro & F.Hammond Giles)

U16 Singles: N.Cortas (St Paul's School)

U16 Doubles: Winchester College (F.Coleman & P.Mannion-Miles)

### **NATIONAL WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

Singles: C.Beattie

Doubles: H.Tunks & S.Zhang

### **BRITISH STUDENTS' (BUSF) CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

Singles: A.Boyd (Edinburgh)

Doubles: A.Boyd & B.Jourdan (Edinburgh)

### **NORTHERN SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

U18 Singles: V.Fikhter (Manchester Y Club)

U18 Doubles: Sedbergh School (O.Griffin & P.Ogilvie-Robertson)

U16 Singles: T.Follett (Sedbergh School)

U16 Doubles: Sedbergh School (F.Leslie & H.Maclean)

### **NORTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

Singles: D.Tristao

Doubles: D.Grant & D.Tristao

### **SOUTH EAST SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

U18 Singles: C.Lacewing (Christ's Hospital)

U18 Doubles: Alleyn's School (M.Arie & Y.Negyal)

U16 Singles: H.Thomas (Tonbridge School)

U16 Doubles: Tonbridge School (M.Gustard & H Haigh)

### **MIDLANDS SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

U18 Singles: J.Skailes (Rugby School)

U18 Doubles: Stamford School (C.McNaughton & C.Sharpe)

U15 Singles: H.Turner-Linke (Rugby School)

U15 Doubles: Rugby School (H.Skailes & H.Turner-Linke)

### **SOUTH EAST SCHOOLS GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

U18 Singles: T-R.Foo (Alleyn's School)

U18 Doubles: Alleyn's School (T-R.Foo & D.Tiwari)

U16 Singles: A.Brown (Alleyn's School)

U16 Doubles: Alleyn's School (S.Antonova & A.Brown)

U14 Singles: A.Ratto (Alleyn's School)

U14 Doubles: Alleyn's School (S.Antonova & F.Dorman)

### **CHALLENGER SINGLES Rugby School 2/2025**

T.McElvaney

### **THE VARSITY MATCH 2025**

Men's: Cambridge

Women's: Oxford

### **NORTH OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

Singles: B.Beltrami

Doubles: J.Aquilina & B.Beltrami

### **COLQUHOUN TROPHY 2025**

U18 Singles: T.Munaretto-Day (Winchester College)

U16 Singles: F.Coleman (Winchester College)

## **WINCHESTER FIVES OPEN DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2025**

D Grant & D.Tristao

## **SCOTTISH SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

U18 Singles: J.Lawrie (Edinburgh Academy)

U18 Doubles: Fettes College (M.Duncan & G.Maclay)

U16 Doubles: Edinburgh Academy (W.Henry & O.Zbikowski)

## **NATIONAL SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

U18 Singles: F.Hammond Giles (St Paul's School)

U18 Doubles: St Paul's School (J.Ferro & F.Hammond Giles)

U16 Singles: V.Fikhter (Manchester Y Club)

U16 Doubles: Edinburgh Academy (W.Henry & J.Lawrie)

U14 Singles: W.Gordon (Merchiston Castle)

U14 Doubles: Edinburgh Academy (F.Derry & J.Taylor)

U13 Singles: O.Moss (Berkhamsted School)

U13 Doubles: Berkhamsted School (O.Culpan & O.Moss)

## **NATIONAL GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

U18 Singles: J.Mitchell (Blundell's School)

U18 Doubles: Blundell's School (J.Mitchell & N.Talbot)

U16 Singles: A.Brown (Alleyn's School)

U16 Doubles: Alleyn's School (A.Brown & F.Hebblethwaite)

U14 Singles: A.Ratto (Alleyn's School)

U14 Doubles: Alleyn's School (I.Lewis & A.Ratto)

U13 Singles: F.Dornan (Alleyn's School)

U13 Doubles: Alleyn's School (S.Antonova & F.Dornan)

## **NATIONAL SCHOOLS MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2025**

U18: Alleyn's School (E.Erdmeier & Y.Negyal)

U15: Alleyn's School (A.Brown & T.Green)

## **NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2025 (Cyriax Cup)**

E.Kay & D.Tristao

## **RFA EQUALISER MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2025**

L.Ware & A.Hutchinson

## **NATIONAL VETERANS' CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

Singles: T.Maconie

Doubles: T.Hebblethwaite & T.Maconie

## **NATIONAL VINTAGE CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

Singles: A.Pringle

Doubles: A.Pringle & M.Spillane

## **NATIONAL MASTERS' DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2025**

S.Kirby & B.Kirk

## **NATIONAL GRAND MASTERS' DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2025**

N.Arnott & C.Horrocks

**NATIONAL CLUB KNOCK-OUT 2025 (Wood Cup)**

Old Paulines

**SCOTTISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

Singles: D.Grant

Doubles: P.Chai & L.Keates

**WOMEN'S WINCHESTER FIVES CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025**

Singles: S.Zhang

Doubles: H.Tunks & S.Zhang

**WINCHESTER FIVES MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2025**

S.Zhang & P.Chai

**NATIONAL OPEN MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2025**

C.Beattie & E.Kay

**DERBY MOOR INVITATION DOUBLES 2025**

Richard Christie & Val Fikhter

**LONDON LEAGUE 2025**

Edward Alleyn Club

**OWERS TROPHY 2024/25**

Not played

**THE LADY'S CUP 2024/25**

Not played