

## Results and Results from the RFA Website 2008-2009

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## **SOUTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Blundell's School, Tiverton, 28/29th June 2008

It was a case of quality rather than quantity at the South West Open Championships. And, at the end of the new season's first competition, it was Hamish Buchanan's quality that shone through and secured him two more titles.

However, if the spectators thought the relatively low numbers of players would mean a lack of competition, they couldn't have been more wrong. The top three seeds in the singles were all Top 10-ranked players, and the rest of the field were closely matched. In the pick of the first round matches, for example, Chris Jones took on Alex Rew, and the Londoner only came through 12-11 in the third game. He then pushed third seed Will Ellison all the way in the quarter-final, only to lose 11-9 in both games. There was another close quarter-final between Kevin Henry and Marcus Bate, with Kevin coming back from a game down to clinch the match with 11-9 wins in the next two games.

That set up a meeting with a Hamish Buchanan in one semi-final, while Will met Phil Bishop in the other. In the top half of the draw, Hamish had a comfortable win, but it was a very different story in the bottom half. Will took the first game decisively and then raced into a strong lead in second, before Phil staged a stirring comeback. However, the lead was too strong, and Will claimed a 12-11 win in the second to secure a place in his first ever Open final. Here, though, he was the one who made the slow start, and Hamish raced through the first game and opened up a big lead in the second. But, just as in the semi, that was the cue for a major fightback, although again it was in vain. Hamish's lead was too big, and although closed the gap, Hamish clung on to secure the few points he needed to take the second game – and the title.

Disappointingly, only six pairs entered the doubles, but again it was the quality that shone through. The pick of the two quarter-finals was the match between Alex Rew & Jim Hughes and Kevin Henry & Wayne Enstone, where Alex and Jim raced through the first game, only for the Manchester pair to secure a semi-final place with narrow wins in the next two wins. Wayne, in particular, was in superb form, but he and his partner couldn't repeat the trick in the next match, and lost out narrowly to the relatively untried partnership of Hamish and Chris Jones.

In the bottom half of the draw, it was another untried partnership that took the second final berth, but only after an epic battle. Phil Bishop and Andy Pringle were playing together for the first time, and this showed as they lost the first game to the more established pair of Will Ellison and Marcus Bate. However, Phil and Andy came back with revised tactics, and took the next two games to clinch the match. Come the final, however, it was the opposite story. With the first game evenly poised at 8-8, Phil hit a rich vein of form, and reeled off a succession of superb winners to take put himself and his partner a game to the good. Then, in the next two games, it was Hamish and Chris who changed their tactics, and their pressure on Andy told, forcing the RFA Gen Sec into errors and – with Phil's big shots not quite hitting the same nicks as in the first game – it was the two Londoners who were able overcome their opponents' spirited defence and close out the match to take the title with clear wins in the second and third games.

### **Singles**

1st round: K Henry bt K Kennerley 11-0, 11-1; C Jones bt A Rew 11-9, 1-11, 12-11; A Pringle bt T Lewis 11-3, 11-1

Quarter-finals: H Buchanan bt J Hughes 11-7, 11-4; Henry bt M Bate 7-11, 11-9, 11-9; W Ellison bt Jones 11-9, 11-9; P Bishop bt Pringle 11-3, 11-3

Semi-finals: Buchanan bt Henry 11-0, 11-5; Ellison bt Bishop 11-5, 12-11

Final: Buchanan bt Ellison 11-3, 11-9

## **Doubles**

Quarter-finals: Enstone & Henry bt Hughes & Rew 4-15, 15-12, 15-13; Bate & Ellison bt Kennerley 15-0, 15-3

Semi-finals: Buchanan & Jones bt Enstone & Henry 15-10, 15-10; Bishop & Pringle bt Bate & Ellison 8-15, 15-13, 15-11

Final: Buchanan & Jones bt Bishop & Pringle 8-15, 15-7, 15-7

## **PROPOSED NEW COURTS AT RUGBY SCHOOL**

Rugby School, July 2008

As every RFA member will know from the General Secretary's report at the AGM, there are exciting plans to build new Rugby Fives courts at Rugby School. Naturally, the RFA is delighted to help the scheme in any way it can, and at the moment the only stumbling block is the question of finance.

The School has recently sent out leaflets to many Old Rugbeians in an effort to raise the necessary funds, and we make no apology for making those same leaflets available here on the RFA's website. The prospect of Rugby Fives returning to the school that gave the sport its name is one that we are hugely excited about, and we encourage every RFA member to contribute to this scheme. Any contribution is welcome, and can be made even more worthwhile thanks to Gift Aid.

To make a donation, and to get the latest information on the scheme, simply click on the links below to download Rugby School's leaflets. And, keep an eye on this site in the future, where we will advise you of all the latest developments.

## **OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS**

London, 21st August 2008

Ahead of the London Open, the RFA has published its latest singles and doubles rankings. Compiled by Dave Hebden, these take into account the results of the South West Open Championships. However, due to the relatively small entry and the lack of surprises in the competition, there is minimal movement in the positions. The most notable moves are from South West singles champ Hamish Buchanan – who jumps over Matt Cavanagh to take third place in the singles rankings – and from Chris Jones, who partnered Hamish to the South West doubles title and climbs six places in the doubles rankings as a result.

## **ONE-WALL FIVES SUMMER FESTIVAL**

Westway Sports Centre, London, 31st August 2008

36 Eton and Rugby fives players, including eight one-wall players with international experience, participated in the inaugural One-Wall Festival in London on the last day of August.

Titles up for grabs included singles and doubles for both men and women, as well as a mixed doubles event which the men qualified for by losing in the first round of the plate! The format was 10 minute timed games, the winner being the player or pair with the most points. With 106 games to get through, everyone was kept busy on court all day and plenty of handball was had by all.

The day started with a brief explanation of the rules for first-timers, who were quickly thrown in the deep end with competition starting shortly after 10am.

After a grueling six hours of handball, the last game of the day saw Andy Pringle and Thomas Curtin face up to Steve Korris and Inigo Ackland in the men's doubles final, with Steve and Inigo emerging

victorious in a match of outstanding quality. Andy also reached the semifinals of the singles – a unique achievement.

The men's singles went largely to the form book, with Pete Cohen and Adrian Lee, England's two most experienced international players, making the final. Pete eventually pulled clear after some early trading of points to close out the match.

The ladies singles was won by Kerry White, proving her class after reaching the final of the Irish National Championships earlier in June, defeating Ash Lumbard. Not to be outdone, Ash and Helen Toop won the ladies doubles with wins over both Kerry and Gemma Reece, and Emmalina Thompsell and Anita Ganguly.

In the fiercely fought mixed competition, Kerry partnered Stuart Kirby of Derby Moor, against Helen and David Bowden in the final. Kerry and Stuart emerged victorious in a match with excellent athleticism demonstrated on all corners of the court! The men's singles plate was closed out by Daniel Clydesdale-Cotter, securing victory after a 5-match unbeaten run.

There is a One-Wall Fives session held indoor at Westway every Tuesday from 8-10pm – all welcome so please do come along!

## **LONDON OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Alleyn's School, London, 6/7th September 2008

It looked very much like a case of history repeating itself at the 2008 London Open. Not only did Ed Fuller win the singles title for the third year on the trot, Hamish Buchanan and Ben Taberner also retained the doubles title they had won in 2007. In all, that made it the eighth consecutive year that Hamish had won the London doubles title - with five different partners.

This year's London Open was also remarkable for the quality and quantity of the field that played over two dark and drizzly days in South London. The country's top five singles players were all in the draw for the singles, while the doubles draw featured half of the top 16 from the latest doubles rankings.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, it was the top eight seeds who made it through to the quarter-finals of both competitions, the top four contested the semi-finals, and the top two played out the finals. However, that's not to say the top seeds had it all their own way. In the singles, for example, eighth seed Chris Jones only made it into the quarter-finals after a titanic three-game battle with Mike Hajialexandrou, while the third seeds in the doubles, John Minta and Kevin Henry, were narrow winners in their quarter-final against Ed Hatton and Steve Korris - a match that really could have gone either way.

In the end, though, it was the top four seeds who won through to the semi-finals. So, in the top half of the singles draw, James Toop faced Matt Cavanagh in amazingly topsy-turvy game. After losing the first game to love, Matt came back to take the second for the loss of just two points, only for James to take the decider 11-4. In the bottom half of the draw, meanwhile Ed Fuller proved just too strong for Hamish Buchanan, hitting the ball low and hard, as well as displaying incredible athleticism around the court.

The final was a superb match, full of deft touches, powerful hitting and amazing speed around the court. And, although Ed wasn't in the best of health – he would later describe this match as 'the biggest ordeal' he had ever faced on a fives court - his relentless running, retrieving and accurate hitting won the day.

In the doubles semi-finals, fourth seeds Chris Jones and Andy Pringle – who had prevailed in a tight

three-game quarter-final match against Ady Lee and Dan Grant – pushed the defending champions and top seeds hard, and were close to taking the first game. But, in the end, the sheer firepower of Hamish and Ben was too much. On the next-door court, meanwhile, Will Ellison and Marcus Bate completed a good win over the Manchester pair of Minta and Henry to reach their first open championship final as a pair.

However, they weren't able to finish the day with their first title. Although they played superbly against the defending champions, retrieving for all they were worth and never afraid to attack their opponents when they had the chance, again it was the sheer relentless quality of the left- and right-handed pairing of Hamish and Ben that won the day.

### **Singles**

1st round: B Taberner bt C Lamb 11-1, 11-0; M Hajialexandrou bt P Cohen 6-11, 11-4, 11-4; C Jones bt A Bowden 11-3, 11-1; J Minta bt G Matthews 11-0, 11-0; C Brooks bt R Bridge 11-0, 11-0; A Pringle bt G Price 7-11, 11-9, 11-7; J Furniss bt B Chandler 11-2, 11-4; E Hatton bt P A'Hern 11-1, 11-0; W Ellison bt T Lewis 11-0, 11-1; D Grant bt I Ackland 11-1, 11-2; T Maconie bt A George 11-2, 11-7; P Winzeler bt G Barnes 11-9, 11-2

Second round: J Toop bt Taberner 11-0, 11-4; Jones bt Hajialexandrou 11-2, 9-11, 11-7; Minta bt Brooks 11-6, 11-4; Cavanagh bt Pringle 11-2, 11-3; H Buchanan bt Furniss 11-5, 11-3; Ellison bt Hatton 11-3, 11-2; Grant bt Maconie 12-11, 11-0; Fuller bt Winzeler 11-5, 11-8

Quarter-finals: Toop bt Jones 11-8, 11-5; Cavanagh bt Minta 11-3, 6-11, 11-7; Buchanan bt Ellison 12-10, 11-2; Fuller bt Grant 11-3, 11-2

Semi-finals: Toop bt Cavanagh 11-0, 2-11, 11-4; Fuller bt Buchanan 11-1, 11-6

Final: Fuller bt Toop 11-7, 11-5

Plate: Ackland

### **Doubles**

1st round: Buchanan & Taberner bt Chandler & Ackland 11-2, 11-1; Furniss & Barlow bt Maconie & Smith 4-11, 11-1, 11-5; Grant & Lee bt Hanton & George 11-5, 11-4; Jones & Pringle bt Bowden & Bridge 11-4, 11-3; Minta & Henry bt Lamb & Cooper 11-7, 11-3; Hatton & Korris bt Hine & Harris 11-3, 11-5; Akerman & Mohammed bt Price & Price 11-7, 11-4; Ellison & Bate bt Kay & Ward 11-2, 11-2

Quarter-finals: Buchanan & Taberner bt Furniss & Barlow 11-4, 11-2; Jones & Pringle bt Grant & Lee 7-11, 11-7, 11-6; Minta & Henry bt Hatton & Korris 11-4, 4-11, 12-10; Ellison & Bate bt Akerman & Mohammed 11-8, 11-1

Semi-finals: Buchanan & Taberner bt Jones & Pringle 12-10, 11-6; Ellison & Bate bt Minta & Henry 11-5, 11-5

Final: Buchanan & Taberner bt Ellison & Bate 11-3, 11-7

Plate: Hine & Harris

### **OWERS TROPHY**

St. Paul's School, Barnes, 27th September 2008

After coming agonisingly close to winning for the last two seasons, the Old Paulines finally left Barnes with the Owers Trophy this year. It was their first win in the tournament, and came at the expense of the Alleyn Old Boys, the defending champions and a team who were going for a third successive title.

The day had begun with nine teams playing a round-robin format in three groups of three. From the very start, in the first two groups, the Alleyn Old Boys and Old Paulines immediately showed why they were the top seeds, both winning their groups to claim a place in the semi-finals.

In the third group, however, things were much closer, with the group winner only decided in the final

game of the final match between the Old Eastbournians and Old Merchant Taylors. Despite losing that game, the OMTs scored enough points to clinch the match and top the table. But, there was good news for the OEs, who had done enough to also qualify for the semi-finals as best group runners-up.

Come the semi-finals, it was the top two seeds who again showed their class, losing only a single game each: the Alleyn Old Boys took a comfortable win against the OEs, while the Old Paulines beat the OMTs by almost 20 points, to set up a repeat of the previous two years' finals.

However, the outcome was to be very different. Whereas, in past years, the AOBs' first pair had been able to score big wins and establish a lead the Old Paulines couldn't claw back against their second pair, this year, the AOBs' first pair (Hamish Buchanan and Dave Hebden) only won one game – and that was 16-15. So, although it was one game apiece midway through the match, the Old Paulines went into the second half with a lead, thanks to Ady Lee and Alex Griffiths' 15-6 win over Inigo Ackland and Peter Hanton.

In those return games, Inigo and Peter again played Fives of a standard that belied their youth and relative inexperience, but Dan Tristao and Charlie Brooks won through 15-9; and, with Ady and Alex claiming a notable win over Dave and Hamish, the match – and the trophy – was the Old Paulines'.

#### **Group stages:**

**Group One:** Old Paulines bt Old Oundelians 89-34; Old Wykehamists I bt Old Oundelians 74-32; Old Paulines bt Old Wykehamists I 80-33

**Group Two:** Old Olavians bt Old Wykehamists II 88-11; Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Wykehamists II 88-9; Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Olavians 77-33

**Group Three:** Old Merchant Taylors bt Old Blues 88-19; Old Eastbournians bt Old Blues 88-47; Old Merchant Taylors bt Old Eastbournians 62-61

**Semi-finals:** Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Eastbournians 56-24; Old Paulines bt Old Merchant Taylors 58-39

**Final:** Old Paulines bt Alleyn Old Boys 60-44

**Plate:** Old Wykehamists I

## **YORKSHIRE OPEN DOUBLES**

Giggleswick, 11th October 2008

The pupils seemed a friendly lot at Giggleswick as we congregated for the Yorkshire Open, writes Ian Roberts. All the girls waved at us, as did most of the boys. Then we realised that the entire local population of midges had descended on Giggleswick to view the Tournament and that it was a case of 'not waving, but swatting'. Nevertheless, our reception was friendly; the weather held good to dry any residual damp in the courts; and for the first time, we were able to enjoy excellent changing facilities in the School's superb new sports hall abutting the courts. That all ran smoothly was a great relief after the enforced abandonment of the 2007 Tournament, due to adverse weather conditions.

Play started promptly, and continued without a break or the disruption caused by any of the 12 pairs insisting on playing 3-gamers. Indeed, the only incidents were injuries; Tim Widdop's attempt to play a turning shot through an opponent wrenched his arm and led to him serving left handed for the rest of the competition; and Charles Lamb developed a nosebleed as a result of an errant ball played by his partner striking him in the face. (Callous spectators composed tabloid headlines on the lines of – "lamb to the slaughter" or "sacrificial lamb", or simply commented, "I didn't realise that Fives was a blood sport"). Richard Price who photographed all aspects of the day with enthusiasm, recorded the episode with all the aplomb of a war correspondent manqué. Nevertheless, concerned readers can be assured that no players suffered serious injury in the running of the Tournament.

Two pairs from Derby Moor attempted to confound the organiser by declining to declare their pairings in advance of their arrival, stating merely that both pairs would be of roughly equal standard.

They thus had only themselves to blame for appearing in the draw as “Derby Dossors” and “Moor Marauders”. However, the accuracy of their assessment of the relative strengths of their two pairs was proved when they ended up playing each other in the Plate, resulting in a hard fought 16-14 game, the closest of the day.

Back in the main competition, the seeds won through to the Semi-Finals, but Widdop’s injury enabled Minta & Bishop to secure a swift passage to the Final, whereas Hebden & Buchanan had to work harder to secure the opportunity of defending their 2006 title. Perhaps weakened by the harder Semi, they lost to John Minta and Phil Bishop at the final hurdle in a fast moving and hard-hitting Final, leaving the Mancunians to secure the historic JH Whitley Trophy.

In the next-door court, another hard-hitting game was in play, as the two Durham University pairs who had triumphed in their respective blocks did battle for the White Rose Wine Coaster in the Plate Final. They emerged after the first game thinking it was all over now, before being ushered back on court by the organiser to comply with the “best of 3 games to 15” rule of the competition. Although Alan Bowden & Charlie Leggett improved their score in the second game, it was not quite enough to prevent Chris Hay & Hal Mohammed re-emerging to claim the Coaster.

After a hard day’s Fives, no Yorkshire Open would be complete without a visit to the superheated snug of the Black Horse where the restorative properties of Taylor’s Landlord Bitter were once again demonstrated, before those remaining repaired to the dining room for a late suppers

**First Round:** R Christie & A Goodwin bt TI Roberts & DK McIntyre 15-3, 15-1; GW Enstone & K Henry bt CD Lamb & JR Hawke 15-8, 15-8; TC Widdop & RG Sandie bt A Bowden & C Leggett 15-13, 15-13; B Kirk & C Butler bt P Brown & A Lewis 15-6, 15-11.

**Quarter-Finals:** DJ Hebden & NH Buchanan bt C Hay & H Mohammed 15-2, 15-9; Enstone & Henry bt Christie & Goodwin 15-4, 15-6; Widdop & Sandie bt Kirk & Butler 15-6, 15-5; J Minta & P Bishop bt R Price & G Price 15-2, 15-9.

**Semi-Finals:** Hebden & Buchanan bt Enstone & Henry 15-12, 15-13; Minta & Bishop bt Widdop & Sandie 15-1, 15-1.

**Final:** Minta & Bishop bt Hebden & Buchanan 15-4, 15-4.

**Plate Final:** Hay & Mohammed bt Bowden & Leggett 15-7, 15-10.

## **WEST OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Sherborne, 25/26th October 2008

The 2008 West of England Championships will be remembered not just for James Toop’s first double of the season, but also as the tournament when a group of young players came of age. Despite a field containing many seasoned campaigners, both the singles and doubles finals (and the singles plate final, for that matter) were contested by players of less than 30 years old.

Indeed, right from the first round of the singles, young players were making a name for themselves, as Chris Burrows – playing in his first tournament since leaving Oundle – defeated Ben Taberner. In the end, though, it was the eight seeds who made it through to the quarter-finals; and, in the bottom half of the draw, it was the higher seeds who reached the semis, John Minta and James Toop securing reasonably comfortable wins over Harry Akerman and Dan Grant, respectively.

It was in the top half, however, things were less clear-cut. First, fifth seed Will Ellison took fourth seed Matt Cavanagh to three games before the higher-seeded player won through. And, then, the form book was well and truly upset, as eighth seed and reigning BUSA champion Dan Tristao beat current national champion Hamish Buchanan in three tightly fought games.

The contrast between the resulting semi-finals could hardly have been more marked. The match between James and John was a no-holds barred affair, both willing to trade blow for blow, going for

their shots and mixing sheer power with deft touch and spin shots. John took a good lead in the first game, only for James to save game-ball, fight back and nick the game 12-10, before white-washing John in the second.

Next door, the pace may have been less frenetic, but the play was no less skilful. If John and James's match had been a boxing bout, Matt and Dan's was a game of chess, each player probing for a weakness, retrieving superbly and displaying immense patience as they waited for the chance of a winner. Belying his relative lack of experience at this level, Dan fought back from 10-7 down to take the first game, and was never headed as he took the second game – and the match – against the former national champion.

In the final, the first game was very tight, but James just shaded it 11-8. However, for the second game, James began to be a little less defensive, moving into the ball earlier, and the change in tactic was enough for him to take the game 11-2 and regain the title he had won last year. The singles plate, meanwhile, also went to a young player, with Ady Lee beating Hal Mohammed.

As in the singles, so in the doubles, the eight seeds reached the quarter-finals – and three of the top four made it to the semis. The exceptions were sixth seeds Ady Lee and Dan Grant, who avenged their defeat in the London Open by putting out the third seeds, Chris Jones and Andy Pringle. However, they couldn't continue their winning form in the semis, and lost to Marcus Bate and James Toop in two games.

In the top half of the draw, there was a real shock, as Will Ellison and Hal Mohammed played superbly to beat the London Open champions, Hamish Buchanan and Ben Taberner, convincingly in two games. However, the young ex-Winchester pair weren't able to recapture their semi-final form in the final, and right from the off, Marcus and James took control of the match. The combination of Marcus's steady power and good choice of shot with James' willingness to take the ball early on the volley seemed to rush their opponents, who weren't able to generate much pace from the ball and saw themselves forced into mistakes. In the end, James and Marcus (last year's runners-up in this tournament) took a comfortable win.

## **Singles**

**1st round:** H Buchanan bt C Lamb 11-2, 11-0; E Brooke bt A Smith 11-5, 11-1; M Bate bt R Bury 11-3, 11-4; D Tristao bt T Lewis 11-6, 11-3; W Ellison bt K Henry 11-3, 11-2; C Burrows bt B Taberner 11-6, 11-6; E Hatton bt H Mohammed 11-6, 11-7; M Cavanagh bt G Price 11-3, 11-0; J Minta bt R Bridge 11-0, 11-0; C Thomas bt A Pringle 11-7, 7-11, 11-8; C Jones bt S Watson 11-5, 11-7; H Akerman bt M Gibbor 11-12, 11-3, 11-2; D Grant bt N Geere 11-6, 11-2; T Maconie bt T Kiggell 12-11, 11-2; C Brooks bt J Hughes 11-0, 11-2; J Toop bt A Lee 11-2, 11-2

**2nd round:** Buchanan bt Brooke 11-6, 11-3; Tristao bt Bate 5-11, 11-6, 11-2; Ellison bt Burrows 11-3, 11-5; Cavanagh bt Hatton 11-2, 11-2; Minta bt Thomas 11-0, 11-1; Akerman bt Jones 11-4, 11-5; Grant bt Maconie 11-7, 11-7; Toop bt Brooks 11-1, 11-1

**Quarter-finals:** Tristao bt Buchanan 11-8, 8-11, 11-8; Cavanagh bt Ellison 10-12, 11-5, 11-0; Minta bt Akerman 11-2, 11-6; Toop bt Grant 11-2, 11-4

**Semi-finals:** Tristao bt Cavanagh 12-10, 11-6; Toop bt Minta 12-10, 11-0

**Final:** Toop bt Tristao 11-8, 11-2

**Plate:** Lee

## **Doubles**

**Preliminary round:** C Thomas & T Kiggell bt S Maskell & S Werkshagen 11-7, 11-2; H Akerman & M Mohammed bt Lewis & Watson

**1st round:** H Buchanan & B Taberner bt E Hatton & T Maconie 11-2, 11-7; C Brooks & D Tristao bt Thomas & Kiggell 11-4, 2-11, 11-9; W Enstone & K Henry bt Akerman & Mohammed 11-9, 11-5; W Ellison & H Mohammed bt R Bury & N Geere 11-2, 11-6; C Jones & A Pringle bt C Burrows & C



Lamb 11-2, 11-6; A Lee & D Grant bt R Bridge & E Brooke 11-3, 11-4; J Hughes & A Rew bt M Gibbor & D Ackland w/o; J Toop & M Bate bt G Price & A Smith 11-2, 11-6

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Brooks & Tristao 11-8, 11-1; Ellison & Mohammed bt Enstone & Henry 11-6, 11-3; Grant & Lee bt Jones & Pringle 11-2, 11-6; Bate & Toop bt Hughes & Rew 11-8, 11-1

**Semi-finals:** Ellison & Mohammed bt Buchanan & Taberner 11-4, 11-4; Bate & Toop bt Grant & Lee 11-8, 11-3

**Final:** Bate & Toop bt Ellison & Mohammed 11-4, 11-3

**Plate:** Hatton & Maconie

## **OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS**

London, 30th October 2008

There has been some significant change in the RFA rankings following the recent West of England Championships. Singles champion James Toop has regained top spot in the singles rankings, but the most major move comes from Dan Tristao, whose run to the final has shot him up nine places to sixth. Equally important is the fact that this ranking determines the four automatic qualifiers for the final rounds of the National Singles Championships, and Dan's defeat of Matt Cavanagh has pushed the 2004 and 2006 champion into fifth place, meaning that John Minta leap-frogs him, and qualifies automatically for the final rounds.

Although it may look a little confusing that Matt has dropped a place after losing to Dan in the semi-finals at Sherborne, whereas Hamish Buchanan (who lost to Dan in the quarter-final) retains his third place, Dave Hebden, who compiles the rankings for the RFA, explains: "The answer is that other results over the last couple of years come into account in the 'performance adjustment'. Hamish had two good wins against players with high points last season, which has balanced the effect of the Tristao defeat to some extent. Matt did not have any such wins last year and so the defeat had a greater affect. Also, Hamish has more ranking points this year (18.5) than Matt (13), and this is also a factor in keeping his ranking fairly high."

In the doubles rankings, the West of England champions James Toop and Marcus Bate make good progress up the top 10, while the runners-up also climb: Will Ellison moves up to 7th, while Hal Mohammed jumps eight places to 17th. At the same time, Dan Grant and Ady Lee also see their rankings improve after a good run to the semi-finals in Sherborne, while Plate winner Tom Maconie is a new entrant in the rankings, just outside the top 50. For the full rankings, simply click on the link below

## **SCHOOLS' WINCHESTER FIVES DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP**

**Winchester College, 9th November 2008**

This tournament attracted a high-quality entry of 12 pairs from six schools, with more than half the matches going to three games.

All six schools had pairs involved in lengthy first-round encounters, so the organiser was relieved when, after a break for the two-minute silence for Remembrance Sunday, the quarter-final matches saw wins in straight games for the four seeded pairs.

The semi-finals were both excellent three-gamers. Winchester I played their best fives to defeat top seeds St. Paul's I, and Alleyn's I had to call on all their resources to beat St. Paul's II. The final was always likely to be a close one, and in the end it was fitness and determination that saw Peter Hanton (with a damaged right hand) and Adam George come home in the third game against Winchester's Luke Squire-Smith and James Lane. Congratulations to both pairs on a superb final, and to Alleyn's on their first win in this event. A strong plate entry saw a good Malvern pair beat the promising

Winchester III in the final.

**Renewed thanks go to Winchester College for the use of their courts and facilities.**

**1st round:** Malvern bt Winchester III 7-15, 15-8, 15-5; St. Paul's III bt Marlborough I 11-15, 15-11, 15-10; Alleyn's II bt Bradfield 15-7, 12-15, 15-11; Winchester II bt Marlborough II 15-4, 15-6

**Quarter-Finals:** St. Paul's I bt Malvern 15-5, 15-10; Winchester I bt St. Paul's III 15-5, 15-11; St. Paul's II bt Alleyn's II 15-7, 15-0; Alleyn's I bt Winchester II 15-13, 15-9

**Semi-Finals:** Winchester I bt St. Paul's I 16-15, 12-15, 15-6; Alleyn's I bt St. Paul's II 15-5, 11-15, 15-11

**Final:** Alleyn's I (P Hanton & A George) bt Winchester I (L Squire-Smith & J Lane) 14-16, 15-11, 15-7

**Plate:** Malvern

## **NATIONAL STUDENT CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Edinburgh, 21st/23rd November 2008

BUCS has published the draw for the National Student Championships, which take place in Edinburgh later this month. Included are players from many of the country's top Fives-playing universities, as well as competitors from universities where Fives is not active - Glasgow and Warwick, for example.

In the singles, reigning champion Dan Tristao and Will Ellison – both ranked in the national top 10 – are seeded to meet in the final, but there should also be strong challenges from the likes of Hal Mohammed, Jonny Major and Mark Gibbor. The doubles competition sees Dan team up with Ed Ronan, as he attempts to repeat his double victory of last year, but there are many strong pairs in the draw. The Imperial pairing of Will Ellison and Chris Burrows are top seeds, but second seeds Hal Mohammed and Chris Hay are one of a number of strong pairs from Durham.

## **WEST OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Sherborne, 25/26th October 2008

Anyone who missed the singles and doubles finals at the recent West of England Championship can now see them online - thanks to Ed Hatton. He has posted several minutes of action from both finals (and from various other matches at Sherborne and from the London Open) on Youtube, and you can find them simply by clicking the link below.

## **RFA CLUB PRESIDENT'S CUP**

Merchant Taylor's School, Northwood, 7th December 2008

The organisers of the annual President's Cup have been in touch with the RFA to advise us that, due to problems with their local Post Office, the entry forms for the tournament will only be sent out this weekend. For some reason, although the letters were originally taken to the Post Office to be sent out two weeks ago, they have just been returned, unfranked and unsent. Quite why, no one is sure, but the organisers assure us that the letters will be sent out over the coming weekend - and compensation sought from the offending Post Office. However, if no RFA member has received their entry form by the middle of next week, please get in touch with the General Secretary

## **NORTH OF ENGLAND WINCHESTER FIVES CHAMPIONSHIP**

Sedbergh, 9th November 2008

The Tournament was again held at Sedbergh School this year, but the day marked the end of an era, as it was the last time that Laurence Catlow will organise the competition as Master in Charge of Fives there, as he will be retiring next year.

In view of that, he will take great delight in the fact that the main competition was won by two current Sedbergh pupils, Alex Elletson & Max Pimlott, who maintained their home advantage to triumph over a Rossall-based pair, Phil Brown & Alex Lewis, in a three-game final 11-7, 8-11, 11-5.

The Plate Tournament was won by another Rossall pair, Tom Root & Chris Metcalfe. Clearly a good advert for schools spending money wisely on improving their Fives facilities!

After the tournament, Laurence was presented by Grem MacIntyre with a book on fishing with Old Sedberghian connections – “My Rod, My Comfort” by Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart – as a thank you for his hospitality and organisation over the years.

## **NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP : Northern Qualifying**

Finals: Manchester, 29/30th November 2008

16 players gathered from across the north of the UK to contest what was one of the toughest northern qualifying tournaments for many years, writes organiser Phil Bishop. With the number of qualifying places unknown and an exceptionally high-quality field, some called it the “draw of doom”, and others simply fled to Mexico. Yes, there were only 15 listed on the draw, but one player, having told the organiser that he was not available, heard that his name was listed on the draw and duly arrived for his match, only to find that it was Fitz Walker who had entered – thanks, Terry (no relation).

A resolute squad of Durham players braved foul weather on the M62 in an early crossing of the Pennines, delaying the start. Eighth seed Chris Hay was first on court against Matt Bowness, and was caught cold in the first game, but rallied in the second with some tenacious retrieving and shot play. A third game looked imminent, but Matt put paid to his hopes and claimed his first victory of the day.

Meanwhile, the other seeded players prevailed to reach the quarter finals. Dave Fox was Matt Bowness’s next opponent. First game, Matt fought his way to game point with a comfortable lead, only for Dave to unleash a typical barrage of cunning winners to go game point up, before succumbing to Matt’s persistent retrieving and hard hitting. Matt comfortably secured the second game and well-earned qualification. The other semi-finalists – and hence qualifiers – were Simon Fraser, Neil Roberts (who overcame the resilient Marco Skogh) and Phil Bishop.

At this point, the losing quarter finalists, which included Hal Mohammed and Kevin Henry, enthusiastically – well pragmatically, anyway – embarked on a round-robin competition to determine the ranking order for the additional qualification places up for grabs. The problem with round-robins is that they can be far from conclusive. Hence, as Fox beat Mohammed, Mohammed beat Skogh, and Skogh beat Fox, the only thing that was clear was that no one could relax. Henry produced his best performance of the day to outwit Skogh, while an increasingly consistent Mohammed claimed victory over Henry. So all hung on the last game, and it was a relieved Dave Fox who scraped home 16-15 over an exasperated Kevin Henry, leaving Fox and Mohammed with 2 wins, Henry and Skogh with 1, and sending Dave Hebden’s computer into overdrive to determine the final ranking order.

Meanwhile in the main competition semi-finals, Phil Bishop beat Neil Roberts and Matt Bowness continued to show no respect for the rankings list, claiming the scalp of Simon Fraser. It was only in the final that the three previous hard matches finally took their toll on Matt, and after a tight first game, Phil ended up a comfortable winner. Matt’s achievement was all the more remarkable given

that he was knocked down by a taxi in September and only returned to playing a few weeks ago. He hopes to be fully fit by the finals weekend.

The organiser thanks all who turned out and made the tournament such a success, and looks forward to extending some Mancunian hospitality to the other qualifiers on 29th November

**1st round:** Bowness bt Hay 15-4, 15-11; Henry bt Bowden 15-3, 15-12; Fraser bt Ackland 15-2, 15-6; Roberts bt Harrison 15-4, 15-3; Skogh bt Walker 15-3, 15-3; Mohammed bt Samuels 15-4, 15-6; Bishop bt Legget 15-7, 15-0

**Quarter-finals:** Bowness bt Fox 16-15, 15-6; Fraser bt Henry 15-12, 15-0; Roberts bt Skogh 15-11, 15-1; Bishop bt Mohammed 15-3, 15-8

**Semi-finals:** Bowness bt Fraser 15-5, 15-9; Bishop bt Roberts 15-3, 15-1

**Final:** Bishop bt Bowness 15-10, 15-2

**Round-Robin** (for losing quarter-finalists) : Fox bt Mohammed 15-8, bt Henry 16-15, lost to Skogh 5-15; Mohammed bt Henry 15-1, bt Skogh 15-7; Henry bt Skogh 15-9

## **NATIONAL STUDENT CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Edinburgh, 21st/23rd November 2008

Oxford's Dan Tristao survived the luck of the draw to retain his BUCS title in Scotland, reports David Gardner. He had been unhappy that, due to the 'luck of the draw', all his previous matches had been at Loretto, and that his first match at Fettes was the singles final. Whilst accepting that this was just bad luck, his viewpoint clearly showed in the early stages of a fine singles final, where he was unsettled, and indeed outplayed, by a fine array of powerful, accurate and angled shots from his opponent, Will Ellison (Imperial), who was forcing errors, and generally outplaying the champion, who found himself 1-10 down after a short period of play.

Like all good champions, however, Dan settled down and slowly began to claw his way back into the match, forcing errors from his opponent and generally starting to take control of the rallies. After a lot of very high quality play from both players, Will was forced to concede the game at 15-12 and never really got back into control, losing the second game to 6. The gallery of spectators responded enthusiastically to the quality of play (although it could be argued that they were just trying to keep their hands warm !!)

The Doubles provided equal excitement and Will Ellison, partnered by Chris Burrows sadly extended his losing streak, despite Herculean efforts against the lower-seeded newcomers from Durham! Extremely powerful hitting from Inigo Ackland, plus some deft variations in pace and angle, combined with the dexterity and huge enthusiasm of partner Alex Griffiths, enabled the Durham pair to overcome the top seeds 15-8, 15-13 and become the new champions. Alex Griffiths

will surely turn into a very high quality left-hander in the future, who will be sought after as a partner by many right-handed players!! It is perhaps interesting to note that the doubles winners also fell foul of the 'luck of the draw' and had no previous matches at Fettes either!

Plate Honours went to Oxford with Sam Adcock (Oxford) taking both titles, partnered by David Park in the doubles. Particular comment must also be made of the efforts of Shafin Somji (King's London) who took a game off Sam in the singles final.

In a day of excellent fives, the spectators were the winners - being privileged to watch such quality play from our emerging young players. They should be congratulated on staying to watch for hours - although it might just be that they were frozen to the spot and unable to get away!

### **Singles**

**1st round:** Corbin bt Milne 15-4, 15-0; Park bt Hansom 15-5, 15-1; Fabes bt Spencer 15-2, 15-2; Morrison bt Nicholson 15-2, 15-7; Meek bt Dyson-Richards 15-0, 15-0; Hay bt Rutlet 15-0, 15-1; Somji bt Peace 15-0 15-2; Adcock bt Edwards 15-0, 15-0; Bowden bt Acton 15-0, 15-1

**2nd Round:** Tristao bt Malhotra 15-0, 15-0; D Ackland bt Litherland 15-1, 15-6; Pumphrey bt Corbin 11-15, 15-11, 15-6; I Ackland bt Tong 15-4, 15-2; Major bt Weisner 15-1, 15-4; Griffiths bt Parker 15-0, 15-0; Park bt Fabes 15-3, 15-3; Mohammed bt Wall 15-0, 15-1; Gibbor bt Lane 15-0, 15-1; Murby bt Champness 15-2, 15-5; Burrows bt Morrison 15-2, 15-7; Hay bt Meek 15-3, 15-3; Legget bt Somji 15-1, 15-0; Ronan bt Weil 15-0, 15-0; Bowden bt Adcock 15-8, 15-3; Ellison WO Carlisle

**3rd Round:** Tristao (Ox) bt Ackland D (UCL) 15-12, 15-9; Ackland I (Dur) bt Pumphrey (Edin) 15-1, 15-3; Major (Edin) bt Griffiths (Dur) 15-6, 15-13; Mohammed (Dur) bt Park (Ox) 15-8, 15-4; Gibbor (UCL) bt Murby (Glasgow) 15-10, 15-1, 6 15-13; Hay (Dur) bt Burrows (Imp) 15-9, 15-11; Ronan (Ox) bt Legget (Dur) 15-6 15-6; Ellison (Imp) bt Bowden (Dur) 15-2, 15-1

**Quarter-finals:** Tristao bt Ackland I 16-14, 15-7; Mohammed bt Major 15-7, 15-13; Hay bt Gibbor 15-9 15-2; Ellison bt Ronan 15-4, 15-6

**Semi-finals:** Tristao bt Mohammed 15-5, 15-2; Ellison bt Hay 15-4 15-1

**Final:** Tristao bt Ellison 15-12, 15-6

### **Doubles**

**1st Round:** Champness & Litherland bt Milne & Morrison 15-8, 15-9; Legget & Bowden bt Fabes & Hansom 15-1, 15-2; Weisner & Parker bt Nicholson & Peace 15-2, 15-7; Acton & Rutley WO Cochran & Carlisle; Weil & Malhotra WO Wall & Edwards

**2nd Round:** Ellison & Burrows (Imp) bt Champness & Litherland (Dur) 15-2, 15-3; Legget & Bowden (Dur) bt Meek & Corbin (War) 15-2, 15-5; Gibbor & Ackland D. bt Weisner & Parker (Leeds) 15-2, 15-7; Major & Pumphrey (Edin) bt Acton & Rutley (UCL) 15-0, 15-1; Tristao & Ronan (Ox) bt Lane & Spencer (Dur) 15-0, 15-1; Griffiths & Ackland I (Dur) bt Weil & Malhotra (UCL) 15-5, 15-3; Murby & Robinson (Glasgow) bt Park & Adcock (Ox) 15-9, 14-16, 15-11; Mohammed & Hay (Dur) bt Somji & Tong (Lon) 15-10 15-3

**Quarter-finals:** Ellison & Burrows bt Legget & Bowden 13-15, 15-10, 15-11; Major & Pumphrey bt Gibbor & Ackland 15-10, 15-2; Griffiths & Ackland bt Tristao & Ronan 15-9, 15-8; Mohammed & Hay bt Murby & Robinson 15-2, 15-2

**Semi-Finals:** Ellison & Burrows bt Major & Pumphrey 15-13, 15-4; Griffiths & Ackland bt Mohammed & Hay 15-11, 16-14

**Final:** Ackland & Griffiths bt Ellison & Burrows 15-8, 15-13

**Plate singles:** Semi-finals: Somji (Lon King's) bt Tong (Lon Imp) 15-9; Adcock (Ox) bt Acton (UCL) 15-1

Final: Adcock bt Somji 12-15, 15-2, 15-9

**Plate doubles:** Final: Park & Adcock (Oxford) bt Fabes & Hansom (UCL) 15-2, 15-8

## **NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP**

Manchester, 29/30th November 2008

Organiser Ed Hatton has just published the draw for the final rounds of this year's National Singles Championship. Played in Manchester, these see the regional qualifiers join the top four seeds, who qualified automatically. James Toop and Ed Fuller are seeded to reach Sunday's final, but they will have to play some excellent Fives to do so, as the field contains a mouth-watering mix of youth and experience.

As well as reigning champion Hamish Buchanan, other former champions in the field include Neil Roberts and Phil Bishop - and just their first-round matches (against Dave Fox and Simon Fraser, respectively) look extremely attractive prospects for the spectators. Joined by the likes of Dan Tristao, Will Ellison, Chris Burrows and Hal Mohammed, all of whom played so well at the recent BUCS championships, a weekend of truly superb Fives is in prospect. For the full draw, click on the link below.

## **RFA v BUCS REPRESENTATIVE MATCH**

Christ's Hospital, 8th February 2009

BUCS has now announced its team to face the RFA in the annual representative fixture. The match will take place in February 2009 on the courts of Christ's Hospital, and the following have been selected by BUCS after their performances at the recent National Student Championships in Edinburgh:

Daniel Tristao (Oxford & St. Paul's)  
Will Ellison (Imperial & Winchester)  
Hal Mohammed (Durham & Winchester)  
Jonny Major (Edinburgh & St. Paul's)  
Alex Griffiths (Durham & St. Paul's)  
Inigo Ackland (Durham & Alleyn's)

Among the reserves are: Mark Gibbor (UCL); Chris Hay (Durham); Chris Burrows (Imperial) and Richie Murby (Glasgow).

## **NATIONAL LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIPS**

St Paul's School, London, 30th November 2008

Manchester's Claire Knowles again dominated the the Ladies National Championships, taking both the singles and doubles titles – as she has done every year since 1999. Although she had a knee operation in the summer, she breezed through to the final of the singles without dropping a point, and then (in a repeat of last year's final) took the title with a two-game win over Emma Howie – for the loss of two points. However, it seemed fitting that one of Claire's victims should go on to win the plate, and Helen Toop duly made it a double day of celebrations for the Toop family (see above story) after claiming the plate by winning all her matches in the round-robin.

In the doubles, too, the final was a repeat of last year's. Defending champions Claire and Melanie Whitehead came through their semi-final for the loss of just a single point, while in the bottom half of the draw, Emma Howie and Irene Bravo (who had come over from Spain for the tournament) successfully overcame Sophie Palmer and Helen Toop. Come the final, though, it was clear why Claire and Melanie were defending champions: they took the title for the loss of just one point over two games, retaining the championship they first won together in 2000 – and haven't lost since.

### **Singles**

**1st round:** S Palmer bt M Raynor 15-9; E Ward bt Andrea 15-9; C Makepeace bt Lucy 15-9

**2nd round:** C Knowles bt H Toop 15-0; I Bravo bt S Palmer 15-9; M Whitehead bt Andrea 15-1; E Howie bt C Makepeace 15-3

**Semi-finals:** Knowles bt Bravo 15-0, 15-0; Howie bt Whitehead 15-13, 15-8

**Final:** Knowles bt Howie 15-2, 15-0

**Plate:** Toop

### **Doubles**

**1st round:** E Ward & M Raynor bt Lucy & Andrea 15-3; S Palmer & H Toop bt M Griffith & C Makepeace 15-1

**Semi-finals:** C Knowles & M Whitehead bt Ward & Raynor 15-0, 15-1; E Howie & I Bravo bt Palmer & Toop 15-4, 15-6

**Final:** Knowles & Whitehead bt Howie & Bravo 15-1, 15-0

**Plate 1:** Griffith & Makepeace

**Plate 2:** Palmer & Toop

## **NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP**

Manchester, 29/30th November 2008

After gruelling regional competition which had already produced a number of upsets and a record entry from the North, 16 competitors gathered at the Y club in Manchester to contest the 2008 Jesters' Cup. Despite foggy weather which meant two players, the first round was soon underway. All went to seeding, except Neil Roberts who secured a comfortable and impressive victory over Dave Fox. However Will Ellison prevailed only after a lengthy three-gamer against the resurgent Matt Bowness, who went on to win the plate. Not many could claim similar achievements with a perforated eardrum.

The quarter-finals did not fail to deliver: both James Toop and Ed Fuller were pushed very hard in a first game against Roberts and Ellison respectively, before their fitness and drive gave them each second game victories to love. The only disappointment was the withdrawal of Hamish Buchanan due to a back injury. Pick of the round, however, was John Minta's epic struggle against Oxford student and BUCS winner Dan Tristao. A match that could have gone either way ended with a couple of minor errors by Dan and a very relieved John carrying the Manchester flag into the semi-finals jointly with Phil Bishop.

In the first semi, after some tense early exchanges John was unable to maintain this intensity and Toop completed a comprehensive and striking victory against him. The other semi-final was a different story and produced the longest, most tightly-fought match of the tournament. Despite the organiser's lack of appreciation for their efforts, both Fuller and Bishop pulled out all the stops, ending in a nailbiting 16-14 victory in the third game for Fuller.

After restrained evening entertainment and refreshment, the finalists both arrived before 10am on Sunday for the 10.30am start, and right from the first rally there was no doubting their intensity. At

first Fuller seemed wrong-footed and a little sluggish in the face of Toop's relentless spin-assisted pressure on the side and back wall lengths. However he clawed back Toop's early lead and with his accustomed determination took the first game 16-14.

Toop's displeasure with himself was obvious and he upped his own consistency in the second game, as well as mixing up his play with more angled shots, which was enough to earn him a 15-9 win. However Ed was unfortunately unable to continue the third game to his usual standard after a heavy collision with the back wall, and played on nobly, despite obvious restriction to his movement. This should take nothing away from a final that truly displayed the best fives of the tournament, from the best players. James Toop now secures his place in the history books by holding simultaneously the Jester's and Kinnaird Cups, national titles for the codes of Rugby and Eton Fives respectively.

**1st round:** J Toop bt C Burrows 15-3, 15-7; N Roberts bt D Fox 15-7, 15-2; D Tristao bt K Henry 15-9, 15-12; J Minta bt M Bate 15-9, 15-1; H Buchanan bt H Mohammed 15-5, 15-4; P Bishop bt S Fraser 15-9, 15-7; W Ellison bt M Bowness 10-15, 15-2, 15-2; E Fuller bt T Maconie 15-2, 15-2

**Quarter-finals:** Toop bt Roberts 15-13, 15-0; Minta bt Tristao 15-4, 3-15, 15-13; Bishop bt Buchanan (ret'd hurt); Fuller bt Ellison 16-14, 15-0

**Semi-finals:** Toop bt Minta 15-5, 15-2; Fuller bt Bishop 11-15, 15-9, 16-14

**Final:** Toop bt Fuller 14-16, 15-10, 15-0

**Plate:** Bowness

### **RFA CLUB PRESIDENT'S CUP**

Merchant Taylors' School, Northwood, 7th December 2008

The 50th running of the President's Cup saw a triumph for youth and experience – and the game's statisticians scurrying to their record books. After a day's traditionally tough competition, it was Hamish Buchanan who again lifted the President's Cup, partnered this year by Jay Gravatt, a 16-year old schoolboy from KCS Wimbledon, who is generally reckoned to be the youngest ever winner of the tournament in what was certainly one of the closest finals on record. In doing so, they also were able to claim the distinction of winning the title without losing a single game.

The final against Mark Gibbor and Merchant Taylors' teacher Nick Hillier was an enthralling contest that had the gallery spell-bound. It was nip and tuck in both games, and Mark and Nick had game ball in the first game before Hamish and Jay nicked it 16-15. By this stage, however, it was clear that Jay's right hand was in major pain and he was in real discomfort at the start of the second game. Almost inevitably, he and Hamish fell behind, but then the adrenaline seemed to kick in to mask the pain. With Jay's right hand starting to fire again, he and his partner fought their way back into the game, drew level and eventually found the shots to clinch the title with a nail-biting 15-13 win in the second game.

Such a close game was typical of the whole day's play. Six of the eight first-round games, for example, went to three games, and the 16 closely matched pairs ensured that there were no one-sided games in the whole tournament. In the three plate competitions, too, competition was fierce, so even winning one of those was a real achievement. The Love Mug went to the left/right hand combination of Jack Furniss and Richard Christie (his first ever piece of silverware in his fives career), while the Mate's Plate went to Daniel Ackland and Freddie Sjostrom (who had already done well to reach the semi-finals of the main competition) and the T-Pot was won by Peter White and Chris Burrows, the latter emulating his father's performance of last year



**1st round:** J Schroeter & M Hanney bt A Smith & B Kirk 5-15, 15-11, 15-12; M Gibbor & N Hillier bt B Hanton & I Roberts 15-9, 15-16; 15-7; C Burrows & P White bt D Grant & C Lamb 15-13, 13-15, 15-13; D Ackland & F Sjostrom bt A Pringle & A Tong 16-14, 3-15, 15-10; A Lee & J Hawke bt C Butler & R Price 15-5, 15-13; H Buchanan & J Gravatt bt J Furniss & R Christie 15-8, 15-11; W Ellison & N Hemming-Brown bt A Passey & B Baral 11-15, 15-11, 15-7; P Cohen & S Somji bt G Price & J Abecassis 13-15, 16-15, 15-6

**2nd round:** Gibbor & Hillier bt Schroeter & Hanney 15-8, 15-6; Ackland & Sjostrom bt Burrows & White 15-10, 15-10; Buchanan & Gravatt bt Lee & Hawke 15-13, 15-8; Ellison & Hemming-Brown bt Cohen & Somji 6-15, 15-7, 15-9

**Semi-finals:** Gibbor & Hillier bt Ackland & Sjostrom 15-9, 15-9; Buchanan & Gravatt bt Ellison & Hawke\* 15-7, 15-8

**Final:** Buchanan & Gravatt bt Gibbor & Hillier 16-15, 15-13

**The Love Mug:** Christie & Furniss

**The T-Pot:** Burrows & White

**The Mate's Plate:** Ackland & Sjostrom

\* Substitute for Hemming-Brown

## OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS

London, 12th December 2008

The latest RFA rankings, prepared by Dave Hebden, see the finalists in the recent National Singles Championship remaining at the top, with champion James Toop extending his lead over Ed Fuller. Meanwhile, John Minta, who reached the semi-finals in Manchester, has edged past Hamish Buchanan into third place. Dan Tristao, Phil Bishop and Will Ellison all had excellent performances in the Championships and consolidate or improve their positions in the top 10, while Neil Roberts makes a return to the top 10 after reaching the Quarter-Finals.

Matt Bowness makes a huge leap into the top 20 at 14 after outstanding performances in the NW Qualifier and in winning the Singles Plate, while losing Plate finalist Tom Maconie enters the top 20 for the first time. Chris Burrows also did well to qualify from the London Qualifying event and makes a significant move up to 39.

The new rankings also reflect the BUCS Championships. Finalists Tristao and Ellison are both in the top 8 of the rankings, reflecting the strength of University Fives at the moment, while Hal Mohammed, Chris Hay, Mark Gibbor, Inigo Ackland and Ed Ronan all picked up points to climb up the table.

The doubles rankings only reflect the results of the student championships, so there's little change at the top of the table. Highest movers are the new BUCS champions Inigo Ackland and Alex Griffiths who enter the rankings at joint 34. Chris Burrows is also a new entry at 41 after reaching the final with Will Ellison, who is already at number 7. For the full rankings, click on the link below.

## WEST OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sherborne, 3rd/4th January 2009

**STOP PRESS:** Boys from Alleyn's dominated the Open category of the West of England Schools' Championships, with Peter Hanton beating his own doubles partner, Adam George, to take the singles title, before the pair teamed up to win the doubles title with a win against the top pair from St Paul's. In the Colts section, the singles title went to Luke Thomson from Christ's Hospital, while the doubles was won by Winchester – represented by singles runner-up James Kennedy and Henry Owen – who beat St Paul's in a two-game final.

## Senior Singles

**1st round:** Hine (St Paul's) bt Phelps (Bradfield) 15-4; Mighall (Christ's Hospital) bt Gordon (KCS Wimbledon) 15-1; Bowyer-Knight (Marlborough) bt Prowse (Sherborne) w/o; Chase (St Paul's) bt Forrest (Christ's Hospital) 15-0; George (Alleyn's) bt Edmanson (Blundell's) 15-0; Goodwin (Derby Moor) bt Gravatt (KCS Wimbledon) 15-1; Bowden (Alleyn's) by Neale-Draysey (Christ's Hospital) 15-1; Hill (Derby Moor) bt Wussinghe (St Paul's) 15-5; Kay (St Paul's) bt Evans (Tonbridge) 15-1; Lane (Winchester) bt Fowler (Christ's Hospital) 15-0; Hunter (Alleyn's) bt Aqualina (St Paul's) 15-6; Barnes (St Paul's) bt Cumberlegg (Blundell's) 15-0; Booker (KCS Wimbledon) bt Clark (Sherborne) 15-2; Garratt (Alleyn's) bt Bellringer (KCS Wimbledon) 15-13; Ward (St Paul's) bt Stevenson-Hamilton (Bradfield) 15-4; Hanton (Alleyn's) bt Smith (Christ's Hospital) 15-0

**2nd round:** Hine bt Mighall 15-6; Chase bt Bowyer-Knight 15-4; George bt Goodwin 15-3; Hill bt Bowden 15-4; Kay bt Lane 15-4; Barnes bt Hunter 15-3; Garratt bt Booker 15-7; Hanton bt Ward 15-3

**Quarter-finals:** Hine bt Chase 11-7, 10-12, 11-3; George bt Hill 11-4, 11-0; Barnes bt Kay 11-8, 11-2; Hanton bt Garratt 11-2, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** George bt Hine 11-4, 3-11, 11-6; Hanton bt Barnes 11-5, 11-1

**Final:** Hanton bt George 11-5, 11-0

**Plate:** Bellringer

## Senior Doubles

**1st round:** Alleyn's I bt Christ's Hospital II 15-2; St Paul's III bt Sherborne w/o; Christ's Hospital I bt KCS Wimbledon II 15-12; St Paul's II bt Bradfield 15-3; Derby Moor bt Alleyn's III 15-3; KCS Wimbledon I bt Tonbridge 15-8; Alleyn's II bt Blundell's 15-2; St Paul's I bt Marlborough 15-5;

**Quarter-finals:** Alleyn's I bt St Paul's III 11-3, 11-0; St Paul's II bt Christ's Hospital I 11-1, 11-7; Derby Moor bt KCS Wimbledon I 11-6, 11-0; St Paul's I bt Alleyn's II 11-7, 11-5

**Semi-finals:** Alleyn's I bt St Paul's II 11-5, 11-3; St Paul's I bt Derby Moor 10-12, 11-5, 11-2

**Final:** Alleyn's I (Hanton & George) bt St Paul's I (Hine & Kay) 11-7, 11-9

**Plate:** Marlborough (Bowyer-Knight & Rolls)

## Colts Singles

**1st round:** Ainsworth (Tonbridge) bt Williams Joy (Christ's Hospital) w/o; Butler (Bradfield) bt Kirwan (Eastbourne) 15-3; Lewis (Rossall) bt Goodwin (KCS Wimbledon) 15-5; Baines (Winchester) bt Scott (Bradfield) w/o; Conboye (Rossall) bt Daykin (Blundell's) 15-7; Browett (Alleyn's) bt Bury (Kelly College) w/o; Edmonds (St Paul's) bt Graham (Winchester) 15-2; Thomson (Christ's Hospital) bt Ader (St Paul's) 15-2; Aldham (KCS Wimbledon) bt Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's) 15-4; Atkins (Winchester) bt Tan (St Paul's) 15-6; Malde (St Paul's) bt Crofts (Eastbourne) 15-0; Frost (Derby Moor) bt Mathias (Christ's Hospital) 15-4; Brubert (Alleyn's) bt Cummins (Kelly) 15-1; Moore (Winchester) bt Goodwin (Derby Moor) 15-12

**2nd round:** Kennedy (Winchester) bt Ainsworth 15-4; Lewis bt Butler 15-13; Baines bt Conboye 15-4; Edmonds bt Browett 15-4; Thomson bt Aldham 15-5; Malde bt Atkins 15-6; Brubert bt Frost 15-7; Stephens-Hemingway (Alleyn's) bt Moore 15-1

**Quarter-finals:** Kennedy bt Lewis 11-6, 12-10; Edmonds bt Baines 11-5, 11-2; Thomson bt Malde 11-5,

11-2; Stephens-Hemingway bt Brubert 11-5, 11-1

**Semi-finals:** Kennedy bt Edmonds 12-10, 4-11, 11-9; Thomson bt Stephens-Hemingway 11-5, 11-2

**Final:** Thomson bt Kennedy 11-2, 11-6

**Plate:** Ainsworth

## Colts Doubles

**1st round:** Bradfield bt Alleyn's 15-13; St Paul's II bt Blundell's 15-9; KCS Wimbledon bt Rossall 15-2; Derby Moor bt Eastbourne 15-1; St Paul's I bt Winchester III 15-2

**Quarter-finals:** Winchester I bt Bradfield 11-2, 11-0; Christ's Hospital bt St Paul's II 11-1, 11-2;

KCS Wimbledon bt Winchester II 11-4, 11-7; St Paul's I bt Derby Moor 11-7, 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Winchester I bt Christ's Hospital 11-1, 9-11, 11-3; St Paul's I bt KCS Wimbledon 11-9, 12-10

**Final:** Winchester I (Kennedy & Owen) bt St Paul's I (Malde & Edmonds) 11-3, 11-5

**Plate:** Alleyn's (Brubert & Browett)

## **NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP (QUALIFYING ROUND)**

Alleyn's School, London, 10th January 2009

The London qualifying tournament for the final rounds of the National Doubles Championship defied the sub-zero temperatures off-court to produce some outstanding and nail-biting matches on-court.

The 12 competing pairs started the day with a round-robin, after which eight went through to a straight knockout tournament. From there, it was three of the four group winners who won through to the semi-finals, although – in a very open competition – none of them had easy passages. The one exception was Tom Maconie and Andy Pringle, who had finished as runners-up in Group D, but beat Group B winners Steve Korris and Ed Hatton to claim a semi-final place. Here they faced the left- and right-hand combination of Jack Furniss and Charlie Brooks in a match that went down to the wire.

Charlie and Jack edged the first game 15-13, only for Andy and Tom to come back to take the second 15-9. Things started very evenly in the decider, but a poor run of play from Andy and Tom gave their opponents a good lead and, although Andy and Tom fought back strongly towards the end, they had left themselves too much to do. Jack and Charlie went through with a 15-13 win in the third game.

Mind you, even that was not as close as the second semi-final on the neighbouring court. This too went the distance once Ady Lee and Dan Grant had fought back to take the second game after losing the first to Hal Mohammed and Nick Wolstenholme. Throughout the final game, it was nip and tuck, with rarely more than a point or two between the pairs, Hal's aggression matched by more adventurous angled shots from Dan and Ady, while Nick – encouraged loudly by his father from the back of the court – retrieved manfully and was never afraid to look for winners himself.

It was the Wessex pair who reached game-ball first, but Dan and Ady survived and, after several tense rallies, they finally clinched the win by the narrowest of margins, 16-15. As a result, they will join Charlie and Jack (who had already conceded the qualifier's final match, with Jack's left hand badly bruised) in the final rounds of the National Doubles Championship in March. Here they will face the top four seeded pairs and one qualifier from the forthcoming south-west qualifying tournament.

With three places in the finals up for grabs from the London tournament, there should have been a play-off between the two losing semi-finalists. However, Andy and Tom had to withdraw, leaving Hal and Nick to claim the last place in the final rounds

### **Round-robin**

**Group A:** D Grant & A Lee bt C Burrows & M Gibbor 15-12, bt R Christie & B Kirk 15-12; Burrows & Gibbor bt Christie & Kirk 15-3

**Group B:** C Brooks & J Furniss bt I & D Ackland 15-13, bt A Bowden & Hansom 15-2; Ackland & Ackland bt Bowden & Hansom 15-8

**Group C:** E Hatton & S Korris bt A Smith & F Sjostrom 15-7, bt G & R Price 15-9; Price & Price bt Smith & Sjostrom 15-8

**Group D:** T Maconie & A Pringle bt D Bowden & A George 15-4, lost to H Mohammed & N Wolstenholme 10-15; Mohammed & Wolstenholme bt Bowden & George 15-4

### **Knockout stage**

**Quarter-finals:** Brooks & Furniss bt Price & Price 15-6, 15-12; Maconie & Pringle bt Hatton &

Korris 15-12, 15-9; Grant & Lee bt Ackland & Ackland 16-14, 15-4; Mohammed & Wolstenholme bt Gibbor & Burrows 16-14, 15-10

**Semi-finals:** Brooks & Furniss bt Maconie & Pringle 15-13, 9-15, 15-13; Grant & Lee bt Mohammed & Wolstenholme 10-15, 15-9, 16-15

**3rd/4th place play-off:** Mohammed & Wolstenholme w/o

**Final:** not played

**Plate:** Smith & Sjoström

## **NORTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Manchester, 24/25th January 2009

STOP PRESS: Manchester's John Minta claimed his first ever double on his home courts by beating defending champion Ed Fuller to take the North West Open Singles title and then teaming up with Phil Bishop to also take the doubles title. The runners-up in the doubles were Hamish Buchanan and Ben Taberner, while the quality of the field was demonstrated by the Plate winners: England handball international Dan Grant claimed the singles plate, while the plate doubles went to the pairing of Neil Roberts and Ed Fuller, respectively former national champion and defending NW champion.

### **Singles**

**1st round:** C Hay bt B Nithsdale 11-0, 11-7; J Beswick bt R Price 11-3, 11-3; H Mohammed bt G Price 9-11, 11-5, 11-1; T Widdop bt A Griffiths 11-6, 11-9; B Taberner bt T Lewis 11-6, 11-5; M Skogh bt C Leggett; I Ackland bt T Walker 9-11, 12-10, 11-5

**2nd round:** E Fuller bt Hay 11-1, 11-4; M Bowness bt A Lee 11-2, 11-7; Beswick bt N Roberts 11-7, 5-11, 11-7; P Bishop bt Mohammed 11-7, 11-7; H Buchanan bt Widdop 5-11, 11-1, 11-2; D Fox bt Taberner 11-9, 12-10; Skogh bt D Grant 11-7, 5-11, 11-9; J Minta bt Ackland 11-1, 11-5

**Quarter-finals:** Fuller bt Bowness 11-1, 11-2; Bishop bt Beswick 11-1, 11-2; Fox bt Buchanan 12-10, 12-10; Minta bt Skogh 11-3, 11-4

**Semi-finals:** Fuller bt Bishop 11-1, 11-5; Minta bt Fox 11-0, 11-7

**Final:** Minta bt Fuller 11-9, 11-6

**Plate:** D Grant

### **Doubles**

**1st round:** Ackland & Griffiths bt Price & Price 9-11, 11-7, 11-9; Hay & Mohammed bt Christie & Kirk 11-9, 11-3

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Ackland & Griffiths 11-5, 11-1; Grant & Lee bt Enstone & Henry 2-11, 11-6, 11-5; Beswick & Bowness bt Fuller & Roberts 11-2, 12-11; Bishop & Minta bt Hay & Mohammed 11-6, 11-4

**Semi-finals:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Grant & Lee 11-9, 10-12, 11-7; Bishop & Minta bt Beswick & Bowness 11-1, 11-4

**Final:** Minta & Bishop beat Buchanan & Taberner 11-8, 11-3

**Plate:** Roberts & Fuller

## **UNDER 25 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Merchant Taylors School, Northwood, 31st January/1st February 2009

The RFA has now received a report from organiser Dan Grant on the Under 25 championships, written in his own inimitable style. We are happy to publish it here in an abridged form...

A hardy troop braved the freezing weather and a completely shattered Underground system for another smashing weekend of U25s fives. There was a wealth of competition in both the singles and

the doubles, some top-quality towel display and some awe-inspiring flair!

We'll start with the doubles, as nothing overly shocking happened, although Sjostrom and Dean almost caused an upset in the quarter-finals against second seeds Grant and Lee, taking the duo to three sets before bowing out. In the semis, Grant and Lee were up against Brooks and Furniss and, with absolutely no bias whatsoever by the writer of this article, after a closely contested first set, Grant found the 'awesome' streak he'd been looking for and quickly racked up seven amazing nick shots and flair spin volleys within five minutes to tie up the match.

On the other side of the draw, Ellison and Korris smashed through all opposition and eased through to the final, which went much like the rest of the tournament. The first set went comfortably to Ellison and Korris, a crazily pingy new ball suiting the hard-hitting pair's game to a tee. They kindly allowed a new ball in the second set and the pinginess was replaced by some serious seam action. This set was slightly longer, but Dan (having lost his 'awesome' streak) and Ady (whose arms were about to fall off) had no answer for their opponents' relentless power and precision. Korris and Ellison reclaimed their title.

Notable mentions go to Hanton and George for winning the plate, and to Tong and Somji for taking a decent pairing of Gibbor and Burrows to three sets in the opening round.

The singles was far more exciting, with an epic first-round match between Furniss and Hay, Hay winning by the narrowest of margins. Everything then went with seeding until the quarter-finals, when Korris smashed Lee out in a blaze of resistance, laughing in the face of spin shots and jammy drops.

The semi-finals were both three-set affairs. In the top half of the draw, Tristao took the first set off Korris by the narrowest of margins (16-15) before Korris doggedly fought back to take a close second set. This clearly angered Dan, because he came out guns blazing in the third, thrashing Steve 15-1.

On the other side, Grant played Ellison. Dan made Will very uncomfortable in the first set, altering his game to a pace Will was not happy with and took the game 15-10. But Will came back in the second and third with those firey eyes, banging of gloves and shouted 'come-ons' to switch things around, sucking Dan into his game and, in the end, winning quite comfortably.

The final was something very special – an amazingly long game, with top form from both athletes. Every set was closely contested and after some truly mind-blowing stuff, Nadal beat Federer in the fifth.

Back on the fives court, Dan and Will were having their own maximum-setter. The rallies were relentless, and Will took the first set 15-8. But as mentioned, it is not wise to win a set against Dan because it will anger him. The second was kinda close, Dan coming through 15-8, but the third was quickly over. Dan T won his first U25s title and left Will still searching for that elusive first singles accolade.

Elsewhere, in a cracking plate final and with no time-outs taken, Burrows managed to win 25-14. The U25s singles 'super' bowl and doubles plate will now form a part of the yearly crockery-ware.

Perhaps most important this weekend was the 'flair' competition. Under the ever-watchful gaze of the Ady Lee Flair-o-Meter, each and every player tried to rack up the 'ultimate flair' accolade. Dean came close with a reverse behind-the-back pick-up; Sjostrom came closer with a spin-spectacular backwards finger-diddler; but the eventual winner was Furniss, decimating the opposition with a lob shot through the roof rafters to produce a winning nick roller! Smashing stuff!

## **Singles**

**Preliminary round:** M Gibbor bt A Tong 15-9, 15-12; E Ronan bt S Somji 15-2, 15-3; A Bowden bt Seigel 16-14, 15-11

**1st round:** D Tristao bt Gibbor 15-9, 15-3; F Sjostrom bt Hansom 15-0, 15-2; S Korris bt D Ackland 15-3, 15-0; A Lee bt Ronan 15-3, 15-10; D Grant bt T Dean 15-9, 15-6; C Hay bt J Furniss 15-3, 10-15, 15-11; C Brooks bt C Burrows 15-7, 15-11; W Ellison bt A Bowden 15-0, 15-2

**Quarter-finals:** Tristao bt Sjostrom 15-9, 15-9; Korris bt Lee 15-6, 15-3; Grant bt Hay 15-5, 15-5; Ellison bt Brooks 15-1, 15-2

**Semi-finals:** Tristao bt Korris 16-15, 12-15, 15-1; Ellison bt Grant 10-15, 15-4, 15-4

**Final:** Tristao bt Ellison 8-15, 15-8, 15-4

**Plate:** Burrows

## **Doubles**

**1st round:** Gibbor & Burrows bt Tong & Somji 11-2, 11-5; Sjostrom & Dean bt D Ackland & Hansom 11-5, 11-1

**Quarter-finals:** Ellison & Korris bt Hanton & George 11-1, 11-4; Tristao & Ronan bt Gibbor & Burrows

11-8, 11-6; Brooks & Furniss bt Hay & Siegel 11-0, 11-7; Grant & Lee bt Sjostrom & Dean 4-11, 12-10, 11-1

**Semi-finals:** Ellison & Korris bt Tristao & Ronan 11-0, 11-2; Grant & Lee bt Brooks & Furniss 11-6, 11-2

**Final:** Ellison & Korris bt Grant & Lee 15-2, 15-3

**Plate:** Hanton & George

## **RFA v BUCS**

Christ's Hospital, 8th February 2009

The excellent health of univeristy Fives was shown as a six-strong team of students clashed with a team representing the RFA in the annual fixture between the two organisations. Although the RFA eventually came out on top by 59 points, it was only in the final round of doubles games that they pulled clear.

Indeed, in the opening singles matches, honours were even, with each side winning three games. For BUCS, Jonny Major did well to beat Sam Roberts, and there were also excellent wins for Dan Tristao and Will Ellison, who followed up their appearance in last week's Under 25 singles final by each narrowly beating a former national singles champion. Meanwhile, more comfortable wins from the RFA's Tom Maconie, Andy Pringle and Robin Perry saw the RFA take a 12 point lead into the doubles.

Over the first two rounds of doubles, honours were again even, with each side winning three matches. However, as in the singles, it was the RFA's experience that counted, with their more comfortable wins more than compensating for their generally narrow defeats. The one exception was Will Ellison and Hal Mohammed's 15-4 win over Pringle & Maconie, where the Wykehamists hit a rich vein of form.

They then continued this in the final round of matches, where each pair played two games against their opposite numbers. Facing current national doubles champions Hamish Buchanan and Robin Perry, Will and Hal had the temerity to win the first game 16-15 and then staged a massive comeback in the second before losing 15-13. It was a truly superb performance - and, indeed, this second game was the only one the pair lost all afternoon.

However, their team-mates weren't able to put up such strong resistance, and comfortable wins for Cavanagh & Roberts and Maconie & Pringle saw the RFA through to a deserved overall victory.

### **Singles (BUCS names first)**

D Tristao bt H Buchanan 16-15; W Ellison bt M Cavanagh 15-12; H Mohammed lost to T Maconie 8-15; J Major bt S Roberts 15-8; I Ackland lost to A Pringle 8-15; A Griffith lost to R Perry 6-15

### **Doubles (BUCS names first)**

1st round: Ellison & Mohammed bt Cavanagh & Roberts 15-12; Tristao & Major lost to Maconie & Pringle 5-15; Ackland & Griffiths lost to Buchanan & Perry 0-15

2nd round: Ellison & Mohammed bt Maconie & Pringle 15-4; Tristao & Major lost to Buchanan & Perry 7-15; Ackland & Griffiths bt Cavanagh & Roberts 16-14

3rd round: Ellison & Mohammed lost to Buchanan & Perry 16-15, 15-13; Tristao & Major lost to Cavanagh & Roberts 8-15, 8-15; Ackland & Griffiths lost to Maconie & Pringle 11-15, 4-15

**Overall: BUCS lost to RFA by 186 points to 245**

## **VARSIITY MATCH**

St Paul's School, Barnes, 21st February 2009

Oxford retained the Jock Burnet trophy by a massive margin, in the process displaying some excellent fives, with strength throughout the team of eight.

Cambridge were unable to recover from a tough morning's singles, where the experience of Fabes and Ronan at two and three proved decisive as back-up to the known quality of Tristao at one. Freshman Dewhurst gave the Oxford captain Park some anxious moments in the fourth game, but could not quite sustain his challenge.

Cambridge were known to have competed well in the doubles in previous matches, but their hopes were blown away by devastating performances from the top two Oxford pairs: Tristao and Ronan conceded only five points in the afternoon (at least one of these a service into the bar) and, although Cambridge's top pair (Jones/Brubert) contested their second match vigorously, there was still a convincing win for the Oxford captain and his new partner, who was making his debut for the dark blues as a mature former-captain-of-the-other-place.

A titanic struggle took place between the third pairs, with the Cambridge freshmen Dewhurst and Kelly winning a sole game for their side, that game alone lasting longer than the whole of the top doubles. Unfortunately, this took a great deal out of them and they succumbed heavily to the old-Pauline pair of Hoolahan and Baker. The Cambridge fourth pair also gave a good account of themselves without quite threatening to take a game, although they almost pinched the final game when Emmett took a tumble and limped through the last few points.

It was unfortunate that injuries to potential Sparrows meant that the reserves' match was cancelled. Thanks and congratulations to all who *did* take part in a characteristically sporting and genial spirit

### **Singles (Oxford names first)**

D Tristao (St Paul's & Lincoln) bt C Jones (Tonbridge & Emmanuel) 15-3; J Fabes (Clifton & Green) bt J Brubert (Alleyn's & Queens') 15-2; E Ronan (Bradfield & St Hugh's) bt A Ladak (St Paul's & Christ's) 15-0;

D Park (Sherborne & St Catherine's) bt C Dewhurst (St Paul's & St John's) 15-11

### **Doubles (Oxford names first)**

Tristao & Ronan bt Jones & Brubert 15-0, 15-3; bt Ladak & Ashok (St Paul's & Queens') 15-1, 15-1; Fabes

& Park bt Ladak & Ashok 15-3, 15-7; bt Jones & Brubert 15-12, 15-6; S Adcock (Eastbourne & St Edmund Hall) & E Emmett (St Paul's & Christchurch) lost to Dewhurst & W Kelly (Winchester & Girton) 13-15,

15-10; bt R Walter (Tonbridge & St John's) & C Compton (Eastbourne & St John's) 15-9, 15-12; T Hoolahan (St Paul's & Christchurch) & J Baker (St Paul's & Pembroke) bt Walter & Compton 15-7, 15-6; bt Dewhurst

& Kelly 15-0, 15-1

**Overall: Oxford bt Cambridge by 298 points to 109**

### **NORTH OF ENGLAND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Durham, 28th February/1st March 2009

**STOP PRESS:** In a tournament high on quality and quantity, Ed Fuller claimed the North of England Singles Championship for the first time, after a three-game win over BUCS and Under 25 champion Dan Tristao. However, Ed was denied the double when he and his partner, Hamish Buchanan, lost in the final of the doubles to the defending champions, Phil Bishop and John Minta.

#### **Singles**

**1st round:** Legget bt G Price; Burrows bt Bowden; Major bt Ackland; Litherland bt Champness

**2nd round:** Fuller bt Legget 11-8, 11-9; H Mohammed bt Grant 11-8, 11-2; Bishop bt Burrows 11-12, 11-6, 11-6; Buchanan bt Major 11-1, 11-1; Tristao bt Litherland 11-6, 11-3; Ellison bt Wolstenholme 11-3, 11-2; Bate bt Hay 11-3, 11-9; Minta bt Lee 11-3, 11-3

**Quarter-finals:** Fuller bt Mohammed 11-2, 12-11; Buchanan bt Bishop 11-5, 11-7; Tristao bt Ellison 8-11, 11-8, 12-11; Minta bt Bate 11-6, 11-1

**Semi-finals:** Fuller bt Buchanan 11-4, 11-4; Tristao bt Minta 11-9, 11-7

**Final:** Fuller bt Tristao 8-11, 11-5, 11-6

**Plate:** Grant

#### **Doubles**

**1st round:** Tristao & Wolstenholme bt Ackland & M Mohammed 12-10, 11-6; Hay & H Mohammed bt Baral & Price 11-8, 11-5; Grant & Lee bt Champness & Litherland 11-2, 11-2; Bowden & Legget bt Burrows & Major 11-6, 11-9; Manning & Widdop bt Christie & Kirk 11-3, 11-3

**Quarter-finals:** Bishop & Minta bt Tristao & Wolstenholme 11-6, 11-4; Bate & Ellison bt Hay & H Mohammed 11-7, 11-6; Grant & Lee bt Bowden & Legget 6-11, 12-10, 11-2; Buchanan & Fuller bt Manning & Widdop 11-3, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Bishop & Minta bt Bate & Ellison 11-1, 8-11, 11-7; Buchanan & Fuller bt Grant & Lee 12-11, 11-5

**Final:** Bishop & Minta bt Buchanan & Fuller 11-9, 11-6

**Plate:** Baral & Price



## WINCHESTER FIVES NATIONAL DOUBLES TOURNAMENT

Malvern College, Worcestershire, 15th March 2009

On a day when David Barnes was unable to attend the Winchester Fives National Doubles tournament, the championship produced a result that brought a huge smile to his face. Winners of the Barnes Bridge trophy were Old Wykehamists Hal Mohammed and Will Ellison, while the runners-up were Wessex Club member Nick Wolstenholme and Old Bradfieldian Ed Ronan.

It is believed that Hal and Will's win is the first by an all-student pairing, but David Barnes has confirmed that it makes them the youngest ever winners of the tournament. And, they did it in some style, without dropping a single game on their way to the title, and only once conceding more than 10 points in a game.

The final was a truly impressive affair, with four 'proper' Winchester Fives players on court. Their ability to hit the buttress and retrieve the ball from it was fantastic - and a lesson to the enthralled spectators who were mostly more used to Rugby Fives. The first game of the final game ebbed and flowed one way then the other to reach 12-12, when Hal and Will produced a run of three points to take it. The bad news for Ed and Nick after that was that the two students then raised their game, playing superb, aggressive Winchester Fives to take the second game comfortably and, with it, the title.

However, Ed and Nick can at least console themselves with the fact that they had produced the biggest upset of the day, defeating the defending champions Hamish Buchanan and John Minta. This was another fantastic encounter, and it went down to the wire in front of spellbound spectators. The pairs shared the first two games to set up a deciding third, and this was nip and tuck all the way. It all boiled down to a nail-biting session at the end which seemed to last for ever - and in which both pairs had game-ball. Hand after hand was served out without either pair scoring, but eventually Ed and Nick found a way past John and Hamish's defence and struck the killer blow, taking the third game 16-15 to the loudest applause of the day.

The plate competition - open to all except the semi-finalists in the main competition - also produced some superb play, resulting in a final between Andy Pringle & Jez Sinton and Andy Passey & Gareth Price. This was a repeat of a first-round clash which (like three of the four first-round matches) had gone to three games and saw a win for Andy and Gareth. Needless to say, the return match also went to three games and, although Andy and Jez took an early lead in the final game, their opponents worked their way back into it and eventually took it by 15 points to 13. There was little between the pairs, but in the end, Andy Passey's superior buttress skills probably just gave him and his partner the edge. It was a fitting end to a great day's competition - and one in which the genuine Winchester Fives players shone.

**1st Round:** Bishop & Coffey bt Butler & Kirk 15-11, 13-15, 15-12; Passey & Price bt Pringle & Sinton

15-13, 14-16, 15-8; Maskell & Werkshagen bt Cho & Keyes 15-4, 15-6; Hale & Ward bt Arnott & Wilkinson 15-6, 14-16, 15-8

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan & Minta bt Bishop & Coffey 15-9, 15-2; Ronan & Wolstenholme bt Passey & Price 15-2, 15-4; Ellison & H Mohammed bt Maskell & Werkshagen 15-8, 15-6; Akerman & M Mohammed bt Hale & Ward 15-1, 15-3

**Semi-finals:** Ronan & Wolstenholme bt Buchanan & Minta 15-11, 9-15, 16-15; Ellison & H Mohammed bt Akerman & M Mohammed 15-7, 15-10

**Final:** Ellison & Mohammed bt Ronan & Wolstenholme 15-12, 15-2

**Plate:** Passey & Price

## **NATIONAL UNDER 13s CHAMPIONSHIPS**

St Paul's School, London, 15th March 2009

The game in the Under 13 age group appears to be in rude health, writes Peter de Winton, organiser of the Under 13s Championships. Entries were received from nine schools, and the enthusiasm from both the boys and the coaches helped to make it another hard-fought competition of a high playing standard.

It was also very pleasing to welcome two schools that had not been at the Under 13s recently, Blundell's and Sutton Valence. They both punched above their weight, with Blundell's showing strength in depth and carrying off the two main trophies. But it was not all one-way traffic: nearly all the schools were represented in the knockout competitions in both the Singles and Doubles.

Blundell's have an outstanding player in Sam Wyatt-Haines, who dropped only six points in eight matches on his way to winning the final of the Singles. His strength, timing and court sense enabled him to regularly hit winners for which his opponents had no answer. He quickly swept them aside, and in the final, overcame Henry Duxfield (Pilgrims'), whose steadiness and ability to retrieve had earned him successive victories, but could not cope with the onslaught. The Plate Final was a closer affair, with Joe Leale-Green, the Sutton Valence number one player, taking the game from George Herring of Pilgrims'.

In the Doubles, which became a test of stamina at the end of a long day, Blundell's I were triumphant, as they outgunned a steady Loretto pair, who themselves had just come through a closely fought match against Derby Moor. And in the Plate Final, Sutton Valence narrowly missed capturing their second Plate competition of the day when they were pipped 12-10 by Blundell's II.

Though the day was successful and enjoyable, it may be that a change in the format is needed in future to enable more players from different schools to take part, as the demand to compete is likely to grow.

### **Singles**

#### **Group stages:**

**Pool 1:** 1st Bar (Pilgrims); 2nd Savage (Alleyn's); 3rd Sobczak (Blundell's); 4th Prinja (Merchant Taylors); 5th Morrison (Rossall); 6th Massey (Reigate Grammar); 7th Cain (Sutton Valence)

**Pool 2:** 1st Criswell (Pilgrims); 2nd Christie (Derby Moor); 3rd V Patel (Merchant Taylors); 4th Petredes (Alleyn's); 5th Pilkington (Blundell's); 6th Andrews (Rossall); 7th Aucamp (Sutton Valence)

**Pool 3:** 1st Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's); 2nd Herring (Pilgrims); 3rd Rogers (St Dunstons); 4th R Patel (Merchant Taylors); 5th O Donnel (Alleyn's); 6th Chiappini (Sutton Valence)

**Pool 4:** 1st Webber (Blundell's); 2nd Whait (Loretto); 3rd Leale-Green (Sutton Valence); 4th Tomlinson (Pilgrims'); 5th Twyman (Alleyn's); 6th Gillman Smith (Merchant Taylors)

**Pool 5:** 1st Good (Loretto); 2nd Taberham (Merchant Taylors); 3rd Edmonstone (Pilgrims'); 4th Bennett (Blundell's); 5th Thicknesse (Alleyn's); 6th Burbidge (Sutton Valence)

**Pool 6:** 1st Duxfield (Pilgrims'); 2nd Grandfield (Blundell's); 3rd Whitehorn (Derby Moor); 4th Royer (Sutton Valence); 5th Hanton (Alleyn's); 6th Shrimankaer (Merchant Taylors)

#### **Knockout stages:**

**Quarter-finals:** Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's) bt Christie (Derby Moor) 11-1; Bar (Pilgrims') bt Webber (Blundell's) 11-3; Good (Loretto) bt Criswell (Pilgrims) 11-4; Duxfield (Pilgrims') bt Savage (Alleyn's) 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Wyatt-Haines bt Bar 11-1; Duxfield bt Good 11-5

**Final:** Wyatt-Haines bt Duxfield 11-1, 11-2

**Plate:** Leale-Green (Sutton Valence)

## **Doubles**

### **Group stages**

**Pool 1:** 1st Derby Moor; 2nd Blundell's II; 3rd Merchant Taylors II; 4th Rossall; 5th Alleyn's III; Retired Pilgrims' I

**Pool 2:** 1st Blundell's I; 2nd Sutton Valence I; 3rd Reigate/St Dunstons; 4th Allens II; 5th Merchant Taylors III; Retired Pilgrims II

**Pool 3:** 1st Loretto; 2nd Merchant Taylors I; 3rd Pilgrims' III; 4th Alleyn's I; 5th Blundell's III; 6th Sutton Valence II

### **Knockout stages:**

**Semi-finals:** Blundell's I bt Merchant Taylors I 11-2; Loretto bt Derby Moor 12-11

**Final:** Blundell's I bt Loretto 11-3, 11-3

**Plate:** Blundell's II

## **NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP (CYRIAX CUP)**

Alleyn's School, Dulwich, London, 28/29th March 2009

Reigning champions Hamish Buchanan and Robin Perry today claimed their sixth consecutive win in the National Doubles Championship with a win over Will Ellison and Marcus Bate.

However, they were made to work hard for it every step of the way. Tom Maconie and Andy Pringle were close to taking a game off the champions in the quarter-final, while in a repeat of the 2008 final, Matt Cavanagh and Ed Fuller belied their reputations as singles specialists to push Hamish and Robin hard in the semi-final. Nevertheless, whatever their opponents threw at them, the defending champions had an answer and they prevailed to reach their ninth consecutive final appearance in this competition.

Their opponents, too, had a tough route to the final. Alex Rew and Jim Hughes made Will and Marcus work hard in the quarter-final, but the younger pair faced an even bigger challenge in the semi-final, the second seeds. John Minta and Phil Bishop had already beaten them en route to the North of England Doubles Championships in February, but in London Will and Marcus gained their revenge, coming back from a game down to clinch a place in the final in three games.

The final itself was a predictably tough encounter, but played in a wonderful, fair spirit. Both games were very even, but for a crucial passage of play in the middle of each when the champions scored a run of five points. That allowed them to eke out a lead they never lost, and they claimed the title 15-9, 15-7.

The plate competition, too, was keenly contested, ending up in a final between the Executioners pairing of Pringle & Maconie and the Wessex pair of Hal Mohammed & Nick Wolstenholme. The first two games were shared between the pairs, but it was the Wessex pair who were stronger in the third, and they duly claimed the Plate - a fitting reward for their day's efforts after they had pushed the second seeds so close in the quarter-final and scored a good win over the left/right-hand pair of Jack Furniss and Charlie Brooks to reach the Plate final.

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan & Perry bt Pringle & Maconie 15-5, 15-11; Cavanagh & Fuller bt Brooks & Furniss 9-15, 15-5, 15-6; Bate & Ellison bt Rew & Hughes 15-6, 15-9; Bishop & Minta bt Mohammed & Wolstenholme 15-13, 15-11

**Semi-finals:** Buchanan & Perry bt Cavanagh & Fuller 15-10, 15-12; Bate & Ellison bt Bishop & Minta 13-15, 15-10, 15-7

**Final:** Buchanan & Perry bt Bate & Ellison 15-9, 15-7

**Plate:** Mohammed & Wolstenholme

## **OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS**

London, 2nd April 2009

The RFA has today published the latest official rankings, which are prepared for the Association by Dave Hebden. There will be a full review of the latest standings at the end of the season after the Scottish Open in May, but in the meantime, there are a few notable moves: Dan Tristao enters the top four of the singles rankings for the first time, while Hal Mohammed enters the top 20; and, in the doubles rankings, Will Ellison and Robin Perry climb several places in the top 10; National Doubles Plate winner Nick Wolstenholme is a new entry in the rankings, just outside the top 30, and Tom Maconie (runner-up in the Plate) climbs more than 20 places. For the full list, simply click on the link below.

## **NATIONAL SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS**

St Paul's School, Barnes, 30th March/2nd April 2009

A smaller entry than usual, caused at least in part by abnormally disparate dates for school holidays, did not detract from the quality or enjoyment of the tournament, and some excellent players were on show, writes Peter King. Fifteen schools were represented, and it was good to have substantial groups from Rossall and Blundell's, as well as the usual suspects from the Home Counties circuit.

The Open Singles was dominated by St Paul's and Alleyn's, perhaps not unexpectedly. With only eight preliminary groups, there was less scope for lower seeds to proceed in the main draw, but the Plate was correspondingly strong. In the two all-Pauline quarter-finals, Ed Kay cruised past Henry Jefferies, but Mark Hine was sternly tested by George Barnes in two close games. Both Alleynians survived, Peter Hanton given the more severe challenge by Joe Harris, and whereas Kay managed to defeat Adam George in straight games in the semi, it took a three-game tussle against Hine before Hanton was able to join him in a repeat of the 2008 Colts' final. The final itself was an epic, with magnificent attacking and defensive Fives from both players: Kay won the first, had his chances at 9-7 in the second, but was hauled back; and in the final game, Hanton went in to a 9-1 lead, but Kay rallied, winning some significant rallies to give his opponent some doubts, and as fatigue set in, he eventually came out the winner 11-9 – Peter's first championship defeat at the hands of one of his own year-group.

In the Open Doubles, injuries from the first-day singles and one school's withdrawal reduced the field to 11 pairs, and preliminary groups were formed as for the singles. Two Pauline pairs and the top Alleyn's pair proceeded fairly comfortably, but the final place in the semi-finals was hotly contested as KCS survived two three-gamers to oust Sedbergh and St Paul's IV. They also gave a good account of themselves against the top Pauline pair, while in the other semi-final Kay and Barnes continued to hold the edge over Hanton and George, which had seen them on top in the term's school matches. The all-Pauline final was an anti-climax, with Kay exhausted after the singles, and the consistency and power of Mark Hine and Joe Harris saw them comfortably home.

In contrast to the Open, the Colts' Singles had eight schools represented for the ten-man knockout stage. Bradfield's David Butler survived a three-game marathon on the Monday evening against Lee Robinson (Whitgift) to reach the quarter-final, but here he got little change out of Luke Thomson (Christ's Hospital), winner of the West of England tournament and clear favourite. In the top half of the draw, Ben Stephens (Alleyn's) beat Dan Aldham (KCS) in the semi-final, and it was Tonbridgian Alfred Ainsworth who faced Thomson. Although few of the knockout games had scores that indicate close matches, the quality of play was very high, and an encouraging sign for years to come, as several schools clearly have significant numbers of strong players enjoying the game.

In the Colts' Doubles, the presence of two strong left- and right-hand combinations looked likely to hold sway, and so it proved, with Tonbridge (Ainsworth and Jonny Short) defeating St Paul's to qualify for the final against Christ's Hospital, who defeated Whitgift in the semi-final. This meant that there would be a first-time winner of this championship, and after a tense scrap in the first game, Thomson and his partner Seb Stracey emerged the stronger in the second to take the Marchant Cup to its new home.

The Under 14 competition was always likely to be dominated by a very strong Alleyn's squad, whose experience (and success in the previous year's U13 event) and skill combined to make them favourites.

It was to the credit of many of the challengers that they scored a number of successes. Five of the six singles finalists were from the school, their sixth player having been removed 12-10 by the very promising Under 13 champion Sam Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's). In a minor upset, the plate went to Charlie Williams, with a 16-15 win over Sam Browett, but in the main final the consistency and range of shot possessed by Zack Brubert proved too much for his doubles partner Sam Redmayne. Matthew Shaw of St Paul's picked up the second plate as a token win for "the rest"! The doubles was well fought, and Rossall did well to remove Alleyn's II (the two plate singles finalists) in the semi-final. But, the consistency of Brubert and Redmayne was again decisive in the final, where a charge in the second by Rossall was cut short by a break for injury, so that last year's U13 champs retained their crown. It was generally agreed that the standard in this year's U14 competition was extremely high, which bodes well for the future.

Many thanks to all involved in organisation and support, especially to those school staff who were giving up holiday time (and those who were supposed still to be teaching!). The whole championship was played in an excellent spirit, with the highest standards of sportsmanship and manners on court and camaraderie off it.

## **Open Singles**

### **Group stages:**

**Pool A:** 1st A.George (Alleyn's); 2nd A Bellringer (KCS Wimbledon); 3rd J.Aquilina (St.Paul's); 4th D.Lai (Blundell's)

**Pool B:** 1st T.Chase (St.Paul's); 2nd J.Stevenson-Hamilton (Bradfield); 3rd L.Squire-Smith (Winchester)

**Pool C:** 1st E.Kay (St.Paul's); 2nd S.Mighall (Christ's Hospital); 3rd J.Gravatt (KCS Wimbledon)

**Pool D:** 1st H.Jefferies (St.Paul's); 2nd J.Mabbutt (Whitgift); 3rd R.Edwardson (Oundle)

**Pool E:** 1st P.Hanton (Alleyn's); 2nd K.Ward (St.Paul's); 3rd E.Cumberlege (Blundell's)

**Pool F:** 1st J.Harris (St.Paul's); 2nd S.Rolls (Marlborough); 3rd C.Yuen (Winchester); 4th S.Sri-Pathmanathan (KCS Wimbledon)

**Pool G:** 1st M.Hine (St.Paul's); 2nd A.Goodwin (Derby Moor); 3rd J.Garratt (Alleyn's); 4th F.Heathcote (Oundle)

**Pool H:** 1st G.Barnes (St.Paul's); 2nd A.Elletson (Sedbergh); 3rd J.Gordon (KCS Wimbledon); 4th C.Choudhry (Merchant Taylors')

### **Knockout stages:**

**Quarter-finals:** George bt Chase 11-1, 11-2; Kay bt Jefferies 11-0, 11-2; Hanton bt Harris 11-5, 11-9;

Hine bt Barnes 11-9, 12-10

**Semi-finals:** Kay bt George 11-4, 11-3; Hanton bt Hine 4-11, 11-4, 11-4

**Final:** Kay bt Hanton 11-7, 9-11, 11-9

**Plate:** Elletson

**Plate 2:** Garratt

## **Open Doubles**

### **Group stages**

**Pool A:** 1st St.Paul's II; 2nd Derby Moor; 3rd KCS Wimbledon II

**Pool B:** 1st Alleyn's I; 2nd St.Paul's III; 3rd Blundell's

**Pool C:** 1st St.Paul's I; 2nd Alleyn's II

**Pool D:** 1st KCS Wimbledon I; 2nd Sedbergh; 3rd St.Paul's IV

### **Knockout stages**

**Semi-finals:** St Paul's II bt Alleyn's I 11-9, 11-5; St Paul's I bt KCS I 11-6, 11-7

**Final:** St Paul's I bt St Paul's II 11-0, 11-4

**Plate:** St Paul's III

## **Under 16 Singles**

### **Knockout stages**

**Pool A:** 1st B.Stephens (Alleyn's); 2nd R.Lamb (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd S.Scott (Bradfield)

**Pool B:** 1st G.Waugh (Sedbergh); 2nd J.Ader (St.Paul's); 3rd J.Wright (Radley)

**Pool C:** 1st R.Matthias (Christ's Hospital ); 2nd J.Short (Tonbridge); 3rd A.Dalman (Whitgift);  
4th G.Berman (KCS Wimbledon)

**Pool D:** 1st D.Aldham (KCS Wimbledon); 2nd J.Malde (St.Paul's); 3rd S.Redmayne (Alleyn's);  
4th G.Fox-Edwards (Radley)

**Pool E:** 1st S.Stracey (Christ's Hospital); 2nd A.Lewis (Rossall); 3rd W.Sloper (St.Paul's);  
4th V.Patel (Merchant Taylors')

**Pool F:** 1st A.Ainsworth (Tonbridge); 2nd A.Goodwin (KCS Wimbledon); 3rd M.Frost (Derby  
Moor);  
4th N.Finney (Merchant Taylors')

**Pool G:** 1st S.Cato (St.Paul's); 2nd S.Browett (Alleyn's); 3rd A.Matthias (Christ's Hospital);  
4th I.May (Radley)

**Pool H:** 1st L.Robinson (Whitgift); 2nd R.Patel (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd M.Oddy (Blundell's);  
4th J.Whittaker (KCS Wimbledon)

**Pool I:** 1st D.Butler (Bradfield); 2nd A.Lindsell (Radley); 3rd G.Michel (Oundle)

**Pool J:** 1st L.Thomson (Christ's Hospital); 2nd T.Speller (St.Paul's); 3rd L.Williams (Rossall);  
4th L.Nicholson (Alleyn's)

### **Knockout stages**

**Round 1:** Stephens bt Waugh 11-6, 11-7; Butler bt Robinson 3-11, 11-9, 11-5

**Quarter-finals:** Stephens bt R.Mathias 11-1, 11-3; Aldham bt Stracey 11-4, 11-3;  
Ainsworth bt Cato 11-2, 12-10; Thomson bt Butler 11-1, 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Stephens bt Aldham 11-1, 11-3; Thomson bt Ainsworth 11-1, 11-4

**Final:** Thomson bt Stephens 11-3, 11-1

**Plate:** Malde

**Plate 2:** Dalman

## **Under 16 Doubles**

### **Group stages:**

**Pool A:** 1st Christ's Hospital; I; 2nd St.Paul's II; 3rd Radley I; 4th Merchant Taylors' I

**Pool B:** 1st Whitgift; 2nd Bradfield; 3rd KCS Wimbledon II

**Pool C:** 1st Tonbridge; 2nd St.Paul's III; 3rd Merchant Taylors' II

**Pool D:** 1st Rossall; 2nd KCS Wimbledon I; 3rd Oundle

**Pool E:** 1st St.Paul's I; 2nd Christ's Hospital .II; 3rd Radley II

### **Knockout stages**

**Round 1:** St Paul's I bt Rossall 11-2, 11-6

**Semi-finals:** Christ's Hospital I bt Whitgift 11-0, 11-8; Tonbridge bt St Paul's I 11-3, 11-2

**Final:** Christ's Hospital I bt Tonbridge 12-10, 11-2

**Plate:** Christ's Hospital II

## **Under 14 Singles**

### **Group stages:**

**Pool A:** 1st J.Ader (St.Paul's); 2nd G.Matthews (Oundle); 3rd A.Malik (Merchant Taylors'); 4th M.Hale (Winchester)

**Pool B:** 1st L.Williams (Rossall); 2nd S.Browett (Alleyn's); 3rd J.Malivoire (Bradfield); 4th O.White (Tonbridge)

**Pool C:** 1st S.Redmayne (Alleyn's); 2nd F.Uys (St.Paul's); 3rd B.Jones (Tonbridge); 4th M.Morrison (Rossall)

**Pool D:** 1st E.Mack (Whitgift); 2nd H.Judge (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd Y.Uddin (Alleyn's); 4th A.Rees (St.Paul's)

**Pool E:** 1st Z.Brubert (Alleyn's); 2nd R.Shah (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd M.Chesser (Whitgift); 4th S.Skynner (St.Paul's)

**Pool F:** 1st J.Morrison (Rossall); 2nd L.Buchanan (Tonbridge); 3rd B.Boyd-Taylor (St.Paul's); 4th J.Pinder (Winchester)

**Pool G:** 1st S.Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's); 2nd C.Williams (Alleyn's); 3rd M.Shaw (St.Paul's); 4th A.Fleming (Tonbridge)

**Pool H:** 1st W.Geberbauer (Alleyn's); 2nd P.Watson (Oundle); 3rd H.Southern (Rossall); 4th N.Phillips (Merchant Taylors')

### **Knockout stages**

**Quarter-finals:** L.Williams bt Ader 11-0; Redmayne w/o Mack (rtd); Brubert bt Morrison 11-2; Wyatt-Haines bt Geberbauer 12-10

**Semi-finals:** Redmayne bt Williams 11-4; Brubert bt Wyatt-Haines 11-8

**Final:** Brubert bt Redmayne 11-2, 11-2

**Plate:** C.Williams

**Plate 2:** Shaw

## **Under 14 Doubles**

### **Knockout stages**

**Pool A:** 1st Alleyn's II; 2nd Whitgift; 3rd Rossall II; 4th St.Paul's III

**Pool B:** 1st St.Paul's I; 2nd Tonbridge I; 3rd Merchant Taylors' I

**Pool C:** 1st Alleyn's I; 2nd Tonbridge II; 3rd Winchester; 4th Oundle

**Pool D:** 1st Rossall I; 2nd Alleyn's III; 3rd Merchant Taylors' II; 4th St.Paul's II

### **Knockout stages**

**Semi-finals:** Alleyn's I bt St Paul's I 15-1; Rossall I bt Alleyn's II 15-10

**Final:** Alleyn's I bt Rossall I 11-5, 11-9

**Plate:** Alleyn's III

## **NATIONAL VETERANS' & MASTERS' CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Christ's Hospital, 4th/5th April 2009

Neil Roberts once again dominated **the Veterans' Championships**, writes organiser Dave Hebden, winning the Singles for the fourth time, and teaming up with Wayne Enstone to pick up the Doubles, also for their fourth successive win.

However, in the pack chasing Neil in the Singles, there was little to choose between the next six players, and this produced some very exciting Fives. Included in this group were three newly qualified entrants, John Walter, Richard Christie and Ian Jackson, all of whom acquitted themselves very well during the day's play. And they were joined by long-standing Veterans Brian Nithsdale, Bob Sandie and Stuart Kirby to produce some entertaining early-round matches.

In the top half of the draw, Stuart Kirby got the better of a determined Brian Nithsdale 12-10 in the third, before losing out to Neil Roberts in the semi-final. Meanwhile in the lower half, there were two epic quarter-final struggles, with Bob Sandie losing to John Walter, and Ian Jackson only just getting

the better of a much-improved Richard Christie from Derby in three games. In the semi-final, Ian Jackson had to endure another three-gamer before finally beating John Walter who played some impressive Fives during a gruelling day's competition. In the final, Ian, suffering somewhat from his earlier tussles, but even more from his opponent's power, skill and steadiness of hitting, found it difficult to challenge Neil Roberts, who went on to take the trophy 15-1, 15-0 in dominant style. Brian Nithsdale just pipped Richard Christie to take the Plate, whilst Stuart Kirby took a third place play-off against John Walter.

A sunny Sunday morning saw 8 pairs line up for the Doubles. The pick of the first round matches saw the scratch pair of Ian Jackson & Brian Nithsdale getting the better of Bernard Atkinson & Mark Kitely, earning them the dubious privilege of challenging Wayne Enstone & Neil Roberts in the semi-final. In the lower half of the draw, Stuart Kirby & Brian Kirk and Bob Sandie & Richard Sutcliffe both won their 1st round matches comfortably to set up a keenly fought semi-final. The White Rose pair eventually prevailed 15-11, 15-12 in an excellent battle. Sandie & Sutcliffe went on to put up valiant resistance in the final, where some excellent Fives was played by all four players, but the champions proved too strong and ended up as worthy winners. There were some good matches in the Plate where Bernard Atkinson, partnered by Mark Kitely, won back the trophy he had first presented with Chris Arnold some 20 odd years earlier. Stuart Kirby & Brian Kirk completed the proceedings with a 3rd place play-off win against Ian Jackson & Brian Nithsdale.

**The National Masters' Championship** was held at the same venue over the same weekend, and Bernard Atkinson has sent this report:

Given that the RFA Masters Tournament is for players over the age of 65, it represents something of a triumph of hope over experience. Notwithstanding (no pun intended), three pairs did battle on Saturday 4th April at Christ's Hospital, and to say that none was prepared to lose was something of an understatement.

In the end, the trophy was won by Bawtree (71) and Atkinson (68) from the 2008 holders Boag and Rice, with Maltby and Wolstenholme contesting every step of the way. The quality of the play was of a high order all round, and the winners were actively engaged in their task on court for two hours to complete the four games to 15.

Bawtree and Atkinson beat Maltby and Wolstenholme 15-9, 15-7, and Rice and Boag 16-14, 15-10, while Rice and Boag beat Maltby and Wolstenholme 15-11, 15-7. It must not be forgotten, however, that some of these lads are still young and will continue to improve like fine wines over the coming years.

#### **Round-robin**

David Bawtree & Bernard Atkinson bt Alan Maltby & Tony Wolstenholme 15-9, 15-7; Bawtree & Atkinson bt Douglas Rice & Bev Boag 16-14, 15-10; Rice & Boag bt Maltby & Wolstenholme 15-11, 15-7

#### **Total points:**

Bawtree & Atkinson 61 (winners)

Rice & Boag 54

Maltby & Wolstenholme 34

#### **NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP (WOOD CUP)**

St Paul's School, Barnes, 18/19th April 2009

Manchester's Y Club continued their recent domination of the National Club Championship, claiming the Wood Cup for the fourth consecutive year with an emphatic victory over the Old Paulines.

And, there's no doubt that 'emphatic' is the word. Although Dan Tristao pushed John Minta hard and



Tim Hoolahan took eight points off Ben Taberner in the opening singles games, the Y Club won all four matches and went into the doubles already with a 22-point lead. Then, they really turned on the style, winning all four of the first doubles matches for the loss of just 11 points.

On one court, John Minta and Phil Bishop combined as well as a pair as they have for some time to defeat the determined efforts of Dan Tristao and Sam Roberts, while next door the left/right-hand combination of John Beswick and Ben Taberner proved too strong for Joe Harris and Tim Hoolahan. That gave the Manchester team an unassailable lead and, although the teams played the first games of the return doubles, again the Y Club won both games, extending their eventual winning margin to more than 70 points. Despite the margin, it's to the credit of the Old Paulines that they never let their heads drop, and they competed hard till the very end. Every game was full of long, tough rallies; the crucial difference was that, on almost every occasion, it was the Y Club's players who found the nick or managed to force an error. Still, the youth of the Paulines' side suggests that it won't be long before they give the Y Club a much sterner test.

The irony was that the story of the tournament was not of huge victories, but of incredibly narrow ones. Indeed, the Old Paulines had only clinched their place in the final with a one-point victory over the Alleyn Old Boys, who had been runners-up for the last three years. Amazingly, the match played out to leave one game of doubles to be played - and the teams tied on points. It was a classic winner-takes-all battle and inevitably it went down to the wire. In a tight and tense game, the Old Paulines' pair of Sam and Dan reached game-ball first, but the AOBs' Inigo Ackland and Peter Hanton dragged the score back to 10-all and then 11-all. But, it was the Paulines who held their nerve, clinching the win in front of an enthralled and appreciative gallery.

Mind you, by this stage, it was probably no more than the crowd expected: the AOBs had only won their quarter-final against the White Rose Club by a single point, and incredibly the overall score in that match was exactly the same as in the semi-final, 109 points against 108. So, by those standards, the Executioners' quarter-final win over a very strong RFA Club side that included no less than three current or former National Singles Champions was a positively comfortable one - by two points.

**1st round:** Executioners I bt Wessex 117-89; Derby Moor bt Executioners II; Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Tonbridgians

**Quarter-finals:** Manchester Y Club bt Exeter 129-65; Executioners I bt RFA Club 93-91; Old Paulines bt Derby Moor 129-61; Alleyn Old Boys bt White Rose Club 109-108

**Semi-finals:** Manchester Y Club bt Executioners I 104-70; Old Paulines bt Alleyn Old Boys 109-108

**Final:** Manchester Y Club bt Old Paulines 110-38

## **NATIONAL WINCHESTER FIVES MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP**

Winchester College, 26th April 2009

As several of their fellow Fives players took on the London Marathon, five pairs took to the courts at Winchester to battle for the Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles title. Regulars from the Rugby Fives circuit were joined by colleagues from Eton and 1-Wall Fives, and a great day's competition ensued.

With just five pairs, the competition took the form of a round-robin, with each pair playing the other four in a best-of-three-game match, and the champions being the pair with most match wins. It was expected to be a day of close competition, and so it proved right from the off. The first two matches both went the full distance, and saw three-game wins for the England Handball pairing of Dan Grant & Anita Ganguly, as well as for Derby Moor's Stuart Kirby and Emma Howie.

As the day wore on, it became clear that these were the pairs who would be fighting for overall victory, so the clash between the two was eagerly awaited. Needless to say, it went to three games, but it was the England Handballers who won through, and meant that they went into their final match (against the EFA pair of Anthony Thedossi and Kerry White) needing a win to ensure they took the

championship. Lose, and they would end up in a tie with Stuart and Emma, who had already finished their four matches, winning three and losing just one.

Almost inevitably, it was another close match. Kerry and Anthony had begun the day relatively inexperienced at this brand of Fives, but had visibly improved during the competition, and pushed Dan and Anita hard. So, although Dan and Anita won the first game, it was Anthony and Kerry who held their nerve to win a very tight second game, ensuring that the competition's outcome would be decided in the final game of the last match on court.

It was tense game, with great skill shown by all four players. Anthony and Kerry were trying to keep the pressure on Anita, while her stronger partner Dan did all he could to protect her. He never stopped running, and hit some amazing angles as well as, perhaps more importantly, some superb serves, meaning that even when Anthony and Kerry won the right to receive, they rarely scored a run of points. The game was nip and tuck to start with, but as it went on, Dan and Anita gradually edged into a lead that they would never lose. They duly won this match two games to one and, with it, the title, which could not have been more richly deserved. This was their fourth three-gamer on the trot!

**Round-robin:**

Andy Pringle & Melanie Whitehead lost to Dan Grant & Anita Ganguly 9-15, 15-11, 9-15; bt Adrian Lee & Nicky Sale 15-8, 15-1; bt Anthony Theodossi & Kerry White 15-11, 15-6; lost to Stuart Kirby & Emma Howie 9-15, 15-11, 9-15

Grant & Ganguly bt Lee & Sale 15-9, 12-15, 15-5; bt Theodossi & White 15-11, 15-16, 15-12; bt Kirby & Howie 15-11, 13-15, 15-12

Lee & Sale lost to Theodossi & White 15-8, 7-15, 8-15; conceded to Kirby & Howie 0-15, 0-15 (ret'd hurt)

Theodossi & White lost to Kirby & Howie 15-16, 9-15

**Overall result:**

1st Anita Ganguly & Dan Grant (played 4, won 4)

2nd: Emma Howie & Stuart Kirby (won 3)

**NATIONAL VINTAGE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Oundle, 26th April 2009

A splendid day and a splendid day's fives, courtesy of Oundle School, writes organiser John East. The facilities and the hospitality could not be better; and the courts are steadily improving. They have a little further to go in terms of overcoming the effects of the wax sheen on the plaster, but as compared to last year's tournament they play noticeably better and some day soon will provide one of the very best Fives facilities in the country.

The Fives court complex this year had an impressive display of material about some major recent injuries suffered by sports stars such as Danny Cipriani and Michael Owen; knee, ankle and shoulder fractures and dislocations were all described in graphic detail, including the technique for popping the knee cap back in place when it comes out. All very useful considering the age of the players about to compete, and as Bernard Atkinson said "If it isn't on the board, it isn't serious".

So it was appropriate that there were no moans or whinges about tired or aching muscles, and if it seemed that some competitors had difficulty climbing the stairs after their games, no-one actually complained.

As usual, Bob Sandie took the prize for hogging the most court time, and as usual he managed to exit both the main tournaments in order to compete in the plate – he will be banned from the plate next year. In the doubles, his exit into the plate was a very close-run thing, but Wayne dispatched his opposition as clinically as ever and Bob had no difficulty finding himself in the singles plate. Martin Wilkinson was runner-up in the Plate singles after some heroic struggles, losing to Bob in the key

round-robin match, while Rob Grey and Graham McIntyre lost to Bob and Brian Nithsdale in the doubles plate final.

In the main tournament Martin Wilkinson surprised Tony Hamilton early on, the latter just winning, only to lose to Jeremy Schroeter in the semi-final. Wayne coasted through in the other half. In the final Jeremy tried most tactics, including attempting to swat Wayne instead of the ball and serving left-handed, but to no avail. Wayne triumphed easily despite some good rallies and spirited efforts by Jeremy.

In the doubles, Bernard Atkinson and Peter de Winton staged a dramatic comeback in order to put Bob and Brian into the plate. Bernard's diving was clearly an attempt to recreate some of the sporting injuries previously alluded to, and on one occasion he even floored his own partner, but by then they were tiring and perhaps a rest was needed. Meanwhile Wayne and Tim Lewis reached the final without any qualms where they met the new pairing of Tony Hamilton and Jeremy Schroeter, both of whom were perhaps a little worn down by their singles exertions. In any event, Wayne and Tim won without too much pressure, although Tim was certainly feeling it as he climbed the stairs to receive his first ever national trophy. Congratulations - and hopefully he will be fully recovered by next year.

As a final point, the organiser did notice increasing evidence of short-term memory loss, particularly where it came to recalling the score or who had served in doubles matches. Surely it is time for someone to devise an electronic scoreboard to avoid the long discussions between rallies regarding what had happened in the rally before (or perhaps such long discussions are a necessary part of the recovery process between rallies?). Conversely, on the physical side, the Vintage players become ever more youthful, with Bernard Atkinson - who is about to enter the grand masters tournament as well - leading the charge, and I look forward to welcoming them all back looking both younger and fitter next year.

It only remains to thank Oundle School and particularly Tony Burrows for the excellent reception and hospitality. Next year we plan hot drinks, too. It will be a dream for players and spectators alike

### **Singles**

**Preliminary round:** R Grey bt J Hawke 15-5

**Quarter-finals:** W Enstone bt R Sandie 15-1; B Nithsdale bt R Grey 15-13; A Hamilton bt M Wilkinson 15-11; J Schroeter bt N Arnott 15-0

**Semi-finals:** Enstone bt Nithsdale 11-3, 11-0; Schroeter bt Hamilton 11-2, 11-8;

**Final:** Enstone bt Schroeter 11-0, 11-1

**Plate:** Sandie

### **Doubles**

**Quarter-finals:** Enstone & Lewis bt Kiteley & Hawke 11-3, 11-2; de Winton & Atkinson bt Sandie & Nithsdale 7-11, 12-10, 11-7; Hamilton & Schroeter bt Grey & McIntyre 11-0, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Enstone & Lewis bt de Winton & Atkinson 11-1, 11-0; Hamilton & Schroeter bt Arnott & Wilkinson 11-1, 11-2

**Final:** Enstone & Lewis bt Hamilton & Schroeter 11-4, 11-4

**Plate:** Sandie & Nithsdale

## **SCOTTISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Loretto School, Musselburgh, 2nd/3rd May 2009

An excellent entry of 16 – including several local players - took to the courts at Loretto for the Scottish Open singles tournament, and in the end it was top seed and defending champion John Minta who won the trophy – but only after a couple of scares.

Scare one was that Neil Roberts had the temerity to take the first game of the final, but the bigger scare came in the third game, when a severe bout of cramp pole-axed John.

Up to that point, the top seed had made ominously strong progress, conceding just four points on his way to a semi-final meeting with Simon Fraser. The Scot, too, seemed to have made easy progress, but the scores don't reflect how hard he had been pushed by Kevin Henry in their quarter-final. The match was full of long, hard rallies, but it was always Simon who found the crucial nick or forced the vital error.

Come the semi-final, though, the tables were turned. The scores suggest an easy win for John; however, it was anything but. John's aggression and power were matched by Simon's retrieving and power of his own, but it was John who seemed always able to find that crucial winner, winning in two games.

In the final, he faced Neil Roberts, who had hardly had an easy route through the earlier rounds. John Beswick had pushed him hard in the first game of their quarter-final, and Dave Fox (who reached the semi-final only after a tough match against Andy Pringle) threatened to stage a comeback in the second game of the semi-final, only for Neil to find the winners to close out the match.

The final started off in a cagey fashion, John seemingly forsaking his usual power and making a few uncharacteristic errors, allowing Neil to edge the first game. The second game began in similar fashion, but the longer it went on, the clearer it became that John's superior fitness would tell. Neil seemed to be slowing and finding it harder to reach the low shots, and John duly took the game. It seemed inevitable that the title would be John's – only for cramp to threaten to ruin his day. However, after a time-out, he recovered and took the game he needed to secure the title.

After the traditional evening's gathering in the Woodside Hotel, seven pairs returned to courts on Sunday morning to compete in the doubles tournament. They were split into two round-robin groups, with the winners of each group playing in the final, and the runners-up making up the Plate final.

In Pool A, the crucial match was between Simon Fraser & Grem McIntyre and Tim Widdop & Simon Hodgson. It went the distance, and although Simon & Grem took the first game, Tim & Simon came back to win the next two and claim a place in the final. That consigned Simon & Grem to the Plate final.

Meanwhile, the competition was no less intense in Pool B, where four pairs fought it out. In the end, the crucial game was between Andy Pringle & John Hawke and John Minta & Neil Reddy. Andy & John took a tight first game, but then John began to dominate the match. Displaying the form that had taken him to the singles title, he guided Neil to a win in three games and a place in the final.

That left Andy & John in the plate final, where some controlled hitting from Simon Fraser, allied to dogged resistance from Grem, secured them the Smith Plate. The final, meanwhile, was a tense affair. Tim & Simon naturally tried to pressurise Neil, and in the first game, despite John's best efforts, it worked – they took it 12-10.

In the second game, though, John seemed to up his game and started to find the winners again. His opponents found it increasingly hard to keep the ball away from him, and John & Neil took the second game – again by a score of 12-10 – to send the match into a deciding game. Sadly, for Tim & Simon, it was a case of the second game repeating itself. John was hungry for the win, and his opponents couldn't cope with his domination of the court and powerful hitting. Backed up by some determined resistance from Neil, it was John who took the third game, claiming the Scottish doubles title for the third year in a row – and with a third partner.

## **Singles**

**1st round:** J Minta bt P Reddy 11-0, 11-1; T Widdop bt M Kemp 11-1, 11-0; K Henry bt I Roberts 11-3, 11-1; S Fraser bt J Hawke 11-3, 11-1; N Roberts bt A Donaldson 11-1, 11-1; J Beswick bt A Smith 11-2, 11-1; A Pringle bt C Lamb 11-2, 11-1; D Fox bt G McIntyre 11-1, 11-4

**Quarter-finals:** Minta bt Widdop 11-1, 11-2; Fraser bt Henry 11-1, 11-0; Roberts bt Beswick 11-6, 11-0; Fox bt Pringle 11-8, 11-8

**Semi-finals:** Minta bt Fraser 11-1, 11-4; Roberts bt Fox 11-2, 11-8

**Final:** Minta bt Roberts score tbc

**Plate:** Donaldson

## **Doubles**

**Pool A:** Fraser & McIntyre bt Donaldson & Lamb 15-13, 15-10, lost to Widdop & Hodgson 15-11, 4-15, 8-15; Widdop & Hodgson bt Donaldson & Lamb 15-10, 15-8

**Pool B:** Minta & Reddy bt Henry & Roberts I 12-10, 11-7, bt Pringle & Hawke 8-11, 11-3, 11-3, bt Smith & Kemp 11-2, 11-1; Pringle & Hawke bt Smith & Kemp 11-7, 11-8, br Henry & Roberts 11-5, 11-6; Roberts & Henry bt Smith & Kemp 10-12, 11-7, 11-9

**Final:** Minta & Reddy bt Widdop & Hodgson 10-12, 12-10, 11-6

**Plate:** Fraser & McIntyre

## **OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS**

London, 16th May 2009

This year's end of season ranking list has a refreshingly youthful flavour to it, writes compiler Dave Hebden, with three of the top four ranked singles players being still in their 20s. Surprisingly, this is the first occurrence of this since I started doing the rankings in 1981, a testament to the growing band of exciting young players that we now have in the game.

This group is led by National Champion James Toop, who with Ed Fuller strengthen their positions as numbers 1 and 2, each picking up two tournament wins during the season, while Dan Tristao moves up to number 4 in only his second season in senior fives. Dan is the current U25 and Student champion, and also picked up some great results against top opposition in senior events. These three are joined by John Minta in the top 4, with John also having a great year, winning events in Manchester and Scotland. John continues to make steady progress each year since first breaking into the top 10 in 2006. The other tournament winner in 2008-09 was Hamish Buchanan, who picked up the South West last June. Hamish is one of five National champions occupying positions in the top 10.

The highest riser in the top 20 is Matt Bowness who moves up to no. 12. Matt won the National Singles Plate and also had good results in the North West. Other notable moves up the list are from Tom Maconie, Chris Hay, Tim Widdop, Inigo Ackland, Chris Burrows, and Mark Gibbor.

In the Doubles, Hamish Buchanan retains his position at the top, a position he has held since 2004. Hamish won three events during the season, including partnering Robin Perry to win their sixth National Doubles title. As in the last three seasons, this was Robin's only event and so this sees him down at number 6. Retaining their positions at 2 and 3 are John Minta and Phil Bishop, who won three open events, with John adding the Scottish Doubles to this haul, partnering Neil Reddy. Marcus Bate makes impressive progress in the top 10 moving up to number 4 after winning the West of England with James Toop, and reaching the National Doubles final with Will Ellison. Will is also the U25 Doubles champion with Steve Korris, as well as being runner-up in the London and the West of England, results that move Will up seven places to number 5.

Other significant moves come from Chris Jones, who picked up his first senior doubles title with Hamish in the South West, and from Hal Mahommed, who was a finalist with Will Ellison at the West of England. Dan Grant and Tim Widdop also move into the top 20 for the first time. In all, there

are 22 new entries in the Doubles rankings this year including Student champions Inigo Ackland and Alex Griffiths. Indeed, there was a healthy spread of the spoils this year across a large group of players. Altogether there were 13 names that appeared across the winners of the 10 events that qualify for ranking points.

**THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION**  
**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the 83rd Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at 7.30 pm  
at the offices of Clifford Chance, 4 Coleman Street, London EC2.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Rugby Fives Association held on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008
3. Any matters arising
4. General Secretary's report - enclosed
5. Presentation of the Accounts as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009 – audited accounts enclosed
6. Election of President and Deputy President – see attached Resolution 1 and 2
7. Election of Board members - see attached Resolution 3
8. Election of Hon Auditor and Hon Archivist – see attached Resolutions 4 and 5
9. Any Other Business

Andy Pringle  
General Secretary  
May 2009

## Notes

1. Any member wishing to add any item to the Agenda must contact the General Secretary in writing by 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009.
2. A member entitled to attend and vote at the meeting is also entitled to appoint one or more proxies to attend and, on a poll, vote instead of him/her. The proxy need not be a member of the company.
3. To be effective, the instrument appointing a proxy and any authority under which it is executed must be deposited at the registered office of the company not less than 48 hours before the time for holding the meeting.
4. Copies of the Minutes of last year's AGM will be available at the meeting or on request from the General Secretary.

Registered office: The Rugby Fives Association, 32 Ashbourne Grove, London SE22 8RL

Company number: 4837244



## **THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009**

#### RESOLUTION 1 (Agenda item 6)

It is proposed that F.Akerman be appointed President of the association in succession to C.Horrocks who has completed his two-year term in office.

#### RESOLUTION 2 (Agenda item 6)

It is proposed that R.Warner be appointed as Deputy President in succession to F.Akerman.

#### RESOLUTION 3 (Agenda item 7)

It is proposed that the following existing Board members, each retiring by rotation, be re-appointed as Directors in accordance with the Company's articles of association:

H Buchanan, E Fuller, I Roberts, A Smith, M Whitehead

In addition, it is proposed that the following co-opted members are appointed as Directors in accordance with the Company's articles of association:

A Lee, T Maconie

#### RESOLUTION 4 (Agenda Item 8)

It is proposed that F W P de Winton be re-elected as Hon. Auditor, to hold office from the conclusion of this meeting until the conclusion of the next general meeting of the Company at which accounts are laid and to authorise the directors to fix any remuneration.

#### RESOLUTION 5 (Agenda Item 8)

It is proposed that D. Barnes be re-elected as Hon. Archivist.

## THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

#### AGENDA ITEM 4 – GENERAL SECRETARY’S REPORT 2008-9

As I approach my second AGM as General Secretary of the RFA, I can look back on a fine 12 months. That said, though, what is potentially the most momentous event is yet to happen – and, as I write, it’s tantalisingly close.

Having new courts at Rugby School is of huge symbolic importance to the RFA, and we are behind the scheme 100 per cent. The plan has always been for the courts to be up and running by September this year, and the campaign is now within touching distance of its goal. It’s an indication of how keen the Association is to support the scheme that it agreed to make a substantial donation to the appeal. How it would delight me if the lead story in our next Newsletter could be a report on the first games taking place on Rugby’s new Rugby Fives courts...

At the same time, Ian Roberts is continuing with our application for Charitable status – and we are very grateful for his efforts. This could have some important benefits for the Association, and we are currently waiting for a response from the Charity Commission as to the success of our application.

Sadly, since the last AGM, there has also been some less welcome news. For example, we received confirmation that the courts at Rutlish have been lost, and that the proposed work at Alleyn’s has been put ‘on hold’ because of the economic situation. However, the saddest news was surely the death of Charlie Colquhoun, for so long a keen supporter of the game at Clifton. I trust you have all read the kind words by Alan Brown in the Newsletter, which sum up the man far more ably than I ever could.

Charlie may be gone, but we hope to ensure that his name will live on. With his wife’s blessing, the RFA is looking to establish a schools’ competition in the South West that will bear his name, and we hope it will be played for the first time next season.

Schools are, of course, crucial to the future of our game, so I am delighted to see that several have recently recruited active Fives players: as well as many established masters, we now have the likes of Ed Brooke at Radley and Ed Hatton at Christ’s Hospital, while from this September RFA board member Alex Smith will take up a position at Eastbourne College. It’s also great to see Fives being actively played again at Sutton Valence, while Dulwich College has found a very able and keen successor to Ed Hatton, who restarted the game there before moving on.

We have also been able to promote the game in some rather more unlikely places, such as Poland, where an Old Cliftonian is now teaching. After getting in touch with us to discuss his plans to start the game on squash courts in Gliwice, he requested some help – and we have been only too happy to oblige, covering the cost of eight pairs of gloves to introduce the game over there.

We also have plans to stage a demonstration game on a recently ‘rediscovered’ court in East Preston in Sussex. Although some more senior members were aware of the existence of a court in the village, a careless bit of Googling brought it to the attention of a slightly younger board member, who

immediately emailed the parish council; and, to cut a long story short, we have been invited to stage a match on the court on their behalf. With luck, we will encourage them to make the investment to repair the court and encourage the game in the village.

Looking to the future, we have also co-opted two new young members to the board in the last 12 months. Both are already tournament organisers, as well as regular competitors and active elsewhere in the game: Tom Maconie is the Jesters Rugby Fives representative, while Adrian Lee is the England 1-Wall Fives captain. Their experience and knowledge will be crucial in helping to take the game forward.

Further good news is that we are seeing a very talented crop of youngsters emerging in the adult game. As Dave Hebden has pointed out, for the first time in the near twenty years that he has compiled the RFA's rankings, three of the top four singles players are only in their twenties. Back this up with the strong showing from several schools in both the National and West of England Schools' Championships, and it's clear that there should be no shortage of young players entering the adult game in the future.

Our challenge is to maintain contact with these players after school, and we are trying to do just that. As well as our website, which remains our main online outlet, we have just set up a group on social networking website Facebook. The two will work in tandem and allow us to maintain contact with more players. On top of this, the RFA has also established a sub-committee under Ed Fuller specifically to safeguard the future of the game.

We also hope to improve the RFA website by working with the Fives Federation. Plans are at an early stage, but we hope to have one online 'portal' for Fives, to which players of all codes will have access, and which will guide them to the information they want, whether it be on Rugby, Eton, Winchester or 1-Wall Fives. It may sound complicated, but if you look at the Annual Review and Newsletter, where all versions of Fives sit side-by-side, you can imagine how this will work online.

This is just one example of how we work with the Federation, and perhaps our most important recent topic of discussion has been medical cover. We are extremely aware of our obligations as tournament organisers, and the RFA has set up a sub-committee, led by Frank Akerman, to look into the issues. After consultation with our friends at the Federation, we will draw up recommendations to be placed in the forthcoming Pocket Book and displayed at courts (following the example of the Eton Fives Association). We will also be making further recommendations to our tournament organisers to confirm what we expect of them. None of this, I hasten to add, will be too onerous – indeed, most are already more than meeting our expectations – but it's a further example of how seriously we take our obligations.

Last, but very definitely not least, while I think of tournament organisers, I must thank all the many and various people who so selflessly give of their time to further our beloved game: the organisers who smoothly run such successful events and send me reports so quickly for the website; all those who contribute words and pictures to all our various printed and online publications; all our match managers and, well, everyone. We – and every player of the game - are profoundly grateful.

Andy Pringle

May 2009

## RFA CLUB MANAGER'S REPORT

The RFA Club has scraped to victory this year with 36 match reports received to date, 19 wins and 17 losses. Thank you as always to match managers for both sides, particularly those for the RFA who raise teams for numerous fixtures across the season. Getting a team of four Fives players to turn up on time is a challenging enough task, let alone four Fives players with kit; there has been a disturbing increase of reported incidents of "bare handed" fives this season!

With regard the year's tournaments, the President's cub saw Jay Gravatt and Hamish Buchanan emerge victorious. Thanks again to Gareth Price for another great job organising the event.

In the Wood Cup, the RFA had a strong team on paper, with two Fullers and Mssrs Toop and Cavanagh. They were undone by an in-form Executioners side in the quarter- finals, however, by the smallest of margins. The Executioners lost in the Semi Final to the eventual winners, the Manchester YMCA, who should be congratulated for a fourth consecutive victory.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the RFA Club again this year, I hope you all have a good summer break and look forward to seeing you on court soon.

Ed Fuller

May 2009

**THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - JUNE 2009**

Financial Report

In my report last year I highlighted the fact that the costs of some tankards for the previous season (£988) and the distribution of the 2007-8 Annual review (£420) were not reflected in the accounts for last season. These were paid in the current year and go some way to explaining the loss shown in the accounts.

Looking at the income, it is particularly pleasing to see the rise in subscriptions mainly due to more members either paying their subs or paying at the correct amount. That said we still have over 50 members paying at the previous subscription level of £20. Overall, we are now approaching the level projected when the subs were increased.

The loss from championships can be put down to the additional cost of tankards mentioned above and the fact that revenues from the Schools competitions were down by some £700 this year. Additionally, costs for court usage were up £200 and £165 was spent on a new base for a trophy. Whether the dip in school revenues was a one off due to the timing of the competitions, in particular the West of England schools or whether there is a deeper problem is an issue which the Board is looking into.

In terms of expenses, secretarial fees were up slightly as a result of the increase given to the Gen Secretary. Postage costs reflect the payment of last year's distribution of the Annual review and whilst printing costs look higher we are awaiting £530 from the EFA as their contribution towards the production of the Newsletter.

Last year we paid two insurance premiums of £650 in respect of our Civil Liability insurance owing to a late demand from the Insurance company but this year sees us back on track.

The grant of £2500 from the 100 Club was given to the Rugby School Fives Courts appeal.

Looking at the Balance Sheet, the debtors and creditors figures relate to cheques paid in to our account and cheques issued out of the account but not reflected in the Bank balance at the year end.

Given the exceptional items seen in this year's accounts it probably wouldn't be inappropriate to look at the two years together, which would show an overall profit of some £1100. Now that subscriptions are nearing the correct level there is no reason why the Association shouldn't return to a profitable situation next year.

Overall, the Board is content with the position shown and recommends the accounts for approval by the meeting.

Ian Fuller, Hon Treasurer

May 2009

## **RFA AGM**

London, 17th June 2009

The RFA's membership elected a new President and Deputy President at its AGM earlier this week. Frank Akerman takes over as President from Chris Horrocks, who has completed his two-year term of office, while succeeding Frank as Deputy President is Dick Warner. At the same time, Tom Maconie and Ady Lee were officially elected to the board after being co-opted during the course of the last year, and David Barnes and Peter de Winton were re-elected as Hon. Archivist and Auditor respectively. At the meeting, it was also announced that Chris Jones and Ollie Stone-Lee had stepped down from the board. A full report on the meeting's proceedings will appear in the Annual Review.

## **NATIONAL STUDENT CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Sherborne, 20th/22nd November 2009

[posted 11 June 2009]

This year marks the 50th anniversary of both the National Student Championships and David Gardner's involvement in them as organiser. To mark the occasion, BUCS has agreed to host a reception on the Saturday evening of this year's event at Sherborne School. This will be open to all former champions and players, and David hopes that players from the very first event will attend. He also wants to invite all former players to attend this year's reception, and asks anyone who would like to attend to fill in the form below and send it to him. If sufficient numbers are interested, there may also be a chance to play some Fives while in the town.

## **RFA VIDEOS**

London, 25th June 2009

The RFA is now hosting a selection of videos online using the Youtube site. The selection currently includes reports on various tournaments from the last 12 months and will be extended in the future. To take a look, simply click on the link below.

## **ENGLAND HANDBALL TOUR**

Castlebar, Ireland, 26/29th June 2009

[posted 25 June 2009]

For the second year running, a group of English Fives players is travelling to Ireland to play in the Irish National 1-Wall Handball Championships - and you can keep up to date with their progress this weekend using the micro-blogging website Twitter. The team totals some 20 players, and includes the RFA's Ady Lee (England Handball captain), Dan Grant, Rich Price, Gareth Price and Andy Pringle, as well as several colleagues from the Eton Fives Association. To follow their results - and, after Ireland, the team's preparations for their trip to the World Championships in October - simply click on the link below.

## **IRISH ONE-WALL NATIONALS**

Castlebar, Ireland, 26/28th June 2009

Eighteen English Fives players went to County Mayo for the Irish One-Wall Handball championships, writes Peter Cohen. Players entered a range of competitions, dependent on experience, and all matches apart from finals were timed at either 15 or 20 minutes, with the winner being the one with

most points when time is called.

Play in the men's Challenger and 'C' grades began on Friday, with Rich Price, Gareth Price, Simon Thomas, Luke Stradwick, Andy Pringle, Doug Foster and Stu Fautly all recording wins. Doug and Simon's games were tight, but the rest of the matches were dominated by the English. Gareth also played his second round on Friday, and turned on the style, beating the former 'C' grade champion and second seed to reach the quarterfinals. Ryan Perrie and Ant Theodossi, meanwhile, lost close first round games to leave the English having won eight matches and lost just two by close of play – an imperious start.

Saturday morning saw the start of the Open grades, featuring Adrian Lee, Dan Grant, Peter White and Peter Cohen in the men's draw, and Kerry White and Ashley Lumbard in the women's. Lee recorded a 30 – 6 victory in his first round with notably quick feet, while Grant, White and Cohen fell to vicious spin serves that would prove to be a deciding factor in the tournament. Kerry had a comfortable win in her first round match, while Ash couldn't quite match her more experienced opponent.

Meanwhile, Anita Ganguly, Emmalina Thompsell and Jess Lumbard began their campaign for the Ladies Challenger Cup, the players split initially into two round-robin groups. Anita and Jess played superbly in their half, winning most of their games, with Jess finishing top after a win over Anita to reach the final. In the other group, Emmalina couldn't quite finish top, but did record a 21-20 win in her final game.

As Saturday progressed, Fautly and Thomas were eliminated from the Men's Challenger, with Foster and Stradwick battling through for a place in the quarter-finals, where they clashed in the game of the tournament so far. It saw epic rallies with huge commitment from both, but Foster won through 14-13.

In the Men's Open, Lee faced top seed Dessie Keegan and drew a big crowd. The Irish international was troubled by Lee's footwork and retrieving from the start, and halfway through, Lee pulled off some outrageous winners to bring the scores level. Keegan's experience and power eventually won the match, but Lee can feel delighted with his performance and improvement from last year.

Not to be outdone, Cohen, White and Grant all knocked out Irish players in the first round of the Open plate, proving they belong at this level. Cohen then faced Grant in an all England semi-final, with Cohen winning 15-12 after Grant drew the scores level with a thrilling comeback from Cohen's early lead. In the final, Cohen faced Darragh Daly, who had narrowly beaten White in the other semi, and the Englishman won the competition with a grueling 16-15 win.

The quarter-finals of the Ladies Open drew together Kerry White and Marianna Rushe, arguably the top players in Europe. In rallies, White had the Irishwoman on the back foot for the majority of the match, but it was Rushe's set-piece serve and return that eventually won the contest. Meanwhile, Ash Lumbard scored a brilliant victory in the ladies open plate, playing her best ever to defeat a strong Irish opponent. In the Men's Challenger, Pringle battled to an impressive semi-final win, while Foster in the other semi was knocked out, preventing an all-English final. Pringle squared up against Creamer in the final, a best-of three-sets match, and swiftly established his authority and class to take the title two sets to nil.

The tourists' final match featured Jess Lumbard in the Ladies Challenger final. After winning the first set, she struggled in the second as her opponent changed tactics to tie the score. The Irishwoman raced into an early lead in the decider, before Lumbard slowly crept back to level the scores, and went on to take the title in the most thrilling match of the tournament.

Over the weekend, the English played 53 matches, winning 31, and brought home three titles – a brilliant achievement and a sign of the huge improvements made since last year. Socially, too, the tour was a great success. Saturday evening saw the hosts, the Gaelic Athletic Association, put on a

fabulous barbeque, and their hospitality and organization throughout the weekend was first-rate. We look forward to taking even more players to Ireland next year, and hopefully winning even more matches and titles. Next stop, Portland for the World Championships

### **INGRAM CUP/DERBY MOOR FIVES CLUB TOURNAMENT**

Merchant Taylors, 6th June/Derby, 28th June 2009

Derby Moor juniors Max Frost (U15) and Anthony Goodwin (U17) are celebrating a June double after Anthony won the Ingram Cup on the first weekend of the month at Northwood and Max won the Derby Moor Invitation Doubles on the last Sunday of the month at Littleover.

Goodwin successfully partnered Gareth Price in the final of the OMTs' event against Brian Kirk and John Walter, while Frost drew ex-National Singles champion Phil Bishop and carried him to victory in the East Midlands tournament against John Minta and Matt Orr, an ex-junior from Derby Moor.

For Phil it was a second success in this competition: he won the first tournament of its sort in 2004 with John East. It was also his second success of the summer, after winning the inaugural Douglas Butt Trophy, a competition for Old Dunstonians, in which he beat Steve Korris in the final.

**1st round:** J Hawke & R Grey bt C Heptonstall & C Butler 11-5, 11-5

**2nd round:** P Bishop & M Frost bt Hawke & Grey 15-2, 15-2; JCE Lee & M Yates bt N Reddy & S Kirby 15-1, 15-2; T Widdop & R Christie bt I Roberts & A Goodwin 15-11, 15-2; J Minta & M Orr bt R Sandie & B Kirk 11-4, 16-15

**Semi-finals:** Bishop & Frost bt Lee & Yates 15-2, 15-3; Minta & Orr bt Widdop & Christie 12-15, 15-12, 15-12

**Final:** Bishop & Frost bt Minta & Orr 15-11, 15-0

**3rd/4th place play-off:** Widdop & Christie bt Lee & Yates 16-14, 15-5

**Plate:** Sandie & Kirk