

Rugby Fives Association



ANNUAL REVIEW 2017-18



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The Rugby Fives Association 2017-18

President
Bernard Atkinson

Deputy President
David Bawtree

General Secretary
Phil Atkinson

RFA Club manager
Hamish Buchanan

Directors
Charlie Brooks
Chris Burrows
Peter King
Stuart Kirby
David Parlby
Alex Smith
Dan Tristao
Tom Webster

Editor: Tom Webster

Designer: Michele Hall
Tel: 07976 964067

Email: michelehalldesign@gmail.com

Commissioning Editor: Philip Atkinson

Contributing writers:
Simon Batten, Hamish Buchanan, Bob Dolby, David Hebdon, David Parlby, Andy Pringle, as well as many club secretaries, coaches and friends of Fives.

Contributing photographers:
David Barnes, Hamish Buchanan, Bob Dolby, Will Ellison, Andy Pringle and several others.

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A welcome from the President

Bernard Atkinson in inspirational mood

As I adopt my customary stance of staring hopelessly at the keyboard, wondering when inspiration will strike, I am struck by the realisation that inspiration is everywhere. I have a real sense of the RFA on the move – with a long way to go, but a clearer idea of the direction of travel. I claim no credit for this but rejoice in the new spirit abroad.

Initiatives abound, like the sub-groups of the Board managing finance, IT, communications and marketing, welfare, clubs, technical and membership, bringing focus to developments needed in our great sport. Of key importance is the appointment of Gareth Price as RFA Development Officer. Gareth is a fine player, a senior coach and clearly intends to make his mark. He will work with Tom Webster and report to General Secretary, Phil Atkinson. Output from our searching review of RFA Strategy is beginning to make its mark.

A donation of £20,000, given anonymously, provides us with means to start putting our aspirations into effect and for the project team to achieve our first result. They are working to assist and motivate the Edinburgh Fives-playing schools to up their profiles by improving courts and extending the playing base to the wider community.

Our game continues to thrill by sheer excellence at the top, but how good it is



to report that the quality is spreading throughout, not only in the men's and ladies' games, but in universities and schools, where there are very promising signs of good things to come. What is more, I aged at the right time to succeed a bit in Veterans, Vintage and Masters; today's quality in those older age groups leaves me in awe. I still issue my challenge to anyone eligible for a Grand Masters Fives Tournament – applicants must be over 75 and not leave it too long!

It is always sad to see names of notable players, who are no longer with us but have left their indelible mark on Fives. I plead presidential self-indulgence in singling out Denise Hall-Wilton: a leading player in the ladies' game and a prolific organiser. Most of all I will remember her great knowledge, her tireless support at tournaments and, above all, as a diminutive 'fun machine'. I claim to be the only President she ever crowned – in a makeshift ceremony at the 2016 Ladies' Winchester Fives tournament! We were also sad to lose Eric Marsh and John Pretlove this year.

Reported elsewhere is the retirement of David Gardner after 58 years of BUSF organising and 60 years of Board membership; to him I send my awed thanks. Good news comes from this, too: a worthy successor as BUSF organiser in the form of Theo Parker.

'I HAVE A REAL SENSE OF THE RFA ON THE MOVE'

BELOW (l-r) Eric Marsh with David Cameron

Denise Hall-Wilton and David Gardner

John Pretlove and his wife Ann



Men's Season Review

Andy Pringle reviews the events of the 2017-18 season

And then there were three... After a run of reviews where there was barely any mention of anyone except Messrs Ellison and Tristao, a third player really broke through in 2017-18.

Well, it's perhaps a little rich to say that someone already with a string of titles to their name 'broke through'. Nevertheless, this was the year when Ed Kay first scored tournament wins over Will and Dan, and that is some achievement.

Although the South West Open in July – with a singles title for Dan, and a doubles win for Will – suggested the season would be business as usual, the first sign of what was to come appeared at the South East Open.

Yes, in the end, Dan's name was engraved on the singles trophy, but for the first time in a singles championship, Ed beat Will. After that gruelling three-game semi-final, Ed went one step further at the London Open. Again, he beat Will, but this time in the final, allowing him to claim the singles title.

It was the start of a rich vein of form in which he picked up trophies at four successive events. His London win was followed by singles titles at the Yorkshire Open (where he beat Dan in the final) and U25s, as well as the doubles title at the South West Open.

Mind you, it's not as if Dan and Will went away. At least one of them picked up a title at each of these open events. Even so, on courts around the country, there were whispers there would be – for the first time in years – a three-way scrap for the National Singles title. As if to prove the point, Ed had overtaken Will and at the start of the tournament to sit second in the national rankings.

However, as the results show, Ed's challenge only got as far as the semi-finals. Here he lost to Will, who was – according to the organiser – playing his best Fives of the season. However, even that wasn't enough to beat Dan Tristao in the final, who went on to seal his third national singles title.

From then on, the rest of the season saw something approaching established practice: the North and North West Open titles went to Dan, while David Butler won the Scottish Open. However, what was unusual was that none of the singles titles went to Will.

Still, Will didn't end the season empty-handed. He picked up doubles titles at the South West, London and West of England Championships, as well as the North West Open. And, it's testament to his versatility that all four titles came with different partners: Dan Grant, Matt Shaw, Ed Kay and Charlie Brooks.



ABOVE
Ed Kay,
three-time
Universities
champion

RIGHT
Andy Pringle
pairs up
with Hamish
Buchanan in
the Veterans'
Doubles



In fact, the only player Will won two titles with was Ed Kay, as the pair won the Winchester Fives championship and the South West Open. Mind you, Dan Tristao wasn't far behind, picking up three titles, again all with different players. He had the pleasure of winning the big prize, too – the National Doubles – with Dan Grant.

The question is: can anyone catch the top three? The good news is there are several players snapping at their heels. Dan Grant, David Butler and Charlie Brooks were serial semi-finalists, while Matt Shaw picked up his first open title this year. All of which means the top three can't relax if they want to retain their positions in 12 months' time.

But, just as the top of the open game seems to involve the usual suspects this year, so the same



ABOVE
Wessex Club:
Winners of the
Wood Cup

LEFT
Dan Tristao
wins the
National
Singles for the
third time



'THE TOP THREE CAN'T RELAX IF THEY WANT TO RETAIN THEIR POSITIONS'

thing is happening in the more senior categories. Some very familiar names picked up the silverware in the Veterans, Vintage and Masters events.

In the Veterans (over 45) championships, Matt Cavanagh won the singles title for the third year in a row. Andy Pringle also took his third successive doubles title, although, with regular partner John Minta injured, he lifted the trophy with six-time winner Hamish Buchanan.

In the Vintage (over 55) event, both finals were a repeat of last year's. The big difference this year

was that Neil Roberts reversed the 2017 result by beating Stuart Kirby to win the singles title. However, for the second year running, the pair teamed up to win the doubles final, beating Richard Christie and Brian Kirk.

Also winning a title for the second year in a row were Spencer Beal and Tony Hamilton, who retained the Masters Doubles, at the expense of new pairing Wayne Enstone and Stuart Watson.

If observers were looking for a shock, it came at the Owers Trophy, because defending champions – the Old Paulines – weren't able to raise a team. That left the way clear for the Old Wykehamists to score a comfortable win in the final against the Old Bradfieldians – who finished as runners-up for the second year in a row.

The Wykehamists were led by Will Ellison, who became the first player to win the trophy with two teams, having won with the Old Pilgrims in 2009.

And, as if to prove his credentials as a team player, Will also led the Wessex Club to victory in the Club Championship. For the fifth year running, the final was between Wessex and the Paulines, and this year it was the Wessex squad (including James Birch, Dave Butler, Ed Hawke and Giles Munn) who emerged as the winners.

As a result, both Rugby Fives team tournaments were won by Winchester Fives players.

Yet another talking point from a season that gave us much to discuss and much to look forward to.

'LET'S HOPE THAT NEXT SEASON ALL PLAYERS ARE IN GOOD FITNESS AND FORM'

Rugby's Cup runneth over - the winners of the Lady's Cup



Ladies' Season Review

Bob Dolby reviews a year in which the medals were shared around

If there is talk of the Big Three in the Men's game, then in the Ladies' game we can speak of the Big Five. This has been a season in which five players have pulled themselves clear of the field by their performances in the four ranking tournaments.

It began with Louise Mathias, now playing in high-quality company at the West of England Club, winning the Ladies' U23 Singles and Doubles, the latter victory coming in partnership with the then National U13 champion Martha Nugent – a very impressive debut indeed in an adult competition. With defending champion Tessa Mills and last year's runner-up Shinan Zhang unable to compete it was a promising

bunch of schoolgirl players from Rugby, Marlborough, Bedford Modern, Fettes and Alleyn's who provided Louise with some very able competition. A number of these young players had already gained valuable practice competing in the company of adults at the Lady's Cup, the annual Doubles event held on the courts of Cambridge University, and there it was Freya Harrison of Rugby who carried Dick Warner to victory.

In January came the Ladies' National Championships in Singles and Doubles. The entry was smaller than organiser Alexandra Steel would have liked, with just one schoolgirl competing, but the top-ranked adults

in the country were there in force and Kathleen Briedenhann deservedly regained her Singles title. Last year's champion, Tessa Mills, was clearly out of practice in her semi-final contest with Louise, who made the final for the first time. In the doubles Maddy Raynor and Alexandra Steel, now playing regularly at Blundell's, were too strong for defending champions Kathleen and Tessa. After some years as runners-up there was great joy in victory for Maddy and Alexandra.

Snowy weather caused the cancellation of the scheduled Ladies Winchester Fives championships and rescheduling made it impossible for Kathleen and Tessa to defend their



The Mixed Winchester group at Bradfield



Alex Steel and Maddy Raynor win the Ladies' National Doubles

title. This gave the pair of Maddy and Alexandra the chance to score another success, this time against Louise Mathias and Wendy Carling. If Maddy was happy at that success she was understandably overjoyed to finally win a singles title the same day, beating her partner Alexandra, who had had a very good win in the semi-final over Louise. The day also featured girls from Bedford Modern and Marlborough, and it was they who fought out the Plate final, with Ibbey Lee and Anna Laakkonen beating the young pair from Bedford, Katie Sumner and Maddie Kent.

The last ranking event of the year was the Mixed Winchester Fives doubles. In this unique event there

were schoolgirls and schoolboys, as well as Eton Fives practitioners and regular Rugby Fives club players, which makes for a great atmosphere. Ollie Arnold was unable to pair up with his champion partner of last year, Tessa Mills, so chose to play with fellow Bristol University student Louise Mathias. From the off it looked as if they might be facing three-times champions Alexandra Steel and Andy Pringle in the final, and so it was, with Louise ending the year as she'd begun: with a winner's medal.

Let's hope that next season all players are in good fitness and form, and that organisers enjoy large entry numbers. If that happens we could be in for a great season of Women's Fives.

END-OF-SEASON WOMEN'S RANKINGS JUNE 2018

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	1	K Briedenhann	88.57
2	2	T Mills	85.51
3	3	M Raynor	85.48
4	4	A Steel	84.79
5	5	L Mathias	82.75
6	6	S Zhang	63.47
7	7	I Lee	62.54
8	8	A Law	56.92
9	9	P Thornhill	53.95
10	10	L Harbottle	53.28
11	11	A de Clermont	52.75
12	-	K Sumner	46.93
13	12	A Laakkonen	45.83
14	13	L Robinson	43.28
15	15	F Harrison	41.92
16	16	B Crinnion	40.66
17	17	I Boddy	39.18
18	19	C Henderson	36.51
19	20	G Shepherd	35.73
20	21	P Bell	35.19
21	22	H Nugent	29.70
22	23	D Skene	29.59
23	25	K Hird	28.55
24	24	M Harte	27.52
25	28	L Simpson	25.08
26	27	A Lombard	24.94
27	29	W Carling	24.87
28	30	M Smith	23.26
29	31	L Theaker	21.96
30	33	N Stokes	18.98
31	-	D Redmond	16.33
32	34	C Bugel	13.87
33	37	L Dan	9.52
34	38	L Calman-Grimdsdale	8.69
35	42	R Elliot	5.88
36	43	V King-Forbes	5.86
37	47	A Lewin	3.43
38	48	E O'Malley	3.14
39	49	D Stark	2.74
40	50	M Cole	2.06
41	51	S Smith	1.96
42	52	O O'Dwyer	1.12
43	53	I Wood	0.40



The Ladies U23 champions



TOP LEFT
The Alleyn's
U13 and U14
schoolgirl
champions

ABOVE
The dominant
Winchester
1st pair

LEFT
Colts
champions
from St. Paul's

Schools Season Review 2017-18

Bob Dolby looks at a season in which standards remained high in school Fives

This season the schools game says goodbye to players of impressive ability: national champions Tom Kidner and Kieran Mackison, regional champions Addie Chai, Cameron Low and Joe Sumner, plus top players like Matt Cheveley and Harry Jackson. We look forward to seeing them and others continuing their Fives at university or club level.

At the beginning of the season, given the continued strength of Winchester College at U18 and U16, it was no surprise to see them win the first of the Schools' competitions – the Winchester Fives Doubles – with Kidner and Mackison defending the title successfully against St. Paul's.

At Sherborne in January this same pair comprehensively defeated the same St. Paul's pair, Cheveley and Jackson, in the doubles but in the singles Kidner was pushed hard by Chai from Blundell's. In the Colts Winchester were not to have it their way, however, as U14 Wiseman from Alleyn's romped through the singles draw to defeat Percival from Winchester in the final before pairing up with a schoolmate to win the doubles.

Come the National Schools championships Kidner and Mackison duly completed the treble. Kidner also successfully defended his singles title, beating Low of Whitgift. Unique, however, was the performance of Wiseman from Alleyn's in winning both the U14 and U16 singles titles. A surprise came in the Colts doubles, where the Pauline pair of Monro-Davies and Odgers played the best Fives of their lives to beat Winchester I in the final. There

was joy for Tonbridge, who won the U14 Doubles.

There has been pleasing progress with Girls' Fives. Girls have hitherto had fewer opportunities for matches and tournaments, but for a second year there was a South East Regional event and an inaugural Scottish Schools Doubles championship, which eight pairs from three schools contested. The competition was won by Edinburgh Academy, Meryl Smith and Olivia Tofts, in a well fought three-game final. These regional events undoubtedly help raise the standard of competitive play. So, how good it is to hear that the innovative City of Durham Fives Club is planning a Northern Women's tournament next season.

Meanwhile the ninth National Girls' Schools championship took place at Marlborough, with four sections: U13, U14, U16 and Open. Eight schools entered this year, with a total of 46 players; medals went to seven of those schools. Marlborough's twice Open champions Ibbey Lee and Anna Laakkonen look more than ready to move into the adult category next season; Rugby's

Anastasia de Clermont has a claim to be the best schoolgirl Rugby has yet produced; Katie Sumner from Bedford Modern played with great maturity to win the U16 Singles title, though runner-up, year-young Aiysha Alli from Christ's Hospital will be a formidable player next season; U14 champions Martha Nugent and Katie Innes from Alleyn's hit the ball with power beyond their years; and the Alleyn's U13 pair of Davey and Stephens are already impressive young players.

'THESE EVENTS UNDOUBTEDLY HELP RAISE THE STANDARD OF COMPETITIVE PLAY'

Around the schools 2017-18

Individual schools report on their Fives season over the last year

ALLEYN'S SCHOOL

Rob Ody reports: An enjoyable Fives season started with the trip to Sherborne for the West of England Championships. Gwydion Wiseman played very well to win the U16 singles and then partnered Stuart Scott to victory in the doubles. In March a group of very keen U13s went to the National Championships at St Paul's. Max Bavington was runner-up in the singles and partnered Will Marshall to take silver in the doubles. The finale to the boys' season was the Schools Championships at St Paul's where boys played at all age groups. In the Open singles Alex Cochrane was runner-up in the Plate and Will Hirth won the B Plate. Gwydion Wiseman was the winner of both the U14 singles and the Colts singles. In the U14 doubles Stuart Scott and Jamie Kirwan finished as runners-up.

Fives is now thriving for the girls, too. We competed in the South East Regional Championships at Christ's Hospital: Martha Nugent won the U14 singles, Katie Innes was runner-



Alleyn's with Gold, Silver and Bronze aplenty

up and Lucy Arie finished in third place. Martha and Katie then went on to win the doubles. At the Girls' National Championships Claudia Davey and Carys Stephens won the U13 doubles and Martha Nugent and Katie Innes took the U14 doubles title. Lucy Arie partnered a player from

Marlborough and together they won the U14 Plate. In the afternoon singles, at U13 level Claudia became National Champion, with Carys as runner-up, and at U14 Martha also took gold, with Katie finishing as runner-up. It has been a most enjoyable season.

BEDFORD SCHOOL

Michael Croker reports: This year the two terms of Fives have been repeatedly disrupted by the weather, with sweating courts taking a toll both on regular games afternoons and school fixtures and the East Midlands tournament being 'snowed off' in February to eventually be played at the start of the summer term. Statistically speaking it has been a tough season for the school team, with victories being hard to come by. With losses to BMS, Derby Moor, MTS, Jesters and the RFA a notable victory was achieved against St Paul's, a highlight of the season, and against Oundle. The 1st IV – consisting of Beard, Jewers, Awan and Sorensen – have endured the challenges with good cheer, with Awan and Sorensen showing real potential for next year. The school singles competitions continue to try and discover hidden

talent amongst the major sports players, but it was the Fives specialists who won the day with Beard winning the senior Dawes Cup and Songara the junior Mellor Cup. House competitions continue to be popular with all the boys who, once involved, realise just how enjoyable Fives can be. Huge thanks must go to Dan Sorensen (OB) who returned as coach to offer his considerable expertise and guidance; this certainly gave the Tuesday games sessions a little more rigour and structure and the boys a sense of what good quality Fives looks like.

BEDFORD MODERN SCHOOL

Robert Kay reports: This season Bedford Modern won all our fixtures, against Bedford, Rugby and Merchant Taylors'. The highlight had to be our match against Merchant Taylors', in

which the final score was 105-104. The players seemed to bond after the game and each school cheered for the other when they met again at the U18 Nationals.

At the Nationals Joe Sumner entered the Singles tournament and made it to the semi-finals. His team-mate Ollie Colbert joined him in the Doubles competition, where they won the Plate.

On a regional level, at the Midlands Schools Regional Championships, Joe scooped first place, beating Ollie in the final. Together they won the doubles tournament against our own Nishant Pradhan and George Larrington.

Not to be outdone by her brother, Katie Sumner became the Rugby Fives U16 Singles champion, competing at the ninth National Schoolgirls' Championship at Marlborough College. She and Maddie Kent were then runners-up in the U16 Doubles.

BLOXHAM SCHOOL

Simon Batten reports: This was a low-key season by recent standards and, for an allegedly indoor sport, one heavily influenced by the weather.

When the courts were not sweating, rain and snow were coming in from holes in the roof that have now reached the point where they need plugging. Worse, two heavy snowstorms coincided with away fixtures, forcing cancellation.

Nevertheless, the pupils continued undaunted to play on three days of the week, with the keenest being a promising group of U15 and U14 boys.

This, and the emergence of some talented girls in the first form, gives ample grounds for hope for the future, as does the prospect of a change of minor sports day to allow us to select our most talented players for matches.

BLUNDELL'S SCHOOL

Wayne Enstone reports: A record season on many counts: firstly for increased numbers of pupils playing Fives, mainly due to the encouragement given by our qualified Level 1 coaches, Addie Chai, James Maclaurin and Barney Ames, together with staff member Alexandra Steel's work with Year 6. We also had a very satisfying performance at the National Championships; four more Lower 6th players becoming Level 1 Coaches, which will help us run a better Fives programme next season; and the establishment of the Wednesday



Addie Chai (r): Colquhoun winner 2017

evening Junior Fives club with the support of local coaches.

It has been the best year for Blundell's squad performance with respect to spirit, attitude and collective support across the age ranges. It was not just Addie's achievement of reaching the U18 Nationals semi-finals, but the way in which he returned to support his team mate James Maclaurin win an exciting Plate Singles final. We were all delighted to hear that Addie, twice winner of the Colquhoun Trophy, had for the first time at Blundell's been awarded full colours for Fives. Chris Hedley-Dent writes: "Addie has given himself selflessly and unstintingly to the development of Fives at Blundell's, coaching three times a week on a regular basis over the past two years."

We were also pleased to have completed all our fixtures despite the 'Beast from the East' – no mean feat on outdoor facilities – and we again hosted a triangular match with Mount Kelly and Sherborne.

BRADFIELD COLLEGE

Jeremy Ball reports: This year saw the 2017 Colts National Singles champion, Stepan Matvienko, join Bradfield – not a bad signing! He brought his usual drive and determination to all his matches and remained unbeaten in all his singles games. The timing of the Nationals this year prevented him entering the Open competition but he has pencilled Easter 2019 into his diary, hoping to be the first pupil to win titles for two different schools. His arrival also brought some players out of retirement and there should be a reasonable Senior IV next year.

There was also an encouraging crop of first year boys who played with much enthusiasm and commitment and, although often hit off the court by much larger opponents, have the potential to become decent players in the years to come. Competition with other sports unfortunately accounted for the U15s, none of whom returned to Fives in their second year.

Finally, we say goodbye to two stalwarts – Freddie Moore and Conrad Hudson. Both have played for all of their five years at the College and have always done so with determination and good grace. It was a fitting end to their careers that they won their last ever doubles game together in a fun but close-fought match against Merchant Taylors'. My thanks to both for their commitment and companionship. I hope they will find their way to a Fives court at university.

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

Ed Hatton reports: CH players performed excellently in the National Girls Fives Championships at Marlborough College. Aiysha and Sophie, a year young, reached the semi-finals of the U16 Doubles. They moved their more powerful opponents around the court brilliantly and met their match only in the experienced Bedford Modern pair. Aiysha also reached the singles final in an absolutely titanic effort.

Ellie and Mina were both playing in their first tournament in the U14s and played with energy and enjoyment, while all of our U13s were beginners, so it was an excellent achievement for Isabella and Isobel to be runners-up in

the doubles and Hope to be winner of the singles Plate.

In the Girls' Regional competition, Aiysha and Angelina won the U18s singles and doubles and Rachael and Sophie the U16s singles and doubles in a dominant performance.

Highlights for the boys' squad have included strong wins against Eastbourne and a battling U14 victory against St Dunstan's.

The winners of the highly contested block competitions were Leigh Hunt and Peele in the juniors, Peele in the intermediate boys and Coleridge and Maine in the seniors. The Grecians' legendary 'Sweaty Glove' trophy was won by West and awarded in a new display case.



The Academy's champions

EDINBURGH ACADEMY

Hector McFarlane reports: Fives continues to thrive at The Edinburgh Academy with increasing numbers of girls and boys playing on a weekly basis. There was a full programme of fixtures against the other Scottish schools as well as the Scottish Schools' Championships including the very successful inaugural Girls' Doubles Championships, which were won by Meryl Smith and Olivia Tofts. The boys performed well but often came up against very strong opposition from Merchiston, who have set the standard north of the border this year. As always the Jesters' visit in January was a real highlight, with some great matches and coaching sessions taking place.

We had successful trips to the National Championships at St. Paul's for the boys and Marlborough College for the girls. Notable achievements included Thomas Peel reaching the semi-final of the U16 singles, as well as in doubles with his partner Daniel Jourdan. Daniel Troup took silverware as the deserved winner of the U16 Singles Plate. At Marlborough Meryl Smith continued to perform at the top level, winning the U18 Plate, whilst Zara Elliot, Sophie Lundie and Olivia Tofts reached the quarter-finals of the main U16 competition. With tentative plans for court redevelopment, along with the increasing participation levels, the future continues to look bright!

FETTES COLLEGE

Peter Worledge reports:

The Fives Club had a frantically busy season with lots of interest and strong performances across the board. It was particularly good to add a brand new team of U16 girls into the mix who, whilst relative beginners, have come on in leaps and bounds during the season, along with a new Senior Colts team snapping at the heels of the 1st team.

The spring term kicked off with our annual joust with the Jesters, with over 40 of them descending on

Edinburgh for the serious business of Fives. Between them, 28 Fettesians notched up over 60 games during the weekend and all will have gained a huge amount of experience and, I hope, enjoyment from it all.

And so it came to the Scottish Schools Senior Doubles Championships and, as winners of both the Cup and the Plate last year, we had much to live up to. The Championships were held at Fettes once again with 16 boys vying for the trophy. Merchiston looked to be very strong this year and so it proved, but the Fettes pairs made it to the final of the Plate where Evan L and Grant S secured the eventual win. Brand new



Fettes' Plate winners Grant and Evan

for 2018 was the inaugural Scottish Schools Girls Doubles Championships, also hosted by Fettes. Similar in format to the boys' tournament, we were unlucky to have two of our players signed off through injury but nevertheless India M and Scarlett G ended as runners-up with lots to aim for next year.

There continues to be very much to be proud of and I am so very grateful to all the players for their commitment, effort and good humour over the season, though perhaps not their taste in music! Fives at Fettes remains in good heart!



Derby Moor U15s at the Regionals

tournament in June and play comfortably in the company of former National champions.

DERBY MOOR JUNIORS

Stuart Kirby reports: We are in the process of rebuilding, with the emphasis on children in the 13-16 year-old bracket who come to the two weekend clubs which Lewis Keates and I run.

As they progress we are then able to invite them to the general club evening on a Tuesday and, in due course, to the senior session on a Thursday.

We try to gradually give them the experience of playing matches on unfamiliar courts and in competitions against players from other schools, aiming for a positive outcome. So, six took on Bedford

School in an annual fixture in December and three then went to Sherborne to play in the West of England Schools event in January; three gained experience playing in a match at Cambridge and a further two represented the club against the RFA at Derby.

The highlight of their season is the Midlands Schools Regional championships where our group of four U15s came away with one gold, two silvers and three bronzes.

Playing often with adults, Vishal, Dean, AR, Kais, Callum and Matthew are all making good progress, such that they were able to participate in our annual Doubles

LORETTO SCHOOL

Richie Murby reports: We have had good matches against the other Edinburgh schools and seen new talent emerging. The senior and junior boys teams recorded victories, and Patrin Maddison reached the final of the Boyd Trophy. His contribution to Fives at Loretto has been immense and, in helping younger players, he has made sure next year's team have a path to follow and a foundation to build on.

With Patrin, Jonny Cunningham and Kyle McGhie leaving, and no players immediately behind them, it will fall to next year's U16s to also form the backbone of the Senior team. This will give the young squad the chance to develop and learn by facing strong opposition. If the group works hard we should see the return of Loretto to the National Championships.

Girls' Fives is still yet to take off here, though our efforts to build a squad that can play regularly against the thriving Academy and Fettes teams continue. We're sorry to lose Justine Henning from the staff: her enthusiasm has been invaluable, and

she even stepped in to play at the Scottish Schools Girls' Championships. Her partner, U16 Robyn Barcham, played well and benefited from the experience, but needs more teammates from her age group. New longer court-opening times will help allow more girls to play regularly.

MALVERN COLLEGE

Chris Thomas reports: Having lost some strong players in the last two years, it was time to rebuild, and with Fives on the Year 9 games rotation, it has been possible to attract new faces to the game. Consequently we have had good matches at the younger level against our usual competitors of Bradfield, Winchester, Marlborough and Rugby.

A particularly successful fixture is against Blundell's, where we play home and away now. In Girls' Fives, a pair of U16s won the doubles Plate at the Nationals and are progressing well. As the courts are currently in a building stage, it has been a challenging year but we are looking forward to a fresh start again next season.

MERCHANT TAYLORS' SCHOOL

Simon Hardman reports: The 2018 season was a successful one for Merchant Taylors', in spite of its being our first without home courts. The boys took to playing on squash courts with ease, at home and in Watford, enabling them to maintain both their own progression as players and the school's standing as a competitive Fives-playing institution.

We were competitive in every fixture and victorious in three-quarters of all matches played across the age range. Given the boys' lack of practice on Rugby courts, I was hugely impressed by their standard of play. A particular highlight was the successful defence of the Centenary Cup against Bedford School. Perhaps our best overall performance of the season was at St Paul's, where both our 1st and U14 IVs played astonishingly well on their way to solid wins.

Though little silverware was won at the Nationals this year, this was certainly our best performance in my time. Six of our seven boys made it to the knockout stages of the main competitions, with one in each age group making the quarter-finals. In the doubles, MTS boys made it to the U14 semi-finals and the U18 quarter-finals. I am hopeful of an even stronger performance from next year.

Although we were not able to raise an U13 side this year and will likely have a very limited U14 side next season, I have been proud of the boys' enthusiasm for, and dedication to, their Fives.



MTS Seniors with the Centenary Cup

MERCHISTON CASTLE SCHOOL

Matt Hillier reports: The 2017-18 Fives season proved to be an excellent one for Merchiston. In addition to winning almost every regular season fixture, we became the first school to win all three Edinburgh Schools trophies in one season. This included all-Merchiston finals in both the U18 and U16 Edinburgh Schools Championships: the former won by Sean Yuille and Douglas Tidy, the latter by Max Layton and Tom Mackintosh. In the Edinburgh Schools Singles final, Douglas recorded a comfortable win over his opponent from Loretto.

Outside Edinburgh, Merchiston Fives fared similarly well, including a very successful tour to London in January. A fixture against Alleyn's on the Friday evening saw the U18s finish in a very rare tie, while the U16s achieved a convincing 76 point victory. On the Saturday, a match against St Paul's resulted in the U18s

losing by only five points in a tight game. However, the U16s won by a staggering 98 points!

At the end of the season, three U15 boys travelled to the annual U16 National Schools Fives Championships in London. In the singles, Ben Afshar won his group and reached the last 16 of the main draw. Max Layton and Marcus Mulvey both finished second in their respective groups, with Marcus reaching the Plate semi-final and Max the quarter-final. In the doubles, Ben and Marcus were knocked out in the main quarter-final. It was an excellent learning experience for all three boys and they all have another shot at the U16s age group next year; they will definitely return stronger.

So an outstanding year and there is already much excitement building about next season.



Merchiston's winning U16s

MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE

Tom Kiggell reports: Investors in Swindon Engravers will be pleased to hear we are keeping their profits ticking over. Ibbby Lee and Anna Laakkonen enjoyed an extraordinary 12 months, bookending Plate trophies at the National U23s and the Winchester Fives Championships with singles and doubles victories at the Schoolgirls' Nationals. They have it in them to reach the top of the adult game.

Arthur Rigg and Harry Powell made sure the boys chipped in, winning the Plate at the Schools' Winchester Doubles and Arthur took the silver medal in the Colquhoun trophy. They were pushed hard in training by Luca Conte, Chris Beswick and Milo Martin, who grew into committed and impressive players.

The seniors played their part in encouraging the juniors. Kirsten Bell and Lena Barton stormed to an unexpected and emotional victory in the National U16 Doubles final. What



Marlborough's haul of silverware

a time they chose to play their best ever Fives! The U14 girls were also inspired, them winning the singles Plate, half the doubles Plate, and silver medals in the main doubles.

The full flowering of the talent of the U14 boys was hampered by a lack of competitive fixtures and the timing of the Nationals. Nevertheless, a good squad emerged, with the potential to build on one of our best years in recent memory.

OUNDLE SCHOOL

Tony Burrows reports: With most of the senior players playing in the Michaelmas Term and therefore 'out of season' for most of our opposition, inter-school matches were limited in number. Success was difficult to come by, but some success against Bedford by fielding U16s playing as seniors is encouraging for next season. Narrow losses to the RFA and Rugby completed the fixtures.

The inter-house competition was well contested and enjoyed by all. Fixtures in the Lent Term, including the Midlands Schools competition and the OO sports weekend fell victim to the poor weather. With a significant number of this year's players keen to improve and returning to play again next year, we look forward to being more competitive once again

PILGRIMS' SCHOOL

Geoffrey Hammond reports: This was another excellent pair of terms with full courts, happy boys and much progress. The Autumn Term was primarily one of learning, where experience guided enthusiasm.

The tempo was raised after Christmas with much expectation on the part of boys and staff – there were matches! The first match involved visiting Blundell's; the courts were affected by the weather, but the occasion was as friendly and worthwhile as ever. With Merchant Taylors' pausing until their courts are rebuilt, we took the chance to initiate a Fathers and Sons afternoon. Though some parents were interestingly keen, the afternoon was a relaxed and happy one. Finally, we went to the National U13s and did jolly well. We may not have had the best players, but the boys enjoyed themselves and four ended up meeting in the doubles Plate final.

So ended another good season; the boys were always polite, keen, utterly fair and a joy to look after – with thanks to Winchester College for the use of their courts.

RADLEY COLLEGE

Dave Cox reports: The 2017-18 Fives season saw a small but dedicated group of players developing their skills further and playing a handful of fixtures in the Lent term. The team

was captained by Hugo Halford-Harrison, with Edward Andrew completing the first pair. The second pair was made up from two of Jamie Bell, Henry Wiggin and Andrew Shaw.

The Schools' Winchester Nationals proved to be a very good work-out for the team, with a huge amount of progress made across a single day's play. Fixtures included a home match against Tonbridge, played on a particularly slippery set of courts; an away fixture at St Paul's, played on their usual warm, fast and bouncy courts; and a season-ending RFA/OR fixture at home. The latter will hopefully lead to more cooperation between the school, ORs and the RFA to provide more diverse training and fixtures and a closer link with the RFA. For this thanks to Duncan Neale, an OR and RFA member. With three 6.1 boys in the team and one fifth former, we look forward to a healthy 6th form showing next season. We are looking to resurrect the Fives careers of any who have played at their prep schools and will be entering the fifth form next year and, as always, fostering novice talent from interested parties.

RUGBY SCHOOL

Trevor White reports: This season was a little below the levels of recent ones, particularly with regard to our silverware haul. However, progress was made by many and Fives remains very healthy indeed. The biggest disappointment came with boys not being available for the key matches or competitions and not fully realising potential. The girls were more consistent and available and once again provided some of the season highlights.

Anastasia de Clermont, girls' captain, improved yet again and there is no doubt that she has become our best girl player since the courts were rebuilt in 2011. She was unlucky in the national U18 singles final, which Rugby has yet to win, playing above herself in a titanic encounter which she eventually lost 13 -15. She also reached the National U23 singles final. Both Anastasia and Maisie Harte have been keen and dedicated performers and an inspiration to the younger girls. Also part of a senior squad of great depth, Freya Harrison and Arte Denton lost narrowly in the national U18 doubles, while Alice Day picked up the U16 singles Plate. The strength of the girls was also seen at the Lady's Cup, where Freya Harrison, partnered by OR Dick Warner, powered to victory on the Cambridge courts.

The boys never quite reached the same levels of achievement and only one boy, Xav Christopher, represented the school in the Colts at the Nationals. Xav won his group and proceeded to the main competition, once again an impressive achievement. At the Midlands Archie Gibbs lost a very tight match in the U15 singles final. With partner James Langham, he went one better: they secured the Doubles crown. The seniors were less successful, although Tom Farren and Jacob Drabble competed for the third place in the singles and Jacob and Sam Stoddart won the Doubles Plate.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL

Sam Roberts reports: It wasn't until the final shot of the last match on the final day of the National Schools Tournament, at the end of the season, that we claimed a trophy and ended our two-year drought as Louis Odgers and Teddy Monro-Davies deservedly won the Colts Doubles. It was the best they had ever played as a pair.

In the Seniors, Matt Cheveley, Harry Jackson, Isaac Hudis, Tom Liu and Julius Davies jostled for position in the 1st IV. When Isaac was on form, he was capable of hitting the ball wonderfully cleanly with both hands, while Tom Liu – officially the 'Most Improved Senior' – developed a devastating serve and sorted out his footwork so as to attack off the front foot.

The Colts had a good year. There was a kernel of keen, talented players who pushed each other along. As well as Louis and Teddy, Nick Stanger, Charlie Jobson, Shrey Bavisha, Guy Ward-Jackson, Ollie Pitman and Manan Pant offered such strength in depth that we were undefeated in school matches.

The Junior Colts have a slightly thin fixture list, which inevitably makes it

SEDBERGH SCHOOL

Jonathan Lidiard reports: This was a relatively quiet season for us, though with much good Fives on show, both at home and away. A mixture of staff and pupils enjoyed competing in the North West Open in January, now a stalwart of the calendar for us and always accompanied by a warm welcome and with some incredibly high level Fives on show. Regular school fixtures saw a young Sedbergh 1st IV enjoy a mixture of victory and defeat, with captain Taylor McGuire the accumulator of most of our points on each outing. The White Rose Club and Dalesmen both made their customary trips to Sedbergh for enjoyable matches, whilst Tonbridge School made a rather less common, though no less welcome visit from down south. Their company and indeed the two excellent matches they provided were certainly the highlight of the term for us and we thank them for making the long journey up to come and stay with us.



Cheveley beats Hudis for the Cunis Cup

difficult to improve. Ben Pymont, Darshan Arjun, Aidan Choi and Gus Goulding made the most progress, with Darshan snapping at Ben's heels by the end of the season.

In the U14s, Ben Roberts won the Beltrami Cup for internal singles, after three extremely close games against Aiden Whitham. Alex Ridley and Benedict Harrison claimed third and fourth places respectively. The other four regulars in the top eight – Alex Adams, Arun Hussain, Nico Zezza and Monty Brown – made progress in the second half of term, but we faced some stiff opposition in school matches and at the Nationals, against boys who had been playing regularly for at least a year longer.

SHERBORNE SCHOOL

Nick Scorer reports: The Fives season at Sherborne has been busy, with eight matches and two competitions.

Benedict Mercer made history again by being the first person to retain the Colts Trophy in the Colquhoun Tournament, defeating teammate Harry Harvey on his way to the final.

In the West of England Colts, Harry reached the singles quarter-finals and Benedict the semis, further than any Shirburnian in 10 years. The pair then made the doubles semi-finals.

Archie Buxton and Harry Le Maistre also played excellent Fives, completing our Senior team. The season highlight was the victory against the RFA. Despite some close losses against a number of schools we felt able to give stronger school opponents some competitive games and learnt much.

In the Juniors a number of boys made their debut for the school, with mixed results but enthusiasm. Things look good for the future.

TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Ian Jackson reports: This was a busy year with many highlights. A weekend tour to Rossall and Sedbergh with the 1st and 2nd IV was a great success. The quality of the hosting was exceptional and was matched by the quality of the Fives. Winning both singles and doubles at the SE Regionals in the U16 age group bodes well for the future. Five teams enjoyed unbeaten seasons; the 2nd IV, U15 A, B and C and the U14 A, so the prospects at the lower end look very good. With 70 boys playing, the club must be one of the largest in the country and, with that number of players, can give a match to opponents at any level, which we are always keen to do. However, the highlight came at the Schools' Nationals where Massimo Campanale reached the final of the U14 singles, then he and Jonas Freeman went one better in winning the U14 doubles. Titles do not come often to Tonbridge – only four in nearly 90 years – so it was one to savour.



Tonbridge's National U14 champions



The Whitgift Senior squad

WHITGIFT SCHOOL

Nick Morgan reports: Whitgift had an outstanding season at Senior level in 2018. Though few in number, the squad more than made up in quality. We had a clean sweep of cups at the SE Regionals held at Whitgift in February and won seven of our eight U18 fixtures, losing only to St Paul's. One player in particular should be singled out: Cameron Low is the finest player the school has produced so far this century, his on-court skills and

intelligent play a model for others to adopt and follow. Once he had found a strong partner in Sean Kendrick, we were due some good results at the Nationals. The pair did not disappoint, losing only in the finals to an excellent Winchester pair. The same can be said for the singles where Cameron's superb run only came to an end playing the defending champion and eventual winner, Kidner from Winchester, in the final. So, the best season overall since my time at Whitgift started in 1990!

As a parting gift, the outgoing Headmaster Dr Barnett approved substantial funding for a total refurbishment of the courts. A new roof and state-of-the-art LED lights have so far mostly been appreciated by the Old Boys in their regular Thursday evening sessions. We have great facilities now: a few more boys and a long-term strategy for the future of Fives is all that is required to see the game thrive into the future.

WINCHESTER COLLEGE

Jamie McManus reports: Winchester has continued to ride the crest of a wave when it comes to success on the Fives courts. Tom Kidner has led the charge this year, as captain of Fives. With some help from his rapidly improving partner Kieran Mackison, he achieved a clean sweep of victories in the various school tournaments. In the younger age-groups Winchester boys were once again in the mix, even if they were not quite strong enough to win any trophies: Dominic Percival finished runner-up in three finals and Marcus Cloke-Brown made it to the semi-final of the National U14 Singles.

However two of the more marvellous achievements of the year came, first, when Tom Kidner qualified for the last 16 of the National Singles – a impressive achievement for a schoolboy and one I don't think he regretted even after Will Ellison had made him run around a lot – and, secondly, when Seb Fraser, partnering Old Fettesian Archie McCreath, won the Doubles at the Scottish Open – presumably the first time a Winchester schoolboy has won an adult title. All of this rather overshadowed the standard school fixtures, where victory or defeat seemed to depend largely on which team we were able to put out. Nevertheless we have a strong squad moving into U18 category next year and enthusiasm aplenty, particularly at what will be U15 level. All to the good as plans for building six new courts get serious.

My thanks go to the boys for their enthusiasm.



Winchester at the West of England Schools

A lifetime of dedication to Fives, on and off court

The Review conducted an Interview with **David Gardner** on the occasion of his retirement from the RFA Board after 60 years

What is your first memory of Fives?

Aged 12 sitting in the playground at St Dunstan's, eating my sandwiches and viewing a rather peculiar game which involved hitting a ball against a wall, with gloves on. It wasn't possible for juniors to try. Only when we were put into Houses, after two years in the school, were we allowed to try things out for ourselves. I took to it like a duck to water.

What was Fives like at St Dunstan's in your early days?

There was a master in charge but Fives was really run by the boys. There was a full list of fixtures ranging from visits to Epsom Downs to the far-flung 'North', (i.e. Merchant Taylors' via the Underground to Moor Park.) What an exciting day out that was!

Learning the game was done in the

House system, where the best players taught and encouraged the youngsters. There were ample House competitions, and the captain and his cohorts would keep a wary eye on emerging players and select them for team practice.

The courts were always available for use and we would just go out and play whenever we wanted. Stan Holt and I used to snatch a quick 45 minutes a couple of lunch hours a week. No health and safety hindrances to worry about in those days!

Tell us about the Schools Competition at Whitgift and the school matches in your senior schooldays

In 1955, in the Doubles, Stan and I were favourites. In the final we played Whitgift, who we had beaten comfortably at home in a school match, but victory in the final on their

home courts was not to be, although I still maintain that in reality we won, as we scored more points than them, losing 12-10, 4-11, 12-10.

I do remember one particular schools fixture against Forest School where St. D's won by 180 points to 8!

The other thing that sticks in my mind was first meeting Alastair Mackenzie when we played the RFA. He won a very tense singles battle 15-13. He then spent the next 50 years reminding me that he did beat me ONCE in his playing career!

What do you remember of your time at Loughborough?

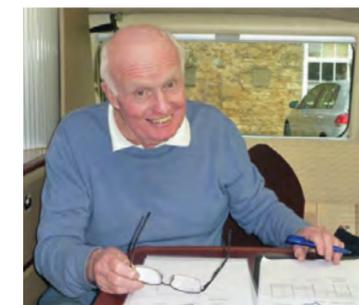
I started at Loughborough Training College, as it then was, in September 1958 after completing National Service. Stan Holt also went there. By sheer chance we found a hall of residence that had what people thought was a squash court in an old barn, which it turned out to be a Fives court, with walls painted for squash.

A Loughborough Fives Club then became a possibility, and we quickly picked up a number of other players. For real Fives courts we travelled on Sundays to play at Denstone and set up fixtures with other universities – Leeds, Sheffield, Durham, Manchester and Cambridge, for example.

From these matches came the idea of a University Championship and in my final year, 1960/61, this came to fruition, with eight universities playing. The four-day event was held at Bedford, consisting of singles, doubles and a team championship. It was followed by dinner at The Swan Hotel.

Following that success I managed to get the event taken on by UAU, which then became BUSF, BUSA, BUCS etc. The rest is history.

You won 62 Open titles in your career - 13 singles and 49 doubles. They include one National Singles title and



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

The Committee in 1998

The organiser at work: Sherborne 2014

2017 The final Universities Championship!



Greater London Council was planning the sports development at Crystal Palace and two Fives courts were on offer – if we could guarantee to keep them full of players. In their wisdom, the Committee turned the offer down, saying that they could not guarantee to fill them!

Of course we could not guarantee that, but my pleas to say we would and get the courts were too 'dishonest' for the RFA. We would have had several years to plan before they were built and, if the RFA could get them used in the evenings, I could have filled many of the days since I took loads of boys by coach each week to use the swimming, squash, and other facilities. Fives could easily have fitted into this schedule. Loads of other GLC schools did the same. What a chance missed!

What are your thoughts on the future of Fives?

Many years ago, as President, I wrote an article saying that the game would never develop unless we got facilities in sports centres, in the eye of the public rather than behind the closed doors of schools and universities. Crystal Palace was that first opportunity and who knows what others might have followed if we had made a success of that.

The current Board is much more outward thinking. Modern events in sport and society have forced this change with more politics involved: lots of time spent on health and safety policies; links with the Eton Fives Association; and, of course the incorporation of the RFA Club, which has enhanced membership and finances. Plus, of course, Ladies' Fives!

Society has changed, with far fewer people continuing to play regular sports after school or university and Fives has changed with it, becoming almost totally championship orientated rather than club based. The

'STAN AND I USED TO SNATCH A QUICK 45 MINUTES OF FIVES A COUPLE OF LUNCH HOURS A WEEK'

Board must be very wary of this, in case clubs fade totally and the game becomes even more elitist than it was before.

I am pleased that the Board is now looking at the future, with a 'strategy', one really good point of which is the quest for cheaper court construction. The other major points are much more difficult: finding large sums of money to build such courts and persuading local authorities and governments etc. to offer sites for them, in the public domain, not in the school playground.

Unless we get into the 'big money game' somehow (maybe a Russian billionaire has a Fives-playing son somewhere?) and get more into the public eye, I fear that, with schools becoming more closed communities because of health and safety and safeguarding issues and with schools closing courts, the future is not exceptionally good for the long term. I hope I am wrong.

■ A full version can be found at www.rugbyfivesassociation.net



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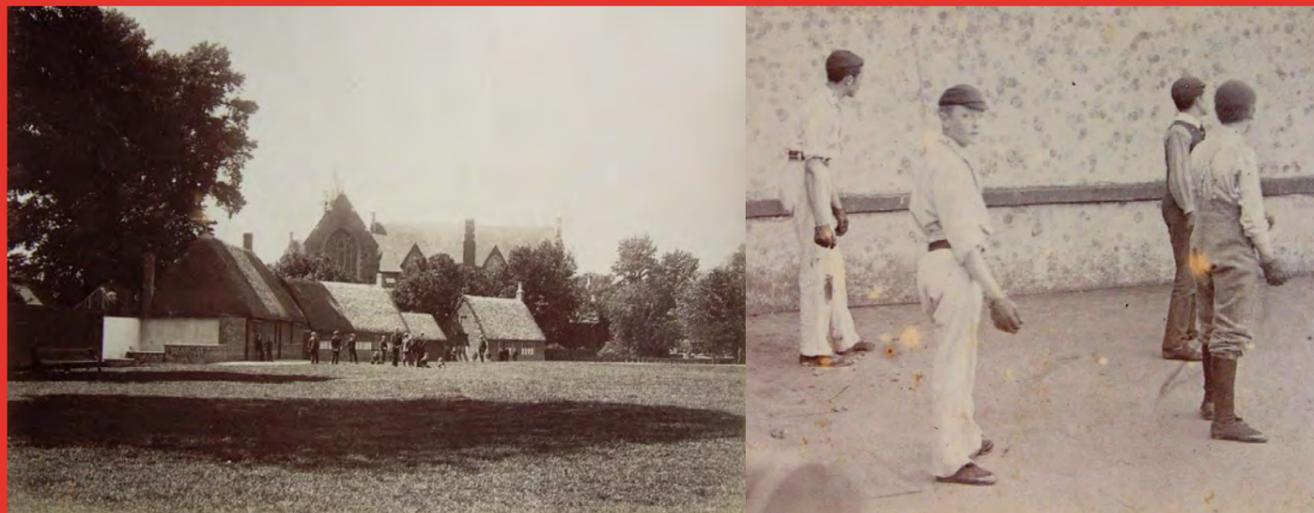
Playing in 1977

At the opening of the back courts at Alleyn's 1960

1955 St Dunstan's: Sharman, Williams, Rolfe, Wade, Holt, Gardner, Grender

The history of Fives at Bloxham School

Simon Batten takes a look through the archives of the school that can lay claim to being the first to lay down the rules of Fives



Bloxham has been playing Fives since shortly after the school's foundation by the Revd. Philip Reginald Egerton in 1860. Although Egerton introduced the strange form of football played at his old school, Winchester, to Bloxham, he did not bring Winchester's version of Fives with him. Bloxham plays Rugby Fives, which is the most commonly played variant of the game (probably because the court, a plain rectangle with no buttress or step, was easier to construct).

There have been three locations for the playing of Fives since the school was founded. The first court was located in the building known as Botany Bay (now the Art School). When built in 1868 the part downstairs was open to the air – the building was not enclosed until converted to a laboratory in 1898.

No photographs exist of this court, but it obviously had a ceiling, and the editor of The Bloxhamist observed in November 1880 that it

'THESE RULES ARE THOUGHT TO BE AMONG THE EARLIEST ANYWHERE IN EXISTENCE'

ABOVE LEFT: Fives Courts at Bloxham School 1890 with the Arkell court left

ABOVE RIGHT: Fives being played at Bloxham School 1891

“was hardly a success as a Fives Court, on account of the frequent interruptions from the Box-room frequenters, and also the limited height and the darkness of the place”. In 1879 a new court was built on the end of the Pavilion with the money left over from a memorial fund for the Matron, Mrs Arkell, who died in 1875 – for this reason it was known as the Arkell Fives Court. This court was open to the sky and had a back wall which was stepped down from right to left thanks to the slope of the land; it was in use until it collapsed in 1929.

EARLY RULEMAKERS

The earliest set of rules we have, set out in the Bloxhamist magazine in October 1881, make it clear that this was a Rugby Fives court. These rules are thought to be among the earliest anywhere in existence – indeed, they even may be the oldest. The rules of Rugby Fives would not be codified until the establishment of the RFA in the late 1920s, and even then some schools would persist with their own variations. The last vestige of the serving system described in the Bloxham rules – the ability of the server (as we would call him) to request the receiver to throw the ball up to him –

was only removed from the official Rules in 1995.

The game was run by the Fives Club, set up in 1875 with a termly subscription of 1 shilling, with annual singles and doubles tournaments (between 1881 and 1898 there was a bat fives tournament as well as hand fives) as well as matches between the dormitories (forerunners of the boarding houses).

Boys were fined 3d if caught playing in boots or in wet weather and 2d if caught sitting on the court wall, and a Lower School boy was exempted from compulsory football in order to sweep the court.

Perhaps the outstanding player of this period was EA Ostrehan, champion in 1888 at singles (winning the final 15-8, 15-6) and doubles with his partner Wilkinson (15-6, 15-6 in the final). Although undated, the photograph showing a game in progress on this court must date from 1891. Fives was played in the Lent Term, and of the four boys shown, William Stowell only arrived at Bloxham in September 1890 and John Selfe left the school in July 1891. The Bloxhamist shows that all four players – the other two were Arthur Rye and Charles Smith – were involved in the school doubles competition in 1891 but all with different partners (Smith reached the semi-finals). Selfe would go on to fight in both the Boer War

and Great War, Rye was wounded on the Western Front and Stowell ended up as a newspaper editor in Bulawayo.

FLUCTUATING INTEREST

In 1909 two new Fives courts were constructed next to the school's new Gymnasium (now the Music School), and they are still there to this day. They are Rugby Fives courts and are said to be on the large side with a high ceiling and were “airy and suitable for lobbing”, according to the Rugby Fives Association.

With three courts now in operation, the game received a new impetus, but interest fluctuated, with the Bloxhamist for 1922 commenting that “Fives as a sport is gradually taking its place among the School games, but enthusiasts are still few and far between”.

This was not uncommon – at Rugby School, the game was said to be “very popular” in 1868, but by 1883 a writer in the Meteor could claim that “not

BELOW: 1st VI 1945 (L-R): DC Thomas, HT Woolnough, JW Butler, RE Langhorne, JR Badham, TMO Morris

'BOYS WERE FINED 3D IF CAUGHT PLAYING IN BOOTS'





above 20 fellows in the School play Fives.” Bloxham’s first school match was played in 1909 – against an invitational team organised by a Dr Wilson of Hook Norton – and the first match against another school in 1922, when Warwick School were beaten 7-3. For the next five decades House matches provided the main focus of the season along with a small number of fixtures against the RFA (from 1951) and the likes of King’s School, Worcester and Eastbourne College.

ABOVE:
A 30ft x 19ft court; built in 1909

CHALLENGES AWAY FROM HOME

With away fixtures came the challenge of adjusting to strange courts very unlike Bloxham’s own large ones, especially when Winchester or Eton Fives courts were encountered. Against Eastbourne in 1943 the team reported that, “we were hindered greatly by the presence of a buttress in the middle of the back wall”.

Wartime shortages affected fixtures in 1944, when the Bloxhamist reported that “owing to the shortage of Fives balls, we have been unable to bring off any School matches this season.”

In the next decade the fixture list was expanded with the addition of Denstone College (1955) and Radley College (1956) and from 1948 the school sent players to the Public Schools tournament. The captain in 1954, CJ Hanbury, reached the third round at Whitgift and lost to the eventual champion.

Standards were raised in the late 1960s by the arrival of a new member of staff, Philip Howard, an Oxford Fives Blue, who announced his arrival by the introduction of circuit training for the players. It was under Howard’s successor as Master-in-charge of Fives that Bloxham reached the peak of its success as a fives-playing school. Colin Stewart, who himself represented Great Britain at Rugby Fives, presided over a strengthening of the fixture

‘BLOXHAM’S FIRST SCHOOL MATCH WAS PLAYED IN 1909’

list, which by the mid-1970s included three of the strongest schools in the country – Denstone, St. Dunstan’s College and Bedford Modern School.

SEVENTIES SUCCESS

The peak of Bloxham’s success was reached in 1976, when the 1st IV went unbeaten through a season of 13 fixtures against schools as far afield as Blundell’s, Merchant Taylors’ and Sherborne. For the first time, success was achieved on an individual level, with as many as eight Bloxham players heading to Whitgift or St Paul’s each year for the annual schools championships.

In 1975 David Bell and Stuart Smart reached the quarter-finals of the Nationals at Colts (Under 16) level, with Jolyon Griffiths getting to the semi-finals in 1977. The next year Ian Davenport (later to become Headmaster of another illustrious Fives school, Blundell’s) reached the quarter-finals of both the senior doubles (with Griffiths) and singles at the Nationals, as did Mike Thompson in the Colts singles.

Griffiths’ finest hour came in 1979, when he reached the semi-finals of the senior singles; in what the RFA described as “the outstanding match of the whole week”, he came back from 6-10 in the first game to win it 12-10 and lead 6-2 in the second, before Kemp of St Paul’s rallied to win 10-12, 11-7, 11-1 (Kemp would go on to win the final).

The 1979 1st IV won eight out of nine fixtures and in 1982 Bloxham still had a strong fixture list against the likes of Loretto and Denstone, but the first warning signs can be detected in Stewart’s report in the 1983 Bloxhamist, which lamented the unavailability of many of the better players due to hockey commitments.

By 1986 he was admitting that “Fives is rather in the doldrums at present. This is perhaps more a reflection of the strength of the hockey than the weakness of Fives, for there is a lot of good Fives played and when hockey players are available the junior teams, in particular, are quite strong”.

BELOW:
Iain de Weymarn wins the President’s Cup 2003



INDIVIDUAL TALENT

Bloxham continued to produce some talented individuals. Wahab Adejumo won the Plate at the 1990 National Schools Championships and reached the quarter-finals of the main competition the following year, while Matthias Lentz, surely Luxembourg’s leading exponent of the game, reached two finals in 2000. Although the 1999 side went without a win in seven matches,



the captain, Tor Humpherston, enjoyed excellent singles wins in the fixtures against Blundell’s and St Paul’s. The outstanding player of recent years was probably Iain de Weymarn (St John’s College, Cambridge), a Blue in Rugby Fives in 1999 and 2000.

ABOVE:
The 2000 1st IV, captained by Matthias Lentz

MODERN RESURGENCE

The 1996 Bloxhamist identified the central problem for a small school with limited numbers of players: “we do have difficulty in putting out competitive teams at all levels as other sports make increasing demands on the talent available”.

Following the retirement of Colin Stewart in 2012 after a remarkable 41 years of teaching Economics and running Bloxham Fives, the last few years have seen something of a resurgence of interest in the game with as many as 104 pupils, a quarter of the school, playing the game at some point in the week in 2017, the bulk of them opting for Fives as an activity rather than a games option.

Faced with the fact that the best seniors tended also to be in demand as hockey and rugby sevens players, the decision was taken to rebuild from the bottom up. As a result, the focus was on boys and girls in the youngest years. Plans were also made to change the fixture day for minor sports – always a key issue in a school with limited playing resources – as well as to renovate the courts, which are in need of some TLC. The goal is to get a proper list of home and away fixtures up and running once more.

Bloxham has been fortunate to secure good fixtures against the likes of Malvern, Blundell’s and Pilgrims’ in recent years, and an important step was taken in 2017 with a promising group of Under

‘PLANS WERE MADE TO RENOVATE THE COURTS, WHICH ARE IN NEED OF TLC’

13 players attending the National Schools for the first time. Another very hopeful sign has been the recruitment of Bertie Matthew onto the staff from Blundell’s.

The game of Fives, one of the most historic and iconic of the games given to the world by the Victorian public school, continues to be an important part of Bloxham School life over 150 years after it was first played on the site.

■ A fully illustrated version of this history, with the Bloxham Fives Rules, can be found on the RFA website at rugbyfivesassociation.net

BELOW:
Simon Batten and Colin Stewart on court July 2018



RFA Club Report

Hamish Buchanan reports on the RFA Club matches in the 2017-18 season



It's been a more difficult year for the Club after last year's bumper harvest. Nevertheless, there were 28 matches completed and as usual some exciting contests, with four matches decided by just two points.

In fact it was a very successful year if measured by a ratio of 22 wins against five losses and one tie, but this is not the overriding aim. Those close matches are the goal of the experienced match manager, keeping everyone engaged in a match that turns on the smallest of margins.

Tony Hamilton's Tonbridge IV beat their age record of last year with a new mean of 70.1 years. Remarkable, although even more amazingly they keep increasing the victory margin!

The annual RFA v Winchester FA match was not as close as some previous years, with the home team missing a few of their top players and the RFA fielding one of their strongest line-ups. Nevertheless, the match went down to the last round of doubles and the quality of Winchester Fives on display was of the highest order.

This year was the first time that the President's Cup could not be played at Merchant Taylors'. The competition moved to St. Paul's, which proved rather prescient as a heavy band of snow fell and would have led to many a player arriving late at Sandy Lodge Lane. As it happened the only seriously late player was the organiser, Gareth Price, caught in the snow on the M1. The other 31 players would not have noticed his absence, such was the efficiency of stand-in organisers Dolby, Buchanan and King, apart from the disastrous fact that the buffet was in the boot of Gareth's car. So, when he arrived shortly after lunchtime the largest cheer of the day was heard and there have never been so many volunteers to help unload the organiser's car.

Many thanks to all the match managers and we look forward to more exciting, competitive and inspiring Fives next year.



The RFA and the Old Bradfieldians

RFA CLUB RESULTS 2017-18

Opposition	Manager	Other players	Result
Alleyn's School	A.Hanton	T.Chapman, N.Geere, R.Sulkin	Win
Alleyn Old Boys	T.Hebblethwaite*	J.Aquilina, A.Bowden, W.Ellison, J.Heath, H.Hunter, J.Tilston	Win
Bedford School	C.Davey	W.Ali, D.Sorensen, J.Wood	Win
British Universities	H.Buchanan	J.Aquilina, C.Brooks, W.Ellison, D.Grant, D.Tristao	Win
Cambridge 1	A.Pringle*	D.Ali, R.Christie, J.Pinder, J.Sumner	Win
Cambridge 2	R.Dolby*	R.Christie, S.Kirby, K.Mahmood, R.Raheem, V.Singh, J.Sumner	Win
Christ's Hospital	E.Hatton	S.O'Boyle, S.Thomson, S.Walsh	Win
Derby Moor	C.Davey	R.Christie, B.Kirk, M.Kiteley	Win
Durham	R.Sandie	P.Leggett, J.McIntyre, M.Patterson	Win
Eastbourne College	A.Hamilton	A.Newton, M.Hole, P.Ross	Win
Executioners	H.Buchanan	J.Heath, E.Ronan, R.Sulkin	Win
Jesters Strawson	R.Warner	Revolving cast of several	Tie
Jesters	W.Ellison	H.Buchanan, E.Carr, T.Chapman, J.Heath, H.Jefferies	Win
OBMs	B.Kirk	A.Goodwin, L.Keates, S.Kirby	Win
Old Blundellians	A.Steel	D.Hill, T.Lewis, J.Wren	Loss
Old Bradfieldians	A.Pringle	R.Bridge, B.Chua, G.Matthews	Loss
Old Paulines	T.Webster*	O.Arnold, B.Beltrami, G.Price, T.Watkinson	Loss
Old Tonbridgians	A.George	H.Buchanan, H.Hunter, R.Sulkin	Win
Oundle School	A.Smith	T.Hoskins, N.Smith, J.Sumner	Win
Radley College	D.Neale	C.Blakeley, R.Don, N.Geere	Win
St. Paul's School	E.Malone	J.Malde, S.Roberts, L.Rowland	Win
Sedbergh School	R.Guthrie	J.Annett, P.Guthrie, A.Williamson	Win
Sherborne School & Staff	A.Passey*	B.Boag, E.Clarke, W.Gunyon, D.Shepherd	Loss
Tonbridge School	A.Hamilton	B.Atkinson, S.Beal, P.Ross	Win
UCS Old Boys	J.Ensor	B.Baral, K.Kantaria, B.Lane	Win
West of England	E.Carr	A.George, N.Geere, S.Lewis	Loss
White Rose Club	R.Christie	S.Kirby, B.Kirk, A.Wheatley	Win
Winchester FA	D.Tristao	O.Arnold, B.Beltrami, H.Buchanan, E.Kay, T.Parker, G.Price, S.Russell	Win

*denotes non-playing manager

Around the clubs in 2017-18

The past season, as reported by the many Fives clubs around the country

ALLEYN OLD BOYS

Hamish Buchanan reports: It has been a successful year for the AOB club regulars in tournaments, with Tim Hebblethwaite winning the South East doubles (with Nick Woolfenden) while in the President's Cup father and son Howard and Gwydion Wiseman brought home the T-Pot and the President's Cup respectively. Gwydion was partnered by AOB Club regular James Tilston, who has two wins from two appearances in the Cup; meanwhile Gwydion is the youngest ever winner at just 14 years of age.

A team mixing youth, in the shape of Ben Kirwan and Billy Rentoul, with the experience of Hamish Buchanan made it to the semi-final of the Owers Trophy, where they lost to an Old Bradfieldian side that also contained two Tuesday night regulars.



Tim Hebblethwaite (r) wins the SE Doubles 2017

Tuesday evenings are popular throughout the year, with numbers averaging a dozen, while Sunday mornings attract the more dedicated crowd, which often results in singles being the only option.

BRISTOL UNIVERSITY

Ollie Arnold reports: Bristol University players have enjoyed a successful season, including an entry of five for BUSF in November, consistently high performances in the Open tournaments, and triumphs in the Ladies' U23s, Mixed Winchester Doubles and National Singles Plate.

Our team of Arnold, Parker, Watkinson, Ackland and Ed Aldous performed well at BUSF, with last 16 and quarter-final losses in the singles, and two pairs in the doubles semis. Unfortunately both our pairs lost to overall winners Kay and Shaw, with Watkinson and Ackland losing out in a tight semi, and Arnold and Parker once again finishing as runners-up.

There was similar success at the U25s. In the singles, Watkinson won the Plate, Parker lost to Shaw in a three-game quarter-final, and Arnold made the semis, having beaten Dave Butler. In doubles, all three of the team made the semis, though unfortunately Arnold (playing with Ben Beltrami) lost the final to Kay and Shaw.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

Matt Shaw reports: CURFC have had a great season and it's been an honour to serve as captain. This year saw a highly competitive men's Varsity Match which went narrowly to the dark blues.

Past versus Present was also a close contest, with promising performances from Jeremy Manger and Charlie Mabbutt, but the win went to the Past. In the Ladies' Varsity Match, Cambridge won convincingly 181-33 led by captain Lottie Simpson and with a top performance by Helena Tunks. It's been a fantastic year for the ladies, with Cassi Henderson ranked 18th, winning the Ladies Nationals Singles Plate, and Holly Nugent climbing the rankings to 21st.

The Kay and Shaw partnership prospered, winning the British Universities and the U25s, where Kay also picked up both singles titles. Ed ended the year ranked 2nd nationally – a brilliant achievement. Also representing the light blues were Andrew Boyd, Ed Pyman, Laurence Cook and Jeremy Manger. Recruitment has gone well this year, with four novices joining: Allan McPherson, Tim Bennett, Cat Bar and Helena Tunks. The ranks of the Sparrows was also filled with players from school including Ashwin Ahuja, Ben Yass, Ollie Smart and Alex Spencer.



Kay and Shaw - Universities champions once more

CITY OF DURHAM

Tom Wakelam reports: We have had a brilliant inaugural year in Durham. The club has grown quickly to well over 20 members, with a waiting list now in place for our junior section, and expansion plans in the offing for next season. We have travelled to compete at a number of tournaments and have achieved some success, including both Plates at the National U14s.

We are also proud that in our first year we have linked with the university club to provide half of the record-breaking draw at the North of England Open in February.

Our relationship with the university has been key, and we are very grateful with their help in working with us to get going. As part of providing outreach for their summer camps and residential trips, we have provided taster sessions to over 100 new Fives players.

A Level 1 course is also planned to increase the number of coaches, with members of the university involved to raise the profile of the sport in the Durham community.



"We're in the medals!"

Finally plans are being drawn up for the provision of two new courts, possibly through the conversion of our adjacent squash courts. We hope this will allow us to host more tournaments in Durham and significantly increase the number of players here. We look forward to more trips away next season and would encourage any willing players to get in touch and visit!

DURHAM UNIVERSITY

Alex Wordley reports: Another year has come and gone for DURVSc with little success, but the famous spirit of the club has been maintained nonetheless. Having lost the elite cohort of Blackaby, McCahon, Hutt and Adam Wordley, the club found itself looking to the freshers for success. In Archie Taylor, John Sellar and Joe Savage we found some true champions, who served to embody the club, both on and off the court.

The season began with a trip to Giggleswick, which was frankly a disaster; the Durham boys failed to record a single win and captain Wordley picked up an arm injury which would see him out of action until BUSE. That tournament was a real pilgrimage, as Team Durham once more let the club down by failing to provide transport. After a makeshift train journey, success was once more limited. However, Savage and Alex Wordley put in an impressive Plate doubles run all the way to the semis

before eventually losing to Oxford.

The club's next venture was the Edinburgh tour, which proved to be a valuable opportunity for the boys to extend their proud reputation in a variety of ways as former Durham captain Dave Butler hosted the palatinate-adorning lads well.

Back at Durham, the club enjoyed their most successful weekend of the year at the North of England Open, with Sellar and Taylor winning the doubles Plate and Wordley reaching the singles Plate final.

All in all, it's been another enjoyable year of mediocrity. What the boys may have lacked on court has certainly been made up for with their contributions off it. As the year comes to an end we must say farewell to the club's social secretary Ben Rich, who graduates this summer, and to club captain Alex Wordley, who is about to embark on his year abroad. The club looks forward to welcoming back Christian Blackaby who returns from Canada to lead as captain next year.

DERBY MOOR

Bob Dolby reports: The Club continues to play twice a week, with Tuesday as an all-ability session and a smaller, more competitive group on Thursdays. Younger players come and go, depending on their circumstances, while the core of Stuart Kirby, Brian Kirk and Richard Christie keep things ticking over, often cajoling members into travelling to tournaments, where there is frequently success to be had in the Plate competitions. Anthony Goodwin, Ashley Hill, Rob Whitehorn and Chris Davey have all posed for the camera with silverware at some point this year. We also rustle up an occasional IV for a match at Cambridge, Bedford, Rugby or Malvern. In the Vintage Championships Stuart won doubles gold and silver in the singles, while Brian and Richard took doubles silver. The highlight of the season is the Derby Moor Invitation Doubles, where players from Durham, Bedford, London, Halifax and the Deep West joined us under the new LED lights. This year Goodwin and Sandie beat Geere and Keates in the main final, while two of our schoolboys played the Plate final in the company of Hamish Buchanan and Neil Roberts. As ever Stuart and Lewis run the Saturday and Sunday Junior clubs, seeking to bring on players who will keep up our tradition of participating in Fives at all levels from U13 to Vintage.



Kirk and Christie win Vintage Doubles silver

EASTBOURNE CLUB

Spencer Beal reports: Eastbourne College Fives Club continues to flourish. We play every Tuesday evening and only an England World Cup match (or similar) ever gets in our way! The three courts have been playing particularly well recently; the drier, warmer weather makes for a fast playing surface and a good even bounce, and the standard of play continues to improve, even though some of us are getting slower with the years. Numbers are steady and players are even travelling from Brighton. On one occasion we had more players (14) than we had court space for, although our usual turnout is six to eight. Tony Hamilton and Spencer Beal flew the flag for the club by retaining their National Masters Doubles title and this success has sparked interest in an Eastbourne pair entering next year's Veterans Championships – watch this space!



The masters of the Masters with RFA President

EXECUTIONERS CLUB

Andy Pringle reports: It's been a rather mixed season: although we've had plenty of players, only a few have been able to commit to playing every week. Just as last year, the modern Fives player's worst enemy – work – was often to blame. Sadly, injuries also put paid to several regulars. This meant we weren't able to complete either our annual singles or doubles tournaments.

However, despite these challenges, we always had a good turn-out on a Wednesday, with stalwarts like Pringle, Bridge, Davies and Julius often joined by the likes of Cranstoun, Peterson, Matthews and

EXETER CLUB

Alexandra Steel reports: Once again, the Club has had a busy and successful year with two tours within a month of each other at the beginning of the year. The first took us to Malvern for a fantastic tri-tournament with teams from Exeter, Derby Moor and Malvern.

A month later our second tour saw a small contingent of players meeting in Bristol for a few games of Real Tennis. Expertly taught by resident coach Ben, we had a great introduction to the sport. We then hightailed it to Marlborough for some excellent games against the Marlborough team, most notably, though, the two Alexes winning a game against number one pair Kiggell and Gordon-Smith – a great battle but tremendous fun. A thoroughly enjoyable tour – many thanks to Jim Hughes and the Marlborough Club for organising and allowing us to visit again.

I should also mention Tim Lewis and Stuart Watson and their valiant effort in attempting to complete their Retirement Tour. Many competitions have been played and their presence on court has been enjoyed and heard by many people.

Maddy Raynor and Alexandra Steel have played with even more power, finesse and passion this year. They managed to bring home two trophies, winning the Ladies National Doubles and the Ladies Winchester Doubles, with Maddy winning her first singles title in Winchester Fives.



Hot work at St Paul's!

Warner. We were also regularly visited by Ben Chua and some fellow students.

Reaching the Wood Cup semi-finals was a highlight. Our squad of Bridge, Chai, Hale and Webster scored a narrow quarter-final win over the Old



Exeter trying their hand at Real Tennis

JESTERS CLUB

Charlie Brooks reports: Once again, we've come to the end of a very enjoyable Jesters season. This was thanks to the usual mixture of close matches, a diverse age range and a Jesterly spirit. The Strawson match, led nobly by Dick Warner, encapsulated this perfectly – the team contained the obligatory mixture of youth and experience to produce a tight result, with a great dinner afterwards.

With last season being the final 'Akerman' Edinburgh Tour, this year was to be something of an unknown. Would there be a dip in numbers, a reduction in cajoling, fewer matches? Not a chance – David Butler and Ben Hale skilfully stepped up and quelled all nervousness. The schools, universities and clubs were all treated to the customary Jesterliness throughout. Most impressively, they managed to attract a record touring party of 38 and continued the increase in the number of female players.

Blues; and although they couldn't then summon the strength to challenge the Paulines, it was still our best performance for years.

We also had some excellent matches during the season – taking on the Old Bradfieldians, the RFA, the Jesters and Oxford University.

Andy Pringle was the club's most successful tournament player: Plate winner at the South East Open, Silver in the Mixed Doubles and Gold again in the Veterans Doubles title. However, in a break from usual practice, Guy Matthews failed to win anything at the President's Cup. Instead, Dick Warner upheld the club's fine tradition in the event,

MALVERN TOWN

Chris Thomas reports: This has been a relatively quiet year with Peter Gray away in Munich. The club enjoyed hosting a triangular tournament in February, with Exeter and Derby Moor joining a Malvern Team of Thomas, Coffey, Tudor, Bruce and Woodward. A lengthy four hours of Fives was played, some of that time spent mopping the courts, and it was pleasing that recent OM Andrew Tudor and current Malvernian Matt Bruce were the most successful pair on the day. Sadly an OM/Jesters/College game had to be called off due to flooded and sweating courts. With the courts currently closed for refurbishment, we are hoping for a more productive season next year.

OLD BEDFORD MODERNIANS

Mark Kiteley reports: The OBM club, which meets on a Monday night, is made up of some who are getting a bit long in the tooth, some who are very young and have been until this season accompanied by a parent and some who never went to Bedford Modern School. We are fortunate also in having a few of our transient members returning from university for a game in the holidays, which all makes for an

enjoyable evening of a couple of hours of mixed ability Fives. If nothing else the OBM club keeps the ethos of what Fives and the game's fraternity is all about.

However, on the playing front we also have a few members who enter various competitions – Kiteley in the President's Cup, Kiteley and Atkinson in the Vintage, where Atkinson will insist on playing in the singles in the morning and wearing himself out for the doubles, whilst at the other end of the spectrum the Sumners have won the Schoolgirls U16 Singles (Katie) and the Midlands Schools Singles (Joe) and have competed with honour in the Winchester Mixed Doubles.

Also, Howard French, Chris Ryan, Stuart Endersby, Angus Gale as well as Kiteley and Atkinson do rock up for the odd Jesters/RFA match, or whoever we are told to play for, usually against Derby Moor or Bedford School.

A quick shout to the school for continuing to support Fives and actually planning to make some investment in the sport.

OLD BLUNDELLIANS

Alex Rew reports: Our main success in national competitions came from Alexandra Steel and Maddie Raynor. As a pair they had a fantastic year,

firstly winning the Ladies National Doubles, beating the holders in two straight games in the final. They went on to win the Ladies Winchester Fives Doubles and, not satisfied with this, they romped away from the field in the Singles and played each other in the final, which Maddie won.

Further success for an Old Blundellian lady came in the Reichwald Cup, our event where Old Blundellians pair up with current Blundellians and compete for the cup in an extraordinary afternoon of Fives. In the main event Melanie Whitehead paired up with James Maclaurin to win, beating George Gibbs and Christian Brooks in the final.

The OBs like to maintain a close involvement with the school and in 2018 Alex Rew and Daniel Hill have both claimed their Level 1 Coaching awards, as did school leaver Addie Chai. We play on a Wednesday evening from 6pm and all are welcome. We are delighted to see the boys take advantage of this: a regular attendee has been Addie Chai, who has performed extremely well on the school circuit this year. James Maclaurin has also played frequently with us and became the first Blundellian to win the National Schools Singles Plate.



Club champions Harry and Sam

OLD PAULINES

Julian Aquilina reports: Starting with the good news, Old Paulines have continued to dominate at open tournaments, ending the season with seven of the top 10 players in both singles and doubles.

Right at the top, two OPs practically swept the singles board. Dan Tristao won six of the nine open tournaments, including his third National Singles title, with Ed Kay winning in London and Yorkshire. Ed also picked up his third successive singles victory in the student championships, partnering Matt Shaw to success in the doubles. Both feats were repeated three months later at the U25s. In doubles, six of the seven open tournaments featured at least one OP winner, and further success came in the President's Cup, where James Tilston won his second title in as many attempts.

However, in club competitions the season was a disappointment. We failed to produce a team for the Owers Trophy, bringing to an end a seven-year stretch holding the title, and we fell short in the Wood Cup final, edged out by a deserving Wessex. Nor did our internal handicap singles tournament, the Cunis Cup, take place.

Despite these setbacks we managed to cap off the club's season with an excellent OP President's Cup doubles tournament, in which current Pauline Harry Jackson and self-proclaimed 'next gen' star Sam Russell emerged victorious.

We encourage players of all standards to join our Thursday evening sessions.

OLD TONBRIDGIANS

Neil Arnott reports: We have continued to meet weekly almost without exception, as we collectively enjoy the game and the camaraderie that ensues. We have been most fortunate to have use of the courts, which are made freely available to us by the school.

We are a consistent group of about 10 and often have up to eight on a given evening with some of us practising our skills with 'Bat Fives', especially one of our number who is a previous Kent Champion Squash player.

Sadly, we have rather fewer young members of late, despite every encouragement, although they can sometimes be persuaded to play in fixtures. On which note, we recorded a narrow loss to a strong RFA side and a narrow defeat by the School team – giving them a wonderful season of unbroken victories.



A selection of Old Tonbridgians

Various members played in National competitions, including Ian Jackson, Martin Wilkinson and Rupert Mathieu, with varying success. Michael Studdard and Neil Arnott had an excellent day of Winchester Fives starting at Bradfield and ending at Winchester.

Anyone interested is welcome to join us on a Tuesday night – they might even be selected to play in fixtures.

OLD WHITGIFTIANS

Nick Woolfenden reports: This year's newly refurbished school courts saw plenty of action with the Old Whitgiftian Club. Regular social sessions have been well attended, with the welcome addition of some recent leavers and senior schoolboys. We also had a highly enjoyable South West tour and seen some good performances nationally.

We started the year with the courts out of action, but after a much needed refurbishment we are enjoying the weather-tight well-lit courts, with just some final decorating to go. We got off to a good start in the Owers Trophy with our 'youth and experience' team of Tony Hamilton, Jon Higgins and schoolboy Cameron Low winning the Plate – much to the delight of visiting OW Tony Owers.

We played plentiful social Fives, involving recent leavers and current schoolboys and including mix-n-match sessions to encourage the latter to continue playing once they leave school. A very enjoyable South West tour with a record-breaking 15 players and supporters involved matches at Sherborne, Blundell's and Clifton, followed (and sometimes

preceded!) by great socialising.

On the national scene Nick Woolfenden won the SE Open Doubles with Old Bradfieldian Tim Hebblethwaite and took the singles Plate against fellow OW Tony Hamilton. Tony and Spencer Beal successfully defended the National Masters Doubles in April, while recent OW Sarath Prakash partnered Cameron Low in the National Doubles, putting in strong performances.

We hope to establish a fuller fixture list in the coming season. Meanwhile we play regularly on Thursday evenings and players of all standards are very welcome. If you'd like more information, please contact nickw5s@hotmail.com.



Old Whits versus the School – all smiles

MARLBOROUGH TOWN

Tom Kiggell reports: While nothing this season could quite match the exoticism of last year's Kenya tour, the Fab Four African tourists (Tim Brown, Paul Folland, John Sanders and Tom Hillman) were all in vigorous action on home turf in 2017-18, playing just as well in Wiltshire as they had done on the equator. In the Vintage, John and Tom played magnificently to cement their standing in the top five pairs in the country. But it was in the Vets where the exciting talent blossomed – Leslie Jenkinson and Gary Sharp played startlingly brilliant Fives to make the last four of the main competition, and Bob Davison and Harvey Bishop blazed their way to a landmark victory in the plate doubles – the first silverware to be won by a home-grown Marlborough



Vets silver for Tom and Jim

pair. Many others will surely follow. Talking of talent, who can deny that the superb double triumph of College girls Ibbey and Anna in the schoolgirls Nationals owes much to what they learnt about the game from us sweaty old geezers on club night? Or was it the other way around?

The College won back the Town-Gown trophy, leaving a sad hole on the

shelf behind the bar in the pub.

Jim Hughes hit the ball more sweetly than anyone else, again. He carried his partner close to victory in the Vets doubles, but they ultimately had to settle for the silver medals. Giles Gordon-Smith moved across the border and will hopefully energize the Fives scene in Berkshire just as he has done here. He'll be much missed. Now he's gone, we can play the club singles trophy.

We were honoured to be visited once again by the touring Exeter Club and the North Oxford Club – two great occasions. In the noble spirit of selfless research on behalf of future visitors, we went to the Lamb for our Christmas knees-up. Verdict: highly recommended. We'd be delighted to return there with anyone else wishing to visit Marlborough for a game.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY

Sid Bhushan reports: This year, Rugby Fives at Oxford has been at its strongest for many years with lots of competition for places in the Men's squad. It was also the first year a proper training plan was implemented for the year with the Ladies' squad. In the VIII, the Varsity Match was won for the first time in seven years against a strong Cambridge side. The Oxford Beavers defended their Iron Fist, while the ladies put on a far better showing than last year. The top end also attended the BUSF tournament, with Bhushan and Kirwan reaching the quarter-finals, while the squad took six players to the National U25s. Brubert, Kirwan and Petrenco achieved Half Blues this year.

A special mention must go to Owen, Petrenco and Haseldine for their work as secretary, treasurer and ladies' captain respectively. I'm confident McGee, Kirwan, Whitham, Kengeter, Longden and Thornhill will step up to continue the club's success. Most of all, however, the squad owes a massive thank you to the Past, who provided ample support throughout the season and powered up the players at Past v. Present a week before Varsity.

While sad to be losing many loyal servants OURFvC are looking forward to next season. We envisage Ladies Fives will go from strength to strength.

WEST OF ENGLAND CLUB

Lionel Lawson reports: The Club has enjoyed a successful season. Numbers for our weekly Wednesday nights have been consistent, with the majority of our 22 members putting in reasonably frequent appearances. We had four fixtures – versus the RFA, Winchester College, UCS Old Boys and Old



West of England win the Winchester Mixed Doubles

WESSEX CLUB

Harry Akerman reports: Tuesday nights have been slightly quieter in the Wykeham Arms this season as this was the year when we realised at Wessex that we are not as young as we once were! We sadly lost regular members for large parts of the season with injuries to feet, knees, hips, hand, heart, eyes and brain. Fingers crossed for a healthier season next year.

Despite this we had some excellent Fives, with the club well represented in the WFA vs RFA match and the annual Jesters trip to Edinburgh. The highlight, though, was winning back the Wood Cup thanks to our squad of Will Ellison, Dave Butler, Ed Hawke, James Birch, Giles Munn and Ian Mettam. For those interested in the Wessex version (well, Dave Butler's version!) of the events please see www.wessexfivesclub.org.uk/news

We also were lucky enough to have the strong Winchester College boys continue to join us and were

Whitgiftians – all won but, more importantly, all enjoyable.

Our Christmas Doubles competition saw veteran player Neil Butterfield team up with student Tom Watkinson to clinch the coveted trophy. We entered the Wood Cup where, having lost the quarter-final against a very strong Wessex side, Ollie Arnold, Inigo Ackland, Kevin Brice and Andrew Lawson went on to win the Plate against the Old Blues.

The Club Singles competition was contested by our four University All Stars – Ollie, Inigo, Tom and Theo Parker, with Theo winning the Fuller Cup by a narrow margin from Ollie. Kevin Brice won the Singles Plate against Andy Mosse.

Congratulations are due to Louise Mathias and Ollie, who carried off the Winchester Mixed Doubles.

Sadly we have to report that there are now storm clouds gathering regarding the use of the courts, with Clifton College presently not offering Fives as a sport and expressing an urgent need for them. The Club and the RFA are doing all they can to keep a foothold for Fives in the future.



The winners of the Letchworth Bowl

delighted to see Tom Kidner win the National Schools singles again and also the doubles with his partner Kieran Mackison, We look forward to watching both of them climbing up the rankings. We welcomed a few players this year, including the left-handed, hard-hitting Chris Jack, who won the end of season Letchworth Bowl with Giles Munn.

Finally, a note of thanks to our patient treasurer, George Bowyer, who not only keeps us solvent but has an unobtrusive way of extracting contributions twice a year!

WHITE ROSE CLUB

John Hawke reports: With the loss of the use of the Halifax courts there has been very little activity in the club. Unfortunately the ban on the use of the courts during rental negotiations meant that some members found other things to do, reducing our ability to pay the rent even further. There is hope that an initiative to get a couple of local schools using the courts may prevent them from becoming unusable and might lead to a revival of the club.

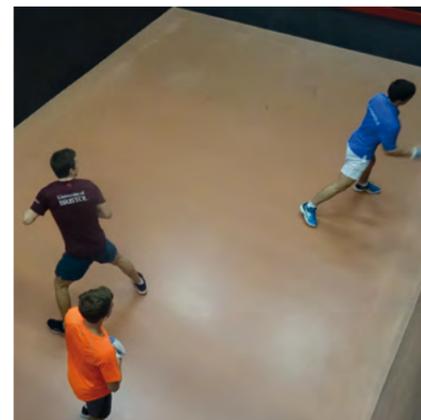
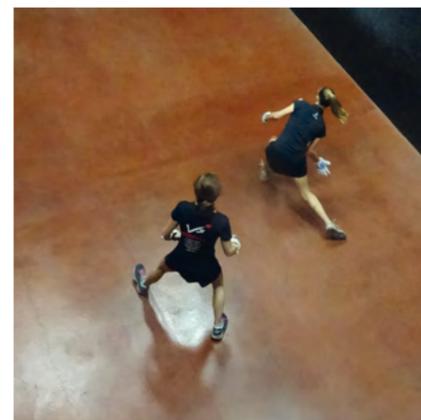
In the meantime there have been a few forays to Giggleswick for an evening's play. The school are very generous in allowing us use of their courts.

We also managed to run, and take part in, another successful Yorkshire Open tournament, albeit half held in Lancashire (oh, the shame!) due to inclement conditions at Giggleswick.

Enthusiasm from the few has kept our presence at various tournaments, mainly those for the aged and, in some cases, infirm. Unfortunately the opposition 45 and 55 year-olds get younger every year.

End-of-Season Rankings

The official UK Rugby Fives rankings, as compiled by **Dave Hebden**



ABOVE (top to bottom) Tom Watkinson at full stretch in Durham; Anna Laakkonen in action at St. Paul's; Matt Shaw serves at the U25s

SINGLES

Current	Previous	Name	Pts
1	1	D Tristao	96.8
2	3	E Kay	89.6
3	2	W Ellison	87.2
4	4	C Brooks	57.4
5	5	D Grant	52.5
6	7	D Butler	50.0
7	6	B Beltrami	49.8
8	8	J Aquilina	40.2
9	13	T Parker	31.8
10	11	R Murby	31.7
11	10	M Shaw	30.4
12	12	O Arnold	29.2
13	18	S Russell	25.1
14	21	J Tilston	20.5
15	20	B Jourdan	18.9
16	16	H Buchanan	18.6
17	19	H Jefferies	17.4
18	15	J Toop	16.7
19	31	E Hawke	16.0
20	30	A Boyd	15.8
21	-	T Kidner	14.7
22	24	A George	13.7
23	21	A Goodwin	13.5
24	35	J Minta	13.2
25	17	P Hanton	13.1
26	23	G Price	13.0
27	28	T Watkinson	12.2
28	26	R Whitehorn	12.1
29	25	A Rew	11.6
30	47	J Smith	10.8
31	27	G Munn	10.7
32	-	B Kirwan	10.1
33	14	T Maconie	10.0
-	-	N Woolfenden	10.0

Current	Previous	Name	Pts
35	33	I Ackland	9.5
36	32	C Burrows	8.8
37	29	N Roberts	8.2
38	-	J Hanton	7.8
39	62	D Fox	7.2
40	38	A Ainsworth	7.1
-	35	E Castillo Carbonell	7.1
-	48	A Hamilton	7.1
43	-	A McCreath	6.8
44	35	P Maddison	6.5
45	-	P Winzeler	6.2
46	44	M Kemp	6.1
47	-	L Keates	5.7
48	45	I Jackson	5.0
49	58	S Bhushan	4.8
-	45	F Thomas	4.8
51	38	C Blackaby	4.7
-	-	A Taylor	4.7
53	-	C Davey	4.5
54	50	B Chua	4.4
55	-	B Stephens	4.1
56	57	N Geere	3.9
-	-	J Savage	3.9
58	-	A Wordley	3.2
59	49	J Sinton	3.1
60	42	A Bowden	2.7
-	-	J Lee	2.7
62	53	J Bristow	2.6
63	-	C Barnett	2.4
-	-	A Jones	2.4
65	55	M Evans	1.8
-	55	O Quarry	1.8
67	40	E Hatton	1.7
68	-	G Marshall	1.4
69	59	H Mahajan	1.2

DOUBLES

Current	Previous	Name	Pts
1	1	W Ellison	94.3
2	3	D Tristao	90.6
3	4	D Grant	88.9
4	2	C Brooks	82.5
5	5	E Kay	78.7
6	6	M Shaw	75.5
7	9	D Butler	68.9
8	7	O Arnold	62.4
9	10	T Parker	51.5
10	8	B Beltrami	51.0
11	13	J Aquilina	49.0
12	12	G Price	46.9
13	11	H Buchanan	46.4
14	14	P Hanton	44.2
15	15	J Tilston	36.4
16	31	A Boyd	36.1
17	25	S Russell	33.9
18	24	H Jefferies	31.6
19	45	T Hebblethwaite	27.4
20	16	A George	24.5
-	-	N Woolfenden	24.5
22	30	R Murby	22.9
23	41	N Roberts	21.2
-	25	T Watkinson	21.2
25	-	S Fraser (Seb)	20.0
-	31	A McCreath	20.0
27	20	A Ainsworth	18.7
-	50	B Callaghan	18.7
-	39	R Whitehorn	18.7
30	19	T Dean	17.3
-	40	N Geere	17.3
-	17	J Hughes	17.3
-	17	A Rew	17.3
-	-	M Spillane	17.3
35	-	J Hanton	15.8
-	45	E Hawke	15.8
-	25	J Lee	15.8
38	49	I Ackland	15.0
-	34	A Goodwin	15.0
40	78	E Castillo Carbonell	14.1
-	-	A Hill	14.1
-	50	L Keates	14.1
-	-	B Kirwan	14.1
-	25	P Maddison	14.1
-	66	J Singh	14.1
46	23	E Hatton	13.2
-	31	B Jourdan	13.2
-	66	J Smith	13.2
49	66	C Davey	12.2

Current	Previous	Name	Pts
-	50	J Manger	12.2
-	21	R Perry	12.2
-	36	A Pringle	12.2
-	50	E Ronan	12.2
-	25	F Thomas	12.2
-	42	A Wheatley	12.2
-	-	P Winzeler	12.2
57	34	C Baxter	11.2
-	36	C Blackaby	11.2
-	63	S Kirby	11.2
-	63	A Wordley	11.2
61	66	S Bhushan	10.0
-	-	A Bowden	10.0
-	42	J Bristow	10.0
-	-	A Chai	10.0
-	50	A Hanton	10.0
-	50	B Kirk	10.0
-	-	T Lewis	10.0
-	-	J Lidiard	10.0
-	-	G Marshall	10.0
-	66	T McCahon	10.0
-	-	T McGuire	10.0
-	42	N Razumovskiy	10.0
-	-	R Sandie	10.0
-	-	J Sellar	10.0
-	-	A Taylor	10.0
-	-	S Watson	10.0
-	-	H Wiseman	10.0
78	-	R Christie	7.1
-	50	B Chua	7.1
-	-	G Darlington	7.1
-	50	W Enstone	7.1
-	50	D Hutt	7.1
-	50	I Jackson	7.1
-	50	K Kennerley	7.1
-	92	L Mathias	7.1
-	-	Z Moxon	7.1
-	-	T Owen	7.1
-	-	T Peel	7.1
-	-	E Pymon	7.1
-	-	J Sissons	7.1
-	-	S Small	7.1
-	66	T Wakelam	7.1
-	-	D Whitham	7.1
94	63	B Ashraf	5.0
-	66	H Mahajan	5.0
-	50	O Quarry	5.0
-	66	A Scott	5.0
-	66	D Sorensen	5.0

Current shows position following: End of Season, May 2018. Previous shows position following: Start Season

The Treasurer's Report

RFA Treasurer **David Parlbly** reports on a year of strong financial support for Fives



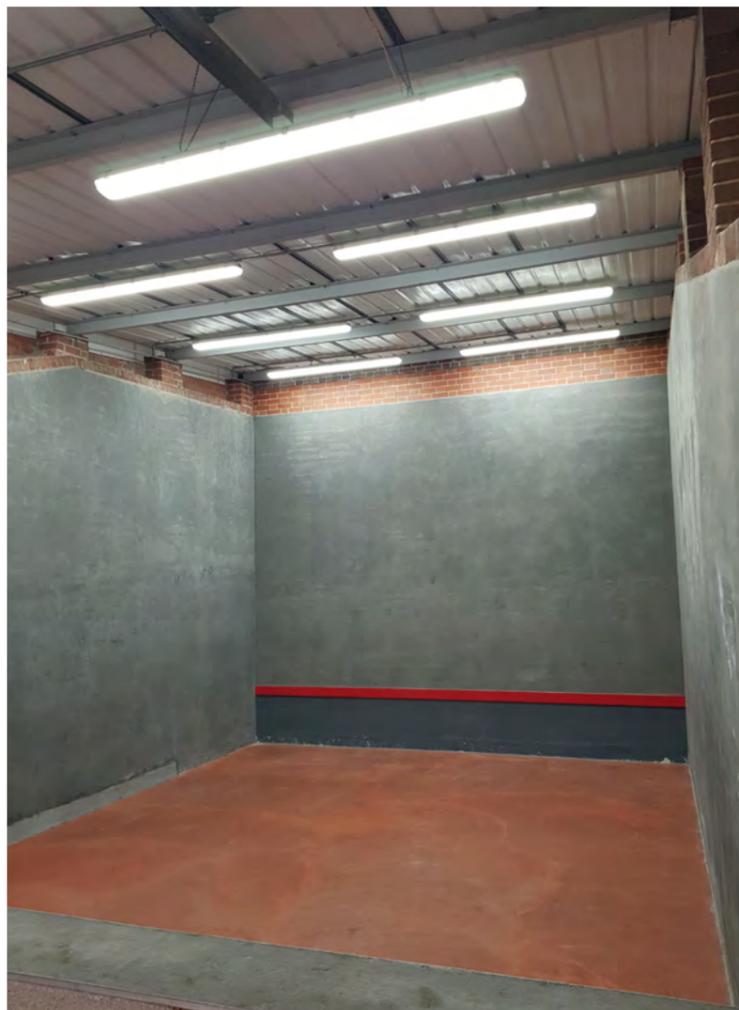
A lot can happen in 12 months and that is certainly the case with the RFA's finances. We have more than doubled our income this year to £43,000, largely through a most generous donation from someone who wishes to remain anonymous. We also increased our surplus by a factor of three to £28,000, through a mix of judicious financial management and the above said donor.

Four key initiatives have taken place that have had a major impact on our financial position and approach to supporting the game of Fives. As part of our strategy, the recent appointment of our Development Officer in the form of Gareth Price has meant that we are putting to good use the funds that have built up over the years. The aim is to encourage more people to start playing Fives throughout the country.

Secondly, the move to transferring the RFA Charitable Trust into the auspices of the RFA means we are building up a tidy fund to help schools and other court owners to effect repairs and improvements to courts. The establishing of a project team to focus on upgrading Scottish courts is a first for the RFA in that the funding provided will be conditional on the schools concerned being asked formally to commit to making Fives accessible to a wider section of the population and to employing at least one Fives coach.

Finally, we have set up a financial sub-committee for the Board that is looking at how the long term financial future of Fives can be secured. We are looking for people who have a background in finance to join the group, so if you're interested please let me know – the time commitment isn't onerous and you could make a big difference.

As part of our on-going activities we have helped around 40 students to participate in tournaments around the country, through assisting them with travel and accommodation costs, and provided gloves and balls to several clubs to help them recruit new players. We have also made a significant contribution to the installation of new lights at Derby Moor through the courts fund mentioned above. The 100 Club goes from strength to strength, with three draws taking place



The new lights at Derby Moor

'WE ARE BUILDING UP A TIDY FUND TO HELP EFFECT REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS'

and a total of some £500 paid out to the six lucky winners. Do please consider joining the 100 Club – it is easy to do, helps support the game and gives you the chance of winning some tax-free cash – see the website for details.

So, onwards and upwards for the 2018-19 season – play well and keep supporting the RFA!

2017-18 RESULTS ROUND-UP

Full details of all these events on www.rugbyfivesassociation.net

SOUTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

Singles: D.Tristao
Doubles: W.Ellison & D.Grant

SOUTH EAST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

Singles: D.Tristao
Doubles: T.Hebblethwaite & N.Woolfenden

LONDON OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

Singles: E.Kay
Doubles: W.Ellison & M.Shaw

OWERS TROPHY 2017

Old Wykehamists

THE LADY'S CUP 2017

F.Harrison & R.Warner

YORKSHIRE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

Singles: E.Kay
Doubles: E.Kay & D.Tristao

WEST OF ENGLAND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

Singles: D.Tristao
Doubles: W.Ellison & E.Kay

SCHOOLS WINCHESTER FIVES DOUBLES 2017

Winchester College
(T.Kidner & K.Mackison)

NATIONAL STUDENTS (BUSF) CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

Singles: E.Kay
Doubles: E.Kay & M.Shaw

LADIES U23 CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

Singles: L.Mathias
Doubles: L.Mathias & M.Nugent

NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2017

D.Tristao

RFA PRESIDENT'S CUP 2017

J.Tilston & G.Wiseman

WEST OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

U18 Singles: T.Kidner (Winchester)
U18 Doubles: Winchester College (T.Kidner & K.Mackison)
U16 Singles: G.Wiseman (Alley'n's)
U16 Doubles: Alley'n's School (G.Wiseman & S.Scott)

NATIONAL LADIES CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

Singles: K.Briedenhann
Doubles: M.Raynor & A.Steel

NORTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

Singles: D.Tristao
Doubles: C.Brooks & W.Ellison

NATIONAL U25 CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

Singles: E.Kay
Doubles: E.Kay & M.Shaw

THE VARSITY MATCH 2018

Men's: Oxford beat Cambridge 260-222
Women's: Cambridge beat Oxford 181-33

NORTH OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

Singles: D.Tristao
Doubles: D.Butler & D.Tristao

WINCHESTER FIVES OPEN DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2018

W.Ellison & E.Kay

LADIES WINCHESTER FIVES CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

Singles: M.Raynor
Doubles: M.Raynor & A.Steel

NATIONAL VINTAGE CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

Singles: N.Roberts
Doubles: S.Kirby & N.Roberts

NATIONAL SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

U18 Singles: T.Kidner (Winchester)
U18 Doubles: Winchester College (T.Kidner & K.Mackison)
U16 Singles: G.Wiseman (Alley'n's)
U16 Doubles: St. Paul's School (T.Monro-Davies & L.Odgers)
U14 Singles: G.Wiseman (Alley'n's)
U14 Doubles: Tonbridge Scholl (M.Campanale & J.Freeman)
U13 Singles: C.Boy (St. Olave's)
U13 Doubles: St. Olave's School (C.Boy & F.Baron)

NATIONAL DOUBLES 2018 (CYRIAX CUP)

D.Grant & D.Tristao

NATIONAL VETERANS' CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

Singles: M.Cavanagh
Doubles: H.Buchanan & A.Pringle

NATIONAL MASTERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 2018

Doubles: S.Beal & A.Hamilton

NATIONAL CLUB KNOCK-OUT 2018 (WOOD CUP)

Wessex Club

NATIONAL GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

U18 Singles: I.Lee (Marlborough)
U18 Doubles: Marlborough College (A.Laakkonen & I.Lee)
U16 Singles: K.Sumner (Bedford Modern)
U16 Doubles: Marlborough College (L.Barton & K.Bell)
U14 Singles: M.Nugent (Alley'n's)
U14 Doubles: Alley'n's School (K.Innes & M.Nugent)
U13 Singles: C.Davey (Alley'n's)
U13 Doubles: Alley'n's School (C.Davey & C.Stephens)

SCOTTISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2018

Singles: D.Butler
Doubles: S.Fraser & A.McCreath

WINCHESTER FIVES MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2018

L.Mathias & O.Arnold

DERBY MOOR INVITATION DOUBLES 2018

A.Goodwin & R.Sandie



Ladies National Champion Kathleen Briedenhann in conversation with David Bawtree



Rugby Fives
Association
2018

www.rugbyfivesassociation.net