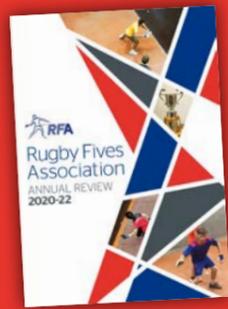




Rugby Fives Association

ANNUAL REVIEW
2020-22





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The Rugby Fives Association 2020-22


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A welcome from the President

David Parlbly reflects on two unusual but positive years

Providing an introduction to a review of two years is something none of my predecessors had to contend with! However, although Covid-19 stopped Fives in its tracks, I'm pleased to report the bounce-back has been strong and the sport's in pretty good shape.

An unexpected and beneficial consequence of the pandemic was that many RFA members turned their hand to doing great things for the benefit of Fives. David Butler, Matt Shaw, Theo Parker and Sam Russell hosted weekly podcasts, which entertainingly explored a wide range of interesting Fives facts and stories. Bob Dolby spent a huge amount of time sorting photos for the website. David and Matt gifted us the comprehensive strategy, 'Sustain, Nurture and Grow', which forms the bedrock of board discussions and activity. Stuart Kirby spent many hours testing out different balls to be used for Squash Fives and updating the rules for the game. We found a new Treasurer, James Tilston, probably the first fully qualified accountant the RFA has had in charge of its finances. (This is a Good Thing!) As a result we now base our accounts on a robust modern system designed for use by charities, meaning dealing with Gift Aid and reporting to the Charity Commission is simplified.

The video-conferencing platform Zoom has transformed the way in which the RFA operates. (Another Good Thing!) When I joined the board in 2017 all meetings were face-to-face, infrequent and occasionally supplemented by poor-quality telephone conference calls. Now a whole range of committees and groups meet on a regular and as-needed basis via Zoom: as indeed does the Board. More work gets done between meetings, with actions quickly completed, momentum generated and considerable progress made. A further benefit of the virtual approach is that it enables us to



enlist the help of more people from around the UK – Julie McIntyre in Durham, David Fox in Manchester, Richie Murby in Scotland and Peter Mellor in Hampshire, to name but four.

With Dan Grant's help we launched our new website and set about promoting ourselves and improving communications with members. The introduction of a regular President's Newsletter, a concerted approach in managing social media, half-yearly webinars for club secretaries and masters i/c Fives and the purchase and use of banners and display panels are examples of how we've moved forward.

The RFA has also been conscious of the need to ensure courts are in good shape. We have offered grants of some £30,000 over the past two years to Loretto, the Edinburgh Academy, Merchiston Castle, Stoke Newington School, the Manchester Y Club, St Dunstan's and Christ's Hospital. Discussions have been had with Bloxham, Clifton College, Eastbourne College and Mount Kelly about improving facilities. A central tenet for these discussions is that owners must be prepared to allow the local community to use the courts. This will enable Fives to move beyond its traditional boundaries – an essential step in ensuring the future of the game.

As to my highlight of my tenure, amongst many things, it is undoubtedly the relaunch of Fives at Stoke Newington School. Enabling 200 pupils a year to play Fives as part of their education is a seminal achievement, not be underestimated. This was only possible through the extremely hard work of Tom Maconie and Hamish Buchanan.

Thank you to everyone mentioned here, to the Board, our volunteers, Phil Atkinson, our General Secretary for seven dedicated years, and his successor Chris Blakeley. I wish Julie McIntyre, our new President, every success and look forward to Fives continuing to thrive.

2021-22 Season Review

Andy Pringle reviews the season when Fives returned

It's perhaps no exaggeration to say that the greatest achievement is that we have a 2021-22 season to look back on at all. After the entire 2020-21 season fell victim to the pandemic, it was with a mixture of delight and trepidation that we greeted the first official event of the new season – July 2021's South West Open, held in memory of local legend Tim Lewis.

As ever, it was held in the familiar surroundings of Blundell's School, under the watchful gaze of Wayne Enstone, but there were many big questions to be answered. How had the enforced lay-off affected the players? Would the Big Three of Ellison, Kay and Tristao still dominate? And was the Butterleigh Inn still open?

In the end, a new venue for the traditional Saturday evening meal was the biggest change. Not much else had changed in the two years since the tournament circus last stopped off at Tiverton. The competition was as fierce as ever from the very first game of the first round, and in a familiar-looking final, Ed Kay beat Will Ellison to defend the singles title he won in 2019 – before Will teamed up with Charlie Brooks to win the doubles title.

If anyone had expected a changing of the guard in the wake of Covid-19, the events in Devon showed that the opposite was true – and that story continued throughout the season.

With the exception of Dave Butler's win in the South East Open, every singles title in the season went to one of the Big Three: Ed won the Yorkshire Open, the West of England and the North of England Championships, while Will won the London and North West Opens. Dan Tristao won the Scottish Open and the big one: the National Singles Championship. In doing so, he secured his fifth consecutive win and sixth in total, equalling James Toop as the second most successful National Singles player after Wayne Enstone.

What is so impressive about the three is their sheer consistency. You have to go back to 2018 to find the last occasion when one of them lost a singles match to anyone from outside this trio.

But, you'll ask, did the new season show signs of anyone bridging the gap to Ed, Dan and Will? The simple answer, as the end-of-season rankings show, is a resounding no. For now, the three look pretty secure at the head of the pack.

Nevertheless, there are several players to watch over the coming 12 months; and if they build on this year's successes, they could perhaps go on to break the trio's stranglehold. Tom Watkinson, for example, reached semi-finals in the South West,



ABOVE
Anthony Goodwin wins the Cambridge Challenger



RIGHT
Will Ellison and Dan Tristao fight out the National Singles final

South East and Yorkshire Championships; University champion Andrew Boyd and Under 25 champion Ben Beltrami also look like good bets in the race to be the Next Big Thing, alongside seasoned campaigner Dave Butler.

Again, the Big Three continued to show their consistency in picking up the lion's share of the Doubles titles this season as well. However, if one deserves to be singled out, it has to be Will, who won five of seven open titles, including the National Doubles with Charlie Brooks.

Not to be outdone, Ed and Dan also picked up a couple of titles – although both of Dan's and one of Ed's came while playing with Will. And, to complete the pattern, Will and Ed also picked up the coveted Barnes Bridge trophy after taking their fifth National Winchester Fives title together.

As in the Singles, the Nearly Men in Doubles this



'THERE ARE SEVERAL PLAYERS TO WATCH OVER THE COMING 12 MONTHS'

season again includes Ben Beltrami (North of England and U25 Doubles champion), but Ollie Arnold also deserves mention after winning the U25, North of England and Yorkshire titles.

In the age categories, too, the pandemic seems to have had little effect on the destination of the silverware. John Minta reclaimed the Veterans (over 45s) singles title with victory over four-time winner Matt Cavanagh, while John and David Fox defended the doubles title they won in 2019.

Likewise, the Masters (over 65) championship was won by the defending champions – Spencer Beal & Tony Hamilton, who secured their fourth title together. Such is their recent domination that you have to go back to 2016 to find a different pair's name on the trophy.

Instead, it was left to the Vintage (over 55) players to deliver change in the pecking order. Although Ian Jackson returned to defend the singles title he won in 2019, he had to be content with the Plate this time. 2022's winner was Morgan Spillane, but he couldn't quite do the double, losing a tight doubles final (with Tony Hamilton) to David Fox & Sam Roberts – earning David the distinction of holding Veterans and Vintage titles at the same time. Mind you, Tony Hamilton's achievement to be Vintage runner-up while

ABOVE
Clean sweep for Ollie Arnold and Ben Beltrami at the U25s



RIGHT
Dave Butler wins the South East Open Singles

champion in the next age grade is impressive.

Equally noteworthy was the Owers Trophy, for teams representing their old school. Here, against teams from long-established Fives institutions such as Alleyn's and Winchester, a team from Derby Moor (Lewis Keates, Anthony Goodwin and Bally Singh) emerged as winners.

In the season's other team event, it was very much a tale of continuation, as the West of England club (Ollie Arnold, Tom Maconie, Theo Parker and Tom Watkinson) successfully defended the title they first won three years ago.

However, what was remarkable about was that no fewer than 12 teams and 57 players took to the courts over the course of the weekend. With levels of participation like that, there's no better way to (hopefully) say goodbye once and for all to the pandemic that afflicted our great game.



The Singles medallists at the Ladies' U23s

Ladies' Season Review

Bob Dolby reviews a year in which women's Fives flourished beyond expectations

Given how much school and club Fives was lost to the pandemic it has been wonderful to see how well women's Fives has recovered over the last 12 months. Thanks for that must go to all those teachers and coaches at schools and clubs who have promoted the game among their charges and fellow players: Rob Ody and Howard Wiseman at Alleyn's, Hector McFarlane at the Edinburgh Academy, Alex Smith at the super-keen Stamford Schools, Julie McIntyre at the City of Durham Club, plus Andy Pringle and his fellow Executioners in particular. A special word of thanks also to Ben Hale and Dave Butler for their efforts in encouraging female players to join the Jesters Tour of Scotland in record numbers.

We started with the delayed but successful Girls' Championships at Alleyn's in August 2021. Numbers were surprisingly good, the standard high,

and there was huge promise shown by Martha Nugent (U18) and Camille Beattie (U16) in winning their age groups against some very good opposition from Scottish and English schools.

Once the 2021-22 season rolled into action we looked forward to the U23s at St Paul's in December. Neither Louise

'IT WAS GRATIFYING TO SEE SO MANY WOMEN ON THE JESTERS TOUR'

Mathias nor Shinan Zhang were eligible any longer, so new champions were expected, though one highly fancied player, Camille Beattie from Durham, was not able to participate. Players from the Executioners and from Cambridge and Oxford Universities entered the fray as well as former Schools champion Katie

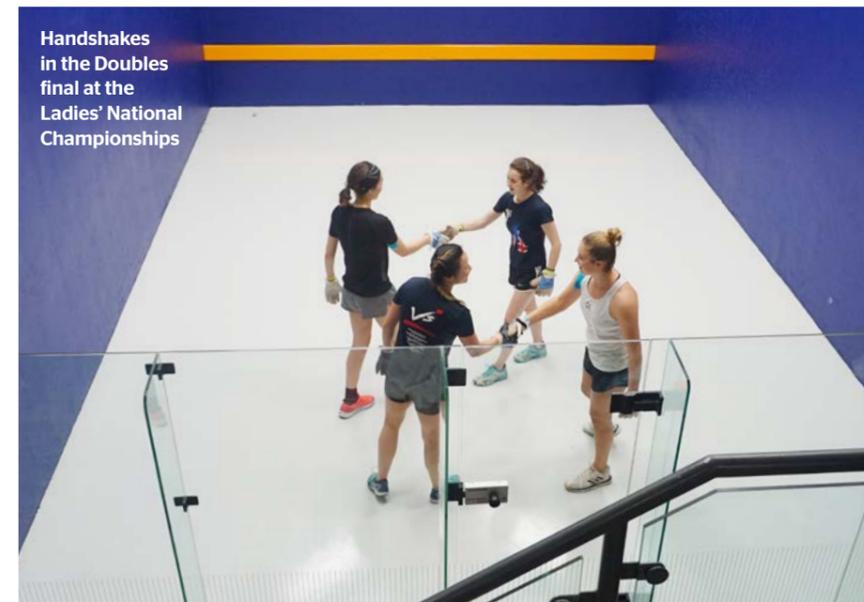
Sumner. In the end another former schools champion Ibbey Lee was unable to prevent Martha Nugent from adding the U23 Singles title to her Schools one. New names entered the record books, though, when Holly Nugent and Savanna Leboff, who have raised their game massively while at Cambridge University, won the Doubles title at the expense of Katie Sumner and left-handed, hard-hitting Imogen Wright, a new face from Durham.

Again, this tournament whetted our appetite for the Ladies' National Championships to be played in January on the Manchester courts. The money had to be on highly experienced Louise Mathias and Shinan Zhang, and they did indeed prove to be the best two in the draw, but Martha Nugent gave Louise a hard game in the Singles final. The unfamiliar pairing of the Nugent sisters, Martha & Holly, also did themselves great credit in defeat by

Louise & Shinan in the Doubles. The entry was sizeable, with players from three universities, multiple Scottish schools, the Durham Club, the Manchester Y Club and from London. The Plate finals saw ever-improving Helena Tunks win the Singles from Edinburgh's Cecily Millar, while Oxbridge graduates Viola King Forbes & Savanna Leboff took the Doubles. We missed our former champions Kathleen Briedenhann, Maddy Raynor, Alexandra Steel and Tessa Mills, but the standard remained high.

April saw the Girls' Championships, played at Oundle, with competitors from seven schools and all four age-categories contested. City of Durham's Camille Beattie fulfilled many people's expectations in winning the U18 Singles and, with Imogen Wright, the Doubles. Rosa Ogilvie from the Edinburgh Academy did the same in the U16 age-group while players from the Academy, Alleyn's and Stamford shared cups and plates in the U14 and U13 categories, demonstrating huge potential for the future.

Before we reached the later stages of the season when the Rugby Fives Mixed Doubles, the Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles and the Ladies' Winchester Fives Championships are



Handshakes in the Doubles final at the Ladies' National Championships



Stamford win the Doubles Plate at the Ladies' Winchester Fives Championships



Schoolgirls' Doubles finalists from Durham and Edinburgh

staged, it was gratifying to see women playing so frequently in Open tournaments and on the Jesters Tour. This has been a measure of the progress and the greater confidence of the female players, which has developed over the past decade. There has been particular progress at Cambridge since the new courts were built, with the Ladies' Varsity Match often, as this year, rather one-sided.

The Rugby Fives Mixed was played, for just the second time, at Alleyn's, and gave young Camille Beattie her first senior title, playing with Nick Whitney, at the expense of Savanna Leboff & Emrys Thursfield. The Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles followed a couple of weeks later at Bradfield and saw Louise Mathias, playing with Ollie Arnold, notch up another title, this time at the expense of Shinan Zhang & Lewis Keates. And on the very final weekend of the season Shinan won the Ladies Winchester Fives Singles, beating Helena Tunks, with whom she then paired up to win the Doubles against old friends Karen Hird & Rachel Wood from the world of Eton Fives. On the same day Camille Beattie distinguished herself by becoming the first female player to win the Derby Moor Invitation Doubles, playing with Lewis Keates.

Finally we wish Louise a swift and complete recovery from the broken wrist she incurred at the Winchester Fives Championships. We look forward to seeing her back on court soon.

Schools Season Review 2020-22

Bob Dolby reviews two years in which Fives made a pleasing recovery post-pandemic

School Fives suffered badly in the pandemic, with inter-school fixtures and tournaments coming to a halt for some 14 months and very little play of any kind permitted in the enclosed environment of Fives courts. There was great concern at the RFA as to what lasting damage might be done to the development of Fives within our affiliated schools. With no possibility of the National Schools Championships of 2020 and 2021 being played as scheduled, Hamish Buchanan, Dave Butler, Sam Russell and Alex Smith took it on themselves to run belated championships by kind permission of Alleyn's School in August 2021. A full-scale Girls' event, an U13 tournament and a four-day U14, U16 and U18 championship were held, all with a gratifying entry. There was particular concern that school leavers from 2020 had been denied the chance of a National U18 title, so a retrospective U18 Singles and Doubles was held for that year at the same time, though it was understood that not all those eligible would be able to compete.

The U13 championships attracted a field of 23 players, with Alleyn's and Edinburgh Academy dominating the main draw and Stamford's 13-strong squad winning both plates. The 16-strong U14s saw the medals more evenly distributed, with Edinburgh Academy's Singles champion, and Stamford's Doubles pair the outstanding performers. The U16s saw silverware going to St Olave's, Alleyn's and Tonbridge.

'THERE WAS REAL PROMISE IN THE PLAYERS FROM WINCHESTER AND ST PAUL'S'



ABOVE
U18 Plate
winner from
Tonbridge

The Open category threw up the interesting possibility of Gwydion Wiseman from Alleyn's, the previous year's runner-up, winning the Singles title for 2021 and retrospectively for 2020. He then duly delivered on this promise before teaming up with Stuart Scott to win the Doubles title for both seasons. Despite the dominance of this pair there was real promise to be seen in the performance of young players from Winchester and St Paul's.

And so we came to the season of 2021-2022. Could Wiseman & Scott win the first of the season's three major schools tournaments, the Winchester Fives Doubles in November? The Winchester 1st pair of Cloke Browne & Wu stepped up to spoil the party. Could they get revenge in January at the West of England Championships? No, once more the Winchester pair won. Which raised the question of Cloke Browne & Wu doing the treble at



'WE SAW SOME FINE PLAYERS EMERGE AT U16, U14 AND U13 LEVEL'

the National Championships in April. This they duly did, beating Scott & Wiseman once more and thus joining a very small band of pairs who have won all three Open Doubles titles in one season.

The other question was: could Gwydion Wiseman become only the second schoolboy ever to win the Open Singles three years in a row? The player who did it in 1960, 1961 and 1962, Peter Mellor, came to St Paul's to witness possible history in the making. Cruelly Gwydion did not succeed in his endeavour, losing to the fast improving Shiloh Wu from Winchester in the final. But Gwydion does have the consolation of being the only player to make the final four years in a row, losing to Taylor McGuire in 2019, winning in 2020 and 2021, and losing in 2022. A record very unlikely ever to be matched.

Elsewhere we saw some fine players emerge at

ABOVE
U14 stars
of the
future from
Winchester,
Stamford and
Merchiston

RIGHT
Dominant
senior
pairs from
Alleyn's and
Winchester



U16, U14 and U13 level: Sam Park, William Gale and Lucas Fiddes (Merchiston), Hugo Rintoul, Calum Swanson and Ronnie Brown (Edinburgh Academy), Theo Vernacchio and Laurie Milner from Alleyn's, James Kennedy (Winchester), Joshua Fienberg (Berkhamsted) and Val Fikhter, a welcome debutant from Manchester Y Club.

It was good to see from the Schools Reports how inter-school fixtures got going again and Regional championships were also played as normal.

Around the schools 2021-22

Individual schools report on a season where Fives got going once more

ALLEYN'S SCHOOL

Rob Ody reports: The season started with the delayed 2021 National Championships. In the U13s Milo Arie won an all-Alleyn's final against Archie Shaw, who then paired to win the Doubles. Gwydion Wiseman beat Stuart Scott in the U18 Singles final, before they won the Doubles. Theo Vernacchio & Laurie Milner won the U16 doubles. In the retrospective 2019/20 U18 Singles and Doubles Gwydion again won the Singles, and he and Stuart took the Doubles.

The belated 2021 Girls' Championships brought silver for Annabelle McAllister, Emily Erdmeier, Janice Ho, Anna Chance, Katie Innes, and Taylor-Rose Foo & Claudia Davey, while Martha Nugent took the U18 Singles and Katie Innes & Lu Arie the U18 Doubles.

At the West of England Championships, Theo Vernacchio won the U16 Singles and partnered Laurie Milner to win the Doubles. Gwydion Wiseman won the Singles and he and Stuart Scott were



runners-up in the Doubles.

The Lent term brought a full fixture list, including the Girls' South East Regionals, where Taylor-Rose Foo, Anna Chance and Lu Arie won Singles titles, and Janice Ho & Diva Tiwari, Anna & Annabel McAllister, and Lu & Katie Innes Doubles titles.

The season concluded with the Girls' National Championships at Oundle. Taylor-Rose Foo won the U13 Singles, while Janice Ho & Diva Tiwari were U14 Doubles champions. Anna Chance won silver in the U16 Singles and Janice Ho in the U14s while we collected various plates.

of LED lighting of the safer viewing platforms and further improvements to noticeboards and signage, we are now looking at plans to improve the middle two courts to be glass-backed – more updates to come in due course.

The intention will be to grow awareness of Fives within the school and promote more regular use of the Fives Courts. As well as being a minor-sport option, Fives is an extra-curricular option as well.

In our internal competitions, Senior House Fives and Junior House Fives made a full recovery post-covid. The Mellor Cup (Junior) was won by Toby L'Estrange, and the winner of the Dawes Cup (Senior) was Rob Menhart, who also captained the School's Fives Team in the Midlands Regionals and the Nationals, as well as in fixtures against Cambridge University, Oundle, Rugby, the OBs and Derby Moor.

BEDFORD MODERN SCHOOL

Katherine Adams writes: This academic year has seen the return of all year groups Fives, after students last year having to practise in year group bubbles due to covid restrictions. It has been lovely to see the interaction between year groups, with those in the older years mentoring younger students.

This year we have focused on the development of skills with a large uptake of new students. Many joined the sport after the successful house Fives competition. Instead of pursuing fixtures, we held internal competitions to prepare players for next year. Students particularly enjoyed the Easter egg competition, where they competed each week of the term across year groups in the quest to win an easter egg. Remy Horwood-Palm

emerging victorious.

In the summer term, older players' exams provided younger years with more opportunities to play. It has been fantastic to witness these students develop their skills over the past year, moving from beginners to conducting and umpiring full matches.

BLOXHAM SCHOOL

Simon Batten writes: This was a quiet season for Fives; in the next two terms we will return to a full set of inter-school fixtures. The focus this year was on developing the game in the younger years. The Exham players were involved in fiercely contested singles and doubles tournaments, with N. Brown and C.Kilonback the best of the girls, and champion A.Burt and runner-up B.Hamblet-Bowes the most promising boys. J.Williams showed huge potential too. The fourth formers produced a surprise winner in J. Shepherd – the most improved player of the year – while M.Muro Godino was the best Spanish Fives player I've yet seen. A committed group of seniors led by S.Hughes and W. Howells took on the Black Gloves staff team, with the result – a win for the staff – in doubt until the last. Seb has been a pillar of Bloxham Fives since 2017, and it is hoped the current crop of youngsters remain as committed as he.

BLUNDELL'S SCHOOL

Richard Moore reports: Like so many schools this season has been about rebuilding the game; the effects of not having anyone on court for two seasons has been evident. The school enjoyed our usual hard fought fixtures against Malvern and Sherborne School. We also hosted the Old Blundellians and the Exeter Fives Club. The highlight of the year is the annual Reichwald tournament and it was lovely to get this back up and running and see so many familiar faces back on the courts.

The Nationals provided a cracking platform for the squad to play new opponents away from our usual circuit. On Finals day Ed and Max faced each other in the Plate quarter-finals. This was a very closely fought game that ebbed and flowed dramatically, with Max finally winning out 12–10.

In the semis Max fought an epic battle against his opponent from Loretto in a superb contest that reached its climax with Max taking the honours 12-11.

The first day of the doubles was very busy and demanding, the squad spirit was as good as it has ever been. Bartlett & Clayton surprised everyone by getting through to the second round and showed a real development in their maturity and ability to change strategy during the course of a game. All pairs went through to the Plate competition played on the final day. The standard was extremely high.

The hard work begins next year. After a fallow couple of years, the squad has to be rebuilt. Fortunately the enthusiasm for the game is ever present and whilst it will take a couple of years the talent is there.

BRADFIELD COLLEGE

Jeremy Ball reports: This has proved to be a challenging year at Bradfield. With no Fives played at all during the 20/21 season, all momentum was lost and a whole year group passed through without seeing the inside of a court. This, coupled with an unheralded change in the sports programme that meant there was no longer a rolling programme of sport when all first years would come to the courts at least once to have a go, meant the Michaelmas term was hard-going and the general standard was of a recreational level. Fortunately, a small but enthusiastic core of players emerged, and we were able to play some matches in the Lent term; my thanks to our opponents for their good-natured flexibility in order to ensure fun, competitive fixtures.

I was extremely lucky to have the assistance of Olly Layton, who brought enthusiasm and verve to proceedings and was particularly adept at persuading boys from his boarding house to come and give the game a try. It was also great to see a couple of our UVI girls regularly attend a weekly session. In the end, a small but loyal core of year 9 and 11 boys played throughout the Lent Term and proved to be enthusiastic, improving with every match day experience. Hopefully, the green shoots of a post-pandemic recovery are emerging – let's nurture them next year!

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

Bart Callaghan reports: It has been a strong term of Fives this year, with every activity full the brim. We have seen players improve their game hugely, as well as many new players showing the beginnings of strong talent for the sport. We competed against the strongest schools in the country and returned some extraordinary results. And we have a fifth court, having converted a squash court!

After the two-year hiatus, it was pleasing to find talented teams throughout the school. Our U15s played their first season, learning valuable lessons along the way. Charlie Lacewing has been a stalwart of the side and reached the final of the U16 singles at the South East Regionals.

The U16s have played strongly and are showing signs of becoming skilful players. Oscar van Huet Lindeman and Ziyad Mukhayer performed consistently, including at the South East Regionals, where Oscar won the U16 singles plate.

We say goodbye to a talented group of players: Tommy Worth, Max Hughes, Oliver Hanger and Chi Udokporo led the sport from the top and inspired a number of players. A note to Max for winning the Regionals U18 singles plate.

Our players performed magnificently at the South East Girls' Regionals. Particular mention to Dora Ishchenko, who demonstrated dedication and resolve in her first school matches. Our girls also had a close game with Eastbourne, with Manuela Musanga and Dora teaming up formidably in the doubles.



Squash court conversion – a fifth court!



BEDFORD SCHOOL

Henry Vann reports: Fives at Bedford continues to grow. Last year we had four boys taking Fives in the Summer Term. Now, with Fives in its second year as a three-term option, we had 23. This is on top of the usual 30 boys taking Fives in Autumn and Spring Terms, and around 40 boys involved in the Prep School. As Fives continues to develop, in addition to small victories

DERBY MOOR JUNIORS

Bob Dolby writes: The stream of enthusiastic and often successful players to emerge from Derby Moor over the past few years has been largely down to the coaching and encouragement of Stuart Kirby and Lewis Keates, with the logistical help of Brian Kirk and Richard Christie. Last year we said goodbye to Raheem, this year to Callum, both in their different ways a credit to themselves and their mentors. Callum goes on to play in Manchester in what could become a flourishing undergraduate club next season. Burt, Kristians and Ethan will take the lead at next year's junior tournaments and in the matches which the ever-ambitious Lewis can sign them up for in his capacity of



Plate winner Kristians with his Manchester partner at the Derby Doubles

Fixtures Secretary. This year the lads have played matches in Durham, Cambridge and Bedford, against a touring Sedbergh squad, and competed in the West of England

Schools, the Midlands Regional and the National Schools competitions. They play regularly on Tuesday Club Evenings and, when sufficiently competent, at Thursday Seniors evening too, as well as at occasional weekend sessions. Stuart has set about recruiting this summer term, so we hope to unleash some talent next season to follow in the footsteps of Lewis, Bally, Vishal, Max, Anthony, Ashley, Aaron and Rob. Playing with adults, as they do in the Derby Moor Invitation Doubles, is an enjoyable experience for our juniors but also valuable. It was good to see Kristians win the plate in that competition; no doubt he will win it one day as a senior.

EDINBURGH ACADEMY

Hector McFarlane writes: It was great to have a near full Fives season again with fixtures between the Scottish schools and trips to Allyn's, Durham, Manchester, St Paul's and Oundle. Things kicked off with the rearranged 2021 National Schools where the nine E.A. girls were very successful, as two Plate victories accompanied triumphs in the U13 Singles (Anna B.), U13 Doubles (Anna B. & Jenna P.), U14 Singles (Rosa O.) and U16 Doubles (Cecily M. & Rosa O.). Ronnie B. won the Boys' U14 Singles.

An eager contingent of eight Girls headed to the Durham Ladies Invitational, where Holly B. won the U18s. The trip to the Ladies' Nationals didn't bring any silverware but proved a great experience. The Covid-delayed Jesters event in March was a triumph with Olivia S. victorious in the Select VIII tournament.

Nine travelled to the National Schools and achieved great success in the U16 category, with three of the eight quarter-finalists in the Singles and the winners of the U16 doubles Marchant Cup (Hugo R. & Calum S.). The final event of the season saw 11 Girls travel to National Girls' Championships. Cups were won in



National U16 Marchant Cup winners from Edinburgh Academy

the U16 Singles (Rosa O.), U16 Doubles (Rosa O. & Olivia S.), U14 Singles (Anna B.) and we had runners-up in the U18

Singles, the U18 Doubles and U14 Doubles, plus Plate victories in the U16 Singles and U16 Doubles.

EASTBOURNE COLLEGE

Simon Beal reports: It has been great to see Eastbourne College Fives returning to some sense of normality after a bleak couple of years. Although there were few seniors (no sixth form boys in fact) playing this year, the College still enjoyed fixtures against Christ's Hospital and Tonbridge. The U14 and U15 boys, all playing in their first matches ever, lost overall but managed to win a few games here and there and seemed to enjoy the experience – there appears to be a good group of young players coming through, some not half bad considering the amount of time they have been playing, and we look forward to seeing them develop as players over the coming years.

Meanwhile our U15 and U18 girls took on Christ's Hospital, and won! They also enjoyed competing at the South East Regionals, with our no. 1 U18 pair finishing runners-up in the doubles. The highlight of the season for the College was the Schoolgirls' National Championships at Oundle. Although we didn't manage to progress too far in the Singles competitions, the U18 pair of Charlotte Stanworth & Saffy Grant Down made it to the Doubles Plate final, while U15 Daisy Dunkley went one better with her partner from Edinburgh Academy, beating Marlborough in the U16 Doubles Plate final 12-10. It has been a while since Eastbourne picked up any silverware – well done, girls!



The U16 Doubles Plate for Eastbourne at the Girls' Nationals

FETTES COLLEGE

Peter Worlledge reports: The Spring term saw the delayed Jesters tour for their annual joust, with 30 descending on Edinburgh for the serious business of Fives. Fettes pupils between them notched up over 30 games during the weekend and all will have gained a huge amount of experience and enjoyment from it all.

Regular fixtures against other schools provided opportunities for development throughout the term; in the Boys 1st IV, brothers Wyman and Toby C. stood out as a pair. The younger teams enjoyed a year of consolidation, with some finding it challenging against older hands at other schools on the circuit; a developing Junior Colts team bodes well for next year, however.

We enjoyed success in the Scottish Schools Championships: firstly, in the U18 Singles where Wyman triumphed in a highly competitive series of games. In the Boys doubles, both Senior and Colts competitions were very tight this year, with Fettes securing the overall win for the Wymans in the Senior Doubles Cup, and with Fettes providing the runners-



Scottish Schools champions and brothers!

up in the Colts Plate.

Finally we came to the Nationals in London, with a great Scottish turnout, and the Wyman brothers completed their tremendous season taking the prestigious U18 Doubles Plate.

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 term! Fives at Fettes remains in good heart!

LORETTO SCHOOL

Richie Murby writes: This year, Loretto unveiled its three freshly refurbished courts. The occasion was marked with several excellent school matches, including a double-header boys match against Fettes College at U16 and U18 level, the former lost, the latter won with only two points to spare. The Jesters also came to sample the new courts in a match involving Loretto seniors Josh F. and Nathan G-W. As the courts continue to bed in and minor ventilation issues are addressed, they will become an even greater Fives venue.

It is with some sadness that we say goodbye this summer to the senior boys team. They have been a fantastic group through the years and will be missed. The school having gone into lockdown mere days after winning the Scottish Schools U16 doubles two years ago, it would be hard to deny that momentum was lost – especially in the absence of the garrulous Joe C., who had transferred from the school



The new look courts at Loretto

in the interim. However, the team continued, with the highly talented Nathan G-W. leading from the front.

Nathan also competed in Select Six with the Jesters, and while he had a disappointing result in the Scottish Schools Singles, he played his best ever Fives at the UK National Schools, serving up an absolute thriller in the Plate competition, a match that would have graced any tournament. We hope he and the team leave with fond memories of school Fives, as this year's Colts step up to emulate them next year.

MALVERN COLLEGE

Chris Thomas writes: Malvern Fives has restarted with some keen U14 boys playing matches against Radley, Bradfield, Winchester, Rugby and Blundell's, aided by some amenable U16 games players who are happy to represent the school and an ageing master in charge. Two very successful House competitions were run, and if the same number of players continue to play in the future from other year groups then the future looks optimistic for Fives. The annual tour in March may happen next year, so if you would like to be possibly included for a visit please do get in touch!

MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE

Tom Kiggell writes: It was an enjoyable and successful season (P17, W12, L5), but frustrating in some ways. U18 no.1 Adam Kiggell was hampered by injury through the year; unforeseeable calendar clashes resulted in several cancellations; a number of fixtures turned out to be rather one-sided. The result was a bitty feel to the year, and it was hard to secure regular, competitive action for our best players. As a result, not everyone was able to play to their potential in the big events. We will need to reboot our training and find more fixtures next season which give our players experience of the level of skill and intensity needed to compete at the highest level.

At the top end, Adam and Archie Todd-Leask won the U18 Plate at the West of England Schools and were both singles semi-finalists in the South West Colquhoun Trophy. Archie won five and lost two at the Nationals, bowing



Merchiston's U16 Singles champion

MERCHISTON CASTLE SCHOOL

Matt Hillier reports: It has been an excellent year for Merchiston Fives, with much success at domestic and national level. It was a relief to begin domestic fixtures again, which served as excellent preparation for the Scottish tournaments in Lent Term. Sam Park and William Gale played with dedication throughout the year and were rewarded by winning the U16 Edinburgh Schools Doubles Cup. Captain Lachlan Ferguson finished as runner-up in the U18 Scottish Schools Singles. Eight boys travelled to the National Schools Fives Championships. In the U18s, Lachlan Ferguson and Isaac Coates both put in good performances, with Lachlan winning his group and reaching the last 16 of the Singles. In the U14

Doubles, Nick De Villiers and Reggie Hargreaves lost in the last 16 before going on to win the Bowl. Fergus Foley and Lucas Fiddes went through the rounds before falling just short to finish as Cup runners-up. In the U14 Singles, Fergus and Lucas won their groups, with Fergus reaching the quarter-finals. Lucas played some exceptional Fives to reach the main final and finish as runner-up. Top two in the UK at U14 Singles and Doubles is something to be very proud of. In the U16s, William and Sam reached the Doubles semi-final. But the U16s Singles is where we had the most success; Sam moved through the rounds before winning a fiercely contested final to become U16 National Schools Champion. This is only the sixth national trophy in Merchiston's history; a serious achievement and an excellent way to end the season.

out in the plate semi-final. 15 first-years played for the school, more than once against older opposition, and learnt the game with great keenness. With very few seniors playing the game next year, it is to be hoped that this younger group can form the basis of a new wave of players.

At the Girls' Nationals, we had three singles quarter-finalists; they played with pride and no little skill, but couldn't overcome the fact that none of them had played for four weeks.

MERCHANT TAYLORS' SCHOOL

The RFA awaits developments from Merchant Taylors', where the courts were demolished in 2017. Since then Simon Hardman has taken boys to play Fives on local squash courts but these too have now closed. Recent leavers Charlie Barnett, Sarthak Garella and Emrys Thursfield continue to play club and university Fives, but the OMT Fives Club is no longer operating. As yet there appear to be no firm plans for new courts.

OUNDLE SCHOOL

Nathan de Garis reports: With four purpose-built courts and two new members of staff to run Fives, the sport has been a popular activity, particularly with the Upper Sixth. The new staff, although short in experience, have brought enthusiasm and a keen intention to grow Fives' profile in the school.

A small but committed group of players were initially coached by Wayne Enstone in the first weeks of the academic year. Because of the significant interruptions to group-based school activities over the past two years, only a small number of the players had previous experience of the game. Over the following weeks they familiarised themselves with the rules, strategies and tactics of the game, growing in confidence as they did so.

Fixtures began to be arranged at the end of Michaelmas Term and became a source of focus for our burgeoning team of players. Throughout the season, the team played Bedford, Stamford and Radley. Matches were highly competitive and enjoyable, and although there were occasional losses to more experienced players, by the

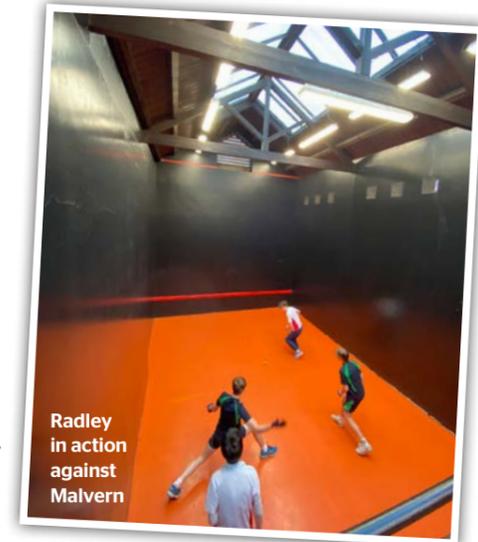
end of the season more games had been won than lost: a source of great pride for their new coaches.

We were proud to host two tournaments during the year, the Midlands Regionals in March and the National Girls Fives Championships in April. Both occasions brought an encouraging number of enthusiastic players from around the country to participate. Given the quality of our courts we are extremely keen to host as many other Fives clubs as possible, share the good fortune of our facilities and enable our own students to develop their competitiveness.

RADLEY COLLEGE

Tereza Horacek writes: 2021/22 has been a slightly unconventional season for Fives at Radley. As an Art Teacher with very little prior knowledge of the sport, I was rather surprised to be appointed Master in Charge of Fives. However, the boys' commitment and enthusiasm has been inimitable, and I thank them for their support and exceptional effort.

At the beginning of the Lent Term, we played against Malvern College, losing with just a points difference of



Radley in action against Malvern

3. The Radley boys gained much experience playing against Malvern, and the return fixture was equally successful. Our team also played matches versus Rugby, Marlborough and Oundle. We have welcomed many new boys, who have taken to the sport quickly and have made considerable progress. The enthusiasm of the older boys has been a huge influence in growing the popularity of Fives and there have been many fun and competitive matches played among the boys and across all year groups.

RUGBY SCHOOL

Trevor White writes: This has been another steady season in the rebuilding process with the courts well used.

The whole club has been brilliantly captained by Arlo Young, who continued to improve and has become a very fine player. The first IV also included Lucy Gribben, who progressed rapidly, and it was a shame that she had only one term of participation. David Leng partnered Arlo at the Nationals, where a first-round victory over Marlborough was a highlight. Vlad Bobrakov completed the quartet and all four showed fine spirit and enthusiasm. Victories in regular fixtures over Bedford and Radley were particularly pleasing. The Jesters and Derby Moor also visited in part to help with the coaching and development of the team. Arlo became the Midlands U18 Champion, and with David they secured the Midlands U18 Doubles

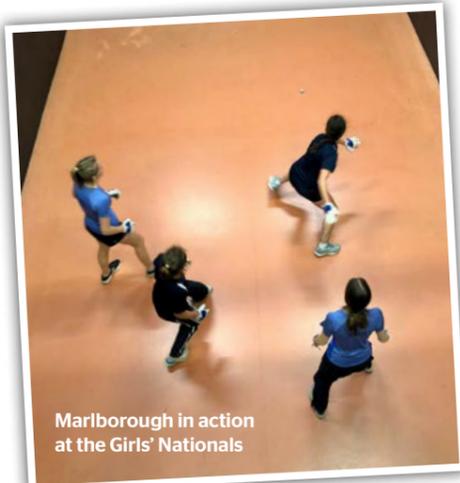


Rugby's U18s at the Girls' Nationals

title, the first time this has been achieved at Rugby.

Although fixtures were limited for the girls, our U18s contributed massively to the Girls' Nationals at Oundle. Lucy Gribben reached the last four in the country before losing to the eventual winner; then, with Gracie

Douglas Miller, she secured the Doubles Plate. Izzy Colbourne reached the Plate Singles final and then she and Eliza Bruce Jones reached the semi-final of the Doubles, before again being beaten by the eventual winners from Durham.



Marlborough in action at the Girls' Nationals

ST DUNSTAN'S COLLEGE

St Dunstan's has plans for four glass-backed courts on the edge of a new plaza and the sports department is currently awaiting drawings. The RFA is ready to give whatever help or advice is sought.

ST PAUL'S SCHOOL

Sam Roberts writes: At the postponed 2021 Nationals, Ben Pymont, Luke Jopling and Gus Goulding dusted off their gloves and played some surprisingly good Fives, with Ben making it to the Plate final. Five entered the U14s – Alex Hogben, Dan Hughes, Kyle Hay, Zach Tydeman and Aarush Ranjan – but just one, Charles Calzia, the U16s. He teamed up with a player from Allyn's to win the Doubles Plate.

At the Winchester Doubles Ben Roberts & Aiden Whitham and Charles Calzia & Will Sauvel-Porter were all trying Winchester Fives for the first time. SPS 1 reached the semis, while Charles and Will lost in the quarter-finals to the eventual winners.

Six entered the West of England: Ben Roberts, Aiden Whitham, Benny Harrison and Alex Ridley in the Open, and Fintan Delaney and Rufus Goodman in the U16s, where Fintan nearly took out the top seed, losing in the third. Rufus improved as the day went on, reaching the Plate final. In the Open Doubles, Alex & Benny and Aiden & Ben reached the semis, which were intense affairs, with long rallies and superb retrieving.

SEDBERGH SCHOOL

Rupert Follett writes: A virtually new look Sedbergh Fives programme has enjoyed a good season this year. Only three players had played the game before the Covid interruption but a brand-new crop of players has emerged and the future for Sedbergh Fives looks healthy.

Our first proper fixtures took place in the Northern School Championships, excellently hosted in Durham. It proved a success, too, with first and second places in the U16 tournament and runners up in the U18 tournament.

Sedbergh have played friendly



No school enjoys its Fives more than Stamford!

STAMFORD ENDOWED SCHOOLS

Alex Smith writes: Fives continues to flourish at Stamford Schools, with pupils playing on our squash courts, building on the success of last

season's pair who won the U14 National Doubles. Things began with the Lady's Cup in October where a very enthusiastic bunch of girls and boys played in the tournament.

At the West of England Schools Chase Burgess & Cameron Drutman competed hard in the U16s, good preparation for the Midlands Regionals at Oundle where Chase won the U15 Singles and the Doubles with Cameron. The girls were not to be outdone – Jasmine Withers won the U15 Girls Singles, and with her partner Georgie Cameron the U15 Doubles. There were several other successes in the U14s for both boys and girls.

At the National U13s and U14 Stamford managed more silverware,

with a Singles and two Doubles Plates. In the U16s, Stamford's squad were all a year young, but played fiercely; we look forward to Chase and Cameron's return next year.

The School Girls Nationals were tough for some of our under-age girls but Georgie Cameron reached the U16 Singles Plate final. Lower down, Bea Grindal & Tilly Stevens won U13 gold, Flo Cavaciuti & Emily Tyler silver and Ruby Wright bronze. The final success came when Bea Grindal & Tilly Stevens won the Ladies' Winchester Fives Doubles Plate.

We have had another fantastic season, and I am thankful to have so many keen players. All we need now are some proper courts!

SHERBORNE SCHOOL

Nick Scorer reports: Despite cancellations the Fives team still had a healthy fixture list with seven matches and two national competitions. Fabian M and Jack P led the senior squad who enjoyed games against both school and adult teams, with victory over the RFA being a particular highlight.

A number of Lower Sixth and Fifth Formers have started to play at the top level this term and in the Third and Fourth Form there are plenty of enthusiastic players, many of whom are new to the sport. Sadly they missed out on a number of matches, but we hope their enthusiasm will follow them into the next season.

STOKE NEWINGTON SCHOOL

Tom Maconie writes: In February Fives restarted at Stoke Newington School in Hackney after some two decades. Earlier in the year an RFA team met with head teacher Zehra Jaffer to discuss restoring Fives as a sport at the school. The six courts were inspected which, while lacking bars on the front walls and flush internal door handles, were in good condition. Moreover, thanks to the work of Gareth Price, there were already stepped benches in place outside the courts for spectators. Court alterations were then carried out on the advice of Stuart Kirby; Gloves and Balls



developed a blue ball easier to pick out against the light-coloured walls and these balls and some 30 gloves were funded by the RFA. The RFA also funded a coach, Derby Moor's Raheem Yusuf. The plan was to "pump prime" the game at the school.

Fives duly started with PE lessons run by the school and after-school clubs on Thursday and Friday run by the coach. The game is mainly played by year 7 and 8 pupils, however, it is catching on fast and is enjoyed by all.

Matches are being planned, PE staff are being trained and drop shots practised. It will not be long before Stoke Newington is a school Fives force to be reckoned with!

Finally, the school has been kind enough to offer the courts for use midweek to a community club. This is tremendous news since it will allow pupils to continue playing when they leave and will enable local parents and adults to enjoy the sport too.



TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Ian Jackson reports: With around 60 players life was busy on the Tonbridge courts again this year. Some strong senior players and U15s enabled Tonbridge to win all four main trophies at the South East Regional Championships this year, with Neil Hudson's senior singles win widely thought to be the event's best ever.

Neil and Massimo Campanale were tipped to do well in the doubles at the Nationals and played probably the best ever game of doubles by Tonbridge in recent years to lose in three games. Neil and Massimo both made the last 16 in the U18 singles and Jack Bourne and Jac Haurie-Pelleg the last 16 in the U14 singles. Oliver Carroll was runner-up in the U14 plate and Max Freudenheim won the Open Singles Plate, a first ever singles trophy at senior level for Tonbridge!

However, the memory which will burn the brightest will be the trip with eight senior players to Edinburgh on a weekend tour. Matches against Fettes, Merchiston and Edinburgh Academy were all much enjoyed, but the spirit of Fives was particularly present in the Saturday evening supper.

WHITGIFT SCHOOL

Stuart Litchfield reports: Unfortunately, due to the impact of Covid over two years and the retirement of Nick Morgan last year, we faced something of an impasse. We have sought a replacement coach with the help of Howard Wiseman and are hopeful that, all checks being in place, we will be able to restart the club from next year, specifically targeting our juniors.

The positive news is that the courts have now been fully refurbished and, although still susceptible to winter sweating, they are much improved and ready for some enthusiastic junior usage come September.

WINCHESTER COLLEGE

Jamie McManus writes: The Winchester College Fives club was delighted to get back to more normal business in 2021-22. Numbers were strong with the courts overflowing with casual players at the Monday and Friday practices and plenty of new talent in the lower year groups.

Highlights included: the competition between Winchester I (Marcus Cloke Browne & Shiloh Wu) and Allyn's I with three doubles finals going Winchester's way in the end; a large entry of 21 in the Schools' Nationals; Open Singles victory for Shiloh Wu over Gwydion Wiseman at the Nationals; U14 success in the Singles (James Kennedy) and Doubles (James Kennedy & Arthur James-Duff); our first ever entry in the Colquhoun trophy and victories for both Chris Lee in the U18s and Anthony Cloke Browne in the U16s; Shiloh & Marcus taking the Plate at the U25 Nationals by storm; an extremely tight 1st IV match at Tonbridge (deservedly won by the home side in the end); a benefit to Covid as 10 boys who had never played a Fives match before ended up representing the school against Tonbridge; and two Wykehamists found to be missing from their boarding house without permission at 10:30pm eventually found playing Fives!

Next season should be no less exciting as the arrival of girls provides an opportunity for expansion of the club, as does the possibility of six new courts – currently scheduled for early 2023.



Winchester at the Nationals

The RFA Media Correspondent interviews the four players – Dave Butler, Sam Russell, Matt Shaw and Theo Parker – responsible for the 37 ground-breaking Fives Podcasts that counted 4000 downloads and enlivened our Saturday mornings over a period of 11 months from May 2020 onwards.

RFA: So, how did The Fives Pod all start? Whose idea was it?

All: Sam's! Or so he'll claim.

Matt: It was lockdown, we were all totally bored, with no Fives and all the other restrictions. Sam was so bored he was reduced to uploading videos of himself kicking a toilet roll round his bedsit. I mean...

Sam: I'd mooted the idea of a Fives podcast ages ago, but no-one had the time to put it into practice. Then, as if by magic, the whole world found itself looking for a project to do in what was about the most boring year in human history. The four of us started chatting on Zoom once a week, with talk inevitably always turning to Fives. Then, about three calls in, the penny dropped: "Why don't we turn these rambling chats into a Fives podcast?"

Dave: Yes, Sam's right. I think we actually discussed it at the London Open, months before the pandemic. Once we got Zooming it was mainly just for a laugh, not for public consumption. Thinking back, my favourite session was a quiz I hosted for the others. There was one round where I made them all 'sing' a Fives tournament report to the tune of a famous song – Theo had to sing the North West Open 2018 or something to the tune of John Lennon's 'Imagine'



Guest presenter Shinan Zhang



The podcasters (clockwise from top left): Sam Russell, Matt Shaw, Dave Butler and Theo Parker

– and the others had to guess both the song and the tournament report being read. Once we decided to go live on air we got a bit more serious, with a designated topic each time. Shame about the 'lost episode', though!

RFA: So once you decided to go public, who took on which roles?

Theo: My memory is Matt did much of the organisation at the time, especially on the technical editing side of things – I think he was on furlough early on, had the time and the skills. We owe him a lot.

Sam: Agreed. We thought we'd divide up the work evenly, except in the end Matt did everything. There is a whole technical side to podcasting that was beyond the other three of us – recording, editing, hosting platforms, airing, marketing. Matt was pretty much the expert in all of those fields.

RFA: We didn't know you had all these talents, Matt!

Matt: Sam's being a bit too flattering.

The first episode was on Soundcloud but we wanted the Podcast to be accessible on Spotify and Apple, so we set up an account with a podcast host. Yes, I was on furlough, craving a distraction, so I took all that stuff, plus the artwork. My brother Dom was at home on furlough too – he's a sound engineer, so we mixed together a theme song using YouTube clips and some footage I captured from the Jesters tour. The guitar riff is in fact Dom's own work and he was pretty excited when I said how many downloads we had through Season Two. Sam and Dave then took on the editing for their episodes once I was back at work. It's amazing what you learn through Fives!

'WE TOOK A WEEK EACH, ONE PODCAST A MONTH, EACH WITH A DIFFERENT APPROACH'

RFA: Does that sound right, Dave?

Dave: Yes, we took a week each, so one podcast a month, each with a different approach: Sam rather liked the 'out there' episodes, the game show type thing. I have a feeling these were quite hard for poor Matt to edit. I preferred the interview format, starting with a take on Desert Island Discs and then moving towards a pure interview. Some of those went well, I felt – my favourites were with Hamish, Dave Hebden and Matt Cavanagh. They were simpler to edit: we just recorded the audio on Zoom, clapped at the start of the episode so Matt knew when to start from, and we were usually able to tell Matt: "No-one swore, no major gaffes, perhaps listen through once but think it is fine with no editing".

RFA: Is that true about the game-show style for you, Sam?

Sam: Absolutely. I really enjoyed doing the episode on the National Singles. It was a real Fives nerds' episode where we hypothetically played out a champion of champions tournament. The panel gelled nicely and it was a lot of fun to record. I still can't believe that Ian Fuller didn't make the quarter-finals. And, of course, only Bob knew about the players from the 50s and 60s who didn't make the round of 16. But Wayne was bound to come out the GOAT, wasn't he?

RFA: Dave, tell us more about the Hamish Desert Island Discs episode.

Dave: Interviewing Hamish was memorable and set the benchmark for those to come: he had such a detailed memory of so many matches, so many interesting comments about tactics and mindset, especially in singles. So, of course, did Dave Hebden when he delved into his memory of great matches and great doubles partnerships. He made you feel we'd missed out, not having ever played with him. I also really enjoyed speaking to Matt Cavanagh; though I was a bit nervous before doing it, as he's such an esteemed member of the community and at that time the reigning Veterans Singles champion.

Sam: There were some we didn't manage: an interview with Wayne Enstone and also Paula Smith would have been great. To get an insight into



Singles champion Matt Cavanagh

the minds of the two greatest would have been fascinating. Unfortunately the timings didn't work out – but when post-Covid Fives settles down, or a budding new Fives-playing podcaster comes along, there are plenty more episodes waiting to be made. When we lost Theo after the first season we went down the guest presenter route, with Shinan Zhang hosting Ed Kay and James Toop on 'Mental Toughness', for example. There's a lot of scope for that sort of thing. Perhaps Guy Matthews or Dick Warner hosting a session on 'How to get Serious about Fives'?

RFA: Do you have a favourite, Matt?

Matt: The one which opened my eyes to the world of Handball sports across the globe was 'That International Episode' with Dan Grant and Gareth Price. It was our most listened-to episode with almost 200 streams. But there is really only one winner in my mind: 'That Doubles Partnership' episode with Tim Lewis and Stuart Watson. I'm so glad we followed up the suggestion to reach out to them. I'm sure their podcast served as a rightful tribute to the camaraderie that Fives can foster and captured the wonderful positive energy that Tim Lewis brought to the Fives court and all those and he met.

RFA: Were there any odd ones?

Dave: Podcasts weren't always about the players. We had our nerdy topics, too, like the History of Fives. We had Bob Dolby 'talking balls' as he put it, with Howard Wiseman, who was making them and saving the game after Nigel Gordon's death. Bob raised his pet idea that the board is now too

'PODCASTS WEREN'T ALWAYS ABOUT THE PLAYERS. WE HAD OUR NERDY TOPICS, TOO'

high for the modern ball and the modern player, particularly in doubles, which Howard found intriguing. With Stuart Kirby and co. now promoting Rugby Fives in squash courts with a lower tin and Howard producing a special ball to match the cushioned wooden floor, it's a thought.

RFA: How about feedback received and lessons learned?

Matt: The biggest takeaway for me was learning about the older generations of Fives players and the vibrant clubs that exist. From Derby Moor to the City of Durham, the Edward Allyn Club – and the easily forgotten Caledonian Club – there are lots of pockets of Fives around the country that so rarely meet up all together but which all share a similar love of the sport and the community. Perhaps we did a bit towards the reuniting of clubs that occurred this spring with the larger-than-usual Wood Cup competition.

Dave: I wish we had done some episodes or recorded some material while at tournaments. But perhaps someone else might still come along and take the project up for a year or so and then pass it on?

Sam: At the time, we just wanted to have some fun and remind the Fives-playing community that the sport still existed. Looking back, I'm very happy with how it turned out.



The inimitable partnership of Tim and Stuart



LEFT (L-R)
Original
President's
Cup; Old
Derbyshire
Yew; Tom
the Turner
with Tim
Hebblethwaite

BELOW
Newly
revamped
President's
Cup

The refurbished President's Cup

by **Tim Hebblethwaite**

Driving to Oundle School for the 2021 President's Cup, Hamish Buchanan and Bruce Hanton were discussing the best way to extend the President's Cup as it had run out of engraving space. Both thought that adding another plastic tier to the trophy would give the Cup the appearance of a tiered wedding cake. A better idea was to simply replace the second tier with a longer one. The question was, how?

Given Emrys Thursfield and I had won the President's Cup that day, I offered to take on the challenge. Meeting the people from the local trophy shop near Dulwich I discovered that the second tier on the cup was the largest available. A more bespoke solution was required. Bruce suggested we should replace the plastic levels with wood and in doing so extend the second base. Having agreed on that, our first step was to find a wood turner.

Turns out (no pun intended) that, unbeknown to me, a friend of mine is a member of the Worshipful Company of Turners. He kindly sent me a list of all the registered professional wood turners in the UK. I was fortunate enough to chance upon Tom Pockley in Iden, East Sussex. I discovered that Tom had turned trophies before, mainly for Sundridge Park Golf Club. As a bonus, living at the end of Tom's workshop was a Silversmith called Stuart Jenkins. So I drove down to meet Tom and Stuart, brief in hand.

The lovely and self-deprecating Tom, who is in his 79th year, describes his life in simple terms. He attended Haileybury and Imperial Service College (as it was known back then) from 1956-1960, he thinks, but remembers the Fives courts were used mainly as smoking dens. He then

went to Dublin University where he flunked his exams as he drank too much Guinness and generally enjoyed a lazy university life. Following his return to the UK intending to train as a teacher in Oxford, he did a short interim stint at Felsted School teaching Chemistry, where he fell in love, married and then continued teaching Chemistry there for another 30 years! He retired at 50 years old, and wood turning has been his occupation ever since.

According to David Barnes's "Brief history of Felsted School Fives", Felsted School has a long history of Rugby Fives. David Everett, who was the Master in Charge of Fives from 1977-1993 and inspired many Felstedians to take up the game, was also Tom's colleague in the Chemistry department. Tom also knows Colin Dowdeswell, who was mentioned in the brief history. What a serendipitous coincidence to have a Fives connection when rejuvenating such a majestic and important trophy.

Tom had a very nice piece of Old Derbyshire Yew in his workshop (see picture) which was our first choice of wood. He said it had been waiting for just such an exciting project as this. Stuart suggested that he could use the same size solid silver band (that would be hallmarked) for the new band, which would be in keeping with the other two silver bands and give us

engraving space until circa 2060.

The job was commissioned and a few months later I picked up the restyled President's Cup. I was absolutely delighted (and slightly relieved) with the result. So much so, I will be doing everything to try and win it back again in 2022, as I suspect many others will be too!



'TOM HAD A NICE PIECE
OF OLD DERBYSHIRE
YEW IN HIS WORKSHOP'

RFA Club Report

Hamish Buchanan reports on a season where Club Fives worked hard to recover



Another tricky year for Club matches with many schools understandably not keen for unnecessary visitors and several match managers struggling to find a team. In

the end just 11 matches were played out of 29 scheduled. Hopefully for the coming year things will improve and we can get back supporting as many schools and clubs as possible, all done whilst enjoying a few good games of Fives.

With this in mind and as it is becoming increasingly difficult to schedule Club matches throughout the season with all the tournaments and annual fixtures, allied to the fact that a 7pm weekday slot is not always the easiest time to get eight players in one location, I am interested to hear from any club secretaries who have, or would be interested in, weekend fixtures against other clubs, combined with an RFA Club team to make up a three-way fixture. The prototype for such a fixture was established several years ago by Exeter Town Club's visit to Malvern, with Derby Moor joining to make a tri-match. Plenty of Fives against a host of opponents and maybe a beer and a meal afterwards, what's not to like? Perhaps particularly appealing to the player who does not enjoy the tournament atmosphere and would prefer a more relaxed format with a guaranteed number of matches.

The President's Cup, which for those who do not know, is the Club's annual festival of Fives before Christmas and should be experienced at least once by every player of any ability, also suffered from post-pandemic rescheduling. With Marlborough College busy with end-of-term events we gratefully decamped to Oundle, who were kind enough to open their courts for us out of term.

Unfortunately the extra journey time was too much for some and we only had 24 players instead of the requisite 32. After some head scratching and a

President's Cup winners
Tim Hebblethwaite &
Emrys Thursfield



'THANK YOU TO TOM
FOR REINVIGORATING
THE WOOD CUP'

binful of failed attempts to re-order the complex draw, a system was found that could work, perhaps, with luck. After eight hours of generally competitive games, some machiavellian tactics from Dave Butler (attempting to plot a route through the labyrinth of early group games so as to find a chance to win the one of the four trophies he coveted most), with plenty of top-notch Christmas fare and a defiant cabal of exclusively male players intent on watching the fiasco of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, we awarded all four trophies including the President's Cup itself to Tim Hebblethwaite & Emrys Thursfield. Note this is the third year in a row that one of the winners of the Cup has travelled to and from the venue in Tim's car. Book your seat for his car to Marlborough now!

A big thank you goes to Tom Watkinson for master-minding and reinvigorating the Wood Cup, played initially on two sites and featuring 12



Wood Cup organiser Tom Watkinson in action

IVs. This Club knock-out competition is very demanding on players, but, played over the weekend of the RFA Dinner at Queen's Club, it attracted a broad range of players, young and not so young, many of them not regular tournament players. In a season where club Fives was recovering rather than flourishing it was good to see most of the traditional clubs represented and the mighty West of England Club defending their title successfully.

So, let's hope we can carry on 'building back' and make next season a Fives-playing one.
hamish.buchanan@rugbyfives.com

Around the clubs in 2021-22

A season of recovering from the pandemic, and doing it pretty well!



Cambridge Captain
Thursfield & HonSec
Burgess take on the Past

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

Emrys Thursfield writes: The season saw entries to more tournaments than usual, some painfully close defeats, and even some silverware! It began with the student-alumnus pair of Thursfield & Edmonds losing a hard-fought plate final at the London Open. BUSF saw us enter seven players, with three new players experiencing their first tournament-level Fives. The standout performance was Holly Nugent & Ben Yass just falling short in the Plate final. The year really started to heat up with the National Singles qualifiers – with Emrys Thursfield winning the 3rd-4th playoff, and Ben Yass reaching the Plate final.

The successes for the club continued at the Women's U23s, with Holly Nugent winning the Singles Plate and then the Doubles title with Savanna Leboff. The Women's Nationals were pleasing too – Holly reached the semi-finals of the Singles and was runner-up in the

main Doubles with her sister.

Success continued with an excellent turnout for the President's Cup, which Emrys won, while Ben took the Mate's Plate, Holly scooped the Love Mug and last year's captain Sarthak won the T-Pot – a current CURFC player or recent alumnus in every winning pair!

The build-up to the Varsity Match started with the U25s and the fantastic Past v Present. The Men's Varsity Match felt the closest it has been for some years, although we fell short. The women on the other hand continued their great run, with too much experience for Oxford. The season was well rounded off with the National Mixed Doubles, where the scratch pair of Thursfield & Leboff made it to the final.

I'd like to congratulate our women's captain Holly Nugent, whose successes are reflected in the women's rankings. Holly finished the season at ninth in Singles and 12th in Doubles – positions which result from hard work!

CITY OF DURHAM CLUB

Julie McIntyre reports: City of Durham Fives has gone from strength to strength this year with our juniors taking the opportunity to enter various tournaments: Imogen won silver in the Women's U23s; Oscar played in a Wallball international in the Netherlands; Simon won the plate at the President's Cup, while Simon & Oscar reached the semis at the National Schools. Camille became the Girls' National U18 champion, and, with Imogen, won the doubles; Camille also won the National Mixed Doubles, while Doug and Julie took the plate. Oscar and Enrique won the Scottish Open Doubles, beating Dan in the final.

Simon, Oscar and Camille have had fabulous seasons: Simon beat Oscar in the Northern Schools, then they won the doubles together. Camille became the first female player to win the Derby Moor Doubles, beating Simon and partner in the final, with Oscar and partner in third place, and Dan took the plate. Camille is now ranked third in the country.

With Tom Wakelam stepping back after four successful years, we're grateful to Richie Murby and Alex Wilson for their coaching. We've been running introductory sessions for local Scouts, Brownies and even Beavers, plus some for the University holiday club, with more scheduled for the summer.



City of Durham's Imogen and Camille,
Schoolgirls champions at Oundle

DEEP WEST CLUB

Charles Hattersley writes: The Deep West club managed weekly sessions through late 2021 and into 2022 following Covid tests prior to each game; these were carefully supervised by our resident Professor of Tropical Medicine David Dance (The Prof). Although we have been depleted in numbers the standard has been enhanced by the regular appearance of Mount Kelly headmaster, Guy Ayling (The Head), and The Prof's full-time return to the UK. The bar is being raised by the hard hitting of Luke Newman-Taylor and Gary Macaulay, who are club stalwarts and, with the assistance of evergreen Nick Geere, are seeking to take part in national tournaments, following the lead of chairman, Dr John Ogle (The Doc).

The Doc reached the semi-finals of the Veterans Championships but, in his excitement at winning two matches on the trot, tore a shoulder muscle that is still healing. However, he still makes regular 180-mile round trips for weekly sessions. In addition The Head is coaching an increasing number of Kelly pupils on the one

court currently available. The Prof and RFA Chairman, David Parlbly (The Left Hand), came to an arrangement with the school that has ensured the continuation of weekly Fives. Lastly, founding member, Richard Bury, is back in training after his brain tumour operation and has every intention of making a comeback before – in his words – he snuffs it!

DERBY MOOR FIVES

Bob Dolby reports: Once unleashed from Covid restrictions we set about making up for lost Fives, staging our Invitation Doubles in June 2021, which Raheem won for a second time. We have stuck to our pattern of three to four sessions a week, with both courts in demand, the players' age range covering some six decades. Matches were played home and away, sometimes as DMF, sometimes as the RFA; coaching was offered at Rugby and Manchester; regular sessions of Eton Fives were played at Repton; a Christmas Dinner was held – and we hosted the Yorkshire Open!

We entered players in virtually every open tournament, with Lewis Keates



Derby Moor's first-time winners of the Owers Trophy

invariably one of them. Our website, mastered by Stuart Kirby, lists the manifold Plates our players have won, but now we are beginning to move to silver and even gold medal status. Notable has been gold for Anthony in the Cambridge Challenger and for our Owers Trophy team of Lewis, Anthony & Bally; there was silver for Lewis in the Barnes Bridge, the Scottish Open Doubles and the Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles, and for Brian in the Masters Doubles. Lewis, whose rise up the rankings has been deserved and inexorable, duly won the Derby Moor Doubles to round off a brilliant season.

DURHAM UNIVERSITY

Douglas Law reports: The first full season back had DURVSC back on top form. From the first tournament, the South East Open, top quality Fives was in evidence. Doug Law teamed up with former captain Sam Russell to make the Doubles final. Although victory eluded us, it was still a good showing – and at least we lost to another former captain, Dave Butler.

At the Universities Championships, several players made their Fives competitive debuts. Callum Clark put on an impressive display before he was thwarted by injury, and Lizzie Ware & Kirsten Bell teamed up effectively in the first-ever outing of a Durham women's team. Their meeting in the Women's Plate at the event bodes well. Pleasingly, Isaac Weaver progressed to the semi-finals of the Doubles with his partner.

The club continued to perform well in regional tournaments, with appearances from our players at the Yorkshire and North of England



Durham University's five past captains at the Yorkshire Open

Opens. At the latter there was glory for Will Hanley as he took victory in an emotional Plate final against long-term rival and teammate Nathan Jerome. At the National Mixed Doubles, Doug Law failed to hold on to the title he had held for three

pandemic-affected years, but took the Plate with fellow Durham resident Julie McIntyre.

Next season is set to continue the upward trajectory, with Isaac Weaver becoming men's captain, and Kirsten Bell leading the women's side.

EASTBOURNE COLLEGE CLUB

Spencer Beal writes: It has been great to be able to get back on court this year after such a long time. The same stalwarts turn out most Tuesday evenings, and a number of others join us from further afield from time to time. Good news, in that Spencer Beal, with no little help from partner Tony Hamilton, managed to retain the Masters Doubles title in April. Not such good news is that the College were unwilling and/or unable to find the money to support an upgrade of the courts, even though the plans were fully drawn up and costed by the RFA, and indeed the RFA were willing to consider a grant to help finance the proposed improvements. As a result we will have to make do with a superficial redecoration with paint and plaster, although rest assured that the courts still offer superb playing conditions with a fast-paced game and good bounce. All are welcome any Tuesday evening throughout the year. There is no charge, we can lend gloves if your old ones are worn out. There is even a water fountain at the courts to quench thirst and we usually retire to The Dolphin or Bibendum for a well-earned drink afterwards.



Edinburgh's Universities Singles champion

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY

Ben Jourdan writes: For the first time in our history, Edinburgh won the Universities championships with an almost clean sweep of the silverware. Remarkably, the singles and plate singles finals were entirely internal affairs, with Andrew Boyd beating Ben Jourdan and Oliver Heath beating Andrew Shaw.

We maintained good form at the Under 25s, where Andrew Boyd made it to the semi-finals and our first pair

progressed to the final. At the Scottish Open we put Daniel Tristao through his paces with Ben Jourdan and Andrew Boyd both almost claiming a game off the then National number one.

This year saw the resumption of bi-weekly training session at The Edinburgh Academy, which has made travel a lot easier for students. Previously, the journey to Fettes College had put new students off. While we are still unable to become an officially recognised club we have had a couple of students join with no previous Fives experience – they have stuck with it and are making great progress. They'll show off their skills at the next Universities championships!

EXETER AND TIVERTON FIVES CLUB

Alex Rew writes: The Exeter and Tiverton clubs are now effectively one in practical terms. We play on a Tuesday night at Blundell's starting at 6pm and have good levels of attendance with a spread of ages, skills and sexes! All are very welcome to join us and lanyards will be provided to guests to satisfy the school's requirements.

We had just the one fixture this last season against the touring Old Whitgiftians. We welcome other touring sides to the West Country. We will be gentle.

Ollie Arnold and Louise Mathias have recently adopted the club, adding some vitality. Steve Clapp has moved back to the area with his brood and is now playing again and the ever-youthful Stuart Watson is back on court to challenge the best, verbally at least, after a period of recuperation and toe-touching.

JESTERS CLUB

Ben Hale writes: We managed to play roughly half our fixtures and look forward to even more next year. The usual January tour to Edinburgh took place in March instead with slightly reduced numbers. It was great to get back up to Scotland after a year away and pleasing to see that the health of Fives in Scotland remains good.

My thanks as ever to all the match managers and fellow tour organiser

EXECUTIONERS

Andy Pringle reports: There was no delay in lots of players joining us on the courts at St Paul's once the 2021/22 season got under way.

Among the familiar faces parading their skills were messrs Pringle, Warner, Bridge, Horder, Chai, Julius, Even, Rich, Mathieu, van Lare, Chua, Hale Matt and Ben, plus Ibbey Lee and Helena Tunks. We were also regularly joined by guests from the OMTs and UCS, as well as several new faces, including Shinan Zhang and Dana Wilson, plus Freddie Evans and Charlie Barnett.

Our Wednesday night sessions feature strong numbers and a high standard of play – which was reflected in the club's best showing in the Wood Cup years. Our team of Penn Chai, Ben Hale, Charlie Barnett and Oscar McIntyre reached the semi-finals despite facing the defending champions early on.

Away from St Paul's, too, our members have had some success:

Ben Hale reached the President's Cup final and the Barnes Bridge semi-finals, while brother Matt picked up the Plate at the latter event.

In terms of tournaments, pride of place goes to our ladies. At the Nationals, Shinan won the Doubles with Louise Mathias, while Helena won the Singles plate, also teaming up with Ibbey to reach the semi-finals of the Doubles. Meanwhile, Ibbey did herself proud at the Under 23s, where she was runner-up in the Singles. Shinan and Helena dominated the Ladies Winchester Fives championships, with Shinan beating Helena to the Singles title before the pair teamed up to win the Doubles.

If there is a slight disappointment, it's that we only managed one friendly – albeit a wonderful six-a-side clash against a Jesters side made up entirely of club members. But with the first match of next season already in the diary, hopefully we can have a much fuller fixture list to report on in 12 months' time.



Dave Butler. A final word of thanks goes to James Tilston, who is moving on from his role as a Jesters committee member representing Rugby Fives to concentrate on his role as RFA Treasurer.



MANCHESTER Y CLUB

Wendy Nicholls writes: What a season we have had and hopefully more to come, now we have our courts back up and running after Covid. Tuesday nights for beginners has become really popular – we sometimes could do with another court! And Thursday nights playing singles is going well. On Saturday morning we run a Junior Y club for Fives, with some great young players already. Getting cubs and scouts involved to complete their sports badges is another work in progress.

The Y Club has been delighted to hold two championships: the North West Open and the Ladies' Nationals. It was wonderful seeing so much high-quality Fives being played on those weekends.

Two of our young players represented the Y Club in the National U13s, which was a great experience for them. Val actually got to the final of the U13 Singles in his first ever tournament. He subsequently went on to win the Plate at the Derby Moor Doubles. He's definitely one to watch for the future!

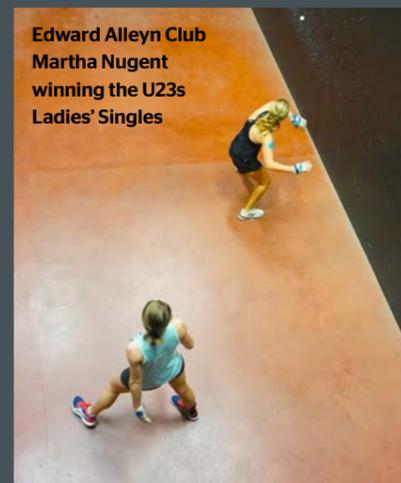
Our older players distinguished themselves as well: The Veterans Doubles title was won by our very own Dave Fox & John Minta, and John won the singles for a third time. Then Dave went on to win the Vintage Doubles with his partner, Sam Roberts.

We staged matches, hosting sides from Sedbergh School and Derby Moor, a great experience and they have invited us to theirs for a rematch. It's definitely onward and upwards.

EDWARD ALLEYN CLUB

Hamish Buchanan writes: A great return to regular Tuesday night Fives on the Allyn's courts with a rolling cast of 30 to 40 players and an enthusiastic band of Allyn's boys and girls, especially Patrick Harrison and Gwydion Wiseman. Sessions are epitomised by the eclectic mix of National Champions like Charlie Brooks and Will Ellison partnering players who have only recently returned to the game after several years' absence, such as Tadig Davey and Joe Garratt. The mix-ups enthuse the youngsters and returning 'beginners' and still allow time for the top quality doubles and singles, especially when there is a tournament on the horizon.

EAC fielded teams in both the Owers Trophy and Wood Cup and several members won national and



regional titles, inc. the aforementioned Brooks & Ellison in the Cyriax along with Martha Nugent and Tim Hebblethwaite in the National U23s and President's Cup respectively.



Marlborough Town Doubles Plate winners Tony Bethwaite & Rupert Folland

MARLBOROUGH TOWN

Harvey Bishop writes:

Marlborough Town Fives Club is in great health once more. In the period when only outdoor sports were allowed we enjoyed play on the Eton Fives courts with players clad in thick coats and woolly hats. The Club's ambition to hold the annual Dinner and Doubles Cup in 2021 was achieved, with a fulsome turnout producing new Cup and Plate winners.

We have enough players for all four courts to usually be filled with mainly doubles on Club nights. Nevertheless this season we have focused on recruiting and now have half a dozen new veterans, as well as a similar number of sons of existing members playing. So far we have been unsuccessful in recruiting women players but, as an inclusive and diverse club, will keep trying. We have run a session for about 30 teenage Marlborough Explorer Scouts to try Fives and Tom Kiggell ran a taster session for Swindon Academy School.

Various national competitions took advantage of the courts, including the President's Cup, the British Universities and the Veterans, where Tom and I managed to make it to the final of the Doubles and give Minta & Fox a good game. The Club has played matches against the Old Whitgiftians and the North Oxford Club. We always welcome visiting clubs, so please keep us in your plans: we are fortunate in having access Wednesday, Friday and Sunday evenings at 6pm.

OLD BLUNDELLIANS

Alex Rew writes: Covid has undoubtedly hit the school Fives hard, so it was fantastic to have such a good turnout at this year's Reichwald Cup where the OBs are paired with school players of both sexes. We had a wonderful ever-lasting tiered cup and plate competition book-ended by lunch and tea at the Beale Centre.

Alexandra Steel has also been holding some 'Fives Masterclasses' during the year aimed at OBs and parents of children at the school. These have unearthed players who haven't donned their gloves for decades and have proved to be fun events, leading to former players getting back on court and new players trying the sport. Gloves are provided and all are welcome to these events but also to the Exeter and Tiverton clubs at 6pm on Tuesdays on the Blundell's courts.



Old Pauline five-time National Doubles champion Charlie Brooks

OLD PAULINES

Julian Aquilina writes: Once again, numerous Old Paulines enjoyed great success at open tournaments over the course of the season. In singles, Dan Tristao continued to hold onto the number one year-end ranking with his victories at the Nationals and the Scottish, while Ed Kay finished close behind, having won four titles himself. In doubles, they were joined by our National champion Charlie Brooks, Ollie Arnold, Ben Beltrami and Theo Parker to place OPs into six of the top seven spots.

However, despite the strength and depth of OPs at the top of the game, the club failed to put out a team for the Owers Trophy – a significant disappointment, considering the success it has enjoyed at this tournament in recent years. Our presence was restored at the Wood

Cup, with the official team, featuring three current pupils and four OPs, overcoming a Jesters side of three more OPs in a closely contested semi-final. We then succumbed in the final to a strong West of England squad which included another two OPs.

Due to pandemic-related scheduling difficulties, the usual internal club competitions were not held this season, but we continue to hold our regular sessions on Thursday evenings during term time, and we encourage players of all standards to come along.

OLD RUGBEIANS

Dick Warner writes: I delegated the task of raising an OR side for the Wood Cup to Michael Suddaby, who promptly produced two IVs. All eight players played their hearts out. Michael then wrote a massive report of the weekend for the editor, who was forced to abridge the text submitted as follows: This year's instalment of the National Club Championship saw the return of the Old Rugbeians to the Fives scene. As bastions of the game, it was the ORs who arrived punctually for the 1st round at 9.30am, bright-eyed and bushy tailed. However, due to our long absence from the circuit, we were unaware that this was a good 30 minutes earlier than the time schedule to which other Fives players work these days. Once the draw was revealed, our two IVs found themselves pitted against teams with the advantage of much more regular play: Executioners, Derby Moor, Old Paulines, and the defending champions, the West of England Club. Qualification for the Plate, to be played the next day, seemed the most realistic target.

After a highly enjoyable Dinner at



Old Rugbeians at the RFA Dinner

OLD TONBRIDGIANS

Neil Arnott writes: Following the ravages of Covid, OT Fives resumed this season with vigour and strong attendances, including the arrival of some completely new to the game

(whom Neil Arnott amazed with his signature drop shots.)

Season highlights included a highly competitive needle match against the Jesters, which – after some warm-up, but definitely non-counting singles –



Old Tonbridgians proud of their champion Grand Master

the Queen's Club on the Saturday evening, a great occasion that enabled old friends to catch up on what had been going on in their lives since they had last crossed paths, hostilities recommenced on Sunday, Sadly, in our quest for silverware we fell foul of the West of England 2nd IV and the Derby Moor 1st IV. However, we'd like to think that the return of the ORs provided a welcome and much needed lift to the wider Fives community. The team spirit and camaraderie of the Rugbeians was for us the highlight of the weekend. As always Fives was the winner, but this particular time let us not forget it was Rugby Fives.

OLD WHITGIFTIANS

Nick Woolfenden writes: Along with players at courts across the whole country the Old Whitgiftians have been very pleased to return to play this year. The school courts in Croydon have been undergoing a welcome refurbishment and Thursday Club nights have been well supported with a range of well-established OW players and newer/returning/school players.

Though our fixture list hasn't yet recovered, we were delighted to re-

establish our annual West Country tour in March with matches at Sherborne, Tiverton and Marlborough. Though the touring party was impacted the day before departure by Covid, there was still a great turnout of six players and seven supporters. Plenty of good Fives and enjoyable socialising ensued.

We're pleased to have had OW

ended in a fitting draw, with the OT's represented by messrs Harman, Lewis, Keyes and Oscroft and the Jesters by Mathieu, Jackson, Chai and Ben Hale.

More exciting still was the fixture against the School ("the best team in twenty years", so we were told), which included four singles and eight doubles, all closely fought. And remarkably this also ended in a tie 103-103! Much beer and curry was then consumed by messrs Oscroft, Keyes, Lewis and Mathieu, only one of whom is the right side of 50.

Finally, the late season icing on the cake was supplied in the shape of Martin Wilkinson winning the National Grand Masters Doubles for the over 75's. Martin, "playing spirit-sapping reverse angles", with partner Bev Boag triumphed over Bernard Atkinson and another OT Mick Summerhayes 4-11, 12-10, 11-6. Is this a record for an OT? Let's hope it inspires us youngsters under 60!



OWs versus the Exeter Club

successes in national tournaments at both ends of our membership age spectrum. And we hope to restart some more fixtures against other clubs this coming year. Club nights are an enjoyable opportunity for players of all standards and ages. If you'd like to play with us or find out more, please drop our Hon. Sec. Nick Woolfenden a line (nickw5@hotmail.com).



Oxford's victorious men

OXFORD UNIVERSITY

Gabriela van Bergen writes: This year was challenging, as the club set about recovering from Covid, having lost players who had graduated, so the emphasis had to be on recruiting via the Freshers' Fayre, through social media and by offering taster sessions.

We sought a generous Club Development Grant for equipment available, coaching and to cover entry to competitions. Tom Kiggell became coach and has hugely helped the team.

We encouraged the women to take part in as many tournaments as possible, with players such as Miriam Stricker and Haulwen Goldie-Jones in particular representing the club around the country. The team made great progress and started winning matches, including the Varsity 2nd team contest where our women were able to demonstrate their superior skill against similar beginners. The relatively inexperienced Women's 1st IV were outmatched by Cambridge, but we expect better results next year.

The Men's VIII had a particularly successful year. They placed well in the Universities and U25 plates, with special mention to Teddy Monro-Davies and Louis Odgers on their run to the BUSF plate semis. After losing to a strong Past side in the annual contest, the team showed great strength to bounce back the next week and win the Men's Varsity Match for the fifth year in a row.

The club has seen significant growth this year, and with most remaining for next year, we expect to maintain momentum and continue to develop our player base in size and skills.

UCS OLD BOYS

Chris Blakeley reports: We continued to run highly enjoyable club evenings on most Mondays and Wednesdays throughout the year for up to six of our regulars and occasional visitors. The single court remains in good condition and the School has left us to get on with it. We have not heard any news either way about their intentions for the court or Fives at the school.

WESSEX CLUB

Harry Akerman writes: We had an enjoyable season on our Winchester Fives Courts – probably our last full season on these fantastic courts as the College builds its new Sports Centre with its suite of Winchester and Rugby Fives courts. Sadly, a couple of players did not return after Covid, but we had our number bolstered by the excellent Winchester College players and we have an enthusiastic junior section with several regular U13s. We had our first Southampton University student for a couple of years and also benefited from Ed Hawke returning with a mended shoulder. The Letchworth Bowl was as hard fought as ever; however we slightly misjudged how quickly Rob Moore would pick the game up again. Though not having played for two years it took him just one rally to find his feet and so Matt Hale and he won on an excellent evening where none of the 12 pairs won all their games. Next year we will probably start on the old courts and the money is on a move to the new centre after Christmas. Come and join us to say farewell to the old courts before it's too late!

WEST OF ENGLAND CLUB

Lionel Lawson reports: Despite the ongoing problem of having just one court at our disposal, under the enthusiastic leadership of our Club Captain Kevin Brice we have managed to keep going throughout the season with eight to 10 members in attendance on Wednesday nights – being patient and waiting for their turn. Sadly, one drawback is that we have been unable to host the three or four matches we have traditionally played down the years. We have, however, been able to play our traditional in-house Christmas Doubles, which was won in a pulsating struggle by evergreen Neil Butterfield & Sam Dansie, who beat Steve Brooke & almost evergreen Pete Grant 15-12 after the score-board stopped rolling at 12-12 for a very long time!

Highlight of the season was the Club retaining the Wood Cup in impressive style and the Club's 2nd team winning the Plate. The heroes for the club were Ollie Arnold, Theo Parker, Tom Watkinson and Tom Maconie, with a 2nd Team comprising Cameron Low, Archie McCreath, Sam Dansie and Louise Mathias. A Wood Cup celebration dinner was held at a local Indian restaurant, followed by a few beers at a local pub – a good time was quite rightly had by all.

Our season starts in September although it is likely some members will play through the summer. We look to intensify our discussions with Clifton College over securing the use of a second court.



West of England Wood Cup Champions

End-of-Season Rankings

The official UK Rugby Fives rankings in summer 2022 as compiled by **Dave Hebden**

SINGLES

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	1	D Tristao	98.7
2	2	E Kay	94.7
3	3	W Ellison	94.0
4	4	B Beltrami	71.4
5	5	D Butler	54.4
6	8	T Watkinson	50.7
7	7	J Aquilina	50.0
8	9	C Brooks	46.7
9	10	A Boyd	46.3
10	11	R Murby	42.1
11	14	S Russell	38.5
12	6	D Grant	35.1
13	19	B Jourdan	34.7
14	12	M Shaw	34.6
15	15	O Arnold	33.9
16	13	T Parker	32.5
17	18	R Whitehorn	26.1
18	27	C Low	25.7
19	16	J Tilston	23.8
20	17	B Kirwan	20.8
21	39	J Sumner	18.6
22	-	M Skogh	18.0
23	21	L Keates	17.2
24	29	J Smith	16.3
25	31	C Davey	16.2
26	24	A McCreath	16.1
27	20	P Hanton	15.6

Current	Previous	Name	Points
28	32	M Suddaby	14.6
29	51	A Goodwin	13.8
30	44	D Law	13.6
31	35	A Chai	13.4
32	43	G Wiseman	13.2
33	45	O McIntyre	12.6
34	-	S Park	12.2
35	22	C Blackaby	11.3
36	-	R Brown	10.0
-	-	D Tidy	10.0
38	23	J Hanton	9.8
39	-	L Wells	9.0
40	-	A Hill	8.1
-	-	S Wu	8.1
42	34	W Shardlow	7.2
43	-	N Jerome	7.1
-	-	G Jourdan	7.1
45	32	N Woolfenden	7.0
46	28	N G-Westacott	6.3
47	-	M Cloke Browne	5.7
48	-	L Cook	5.5
-	-	G Nsenga	5.5
-	40	J Savery	5.5
51	-	B Yass	5.4
52	-	X Millar	5.0
53	-	O Naden	4.9
-	-	E Thursfield	4.9

Current	Previous	Name	Points
55	36	S Beattie	4.5
-	30	D Fox	4.5
-	-	W Hanley	4.5
-	25	A Rew	4.5
59	-	H McFarlane	4.0
60	0	W Chan	3.9
60	46	M Layton	3.9
62	36	M Kemp	3.6
63	0	S Scott	3.3
-	-	A Shaw	3.3
-	-	I Weaver	3.3
0	0	A Whitham	3.3
-	42	D Whitham	3.3
68	36	J Brubert	3.2
-	-	O Heath	3.2
-	26	H Jefferies	3.2
71	51	G Marshall	3.0
72	-	L Odgers	2.9
73	47	S Bhushan	2.8
74	41	E Hatton	2.6
75	50	H Jackson	2.4
76	49	J Sissons	2.3
77	51	C Barnett	2.0
78	-	M Hawley	1.8
79	58	A Naumenko	1.5
80	68	Js Davies	1.2
81	-	L Mathias	0.3

DOUBLES

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	2	W Ellison	103.5
2	3	E Kay	95.7
3	1	D Tristao	88.5
4	5	O Arnold	87.4
5	8	C Brooks	82.9
6	6	B Beltrami	79.2
7	9	T Parker	72.9
8	7	D Butler	63.2
9	4	D Grant	59.0
10	14	T Watkinson	58.8
11	12	J Aquilina	58.7
12	13	A Boyd	52.0
13	16	B Jourdan	50.1
14	15	S Russell	49.8
15	10	M Shaw	49.6
16	11	J Tilston	48.4
17	26	C Low	43.4
18	27	L Keates	38.7
19	18	A McCreath	35.5
20	31	R Whitehorn	33.6
21	63	O McIntyre	30.3
22	48	D Law	30.2
23	76	B Callaghan	26.5
24	50	E Castillo Carbonell	24.7
25	73	C Davey	23.0
26	58	A Goodwin	22.6
27	-	J Toop	22.4
-	-	G Wiseman	22.4
29	-	M Frost	21.2
-	-	I Weaver	21.2
31	36	J Smith	20.1
32	-	B Singh	20.0
-	-	E Thursfield	20.0
34	23	R Mathieu	19.0
-	34	J Sumner	19.0
36	87	Js Davies	18.2
37	56	R Yusuf	18.0
38	45	A Chai	17.6
39	-	A Ahuja	17.3
-	-	D Swinbank	17.3

Current	Previous	Name	Points
-	-	D Tidy	17.3
42	19	C Blackaby	16.7
43	22	B Kirwan	15.8
44	34	L Mathias	15.2
45	-	S Beattie	14.1
46	33	S Bhushan	13.8
-	42	M Suddaby	13.8
48	40	E Hatton	13.4
-	87	N Jerome	13.4
-	31	M Spillane	13.4
51	63	V Singh	12.6
52	30	B Chua	12.2
-	-	W Hanley	12.2
-	17	P Hanton	12.2
-	-	A Hicks	12.2
56	23	S Hodgson	12.0
57	-	B Yass	11.2
58	75	R Christie	11.0
-	23	J Ferguson	11.0
-	29	H Jefferies	11.0
61	43	T Hebblethwaite	10.5
62	-	B Ames	10.0
-	-	W Bucknell	10.0
-	-	B Hale	10.0
-	-	S Leboff	10.0
-	-	D Sorensen	10.0
-	-	H Tunks	10.0
68	28	J Hanton	8.9
-	51	J Hughes	8.9
-	87	H Jackson	8.9
-	21	R Murby	8.9
-	51	A Rew	8.9
73	-	H McFarlane	8.7
74	63	K Brice	7.7
-	20	H Buchanan	7.7
-	37	J Cunningham	7.7
-	63	D Fox	7.7
-	63	R Guthrie	7.7
-	37	M Kemp	7.7

Current	Previous	Name	Points
-	51	J Manger	7.7
-	63	J Minta	7.7
-	63	G Page	7.7
83	87	C Barnett	7.4
84	-	C Clark	7.1
-	-	M Cloke Browne	7.1
-	-	M Dare	7.1
-	-	W Edmonds	7.1
-	-	O Heath	7.1
-	-	A Hutchinson	7.1
-	-	T Monro-Davies	7.1
-	-	L Odgers	7.1
-	-	A Shaw	7.1
-	-	J Sinton	7.1
-	-	L Wells	7.1
-	-	N Whitney	7.1
-	45	N Woolfenden	7.1
-	-	S Wu	7.1
98	56	D Whitham	6.7
99	58	R Dyke	6.3
-	47	N Geere	6.3
-	58	A Steel	6.3
102	87	K Kennerley	5.5
-	55	P Kullavanijaya	5.5
-	72	G Marshall	5.5
-	87	A McGee	5.5
-	76	J Sissons	5.5
107	-	M Borthwick	5.0
-	-	M Langtry	5.0
-	-	H Nugent	5.0
110	63	N G-Westacott	4.5
-	63	E Hawke	4.5
-	76	D Hill	4.5
-	76	R Lebon	4.5
-	61	A Scott	4.5
115	105	W Shardlow	3.9
116	87	O Hay	3.2
-	87	S Kirby	3.2
-	99	J Malde	3.2
-	99	S Prakash	3.2

'Current' shows position following the end of the season as of May 2022. 'Previous' shows position at the start of the 2022 season

2020-22 RESULTS ROUND-UP

Full details of all these events on www.therfa.uk

Season 2020-2021

Because of Covid restrictions no open or regional tournaments were staged during the 2020-2021 season. In August 2021 retrospective Schools Championships were held, followed by a belated Varsity Match.

Season 2021-2022

A normal programme of tournaments restarted in July 2021 with the South West Open at Blundell's School. All subsequent events were then held throughout the season as scheduled.

NATIONAL GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS 2021

- U18 Singles:** M.Nugent (Edward Alleyn Club)
- U18 Doubles:** Alleyn's (L.Arie & K.Innes)
- U16 Singles:** C.Beattie (City of Durham)
- U16 Doubles:** Edinburgh Academy (C.Millar & R.Ogilvie)
- U14 Singles:** R.Ogilvie (Edinburgh Academy)
- U14 Doubles:** Alleyn's (E.Erdmeier & A.Guo)
- U13 Singles:** A.Bailey (Edinburgh Academy)
- U13 Doubles:** Edinburgh Academy (A.Bailey & J.Park)

NATIONAL SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2020 AND 2021

- U18 Singles 2020:** G.Wiseman (Alleyn's)
- U18 Doubles 2020:** S.Scott & G.Wiseman (Alleyn's)
- U18 Singles 2021:** G.Wiseman (Alleyn's)
- U18 Doubles 2021:** S.Scott & G.Wiseman (Alleyn's)
- U16 Singles 2021:** G.Nsenga (St Olave's)
- U16 Doubles 2021:** Alleyn's (L.Milner & T.Vernacchio)
- U14 Singles 2021:** R.Brown (Edinburgh Academy)
- U14 Doubles 2021:** Stamford (C.Burgess & C.Drutman)
- U13 Singles 2021:** M.Arie (Alleyn's)
- U13 Doubles 2021:** Alleyn's (M.Arie & A.Shaw)

THE VARSITY MATCH 2021

- Men's:** Oxford
- Women's:** Cambridge

DERBY MOOR INVITATION DOUBLES 2021

- Singles:** S.Beattie & R.Yusuf

SOUTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2021

- Singles:** E.Kay
- Doubles:** C.Brooks & W.Ellison

SOUTH EAST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2021

- Singles:** D.Butler
- Doubles:** D.Butler & B.Callaghan

YORKSHIRE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2021

- Singles:** E.Kay
- Doubles:** O.Arnold & E.Kay

LONDON OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2021

- Singles:** W.Ellison
- Doubles:** W.Ellison & D.Tristao

OWERS TROPHY 2021

- Singles:** Derby Moor Fives

THE LADY'S CUP 2021

- Singles:** Charlotte Fletcher & Alex Smith

WEST OF ENGLAND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2021

- Singles:** E.Kay
- Doubles:** W.Ellison & E.Kay

DURHAM LADIES CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Singles:** C.Beattie
- Doubles:** K.Bell & S.Breese

NATIONAL STUDENTS' (BUSF) CHAMPIONSHIPS 2021

- Singles:** A.Boyd (Edinburgh)
- Doubles:** C.Low & T.Parker (Bristol)



Recording the winners at the North of England Open

SCHOOLS WINCHESTER FIVES DOUBLES 2021

- Singles:** Winchester College (M.Cloke Browne & S.Wu)

LADIES U23 CHAMPIONSHIPS 2021

- Singles:** M.Nugent
- Doubles:** S.Leboff & H.Nugent

CHALLENGER SINGLES TOURNAMENT 12/2021

- Singles:** A.Goodwin

NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2021

- Singles:** D.Tristao

RFA PRESIDENT'S CUP 2021

- Singles:** T.Hebblethwaite & E.Thursfield

WEST OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- U18 Singles:** G.Wiseman (Alleyn's School)
- U18 Doubles:** Winchester (M.Cloke Browne & S.Wu)
- U16 Singles:** T.Vernacchio (Alleyn's School)
- U16 Doubles:** Alleyn's (L.Milner & T.Vernacchio)

NATIONAL LADIES CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- Singles:** L.Mathias
- Doubles:** L.Mathias & S.Zhang



The Ladies' U23 all smiles

NATIONAL U25 CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- Singles:** B. Beltrami
- Doubles:** O.Arnold & B.Beltrami

NORTHERN SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- U18 Singles:** S.Beattie (City of Durham)
- U18 Doubles:** S.Beattie & O.McIntyre (City of Durham)
- U16 Singles:** O.Griffin (Sedbergh School)
- U16 Doubles:** C.Beattie & A.Hogarth (City of Durham)

NORTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- Singles:** W.Ellison
- Doubles:** W.Ellison & D.Tristao

THE VARSITY MATCH 2022

- Men's:** Oxford
- Women's:** Cambridge

NORTH OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- Singles:** E.Kay
- Doubles:** O.Arnold & B.Beltrami

WINCHESTER FIVES OPEN DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

- Singles:** W.Ellison & E.Kay

COLQUHOUN TROPHY 2022

- U18 Singles:** J.Lee (Winchester College)
- U16 Singles:** A.Cloke Browne (Winchester College)

SCOTTISH SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- U18 Singles:** W.Chan (Fettes College)
- U18 Doubles:** Fettes College (T.Chan & W.Chan)
- U16 Doubles:** Merchiston Castle (W.Gale & S.Park)

NATIONAL SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- U18 Singles:** S.Wu (Winchester College)
- U18 Doubles:** Winchester College (M.Cloke Browne & S.Wu)

- U16 Singles:** S.Park (Merchiston Castle School)
- U16 Doubles:** Edinburgh Academy (H.Rintoul & C.Swanson)
- U14 Singles:** J.Kennedy (Winchester College)
- U14 Doubles:** Winchester College (A.James-Duff & J.Kennedy)
- U13 Singles:** J.Fienberg (Berkhamsted School)
- U13 Doubles:** Berkhamsted School (L.Faulkner & J.Fienberg)

NATIONAL GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- U18 Singles:** C.Beattie (City of Durham)
- U18 Doubles:** City of Durham (C.Beattie & I.Wright)
- U16 Singles:** R.Ogilvie (Edinburgh Academy)
- U16 Doubles:** Edinburgh Academy



Action at the Girls' Nationals at Oundle

(R.Ogilvie & O.Smart)

- U14 Singles:** A.Bailey (Edinburgh Academy)
- U14 Doubles:** Alleyn's School (J.Ho & D.Tiwara)
- U13 Singles:** T-R.Foo (Alleyn's School)
- U13 Doubles:** Stamford School (B.Grindal & T.Stevens)

NATIONAL VETERANS' CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- Singles:** J.Minta
- Doubles:** D.Fox & J.Minta

NATIONAL VINTAGE CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- Singles:** M.Spillane
- Doubles:** D.Fox & S.Roberts

NATIONAL MASTERS' DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

- Singles:** S.Beal & A.Hamilton



Dan Tristao beats the Universities champion at the Scottish Open

NATIONAL GRAND MASTERS' DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

- Singles:** B.Boag & M.Wilkinson

NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2022 (CYRIAX CUP)

- Singles:** C.Brooks & W.Ellison

RUGBY FIVES MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

- Singles:** C.Beattie & N.Whitney

NATIONAL CLUB KNOCK-OUT 2022 (WOOD CUP)

- Singles:** West of England Club

SCOTTISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- Singles:** D.Tristao
- Doubles:** E.Carbonell & O.McIntyre

WINCHESTER FIVES MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

- Singles:** L.Mathias & O.Arnold

LADIES WINCHESTER FIVES CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

- Singles:** S.Zhang
- Doubles:** H.Tunks & S.Zhang

DERBY MOOR INVITATION DOUBLES 2022

- Singles:** Camille Beattie & Lewis Keates



Martha Nugent on the attack at St Paul's



Medallists at the Yorkshire Open in Derby



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Rugby Fives
Association
2022