

Club Captain's Report 2013-14

Movers and Shakers

In the summer, we are active in 10 different competitions in total, a mixture of league, knock-out, singles and doubles. Even in the winter, we compete in 6 events, so no rest for those wanting competitive tennis.

Middlesex leagues

In the Middlesex league, we achieved perfect balance: 1 team up, 1 team down and 1 team holding steady for both the men and the ladies teams.

Men's 1st team are still finding their level and will play in Div 2 this summer captained again by Danny.

Men's 2nd team trounced division 6 with 124 points and will play in division 5 this summer under Tim Brennan's leadership. Tim's squad win the Duracell Award for energy with their "Docheter drill"!

Men's 3rd were victims of a Premier League style mid table points congestion, finishing 4th in division 7, but just 2 points (i.e. only 1 set) off promotion to division 6. Their reward is the opening fixture of the season will be here at the Pavilion on April 29th, so I shall be here to have some of Jordan's cake and cheer both teams on!

Ladies 1st team employed a strategy of mixing stronger and less strong as only 1 team gets promoted into Intermediate. The gamble paid off by winning Division 1 leaving arch rival Our Lady in second place, (despite OLOM having a scary team of powerful juniors and an ex-professional as their playing coach!).

Ladies 2nd team, captained by Kate Engineer, stay in Division 3 this year and win the award for the most consistent partnership in Kate and Jane B.

Ladies 3rd team are regrouping after finding Div 7 more appealing than 6. Kate Lambert is concentrating on being no. 1 pair with Mary and Gill Taylor retakes the reins this year. Gill is getting us all into shape with coaching sessions and rotas for the Friday night and the team wins the "Radox Hot Bath" award for carrying on with our coaching session in the pouring rain. It was pretty grim but everyone was still laughing. We've also got some new recruits thanks to Joe's Return to Tennis groups which is also really healthy for the club.

Aegon Competition

For the Aegon Summer league you need a team of 4 players and matches are played on Sunday mornings. All 4 players first have to battle away in singles, then play 2 doubles rubbers where you can only mix pairs according to ratings. If it's all even after 6 rubbers, the rules now dictate a 'shoot-out': 2 singles victims must be nominated and the other lucky players get to play doubles, so 3 more rubbers are played, each of a match tiebreak.

Women had some very keenly contested matches and a "shoot out" against Highgate Cricket was the highlight, with the "Nerve-Holding" Award goes to Gill and Kathy who were victorious in the rain in the final doubles tiebreak. As a reward, the ladies team has been promoted and have an away fixture at the Hurlingham Club, where we shall have the usual scrabble for who can find any all-white tennis outfits to wear!

Men battled hard again under Tim Brennan's leadership and despite not winning any matches in Div 2, have stayed up.

Middlesex Cup

The Middlesex cup is a doubles only knock-out competition, requiring teams of 6 and the order you play the opposite pairs is determined by pulling from the hat at the start of the fixture.

The ladies team struggled to find 6 players, so Gill, Kathy, Grainne and I headed for darkest Pinner, knowing we would start the match 0-3. The final result was 5-4 ... sadly we didn't get the 5 but gave them a run for their tea and cake!

Our men's team struggled to find a team at all this year, so we wait to see if we were demoted.

Winter season (2 ladies, 1 mens, 1 mixed, 2 vets) 6 competitions

Winter floodlit matches are ongoing, but it looks like the Mixed team will stay in Div. 1 with one more match to play. The Ladies 1st came 2nd to Coolhurst last winter, but we enjoyed a 16-0 win over them this winter, so let's see if we can sneak the title!

Both the Ladies 2nd and the Men's winter teams are also very strongly placed to win their divisions, with one match to go.

Our Vets teams both got promoted last winter, so we have had some very good quality matches but with matches still to be played, it will be a close run thing if both teams manage to stay up. The table is so tight, the Vets first team with one match to play, could technically finish 2nd or get relegated!

So once again, a huge thank you to all captains: Gill, Kate E, Gill T, Danny/Jeremy, Tim, Fred/Byron.

Further thanks to Gill P who as Fixtures secretary has now also taken on the role of online court booker/canceller for all fixtures. Thank you to Nigel for generating the colour coded Fixtures list, sorted by date and team, which I personally find invaluable. And finally, thank you to all the members who support the teams either by playing or simply by letting us have court time. I often hear from our visiting clubs, typically the larger clubs, how hard it is to get courts and they ask me "How do you do it with such a small club?" I guess it's all about keeping the balance right.

Happy tennis for the coming season

Claire