

## Club Captain's Report 2014-15

### **A year of Debutantes**

The theme for this year's report is definitely those making a team Debut.

We had chef extraordinaire, Jordan White[1] making his debut in the 3rd team. Also teaming up with Flavien for the men's III team, Ben Sharp, who can hit a tennis ball with a cricket bat better than a lot of us with a fully strung racket, had an 80% record of success in his matches.

In the ladies, Emanuela volunteered to make up the numbers, then partnered Grainne in the Middlesex Cup and gave Hackney City a run for their money, only losing 18-16 in the match tiebreak. And our new ladies club champion, Yemisi, made a significant contribution to the ladies first team, so much so, that the ladies first team will be experiencing a debut in the Premier league this summer. I'm sure Yemisi is up to it, but maybe not the rest of us!

### **Aegon Competition (formerly NCL)**

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.

The women were playing in the highest division this summer. Any higher and you go 'National' i.e. gallivant around the whole country. So division 1 was tough competition and we had some matches which hinged on that final set tiebreak. Sadly, we didn't clinch them, so this summer we are back to Division 2.

The men's team avoided relegation last season, but not this, so will compete in Div 3. Those keen to get some singles matches should get in touch with Tim Brennan.

### **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.

By getting through to the second round, our ladies team will probably stay in Division 2. Men's team had a tough first round match against Highgate Cricket, sadly losing 6-3 in rubbers.

In the winter, the Middlesex cup is Mixed only but usually a high standard as there are only 3 divisions. In November, we lost to Will to Win Ealing.

### **Middlesex Summer League (6 teams)**

We had 3 promotions to celebrate in the Middlesex Summer League. The ladies first team will make a club debut in the Premier League. We were promoted by the narrowest of margins, partly because our final opponent, Brampton, have been in Premier and didn't want to go there again!

Congratulations also to the men's first team who go back up to Div 1 and have wooed Dan Lynton back to be their captain. And the Ladies III team, under the renewed captaincy of Gill Taylor, bounced back to Div 6.

Both Men's and Ladies second team hold steady in their divisions, 5 and 3 respectively.

Sadly, the Men's III team were in a tough group with likes of the Pavilion who not only get promoted from 7 to 6 but win the award for the least number of points dropped – only 4 sets all season! And Robby blames Artur for that!

### **Winter season (2 ladies, 1 men's, 1 mixed, 2 vets) 6 competitions**

In the Winter floodlit, under Grainne's captaincy, the Mixed team will stay in Div. 1. It must be her Irish charm, but she found lots of new, willing young men players...

The Ladies I did sneak the title this time last year, but have just missed out on the double this winter – I take some responsibility for abandoning the team and choosing Melbourne over Muswell Hill! The Ladies II team will go down this winter, but again we had Debutantes Lorraine George and Natalia Mann stepping up to the winter challenge and getting hardy match practice.

The Men's winter team won promotion both last winter and again this winter under Dave Crout's leadership.

Sadly both our Vets teams have struggled this season with injuries and have felt the departure of Wei Xing. Now is the time for some of our men to confess to being 45, so we can strengthen the squads! After 4 years in charge, Jane Steele is stepping down as Vets II captain, so we are also looking for a volunteer Captain. Each team needs 4 players – 2 men (over 45) and 2 ladies (over 40). You play a same sex doubles (2 sets) followed by a mixed doubles (2 sets). If you are keen to play, please contact me before November 2015.

Finally, a huge thank you to all captains: Gill Parrot, Kate Engineer, Gill Taylor, Danny White, Jane Steele, Dave Crout, Tim Brennan, Haider, Fred and Grainne.

For a small club, I think we are hugely successful in the way we are able to juggle players across the teams. And the arrival of the Debutantes is very exciting for the coming season.

Happy tennis and stay fit and well,

Claire

[1] Jordan White, elder son of Grainne & Danny is a demon cake maker, now supplying the Pavilion Café.

Posted on 18/3/2015 by Claire Unwin