

Club Captain's Report 2018-2019

Changing of the guard!

This year has seen several new captains:

Grainne White took over the ladies 1st team from Gill Parrott.

Emma Josty took over the ladies 2nd team from Kate Engineer.

Sally Meacher took over the vets 2nd team from Kate Engineer.

Milly Ayliffe took on the ladies Middlesex Cup team.

Jeremy Tuck took back the mens 1st team from Danny White, who missed quite a bit of tennis due to injury (wrist and back).

Dave Crout took over the mens 2nd team from Tim Brennan, who is also suffering from injury.

Next season Andrew Holden takes over the mens 3rd team from Fred Morris, who has been captain for at least 25 years!

For the Winter season 2019/20, Michele Freedman will take over the ladies 3rd team from Mary Dunwoodie.

Middlesex Summer League (six teams)

Ladies 1st team – Premier Division – relegated

Ladies 2nd team – Division 3 – promoted

Ladies 3rd team – Division 6 – promoted

Mens 1st team – Division 2

Mens 2nd team – Division 5

Mens 3rd team – Division 8

The ladies 1st team smashed their previous best of 30 points by winning 50 in their second visit to the Premier Division. However, it was still not enough to stay up. Cumberland were overall champions with a massive 126 points and Emma and Lorraine G seemed to enjoy their set against former Wimbledon mixed quarter-finalist Jocelyn Rae and World Team Tennis player Jo Garvey when they stepped up to play for the 1st team.

The ladies 2nd team smashed Division 3, winning the league with 125 points, with Emma and Sally only losing one set all season.

The ladies 3rd team topped Division 6 and will be promoted thanks to great results from a compact and ruthless squad of only eight players: Jane, two Kates, Mary, two Claires, Angela and Michele.

The mens 1st team will continue to play in Division 2 this summer with a growing squad including some great youngsters. The captaincy will be handed back to Jeremy, who is juggling tennis with becoming vegan masterchef. I hear very good things about the team's match suppers.

The mens 2nd team stay in Division 5, captained by Dave Crout, and are also building a new squad.

The mens 3rd team kept their place in Division 8 under Fred's captaincy and will now be captained by Andrew Holden.

Middlesex Cup

The Middlesex Cup is a doubles only knockout competition, requiring teams of six. The order you play the opposite pairs is determined by pulling from the hat at the start of the fixture.

We drew our old rival Coolhurst in the winter mixed Middlesex Cup. Robby and Mayéla teamed up and won our only rubber. Big Dave and Dan Lynton came back to try out the new court surface and inflicted a 5-1 defeat on us.

In the summer, the ladies played Finchley Lawn, another new club to me, tucked away amongst the allotments. It was nearly five hours on very hard courts and we narrowly lost 5-4, as it went down to the last tiebreak of the last rubber.

It's all change next season, as the mixed Middlesex Cup moves to the summer and the winter sees ladies and mens versions of the competition.

Winter season (Floodlit League and Vets)

We have one mixed team, three ladies teams and one mens team in the Winter Floodlit League and two teams in the Winter Vets competition.

Winter tennis has lured a hard core of approximately 17 women and 9 men to brave the elements, although February 2019 saw the warmest winter day on record ever with 21 degrees!

In all the floodlit competitions except the mixed, Muswell Hill Methodist currently occupies third position. Winter mixed is always a good standard but sadly we may not survive in Division 1. We missed both James and Mustafa this season.

Grainne is captaining the ladies 1st team, and the last match is tonight down at Highbury. We're safe from relegation and will stay in Division 1.

The ladies 2nd team, captained by Emma, have three games left and could push for promotion to Division 2 next winter.

The ladies 3rd team, captained by Mary Dinwoodie, are currently second in Division 6 with Highbury playing Georgians tonight to decide if MHM get promoted! Mary will hand over the captaincy to Michele Freedman next winter.

The mens winter team need a draw or better in their last match on Monday night to sneak promotion to Division 2.

Grainne continued the captaincy of the vets 1st team, who yo-yo between Divisions 1 and 2. Sunday was meant to be our last match against bottom team Teddington, but they have given us a walkover. This isn't as good as it sounds because points are apportioned at the end of the season for walkovers – you don't automatically get the full allocation.

Sally Meacher took over as captain of the vets 2nd team and has led from the front, not only with MHM topping Division 6 but also by being the most successful player in the division. With Andrew Holden and Gill Parrott following in 3rd and 4th places, Division 5 beckons.

Junior matches - refer to Joe

Team Tennis competition (formerly NCL/Aegon)

Only our juniors are currently competing in the Team Tennis league – boys under 14 and girls under 16.

MHM supporting Mayéla Bassega

Given that Mayéla is still only 14, her ranking outperforms her age. She is not only under 14 Middlesex champion, but also under 18! For every competition you play, points are awarded and your best results go into the 'ratings run'. She has competed in 38 eligible events in Scotland, Corby, Bolton and Loughborough in the Junior National Tour of GB and is currently in the top 300 in the country... in any age group, i.e. open! This year she stepped up to play her first world ranking events and reached the last 16 in Edinburgh. IFT Junior is the precursor to the main events and Andy Roddick went from number one junior to senior success. We continue to support Mayéla with coaching from Joe and I hope another fundraising event.

Finally

In practical terms, the role of the captain is to ensure the right number of eligible players are in the right place at the right time. However, it's also about motivating, inspiring or simply cajoling! This year it's noticeable how healthy the team practice sessions have been. The ladies 1st team and mens 3rd team now run a court-sharing system on Monday nights. Thursday nights regularly have eight or even twelve players drilling and playing, as the boundaries blur between the ladies 2nd and 3rd teams. A big thanks to captains and players for making this a success.

Thank you to Gill Parrott for captaining the ladies 1st team for so many years and for arranging the fixtures and booking courts. Thank you to Mike and Ian for ensuring there are always match balls and the courts are fit for play.

And thank you to all the team players for turning out, providing food, playing in good spirit and representing Muswell Hill Methodist. Across the teams, we have over 100 players involved in matches!

Stay fit and enjoy your tennis.

Claire