

## **Club Captain's Report 2019-2020**

### **Fine margins**

Back in the winter, Austra kindly arranged a tennis psychology night with an expert, hosted at Emma's house, where team players listened to the wisdom of fine margins. When Djokovic was #1, he won 52.7% of the points he played. At #2, Murray was only 0.8% behind him, winning 51.9% of his points.

Last year we had six new captains taking the reins, so this year was about consolidation and proof that even at our level competitive tennis is all about that slender margin between winning and not quite winning.

Both the men's and women's teams have benefitted from what a difference just one new player can make. Phil Bettles has lifted an already strong squad on the men's side and Rebecca strolled over the lawns from Chester House to become a real asset to the ladies' second team.

The ladies' first team was safe from relegation by 15 points thanks to Yemisi playing two matches, after Mayela moved to Globe to keep up with Premier tennis.

At first it looked like our men's second team was on the wrong end of slim margins, with the same number of points as the second-placed team but 0.2% fewer sets won. But on this occasion the top three teams were promoted to Division 4, so there was a happy ending after all.

As club captain, I'm in close conversation with Ian, our facilities champion, to ensure that the courts don't disadvantage us by those crucial points. And on ladies' team practice night, we shall be working on that serve just slightly to the right of the centre line on the ad side on court 3!

### **Middlesex Summer League (six teams) finishing positions:**

Ladies I – Intermediate – 15 points safe from relegation

Ladies II – 3<sup>rd</sup> in Div 3

Ladies III – 2<sup>nd</sup> in Div 5 – promoted to Div 4 (second promotion in a row)

Men I – 2<sup>nd</sup> in Div 2 – promoted to Div 1

Men II – 3<sup>rd</sup> in Div 5 – promoted to Div 4

Men III – won Div 8 – promoted to Div 7

The ladies' first team had to make use of 14 players over the seven matches to stay in Intermediate, which shows how close the first and second teams have become.

The ladies' second team came third in their first season in Division 2.

The ladies' third team came second in Division 5 and are promoted again!

The men's first team came second in Division 2 and are promoted.

The men's second team are promoted to Division 4 despite finishing third by 0.2% of sets won.

The men's third team blossomed under Andrew Holden's leadership and topped Division 8 to be promoted this summer, when they will meet Pavilion II in their first match.

## **Middlesex Cup**

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

The club didn't enter teams this year.

## **Winter season (nine teams)**

*We have one mixed team, three ladies' teams and three men's teams in the Winter Floodlit League and two teams in the Winter Vets competition.*

In winter tennis, Muswell Hill Methodist continues to flourish, with two new men's teams this season. Unlike last winter, which was the warmest on record, this winter is the wettest with countless matches rained off.

The mixed team stand a good chance of promotion back to the top division thanks to contributions from Phil Bettles, Dave Sharp and Dave Crout.

Grainne is captaining the ladies' first team, and with three matches still left to play, we could finish first or second depending on the last match against Hackney. The ladies' second team, captained by Emma, are already sitting at the top of Division 2 and will join the first team in Division 1 even if they are overtaken by Potters Bar. That will give the captains selection headaches next season! The ladies' third team were captained by Michele this winter and played top of the table Wood Vale last night, finishing fourth in a league which is very tightly packed.

The men's winter first team, captained by Jeremy, are in a very tight Division 2, with only four points separating the top four teams. The last match is on 1<sup>st</sup> April against Hackney to decide promotion or not. Phil Bettles and James are the star performers so fingers crossed they are available. The men's second team, captained by Dave Crout, have one match left to play and again only four points separating the top four teams so they could make promotion to Division 6. The men's third team, captained by Andrew Holden, won't catch Vicars Moor, but could make second place and promotion to Division 8.

Grainne continued the captaincy of the vets first team, who usually yo-yo between Divisions 1 and 2. This season it's Division 1 which means a lovely lunch at Hurlingham. With two rained off matches still to play, it's technically possible that we could break the pattern and stay in Division 1.

Sally Meacher captains the vets second team, and has led from the front again, not only with MHM being top of Division 6, but by also by being the most successful player in the

division. With Gill Parrott and Andrew Holden in second and third place, Division 5 beckons.

**Junior matches - refer to Joe**

**Middlesex National League competition (formerly NCL)**

*Only our juniors are currently competing in the Middlesex National League – under 14 and under 16 boys.*

## **Finally**

In practical terms, the role of the team captain is to ensure the right number of eligible players are in the right place at the right time. But it's also about motivating, inspiring or simply cajoling! This year, however, it's been noticeable how healthy the team practice sessions have been. Monday nights are now running a shift system between the ladies' first and men's third teams for court time. Thursday nights regularly have eight and sometimes 12 players drilling and playing, as the boundaries blur between the ladies' second and third teams. A big thanks to captains and players for making this a success.

Thank you to Gill Parrott for sorting out the fixtures and booking the courts, and to Mike and Ian for ensuring there are always match balls and the courts are fit for play.

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