

Club Captain's Report 2023-2024

From strength to strength

The theme of the last report was Full Steam ahead, with our new courts and lights. This year's theme is about going from strength to strength, strengthening the teams and introducing regular team coaching.

We worked to reduce our waiting list from 60 to 6 this year and have attracted several new team players, who have made a big contribution to the teams. A special mention goes to Andrew Cusack, who has legitimately represented 5 different teams in the 12 months but also wins the award for the fastest response to WhatsApp when asked to play: 60 seconds on average!

Vivian Gabb was finally persuaded to run Thursday night squad training for the ladies 2nd and 3rd teams and players and coach have turned out regularly in all weathers over the winter to be encouraged to 'hit with depth' and 'put the ball in front of the net player'. We recognise that the ladies 2nd and 3rd teams have struggled for the last 2 seasons, so we are rebuilding and training enthusiastically.

As the AGM always falls right on the crucial end to the winter league, I'd like to start with that:

Winter season 2023/24 - 9 competitions

Winter floodlit leagues, 1 x mixed, 3 x ladies teams, 3 x men's team and 2 x vets teams.

This winter we have 2, but possibly 4 promotions ... and probably 3 relegations!

Mixed – were relegated to Division 2 but have won immediate promotion with a game in hand thanks to some new recruits from both the men's and women's teams.

Men's winter teams –

Men's I – Captained by Jeremy have smashed Div 2 with 6/6 wins so far and will bounce back to Div 1

Men's II – Division 5 – captained by Tim Brennan, currently 4th and safe

Men's III – Division 8 – captained by Andrew Wilks, currently top with a top of the table clash with Georgians on Monday

Women's winter teams

Ladies I – Division 1 – captained by Grainne, currently 2nd behind a very strong Coolhurst.

Ladies II – Division 3 – captained by ClareW sadly will likely be relegated to Division 4 by 3 just points

Ladies III – Division 6 – captained by Mary, struggling to find fit players and will likely be relegated to Div 7

In Vets winter teams

Grainne captains the Vets 1st team, and our run of hanging on in the top division will surely end this year.

Captained by Sally Meacher, our Vets 2nd team, are pushing hard for promotion again with just one match left to play.

Middlesex Summer League 2023 (6 teams) finishing positions

Ladies I – despite winning over 100 points, finished only 4th and stay in Intermediate

Ladies II – dropped to Div 3 – With a new joint captain of Clare Woodcock and Claire Richardson, they stay in Div 3.

Ladies III – 6th in Div 4 – and staying in Div 4. Big thank you to Valeria who was persuaded to play the last match, which probably contributed to avoiding relegation as we were able to field a team.

Men I – 5th in Div 2 – stay in Div 2 but squad training is looking very healthy with often 3 courts of 1st and second team men and Jeremy has adopted some restaurant ideas with some nights having 2 sittings if there is only 1 court to work with!

Men II – last in Div 4 – so Div 5 this summer despite Pablo being near the top of all players in that division.

Men III – 6th Div 7 – relegated to division 8 this summer so no match up with Pavilion.

Are other clubs getting stronger in the lower divisions?

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.

Club didn't enter teams this year but if there is interest, we welcome a volunteer captain to get us organised and entered for Winter 2023. (Summer is mixed and winter is mens/womens)

Junior matches- refer to Joe

Aegon Team Tennis Competition (formerly NCL)

Only our juniors are now competing in the Aegon team tennis league – boys under 14 and girls under 16.

Finally

A big thanks as ever to captains and players for making this a successful and competitive small club.

Thank you as always to Gill Parrott being such an awesome 'Fixtures Meister' and sorting out the fixtures, and court booking duties for all 42 matches. Thank you to Mike and Ian for ensuring there are always match balls and the courts are fit to play. And again Ian, for chasing us for results and linking it to the website.

Thank you to all the team players, for turning out, playing in good spirit and representing Muswell Hill Methodists.

A reminder that the role of club captain is to promote **all** competitive tennis and I took my own medicine and played a ladder match against Pablo. It was great fun and I encourage more people to feel the fear of singles and do it anyway! Every visit to a court is a learning opportunity and it certainly made me want to get a lot fitter!

Stay fit and enjoy your tennis!

Claire