

2022 MASTER HOME INTERNATIONAL IRELAND

Event Dates:	Friday 22 nd - Saturday 23 rd Apr 2022		
Address:	Galway Lawn Tennis Club		
England Teams:	Men's O40	Men's O60	Women's O35/40
	Mick Biggs (Captain) Dave Barnett Ross Gore Nick Hargreaves Darren Lewis Paul Stroud	Allen Barwise (Captain) Steve Edmondson Nick Gollaglee John Parkes Nick Peel Mark Taylor	Kate Bradshaw (Captain) Gemma Barber Sophie Beake Emmeline Gale Natalie Lawrence Polly Roylance-Smith
	Women's O60		
	Karen Hume (Captain) Tamsin Bennett Sue Pynegar Lesley Sturgess		

MENS OVER 40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		19	20	20	59	1
	6		20	20	46	2
	0	3		5	8	4
	0	1	19		20	3

MENS OVER 40 REPORT

England 5 Wales 0

England's 5th string Nick Hargreaves had been working on his glute strength prior to the tournament. This was noticed by officials at both Stanstead and Shannon airports, who suspected he may be smuggling contraband between those tight buttocks. Two friskings later and Hargreaves was finally allowed into Ireland. In the clash with Wales, Hargreaves was pitted against the hard-hitting Paul Duffy. The Welshman's movement was not as impressive as his shot power and Hargreaves cruised home to a 3-0 win.

At 3rd string captain Mick Biggs took on Gary Fry. Fry worked some good positions, but couldn't deliver the finishing shots to trouble Biggs, who was covering the court well for an old man. Fry soon ran out of ideas and the match went to Biggs 3-0.

England's 1st string Dave Barnett was preparing to play the tournament in his vest and underpants after forgetting to order his kit on time. Fortunately, Andy Murray of iPro Sports used some logistical genius to get the kit sent directly to Galway in time for the first match. Dave's opponents and all spectators would like to thank Andy for his efforts. Dave is unbeaten in masters squash this season and was in no mood to allow his run to end. A 3-0 win for the Englishman over Wales' James Powell was the inevitable result.

At 4th string for England was Paul Stroud, sporting his famous double-handed backhand. Keen to impress, Stroud went to town on Welshman Darren Thomas, in what can only be described as one of the most efficient performances witnessed in masters squash. 3-0 to Stroud in less than 15 minutes. The Englishman would definitely be tested more thoroughly over the weekend, including when trying to put on his tie for the presentation dinner.

Last on was the maestro Darren Lewis at 2nd string. In his job as a postman Lewis regularly walks 10 miles per day. In fact he walks so much, he has forgotten how to run. For most mortals this would be a serious problem, but when you have racket skills like Lewis, running is an optional extra. Against Wales' Paul Barrell, Lewis treated the crowd to some fantastic exhibition squash. This included several trick shots that would have had Barrell pulling his hair out, if he had any. 3-0 to Lewis, job done for England.



England 5 Scotland 0

At 5th string, Nick Hargreaves treated the crowd to a great display of power and control against Euan Allison. Hargreaves took the middle of the court and pinned the Scotsman to the back corners, taking as much as possible on the volley. Allison's resistance gradually weakened, and Hargreaves took the match 3-0.

At 3rd string England brought in Ross Gore. Gore had joined the rest of the team in Galway a day later, so he could spend a few extra hours working on his tan in Spain. The tactic worked nicely against a comparatively pasty Barry Mason, the Scotsman cowering in the presence of the English bronze adonis. 3-0 to Gore.

Dave Barnett at 1st string was up against Scotsman (via Dorset and Surrey) Stuart Ayton. Ayton is a tidy player and moves well, but Barnett was clearly in no mood for messing about. Using superior pace, tactics and accuracy the Englishman bagged a 3-0 victory with minimum fuss.

Paul Stroud at 4th string was tested by Andrew Spires, with a close first game and the second game going to a tie-break. Stroud did just enough to clinch both though and ran away with the third for a 3-0 win.

Having done a fair bit of walking in the match against Wales, Darren Lewis was rested. This meant captain Mick Biggs was pushed up to 2nd string against Scottish national champion Blair McKenzie. McKenzie has some serious shot-making abilities and doesn't let his opponents find any rhythm. Despite struggling with this, Biggs managed to expose the big Scot's movement just enough to get home in 3.

England 4 Ireland 1

A perfect start for England with two 5-0 victories had been matched by Ireland in their opening matches. This meant the winner of the final tie would take the trophy. Strong captaincy involves making good decisions off the court as well as on the court. Biggs' masterstroke of playing himself at 2nd string and Stroud at 4th string meant they went on last against the Scots. With Lewis coming back in, this pushed them down to 3rd and 5th string respectively and hence were on first against the Irish. With matches rolling straight on, there was barely enough time for a shower and definitely no time for any lunch before play recommenced. Would this blunder prove costly as the weary, malnourished pair took to the court?

If he was suffering physically, Stroud didn't show it as he took the first two games comfortably against the Irish 5th string Neal Pollock. Pollock dug deep in the third, but Stroud held firm to take the match 3-0.

Biggs started well against Irish 3rd string Patrick Morrissey, taking the first two games. In the third however, fatigue was clearly setting in, as the captain made far too many unforced errors allowing the skillful Morrissey to pull one back. A stern talking to between games in the Geordie tones of Dave Barnett refocused Biggs. Gritting his teeth and extending the rallies, he was able to get a few points ahead of his opponent and hang on to close the match out 3-1.

At 1st string Barnett faced Irish hero Keith Moran. Barnett plays at a high pace and this was too much for the Irishman in the first. The pace dropped a little in the second and Moran saw his opportunity. He forged a good lead and gave himself several game balls. The experienced Barnett didn't panic though and gradually reeled the Irishman in to pinch the game. With Moran's resistance broken, Barnett took the third comfortably. Match to Barnett, tie to England and the trophy coming home!

In the first dead rubber Ross Gore narrowly lost out to Irish 4th string Ronan Payton 2-3. Payton's slow, accurate play perplexed the Englishman, causing him to find the tin more often than he would like. At 2nd string Darren Lewis gave another demonstration of walking squash. His opponent this time was the tough Kevin Knox. At two games all, Lewis was forced to accelerate to a canter to ensure the win, which he did.



Squash can be a fiery, aggressive sport, but this tournament was played in the best of spirits, without a single point of contention throughout the whole weekend. Congratulations to all the players involved on their achievements and sportsmanship. On behalf of the whole team I'd like to extend my thanks to Dave Lalor and everyone at Irish squash for organising an amazing event. All the referees and score coordinators for keeping things running smoothly. John Rooney and all the staff at the Galway Lawn Tennis Club for being incredible hosts. Allen Barwise for his organisational efforts and guidance.

Mick Biggs
Team Captain

MENS OVER 60 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		8	20	20	48	2
	17		16	19	52	1
	1	6		18	25	3
	2	3	4		9	4

MENS OVER 60 REPORT



England vs Wales

Our tournament kicked off at the impressive Galway lawn Tennis Club on Friday at 17.30. After intense debate the team settled on the following order:

Allen Barwise, John Parkes, Nick Gollaglee, Mark Taylor, Steve Edmondson and Nick Peel. The running order for matches on the one court was 5,3,1,4,2.

Steve dropped out for the first match delaying his debut until the following morning. Nick Peel got the team off to a great start despite suffering a groin injury in the first set which ultimately put him out for the remaining matches. Despite the injury he battled through taking it 3-1 against Kingsley Rees.

Our absolute banker Nick 'the lob' Gollaglee then put Paul Hounsell to the sword winning in comprehensive fashion. England 2-0.

Allen then took on the Welsh number one which proved a hard-fought match with some incredibly long rallies for such aged competitors. Allen taking it 3-1.

Mark Taylor then showed his experience in winning 3-0 for a handful of points, good result for the Bristol based player.

John Parkes, fresh from his ankle injury and eventful flight across came through 3-0, although showing a little rustiness he still did the business.

England 20 - Wales 2

England vs Scotland

Next up was the Scottish squad fresh from their narrow defeat to the Irish. Steve Edmondson making his debut showed all the grit and determination which earned him his first call up won 3-1 against an experienced Dave McAleese. A good start for the Lakeland based player.

Nick then played another long-standing jock in Keith Gristwood, Nick taking it 3-0 for another comprehensive win.

Allen took on Chris Holt winning 2,7,8 in a match between the two captains.

Mark won the next 3-1 in a fairly tight encounter despite the Scots player proving a difficult opponent.

John looking stronger and more confident in this match beat a regular Nationals player Keith Murray 3-0. A good indicator for what will be required against the Irish.

Allen presented England ties to Steve and Nick on their debuts.

England 20 - Scotland 1



England vs Ireland

The final match of the weekend matched the two outstanding teams for the trophy. Steve had a tough opponent who matched his physicality and toughness on court. A couple of hard clashes saw both men lose their balance and end up on the court floor. Steve though came through 3-1 which saw England take an early lead.

Nick was under great pressure to take the next, unfortunately he met a man in form John Dineen, Nick had a couple of dodgy decisions against him which contribute to the 3-0 defeat.

Allen then took on multiple world champion Willie Hosey, this game had already been written off by the team, Allen sadly was no match for the class act that was Willie. Ireland 2-1 up.

Mark played local hero Dave Lalor in a decisive match needing to win. In a see-saw contest it all came to the final set. This ended at 13-11 to the Galway man although Mark did have an opportunity to clinch it with two match points. England's hold on the trophy was over.

John then played the last rubber against Vince Bradley another top player, John overcoming him 3-2 in a match which would have been a worthy title decider.

England 8 - Ireland 17



At the evening's function and presentation Allen congratulated the winners and participants, particularly the Welsh O60 ladies who took their title for the first ever time, he thanked Irish squash, the club, organisers, hotel and Dave Lalor for their hospitality on behalf of the England, Scottish and Wales squash associations.

Allen Barwise
Team Captain

WOMENS OVER 35/40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		20	20	15	55	1
	7		17	3	27	3
	2	4		3	9	4
	9	19	20		48	2

WOMENS OVER 35/40 REPORT

The ladies stepped up to the first challenge of the weekend by all arriving, just in time, for the photo shoot.



Proudly putting on their England shirts, Gemma, Sophie, Polly and Emmeline for the first time, along with former team mates Kate and Natalie, we lined up on court, raised the flag and smiled! Then the serious business of the weekend began...

England vs Wales



We were straight in against the toughest opponents of the weekend and the match which we thought would be the decider. With not much chance to get her eye in, Nat Lawrence was first up against the very experienced Helen Barnard. Helen took the first point with a roller, showing her intentions - this was not going to be an easy warm up match. Losing the first, Nat then came back and levelled; a similar pattern played out in the next two. Fortunately, Nat started some power hitting alongside some awesome cross court drops just as Helen started to flag and make errors. First match 3-2 England.

Sophie Beake exuded her usual calm on court which was counterbalanced by the extreme effervescence of her opponent, Rebecca Baker. The first game looked as close to nervy as Sophie ever gets (barely perceptible), resulting in a 1-0 score line to Wales. The match was then nip and tuck all the way - a brutal

battle in every game. Sophie's demeanour clearly saved her energy as she nudged out her opponent with skilful boasts and clean line hitting to win 3-1.

Emmeline Gale was next up and knew that she was facing a big challenge. Nervy, but relishing the match-up, she fought hard against Stacey Gooding, the top-seeded player at the tournament. Both girls showed immense quality in their play and movement from the start. Emmeline lost the first, but then took control in the latter stages of the second to hold game point 10-9. Unfortunately, Stacey put in a winning boast and clawed her way back to take it 12-10. The girls traded blows in the third which was super tight again, but also went Stacey's way leaving the match poised at 2-1 to England.

Next on court was Kate Bradshaw against Sarah Creed. Any HI match is normally enough to make Kate a shaking bag of nerves, especially with the score at a critical 2-1 point. However, that Friday evening, nerves were nowhere to be seen with Kate achieving the focus that is so often absent from most of her matches. Taking a 4-0 lead, she saw the first game off 11-6. The next was very similar, although Kate let a 10-3 lead slip to an 11-7 win. Where a dip in concentration might normally be expected at this point, Kate went the other way and managed to produce a controlled and clinical performance in the 3rd, taking it 11-1 and the decider for the match.

Last on and very grateful to Kate was Polly Roylance-Smith. Much like Emmeline, she knew she was up against a quality opponent in Jenny McKenna. With some pressure off, Polly could've relaxed on court, but she showed determination from the off. Within the first few points she had a Makin-like dive and rebound - her commitment was never in doubt. Losing the first she then came very close to



taking the second, just missing out 12-14. Polly continued her valiant effort with fantastic reactions, and extreme politeness on court, with many thank yous to the marker for giving her clear strokes...However, Jenny's shot-making won out in the end, and Wales nabbed this tie to make it a nerve-racking 3-2 to England.

These matches were hard fought, and long! The girls were on court for so long, there was no dinner left...We patiently waited for more food to appear and had a late post-match meal; a quiet night for all ahead of super Saturday...

England vs Scotland



Hoping to see off the other nations on St. George's day, the girls were up and about and ready for their Scottish tie.

Gemma Barber was first up Saturday morning and playing in her first Home Internationals. With nerves which often plague her play apparently absent, she stormed to a 2-0 lead! Perhaps it was too easy, as the confident and positive play of the first two games wavered in the third. Following a quick chat with partner and team coach Tony, she was back on track and smashed the third 11-3. 1-0 England.

Sophie and Emmeline both played with confidence, skill and focus making it look all too easy, bagging two

3-0 wins. Kate also took her second and last match of the weekend 3-0, although the nerves were in full play and she had to battle through to keep this one on track. Polly had perhaps the toughest of the Scottish ties playing Mhairi Gritz. Producing some of the best squash I've ever seen her play, Mhairi was in this match all the way with tight drives, boasts which whipped round and delicate drops. However, Polly's speed and determination proved too much for the Scottish player and she won 3-1.

A solid 5-0 win to England calmed the nerves a little at this point, until we saw how Ireland was faring against the Welsh...



England vs Ireland



Squash Levels is a tremendous tool in many ways, but sometimes doesn't quite do everyone justice. This was never more evident than in its representation of the Irish team. Having expected Wales to be by far the toughest opposition, we began to wonder if Ireland was actually the team to watch. The nerves built throughout the day as the tight scores of Wales v Ireland flowed in...

Gemma clearly hadn't been paying attention to any of this. She stepped on court and absolutely blasted her opponent off of it. A very impressive performance again, 11-6, 11-4, 11-6. 1-0 to England and a much-needed excellent start. 'Still-looking-super-cool' Sophie again found a player who was buzzing with energy. Ali Magee had beaten the Welsh number 3 and we knew that this was going to be a crunch match. With a lot of running from both players, it was a tremendous battle. What was clear though

was when Sophie played her thoughtful, crafted shots, she was by far the better player. Thankfully she achieved this on three of the five games and took the match 3-2. 2-0 England...

Following the irritation of the previous day's defeat, Emmeline was out for a clinical win and very up for the game. Much like Gemma's the day before, it was almost too easy, taking the first two 11-4, 11-2. With a small blip in the third, she took control again in the fourth and romped to 11-2. The team breathed a massive sigh of relief and gratitude as this meant overall team victory!!

Still fearing that some weird system of games won and counting back could take away the win for England, and not actually playing in this tie, Kate was still nervous! The next two matches were both epic! Neither Nat's nor Polly's opposition ever looked like giving up and both were highly attritional matches, fortunately with the same scoreline of 3-2 to England. Although this tie ended as a 5-0 clean sweep to us, with three 3-2s, it was very close!



The squash this weekend had proven some of the most competitive we've ever had at the Home Internationals - this made the weekend nervier, but the win even sweeter. Of course, it's not just all about the squash...Above all, it was a cracking weekend with a group of fabulous people. Everyone was so determined to win and to have fun. It was a complete pleasure to captain and play alongside such a hugely fun bunch of girls - thank you all so much...

A few special mentions:

Team organiser, reporter, general manager and procurer of free wine:
Alexandra Perry (yes, she's Kate's sister, for any of you still confused!!)

Team coach: Tony Webb. Clear advice, succinctly given. Job well done.

Politest player: Polly - Thank you, thank you, thank you xx

Most relaxed individual (on the planet): Sophie. Obviously...



Best effort off the court: Shared between Emmeline (for getting up and jumping in the sea first thing Sunday) and Nat Lawrence - returning from her Galway night out as Emmeline was heading for a dip! Good work ladies...

Kate Bradshaw
Team Captain



WOMENS OVER 60 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		12	5	3	20	3
	1		9	4	14	4
	9	5		10	24	2
	9	9	7		25	1

WOMENS OVER 60 REPORT



The postponed 2020 Ladies O60 Home Internationals took place in Galway, which was bathed in sunlight for the entire duration of the event.

For their initial match, the England team faced a strengthened Wales, featuring the ex-England no1 Jill Champion playing for the first time in a Wales shirt. Starting the match for England, Sue Pynegar, playing with panache, gave the team a convincing 3/0 victory. Disappointingly captain Karen Hume was unable to continue these winning ways, being rather short of match practice after a long period out injured. Despite fighting hard for every point, she went down 3/0 to the new Welsh (ex-England) recruit. The match hung on the result of the number 2 strings, England's Lesley Sturgess-a seasoned campaigner-and Sian Johnson of Wales. On this occasion Sian was just too strong, taking the match 3/0. A 1-2 loss for England-not quite the result we had been hoping for.

Saturday morning and an early start for us oldies, this time against Scotland. A solid opening match by Tammy Bennett (out team Doctor fresh out of the pressure of A & E) at no.3, playing with fluency, power and a winning smile gave us an opening win 3/0. Karen Hume then had the task of taking on the wily Pauline Douglas, a multiple World, European, British and Scottish title holder and, despite coming back from 2/0 down, was unable to push the veteran Scot into a deciding game. 1/3 loss. Sue Pynegar coming in at no2 had the difficult task of playing the deciding rubber. She found herself up against an inspired opponent in Eunice Bond who took the match 3/1 despite great fighting spirit from a tense but always focused Sue. Worryingly the situation was now 2 matches played and 2 losses.

Time to redeem ourselves. The afternoon presented an Irish team of talented shot players and a sauna of a court. Tammy Bennett on again in unrelenting mood, fired the team up with a resounding 3/0 victory. Karen Hume, starting to get the feel of match play again, coped with the tricky drop shots and lobs flowing from Maureen Duke's racket and her power saw her through to a 3/1 victory. A rejuvenated Lesley Sturgess, feeling so much more on the pace than she was on Friday, completed the match with a 3/0 victory for England. At last a team win!

Finishing in third position was not where we would have liked to have been, but many congratulations to Wales, who won the tournament for the first time by a one-point difference over Scotland, despite losing the final nail-biting match to the Scots. It was a truly competitive tournament.

Our thanks go to our 'non travelling' reserve Jackie Gregory, who travelled and provided non-stop support, hitting practice, drinking and dancing over the whole weekend.

Karen Hume
Team Captain