

## 2022 MASTER HOME INTERNATIONAL WALES

<b>Event Dates:</b>	Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> - Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2022		
<b>Address:</b>	Sport Wales National Centre, Cardiff		
<b>England Teams:</b>	<b>Men's O45</b>	<b>Men's O65</b>	<b>Women's O45</b>
	Joss Hargrave (Captain) Paul Boyle Ian Cox David Gouldby Mike Gregory Matt Holland	Stuart Hardy (Captain) Simon Evenden John Guyatt Clive London Ripley Oyler Geoff Redfern	Vix Smith (Captain) Racheal Calver Louisa Dalwood Keeley Johnson Helen Knowles Catherine Ruffle

### MENS OVER 45 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		16	20	20	56	1
	8		18	17	43	2
	3	4		20	27	3
	0	6	2		8	4

### MENS OVER 45 REPORT

The England Men's over 45 squad headed to Cardiff having already suffered the unfortunate loss due to injury of Ashley Bowling. Wily silver fox Mike Gregory came in as a super sub to replace Ashley ensuring the team was not weakened. Known as "Gregs", his addition to the team was apt given that there were literally seven Greggs sausage roll shops within a half mile radius of our hotel. (To be clear, I am not calling Mike a pie eater here; it is merely an observation on the dietary habits of Cardiff's finest).

Anyway, we always knew that the over 45s would be decided between England and the talented Irish side. We had hoped for a finale on the Saturday but were drawn against them in the cauldron of Cardiff Squash Club on Friday night. Our weekend was going to potentially be over before it had properly begun if we got it wrong.

This bunch of Irishmen are Ireland's golden generation - a bit like England football's era of Beckham, Gerrard and Lampard except that this Irish team has actually won things. The pain of losing 5-0 to this team - pretty much the same players but in a slightly different order - 7 years ago in the over 40s in this exact same venue still stings.

Captain Joss Hargrave went on first at no.5 against John Hurley for Ireland and unfortunately lost 3-2 – a mirror image of the result between the two players four years ago in Dublin. Revenge to the big Irishman.

Up next at no.3 was Paul Boyle against the slightly rotund and very much "chatty" Nick Staunton. Paul had been beaten in the Open by Nick who had gone on to win it and so there was already plenty of spice to the match. Nick added to the anticipation by telling everyone who cared to listen that he was odds on to beat any of our team, let alone Paul. Silly boy. A comfortable win to Boyle and Staunton put back in his box to nurse his glass of red.



Up next at no.1 was Matt Holland on debut for England against Stevie Richardson - winning his 986th cap for Ireland. Matt has been awesome all season, but a recent calf injury meant that he was not quite at his sharpest: 3-0 to the Caveman despite Matt having chances in the first and fourth. 2/1 to Ireland

On next was Ian Cox taking on smiling assassin Neal Murphy. Neal is known for his ability to dig in and grind out matches - literally the last thing that Coxy, carrying a little bit of timbre, wanted. Coxy bamboozled Neal with his trademark hands and power: 3-0 to the Englishman to tie the match at 2/2.

The silver fox Gregs was on to play the deciding rubber against the talented and determined Dara O'Flynn. Gregs was making his first appearance for England in over 10 years and started nervously losing the first. However, Mike quickly recovered and won the next two games making Dara work ridiculously hard. Gregs closed out the fourth comfortably having broken Dara down. England had won 3/2 in a very long, tense encounter in front of a packed Cardiff Squash club.

On the Saturday morning we played Scotland and we were determined not to slip up, having done the hard work the night before. On first was David Gouldby making his England debut. David was clearly nervous and went down 6-0 in the first before regaining composure and taking the game. After that there was no looking back and David won the next easily 11/3 11/3. We were off to a great start.

Paul Boyle then took on the handy Keith Simpson at no3. Keith showed great determination before Boyley's class came through for a 3/1 win.

At no1 Matt played the very talented Simon Broughton who historically does not lose much at these weekends. But Matt was clearly determined to put the Friday night loss behind him and chalk up his first England win. Matt's strength and tactical acumen came through for a 3-1 win and to seal the overall match win.

Ian had far too much skill and power for Richard Campbell at no4. Richard had no idea where the ball was going most of the time (and to be fair neither did we in the gallery). A crushing 3/0 win.

At no 2 Gregs encountered strong resistance from Stuart Ayton who appeared not to have read the script when taking the first 12/10. The effort he put in took its toll though and Gregs ran out a comfortable 3/1 winner. 5/0 to England.

England wrapped up the title in quick time on Saturday afternoon against Wales (it was almost like some of us were desperate to get to the bar?). David destroyed his opponent 0, 4 and 3. Paul won 5, 5 and 6. Matt won 4, 6 and 5 against Andrew Neal (Andrew and Matt facially looking like they both belong in the over 35s not 45s). Joss won at no4: 4, 3 and 2. Gregs took on Paul Barrell at no2. Barrell is the nicest bloke off court but looks a tad intimidating on court: gum shield in, bald head with a medical bandage for a headband. Totally uncharacteristically (!) Gregs played to the gallery with a masterclass of winners, holds and trick shots. Poor old Barrell was the stooge in the show but to be fair put in a heck of a shift to try to stay in it. 3/0 to Mike. 5/0 to England.

England had retained the over 45s trophy and a great evening followed. Many thanks to Stuart Hardy, Allen Barwise and the rest of the committee for their help and support.

**Joss Hargrave**  
**Team Captain**





## MENS OVER 65 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		20	16	20	56	1
	1		7	17	25	3
	6	14		19	39	2
	0	5	4		9	4

## MENS OVER 65 REPORT



A very strong England Men's 65 Team assembled in Cardiff to try and ensure England's dominance of this event continued. The team order was thrashed out - not much controversy - as Clive London (Kent), John Guyatt (Worcestershire), Simon Evenden (Nottinghamshire), Stuart Hardy (Wiltshire) Captain, Geoff Redfern (Warwickshire) and Ripley Oyler (Berkshire). The playing order, with all five matches on one court, was 5, 3, 1, 4, 2.

## **England V Ireland**

First up was Ireland and a first Cap for Oyler against Gerry Delaney. Ripley has been trying to get in the England team for some time and he was not going to allow the occasion to get to him. Playing with great commitment he overwhelmed his opponent in straight games. Just the start to set the tone. Simon Evenden then took on South African Irishman Peter Stephens and controlled what could have been a tricky match to ease home in straight games. Clive London had interrupted his holiday to play this weekend and after a solid first it looked like he was on holiday again as the points fell away before a concerted effort and gentle encouragement saw him pinch the game 15/13 against the lively Michael Conlon. The third was straightforward and another 3/0 for the match. Stuart Hardy was up next and produced a decent match to keep Donal Coughlan at bay in spite of some flashing winners. Another 3/0. Another debut, this for British Open Champion John Guyatt. He took on Bert Cotter who has had some excellent results and moves very well. John is a class act, though, and in spite of dropping the second, was fairly untroubled. 3/1. England 5/0.

## **England V Scotland**

This was always going to be the big one. A strong Scotland side headed by National Champion Robin Ridley. The experienced Geoff Redfern came in at five and showed why he has won so many titles over the years. Convincing 3/0. Great start. Then it started to go wrong. Peter Shivas is a fine player and given England players problems over the years. Simon Evenden is fit and mobile and has played several times for England and is unbeaten. Or he was. Shivas produced a great display of Squash and took the match 3/0. One match all. London beat Ridley in the Open final a few years ago and won the 2021 event as well. We thought it was going to be close and it was. Some superb rallies that saw London's renowned mobility stretched and Ridley's powerful hitting saw him edge the match in five competitive games. 2/1 to Scotland.

So, when you're Captain you've got to take some responsibility. Stuart Hardy was on his 16th. International weekend and his tenth as Captain. He had been there before and although on paper it looked close between him and George Stewart, it wasn't. Hardy produced his A - Game and completely overwhelmed the Scot. Match level at 2-2. John Guyatt is on debut but British Open Champion and a strong, athletic player. Against Scottish National runner up Brian Jackson he was merciless, winning for points to clinch the vital match for a 3/2 win for England. Great relief all round.

## **England V Wales**


Moving from Cardiff SC to the National Squash Centre to play Wales proved no problem for the England players. Oyler came back at five and continued to show he was at home playing International Masters Squash with a 3/0 win over Martin Vicary. Simon Evenden bounced back from his morning's disappointment to beat former Army player Mike Mooney in three. London gave a very fine performance to take out Wales no. 1 Adrian Alderton who has had a great season reaching two major semi-finals. The Kent player controlled the match, however, to win in three games and secure the match and the Championship. Geoff Redfern was always too experienced and too good for Wales no. 4 Terry James. Another 3/0 win for him and England. Last up John Guyatt wrapped up proceedings with a 3/0 win over Graham Bastian and that gave England 5/0 against Wales and the Championship.

There followed a few drinks, taken in moderation as befits such fine athletes! A great presentation dinner at Jury's Inn, the inevitable Alan James singing 😊, excellent speeches and much celebration of being back playing the Masters Internationals after the enforced break. Special thanks were made to Squash Wales for an excellent weekend. And to Russell, Roy, and all at Cardiff SC for the hospitality and great food.

**Stuart Hardy**  
**Team Captain**



## WOMENS OVER 45 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		20	X	20	40	1
	1		X	17	18	2
	X	X		X	X	
	2	5	X		7	3

## WOMENS OVER 45 REPORT

- **10-minute read**
- **150 CPD 'Squash Levels' points (don't quote this report when you try to claim them!).**

Before getting down to the business end of the weekend it's *almost* comical to reflect on the injury and illness status of the wO45 team going into it!

Since selection, Helen, No. 6/reserve, had been forced to take a good 2 months out, due to not one, but two, different injuries;

Louisa, No. 5, had gone through knee surgery just a few short months prior;

Catherine had been whacked in the thigh with an absolute belter the day before, sporting the bullseye brandishing many a squash player has experienced at some point in their playing career (not that anyone saw how bad it was, due to the fact that Catherine is in league with the met office and dresses to expect snow on court (indeed, the day it does snow on court, she'll be looking very smug and toasty!);

Keeley, No. 3, had been in bed sick as a parrot for the first half of the week after fainting and was feeling somewhat below par;

Vix, No. 2 had been struggling for some time with the legacy of left bunion surgery, (yes, yes, it is usually considered to be old-lady surgery, but there you go!) and on top of that, her usually mild-mannered, lovely (Scottish!) sparring partner decided to launch his entire weight on her left calf muscle in a 'gentle' training sess the day before, leaving her with a total dead leg wondering if she'd be able to play. Questions were raised as to his motives given his Scottish representation, but it turned out the Scots were unable to field a wO45 team, so the charges were dropped and all was forgiven;

Rachel, No. 1, was one of six starting the weekend in decent shape, but even she suffered with spells of wooziness on court over the weekend.

Suffice to say, it's a minor miracle they all managed to not only wield a racket, but to do so with such great success. What a gutsy bunch of gals! And so to how it all played out...



Before...



After...





## England v Ireland

Age Group	Match Text	Team A	Player A	Team B	Player B	Game Results										Match Result			
						1		2		3		4		5		A	B		
						A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B				
WO45	S1	Ireland	Rachael McNulty	England	Rachel Calver	11	9	11	13	2	11	10	12					1	3
WO45	S2	Ireland	Saoirse O'Sullivan	England	Vix Smith	6	11	2	11	0	11							0	3
WO45	S3	Ireland	Suzanne Swan	England	Keeley Johnson	9	11	8	11	7	11							0	3
WO45	S4	Ireland	Suzanne O'Shaughnessy	England	Catherine Ruffle	0	11	2	11	5	11							0	3
WO45	S5	Ireland	Sarah Scanlan	England	Helen Knowles	8	11	6	11	5	11							0	3



First up was Ireland. Initial impression was to skip the squash and head straight to the bar with this lively lot, such was their warmth! It's fair to say both teams were exuding copious amounts of nervous energy as we lined up for Home-International-fame flag photos. With neither team trying to outdo the other with 'our flag's bigger than yours', we were look set for an unpredictable outcome, which only added to the excitement unfolding!

At No. 5, Helen started as she meant to go on with a volley drop kill return of serve on the 1st point proceeding to take a confident 3-0 lead. Even a fair 'no-let' against her failed to rattle her cool-exterior, despite the ref saying that 'more effort was required'. (Chuckling in the balcony, spectators reminisced that alas, gone were the days when you could raise your hand in a genteel lady-like fashion – in modern era women's squash you had to demonstrate the ability to commit an all-out matrix move rugby tackle combo!). Nevertheless, Helen continued unphased against a very able opponent in Sarah, to take the match 3-0, with cool, calm and collected squash.

Next up was Keeley at 3 against Suzanne S. These equally hard-hitting players fought neck and neck to 6-6 in the first. With 2 floaty serves going out at various points, Keeley demonstrated the impact the low ceilings at Cardiff Squash club were going to have on lob-lovers, to the immense delight of lob-loathers! Keeley, however, took a hard-fought first 11-9 and proceeded to exchange formidable drops with her skilful opponent throughout the match. Brilliant rallies, running and reactionary play gave Keeley a well-deserved 3-0 win.

Battle of the Rachel's ensued at string 1. Despite exchanging drop shot winners and getting some amazing pick-ups, England Rach struggled to find her rhythm in the first game and a half, but by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> she had

saved 4 game points to even the score line. With her signature line and length back on-song, the tables turned dramatically in the 3<sup>rd</sup> with Rach sprinting ahead to a 9-0 lead! Doing her best to bury her opponent in the back corners, she was nudged ever closer to victory when Irish Rachel served out twice. Fighting tooth and nail, Rach saved 3 game balls to win the match 12-10, securing victory for the team. Yay!

With the win already under the English-rose belts, Catherine took to the court. Evidently, feeling sorry for the losing side, she proceeded to take the first game 11-0 to claim the first bagel of the night! Don't mess. With some stunning cross court drops and a smattering of boasts that found the nick, she was able to dictate the play; that combined with her usual Duracell bunny supercharge meant she kept it up to the finish line to claim a comfortable 3-0 victory against another lovely opponent, dropping all of 7 points.

Last up was Vix who quite frankly was delighted to find herself firing on all cylinders with 2 working legs capable of chasing a small rubber ball in random directions at speed. Confident squash from the outset, her cross-court kill was working a treat. Unfortunately for Saoirse who had been stripped of a key super-power in the form of her lob-serve, Vix was able to dominate from the start and everything was coming off. A comfortable 3-0 win and the 2<sup>nd</sup> bagel of the night. Sorry Saoirse!

*Hats off if you're still here – stay on target for those coveted squash levels CPD points (\* see small print).*

\*Please note squash levels CPD points were created purely for the purposes of this report to entice you, the reader, to read it. You will not be entitled to claim an additional 150 squash levels points on completion of this report, but don't let that stop you reading 😊.

### England v Wales

Age Group	Match Text	Team A	Player A	Team B	Player B	Game Results										Match Result	
						1		2		3		4		5		A	B
						A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B		
WO45	S1	Wales	Helen Barnard	England	Rachel Calver	11	5	9	11	11	8	6	11	7	11	2	3
WO45	S2	Wales	Rhian Davies	England	Vix Smith	1	11	4	11	9	11					0	3
WO45	S3	Wales	Samantha Hampson	England	Keeley Johnson	5	11	1	11	1	11					0	3
WO45	S4	Wales	Jill Griffiths	England	Catherine Ruffle	2	11	5	11	2	11					0	3
WO45	S5	Wales	Sally Davis	England	Louisa Dalwood	4	11	6	11	3	11					0	3



First up was Louisa at 5. Through fear of showing one's age, but let's face it, we're all ancient here, Louisa has the ability to consistently turn out a Lee Van Cleef 'Angel Eyes', to anyone's 'Blondie' (cue iconic music playing in your head...aaagrgh aaagrgh aaagrgh!). And if you don't understand this reference, who are you and why are you reading this report. In plain English then, Louisa was determined and focussed, out manoeuvring her opponent with change of direction and pace to a comfortable 3-0 victory; her opponent, Sally, never likely to make much of a dent in the Dalwood armoury.

On to Keeley's 3<sup>rd</sup> string match – never looking rattled, she emphatically demolished her Welsh counterpart who struggled to cope with Keeley's class shot-making ability and inch perfect drop shots on the day, dropping just 7 points in the match.

No.1 clash of Rachel C v Helen B was perhaps THE match to watch of all the w045 games. Two very experienced well-grooved skilful players battling it out. Initially struggling to find her usual length and width and feeling a bit dicey, Rach went 1 down but began to find form with her forehand straight drop in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, winning a tight game to level the score line. It was neck and neck in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6-6 until Helen ran away with it. Rach then did what she does best and continued to chip away to claim the match 11-7 in the 5<sup>th</sup>. A superb finish from an exhausted Rach!

Pocket-rocket Catherine at 4 got off to another flying start to take the 1st. Another controlled, polished, performance, the win never in doubt, ended in a 3-0 victory and a loss of just 9 points across the match. Great squash from Catherine!

Vix always seems to produce her best squash when going on court expected to lose, but whether underdog or overdog, despite a mini wobble in the 3<sup>rd</sup> losing multiple game balls on the trot, on this occasion, she emerged as top dog against 50<sup>th</sup> birthday girl Rhian.

And in the absence of a Scottish team, that was the official wrap. Victory to England!

### **England v Wales Select**

It was with great appreciation that this select line-up of Welsh lovelies turned out their team to fill the void left by Scotland. As much as we would all rather not have been up and at 'em for a 9.30am start. Not least since the England captain really doesn't fire on all cylinders until after 10am, never better demonstrated by the submission of the wrong Wales team sheet – her bacon was well and truly saved from a roasting as the boo-boo was committed against the tie that didn't count. (Note to self, never rely on memory recall after the age of 45. No-one died in the making, but never put me in charge of a crack-pot team of mercenaries!). Moving swiftly on.

Helen got off to a flying start which continued on, helped by the high error rate of her opponent, who seemed to be nursing a slight tweak. At 2-0 down, Helen had to dig deep to take the match 12-10 in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. All-in-all a spectacular 1<sup>st</sup> Home Internationals appearance for Helen! Awesome job.

Keeley was up against the experienced Sarah Creed but took the 1<sup>st</sup> with ease. Looking in control, with great anticipation, she hunted down her opponents boasts. Sarah picked off points with her lovely cross court flick drop, but Keeley's consistent shot making and ability to dig the ball out the back when under the cuff saw her come out the clear winner in 3.

Rachel's match was a battle of the giants! Awesome rallies. Spectacular pick-ups from both players. Rach relaxed into the match using her characteristic forehand drop to great effect to go 2-0 up. Having seen Sarah play at inter-counties, Rach knew this wouldn't be an easy win, and true to form, Sarah came back all guns blazing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to take it 11-8. Using clever change of direction and pace though, Rach came through 14-12 saving 5 game balls to take the match 3-1!

Louisa at 4 was out the blocks like a rocket to take an 8-2 lead, winning the 1st comfortably 11-2. As can so often happen, tables turned in the 2<sup>nd</sup> as nerves kicked-in allowing Gemma an 'in' to level the score line. Louisa had to dig deep to come away with a 12-10 win in the 3<sup>rd</sup> but proceeded to out manoeuvre her opponent with impactful change of direction and pace to an easy 11-2 win in the 4<sup>th</sup>. Job well done.



Vix up last. Challenged in the changing rooms to drop in a flattering description that her ebullient, vivacious and scintillating opponent might need to look up in a dictionary, she stepped on court against lovely-bubbly Rebecca. Luckily for the team, Vix was once again in the zone and despite some beautiful hard-hitting rallies exchanged between the two, she ran away with a comfortable 3-0 victory in a thoroughly enjoyed match.

### Wrapping it up...

The England w045 team would like to extend huge thanks to the venues for their hospitality, to all the referees who turned out to make our lives so much more pleasant whilst competing, to all the travelling supporters and the many volunteers that make these things possible. One thing that shined through with this Women's team was their unwavering ability to bring it when it mattered most. Demonstrated time and time again at regionals and nationals, everyone earned their spot and proved their ability to cope with the undeniable pressure that this level of competition brings. Awesome job by an awesome bunch! Same again next year girls 😊.

