

2023 MASTER HOME INTERNATIONAL ENGLAND

Event Dates:	Friday 28 th - Saturday 29 th April 2023		
Address:	Nottingham Squash Club		
England Teams:	Men's O40	Men's O60	Women's O35/40
	Steven Davies (Captain) Neil Cross Darren Lewis Tim Richards Antony Savage Tony Webb	Neil Harrison (Captain) Bryan Beeson Steve Martin John Parkes Teejay Sogunro Mark Woodliffe	Natalie Lawrence (Captain) Gemma Barber Sophie Beake Kate Bradshaw Heather Joy Michelle Knight
	Women's O60		
	Mandy Akin (Captain) Karen Hume Hilary Kenyon Lesley Sturgess		



MENS OVER 40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		17	20	20	57	1
	4		20	20	44	2
	1	3		8	12	4
	2	3	19		24	3

MENS OVER 40 REPORT



The team had a fantastic couple of days at Nottingham Squash Club with some entertaining squash, a good crowd and atmosphere and most importantly from an England point of a view a win!

The squad had three debutants in it this year and it was one of those Steve Davies, who was first on court at number 5 vs Wales. A nery start saw Steve go 2-0 down against Richard Tailby who hit a succession of good boasts and tricky drops, but a relieved captain managed to turn it round and took the next 3 games relatively comfortably for a 3-2 win. Antony Savage again on debut played superbly and despite his opponent Adam Evans array of attacking shots and at times excellent control Antony was just too strong for him and ran out a 3-0 winner. It was more of the same from Tim Richards at 1 with a quality performance, demonstrating all his control

and touch to win 3-0 against Andrew Neale. The third debutant, Neil Cross kept the wins coming and in typical hard-hitting fashion saw off James Powell 3-0 with a mixture of high tempo squash and superb boasts and low kills. Darren Lewis was left to complete the victory and as he often does dazzled a good crowd and showed off his full array of shots to beat Lloyd Forkan 3-0. A great 5-0 win to kick things off.



The Saturday morning match vs Ireland looked like it could be the crunch one of the weekend with Ireland also having won 5-0 on Friday night vs Scotland. Tony Webb came in for Steve Davies at 5 for this one and set things off with a typically controlled performance, winning a tight 3rd 12-10 to take the match vs Kevin Moore 3-0. Antony Savage once again was on top form and saw off Keith Moran 3-0. The match was a real cracker with Sav certainly not getting everything his own way and had to save a game ball in the second before coming on strong in the 3rd and winning 3-0.

Tim Richards was next on court and as expected had a really tough match against Nigel Peyton. The quality of squash on show was superb and Tim gave it everything but found Nigel's control and movement around the court ultimately too tough to breakdown. The Irish were back in the tie at 2-1. It was over to Neil Cross then to try and nail down victory which he duly did with a 3-0 win over Mark Furlong. Mark fought hard and really pushed hard throughout but was always on the back foot and Neil had too much for him and won 3-0. Once again, the path was clear for Darren to put the icing on the cake and wrap up the victory for England. He had met his opponent Kevin Knox previously and it was Kevin who took the first game. Playing some great squash. Darren as usual though responded with an array of attacking and deceptive shots and took an entertaining match 3-1.

So, it was down to the final match and a win for England over Scotland would see them crowned champions for 2023. The Scottish side put everything into each and every match and showed plenty of skill along the way, but an England team of Tim Richards, Darren Lewis, Antony Savage, Steve Davies and Tony Webb were too strong in the end and ran out 5-0 winners with just Darren Lewis dropping a game this time out.



Thanks go to England Squash Masters for organising the event and as ever doing a superb job. The 40's side had a great couple of days and it really was an honour and privilege to play and be part of the occasion. The squash was as competitive as you would expect for an international match between the home nations but at the same time played in a great spirit and our thanks go to the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh teams for this. The celebrations on Saturday evening were well deserved and certainly enjoyed to the full!



Finally, thanks to Nottingham Squash Club for hosting the event and to the volunteers that did such a good job over the two days.

Steven Davies
Team Captain

MENS OVER 60 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		20	20	20	60	1
	0		9	10	19	4
	2	17		8	27	3
	0	14	17		31	2

MENS OVER 60 REPORT



The England O60's squad was confirmed following the National Championships in February, and what a squad! Bryan Beeson, Mark Woodliffe, John Parkes, Steve Martin, Teejay Sogunro, and myself. 5 experienced Internationals, 4 winners of British Closed, Open and European Championships. I should probably mention that Bryan was formerly a World top 10 player "back in the day". One debutant in Teejay.

The Captain was so confident in this squad that two challenges were set: to achieve 60 points and to win 45 games with none conceded. Mission accomplished (sort of), we achieved the first 2 targets, but dropped 2 games along the way. Or should I say that the Captain dropped 2 games, deliberately so of course (I wish)!

No dramas from a playing perspective other than on Teejay's debut versus Wales! Hit 3 times on the head from 3 "down the middle" lob serves! Possibly the nerves, but odd "Strictly Come Dancing" footwork to avoid the serves, to no avail! If you looked carefully you could see the word "Dunlop" and 2 yellow dots on the top of Teejay's head! All good, the trophy had come home after it had been won by Ireland last year.



Suited and booted, ESM HI ties smartly tied, it was a pint in the hotel, kitty collected, and off to the Plaza Hotel for meal, presentation, speeches, and disco. Having a Victor Meldrew moment, I must have muttered "£7 a pint?", "I can't believe it", a hundred times! The jubilant squad was joined on our table by Natalie Lawrence, Sophie Beake and Heather Joy from England 35s/40s, who joined in the merciless torturing of the Captain's loss of 2 games to Scotland. No concern or quarter given to the sensitive nature of myself! Then I learned that Nat' and Sophie had both lost 3 games each, which is 1 more than 2 I believe, and sufficient to lose a match! Now that's karma!

What a night. A lovely meal, great presentation and some good speeches, followed by some serious bopping on the dance floor 'til late.



Special thanks must go to Allen Barwise, ably assisted by Polly and Ali. As ever, to Brian Brock, with the excellence of his technology skills. Nottingham Squash Club was a great venue, and I wish them well for the future. To my squad of players, a massive thank you. What a squad! An honour and a privilege, just a fantastic weekend.

Neil Harrison
Team Captain

WOMENS OVER 35/40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		17	20	20	57	1
	4		18	17	39	2
	1	8		7	16	4
	5	10	18		33	3

WOMENS OVER 35/40 REPORT



I was absolutely honoured to be given the captancy of the 035/040 women this year along with the very difficult decision of who would play and in what order. This was particularly tricky as our two strongest players from last year decided to abstain this year and everyone else was ranked a similar level. That combined with the fact that the English ladies in this age group had won the home internationals for the last 25 years (except in 2013 when Scotland won) added more pressure to the decision.

Luckily our squad of six ladies had tremendous depth so we were always going to be tough to beat down the order

So the start to the weekend could have gone better what with a massive de-tour to "I Pro sports" to collect the new blue England skirts and two of the team stranded on the M1 junction at a standstill, however much entertainment was had from watching our "avatars" on the "live location mapping" and listening to how long Sophie could last for without going in the hedge!



Our first match was against runners-up last year "Wales" who we only just squeezed a win 3-2 last year. Fortunately for us though, their number 1 Stacey Gooding had been invited to play in the European team championships which was the same weekend, so without her and Jenny McKenna, it was looking promising. First up for England and first home internationals debut was Michelle Knight, the babe of the team having just turned 35 years old, played Anna Adams from Wales! Knight was a tad nervous but seemed to calm her nerves by playing ferociously and "accidentally" bagelling Anna 11-0 in the first game!! The second game was much closer and cheers

from the Welsh side when Anna scored her first point. Knight managed to hold out in the second game winning 11-9 and went on to win the third convincingly 11-2. A great start for England. Up next was 3 seed Heather Joy, another debutant in the England team, who had a fantastic season winning Ipswich and coming second in St.Albans and the National champs, she was playing the bubbly Rebecca Baker! Joy took the first game comfortably 11-4 then had to pull out all the stops in the second game only just managing to take it 11-9, the third game was never in doubt and was literally a "joy" to watch winning 11-7. Up next was me (the sacrificial lamb) at 1 seed, playing a new welsh girl called Gemma Davies! Obviously after stalking her "squash levels" and realising she was actually pretty useful I assumed id be in for a 5 setter, however either nerves got the better of her or I somehow miraculously managed to get my game to gel well, I did manage to win in 3 games (albeit very close games!) Next up was Sophie Beake at 4 seed against seasoned home internationalist Helen Barnard from Wales! Barnard known for her love of 5 setters started well, managing to win the first game 11-7, but after a stern team talk, Beake manage to calm her "tins" and play some outrageous winners to win the next two games 11-8, 11-3. It all looked done and dusted until Barnard not content with 4 games had a blinding 4th to win 11-8. It was always going to be nip and tuck in the fifth, both players having match balls, but it was Barnard who managed to sneak it 12-10 in the fifth and one of the best matches of the weekend. Last up was Kate Bradshaw at 2 seed, a regular in the England team who also had a very successful season winning Wolverhampton and coming second in the National champs. She was playing Sarah Creed. Creed started really well and took control of the match going 2-0 up but in true Bradshaw fashion (another 5 setter lover) managed to battle her way back into the match and spectacularly win the fifth 11-6 for a 3-2 victory for England

Final score 4-1 to England



Day 2 and we were up against Ireland (probably the toughest opponents of the weekend) with Gemma Barber up first at number 5 (Gemma also had a great season this year coming second in Grove park and Wolverhampton) she was playing Michelle Heraughty. This was Gemma's first game this weekend and understandably she was a tad nervous, especially since the team photos seem to drag out forever, but once on court there was no stopping her for a convincing 3-0 victory and a great start to the match. Heather Joy was up again at 3 seed playing Rachel McNulty, a tricky opponent who I personally struggled playing last year in Ireland, however Joy made light work of it

and won convincingly 3-0. I was up next against Tanya Scullion, a very talented junior by all accounts, and only recently back on the squash scene after years off, however it didn't show on court and she played an absolute blinder to win 3-0. The team was now 2-1 up and all to play for. Sophie Beake was up next at 4 against the legend Orla O'Doherty but Beakes power was too strong for Orla and she won 3-0 with only the second game pretty close at 12-10. Last up was Kate Bradshaw against Siobhan Parker, this promised to be a close match and it certainly delivered! Parker took the first game comfortably but Bradshaw fought back from game points down to win the second game 13-11, then comfortably won the third 11-2. Despite the crowd (namely Darren Lewis) predicting a 5 setter, Bradshaw managed to close the match out in 4 games winning a tight 12-10 battle.

Final score 4-1 to England



Last match was against Scotland. Michelle Knight was up first at 5 playing Elaine Inglis, with what promised to be a tight match, and the first game certainly didn't disappoint, with some great rallies and good retrieving skills with a classic Knight display of flexibility! Knight won the first game 11-7. Unfortunately Inglis struggled in the second game losing 11-1 and then finally retired injured, but a great start for England and a 3-0 victory. Up next was Heather Joy playing Catriona Smith at 3 seed and yet another impressive performance from Joy winning in straight sets in just 14 minutes! I was up next against an old nemesis Katy Temple and we had a great battle, I was very lucky to sneak the first two games 13-11

and 12-10 which could easily have gone either way, then managed to steam ahead in the third to win 3-0. Next on was Gemma Barber against Mhairi Gritz which was another humdinger, Barber played some excellent squash winning the first two games 11-9, 11-8, but Gritz came back in the third putting barber under some real pressure to win 11-5, the fourth game went down to the wire with both players having game balls, but it was Barber that went on to win 12-10. Last up was Kate Bradshaw at 2 seed against Sheena Logan, and another faultless match from Bradshaw comfortably winning 3-0 and also retaining her unbeaten home internationals record.

Final score 5-0 to England

A fantastic end to yet another brilliant home internationals competition, I would like to thank all the England players for playing some stunning squash and really getting into the vibe of the event, and thank of course Brian and his team and Allen for their outstanding organisation (which really couldn't have gone any smoother)



And on a personal note id like to thank the 060 men for “putting up” with me on their table at the evening meal, it was an absolute pleasure to be in their company and of course the legend that is Mark Woodliffe! And I haven't forgotten our “racketlon” challenge ;)

Natalie Lawrence
Team Captain

WOMENS OVER 60 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		12	12	9	33	1
	0		3	4	7	4
	2	10		3	15	3
	5	10	10		25	2

WOMENS OVER 60 REPORT



We all arrived in Nottingham ready for a challenge as with a three-person team the pressure is on!

Our number 3, Karen Hume had been ill for a couple of weeks and decided that she didn't feel up to playing in two matches, so Lesley Sturgess stepped up to play in two.

Potentially our hardest match was going to be against Wales and that was also our first match on Friday afternoon. We kicked off with Lesley Sturgess taking on an inform Lynne Davies. Lesley gave a good performance and took the third game to the wire narrowly losing it 10/12 which meant Lynne came through for Wales in 3 games.



The pressure was now on the number 1 & 2. Hilary Kenyon met Jill Campion at number 1. The first two games were tight, but Hilary came through winning 11/8, 11/8. Jill made a good come back to take the third 11/5 but Hilary got back into her stride and took the final game 11/6. One game all and down to the final match! Mandy Akin against Sian Johnson. Sian got off to a good start by taking the first game 11/9. The 2nd game was nip and tuck and Mandy manage to hang in and take it 13/11 (phew!). In the next two games Mandy relaxed and took those two games more comfortably, 11/4 11/5. First win to England 😊



Saturday morning and a 9.30 start against Ireland. Lesley was at number 3 again and put in a very solid performance to take the match 3/0 which took the pressure off for Hilary and Mandy. Hilary also put in a strong performance with a comfortable 3/0 win, 11/4, 11/5 11/2. Final game and Mandy Akin took the first 2 games comfortably and then at 10/5 match ball up, had a lapse of concentration which allowed her opponent, Maureen Duke, to level at 10-10. Mandy finally came through 13/11. Second win to England 😊

Saturday afternoon and our final match against Scotland. The overall points for England and Wales were close at this stage, so it really needed to be another win for England to enable us to take the title. Karen Hume stepped in at number 3 having conserved her energy over the weekend and was up against Eunice Bond. Having not been on court much over the previous 3 weeks, Karen put in a great performance and took the first two games 11/3, 11/3, then Eunice managed to sneak the third 13/11. Karen came back in the fourth and took it 11/6 to win the match and again this took some pressure of the numbers 1 & 2. Hilary was up against Pauline Douglas, always a difficult match due to Pauline's experience and how well she reads the game. Hilary fought hard to take the first two games 11/9, 12/10, Pauline got the bit between her teeth in the third and won it 11/4. Hilary dug deep in the fourth to take the match 3/1, which ensured the title belonged to England. Final match, which was now a dead rubber, which meant a much more relaxed Mandy Akin took to the court with a strong performance to take the third and final match 3/0 - 11/3, 11/4, 11/4.



England Women's Over 60s took the title.

The over 60's women dedicated their win to Fiona McLean of Scotland, who sadly passed away in February this year and was greatly missed this weekend 😞

Mandy Akin
Team Captain