

## 2023 MASTER HOME INTERNATIONAL SCOTLAND

|                       |   |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Event Dates:</b>   | Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> - Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2023  |   |   |
| <b>Address:</b>       | Edinburgh Sports Club   |   |   |
| <b>England Teams:</b> | <b>Men's O35</b>  | <b>Men's O55</b>  | <b>Men's O75</b>  |
|                       | Rory Pennell (Captain)<br>Gbenga Adeyi<br>James Bowden<br>Jamie Douglas<br>David Palmer<br>Phil Rushworth | Alex Betts (Captain)<br>Raymond Burke MBE<br>Tim Clark<br>Stephen McLoughlin<br>Eamonn Price<br>Simon Spencer | Aubrey Waddy (Captain)<br>Martin Day<br>Tommy Elves<br>Barry Featherstone |
|                       | <b>Women's O55</b>  |   |   |
|                       | Karen Webb (Captain)<br>Rose Bamber<br>Nicky Horn<br>Isobel Smith<br>Lisa Tolhurst<br>Fran Wallis         |   |   |

### MENS OVER 35 RESULTS SUMMARY

| Team  |   |   |   |   | Total | Position |
|---|---|---|---|--|-------|----------|
|  |  | 20  | 20  | 20   | 60    | 1        |
|  | 0   |  | 5   | 14   | 19    | 3        |
|  | 2   | 17  |  | 18   | 37    | 2        |
|  | 0   | 10  | 8   |  | 18    | 4        |

### MENS OVER 35 REPORT

This year's over 35s squad was definitely one of the stronger teams we have had. With great strength in depth, knowing it would be difficult for the other teams to match our strength.

We took on the Irish first on Friday evening. A very entertaining opening match from Gbenga Adeyi, who with his infectious smile and laid-back style, saw off his opponent in quick fashion. Next up, team captain, Rory Pennell also put in a good strong performance to take the England team 2 games up. Next up, a solid performance from the elder statesmen of the team, James Bowden, who managed to secure the match for the team. Leaving Jamie Douglas, to relax the best he knows how and dispatching his opponent in quick style. Up last was our Number 2 - Phil Rushworth. Phil is always great to watch, with his lovely holds and great variation. Another great performance to help England towards a 5-0 victory.

Saturday morning seemingly went the same way against Wales, who were slightly weakened this year, with previous players not playing. Captain Rory decided to rest this one out and give the new boy on the block Dave

Palmer his debut. Not disappointing, he came through 3-0. The rest of the team followed in suit and all came through without dropping a game.



Our last match was against the hosts Scotland. This was on paper possibly our closest match up, with the hosts winning both their first two matches. Unfortunately, they were quite not at full strength with their number 1 not being able to play, due to a slight leg injury sustained the night before.

First on was Dave Palmer who continued his form from the morning and got the team off to a good 1-0 lead. Next up, Captain coming in after his rest was in sharp form and made light work of his opponent.

Next Number 1 James went on, showing signs that he should probably move upto the over 40's now.. ;- ) got off to a great start taking the 1st 11-4. His opponent however had other ideas. Firing in the ball from all angles and unsettling James. He soon saw himself 2-1 down. With a few fine words from his teammates (captain mentioning that I would of liked a whitewash this weekend!!) He composed himself and came through the victor 3-2 and quite possibly the most exciting match of the O35's all weekend, and that secured victory for England. Next up, Jamie took the captains words literally and not only didn't drop a game, but refused to drop a point in the first game! Last up Phil saw off his opponent with relative comfot to secure England's 5-0 victory and overall winners and retaining the cup.

I would like to firstly say a huge thank you to all of my team and the supporters we all brought up with us. We were 20+ strong with friends, family and hopefully a few future stars. Definitely the best turnout I've seen at any event, I hope this continues next year.



A thank you also goes to Scottish squash for hosting an amazing event and the team involved in organising the weekend.

**Rory Pennell**  
**Team Captain**

## MENS OVER 55 RESULTS SUMMARY

| Team  |  |  |  |  | Total | Position |
|---|---|---|---|--|-------|----------|
|  |   | 20  | 15  | 20   | 55    | 1        |
|  | 1   |   | 6   | 8  | 15    | 4        |
|  | 6   | 18  |   | 20   | 44    | 2        |
|  | 1   | 14  | 0   |  | 15    | 3        |

## MENS OVER 55 REPORT



After the military efficiency of last year under Ray Burke's captaincy, there was more of a laissez faire approach from the captain of this year's Mens Over 55s team. This approach through good fortune was all going well. There had been no withdrawals and progress to Edinburgh Sports Club from all four corners of England was being checked, albeit not by the captain, and there was some evidence of military planning. A scouting group of Tim Clark & Simon Spencer were already behind enemy lines practising at ESC; Eamonn Price & Alex Betts had crossed the border meeting no resistance; and Ray Burke was marching headlong to ESC. This left Steve McLoughlin, who needs to march on his stomach, moaning about mutiny unless he could find a Greggs. Nevertheless, we all assembled and prepared for the first encounter with Ireland. So, obviously the captain distributed red beanies to his team as a gift to hand over to each opponent and unfortunately he isn't colour blind. After this false step was rectified the team proceeded to a 5-0 victory for the loss of one game with good competitive squash.

After a light supper and restorative refreshments (one of us had a Lucozade Sport although other brands were available), there was some trepidation as we approached our lodgings at the Britannia Hotel, whose only redeeming feature is its proximity to ESC. However, we were all present & correct on Saturday morning for the match against Wales where there was no need to hand out beanies. So, the captaincy wasn't under too much pressure. Another enjoyable match with a 5-0 victory for the loss of one game (we won't dwell on this Ray!).

There was some once in a generation event going on in London, which we caught the end of, which apparently was fortunate since the service in the Abbey apparently went on a bit - just ask Penny Mordaunt! Nevertheless, it provided a bit of a distraction over lunch as we prepared for the toughest assignment, the Scots in their backyard. The Scots presented the sternest test but England's strength in depth made us the favourite. After a nervy 3-0 from the Captain at 5, Steve McLoughlin took on Colin Grant, who had had a titanic 3-2 in the morning. Nevertheless, Colin took Steve to 15-13 in the first 2 games but ran out of gas in the 3rd. So, an accomplished 3-0 win at 3. Next up was the number 1 string match between Tim Clark, recently crowned Nationals champion, versus Mike Ramsay, team mate, training & doubles partner at Queen's Club of our Captain. More poor captaincy became evident: traitorous training with an opponent & useless words of advice between games. Mike played the best squash I have seen from him in ages and ran out a 3-1 winner with high power backhand drives, deceptive boasts and accurate drop shots. Sorry, Tim! So, nerves were beginning to get a bit frayed but not with Simon Spencer, who secured victory with a commanding 3-0 win at 4. That left the number twos, Eamonn Price up against Scottish Captain, Paul Jenkins, who like last year was fired up despite the match being a dead rubber. It is fair to say that Eamonn wasn't quite so fired up and was more concerned about not delaying the evening's festivities, which was very noble of him. Nevertheless, Paul played excellent attacking squash allowing no rhythm for our man and took the match 3-0. So, another solid Home Internationals win for England Mens over 55s.

The evening celebration was as convivial as you would expect but with some poignancy as two Scottish Masters Ladies players, Fiona McLean and Jane Davey, were remembered fondly with fine words from Sue Strachan. It is best to draw a veil over the rest of the evening other than to pose a question, asking for a friend obviously, how do you explain to your partner a credit card expense at "Fingers"?



Many thanks to ESC who made us all very welcome and to the referees, who really put in some shifts. Finally, thanks to the team for putting up with the novice Captain and ensuring we all had a great time.

**Alex Betts**  
**Team Captain**

## MENS OVER 75 RESULTS SUMMARY

| Team  |  |  |  |  | Total | Position |
|---|---|---|---|--|-------|----------|
|  |   | 14  | 14  | 14   | 42    | 1        |
|  | 0   |   | 3   | 4  | 7     | 4        |
|  | 1   | 13  |   | 4  | 18    | 3        |
|  | 0   | 11  | 11  |  | 22    | 2        |

## MENS OVER 75 REPORT



Preparations for the England team in the Men's o-75 home internationals were holed, but not below the waterline, by the withdrawal of James Dubois. James' strong form through his two years in the age group had made him a key member of the team. Then a further potential disaster: immediately after agreeing to take James' place, his replacement Chris Ansell pulled a hamstring. In this venerable age group, taking a team of just three would be a huge risk. Fortunately, Tommy Elves was able to step in, even though the beam across the ceilings of courts 1-4 at Edinburgh Sports Club would intercept his go-to shot, the lob.

There was a general squad thumbs down at the prospect of staying in the Britannia Hotel, traditionally chosen for the Edinburgh internationals by Scottish Squash. This led to the slight risk of signing up for an Airbnb organised by the captain of one of the chief foes, Ian Ross of Scotland. Concern seemed to be justified by the tempting presence of not one but two bottles of prosecco in the property's capacious fridge. Fortunately, the house, owned by Ian's cousin Martin, was more than adequate. Less adequate were the two bone-shaking miles of road between the Airbnb and the club, which brought to mind conditions in the besieged town of Bakhmut. Edinburgh City Council's response has been to impose an almost universal twenty miles per hour speed limit.

Our first opponents were Ireland. We were fortunate to be assigned the duck egg blue Court 6, whose ceiling unlike courts 1-4 was more than standard height: Tommy would definitely play in this one. Counterintuitively, he sought out the court thermostat, and a blast of gas-powered heat warmed at least the back of the court. Tommy played well to beat Myron Evans 3-0. Barry Featherstone was predictably ruthless in his 3-0 win over Frank Fahey and Martin Day survived a couple of game balls in the first game to beat Ciaran Roche 3-0. A perfect start... except that on the exhibition court Wales were unexpectedly beating a strong Scotland side 2-1, with Duncan Jones and Leighton Jenkins particularly effective. Food for thought for the match the next morning.

The spectre of the 2016 collapse against Wales in the o-70s and the narrow o-75 loss to Scotland in 2019 informed the decision to bring in Martin rather than Tommy to play against Wales. This was at the unseemly hour of 09.30 on Saturday morning. With hindsight - a 3-0 win - the change wasn't needed, although Barry in his 3-0 victory had to resist some pressure from the fleet Welsh No 1 Steve Evans. Martin dispatched David Grant easily and Aubrey was too strong for Duncan Jones. For the final match, just into the afternoon, Scotland would always be a threat if England collapsed as they had done in the past. Ian Ross in particular was favourite to beat Barry. So Martin, after his strong performances in the Regionals and the National Championships, was selected over Tommy. Again, hindsight shows what looks like an easy win. With the thermostat set to 25 degrees, Martin resisted some pressure in beating Andy Duff 3-0, before Barry put in one of his performances of the season in a fine 3-1 victory over Ian Ross. Aubrey had to save game points in the first game before Ken Reid lost his sharpshooting accuracy: another 3-0 to England.

So eventually it turned out to be a comprehensive win for England, but this doesn't reflect the tension during the matches. The team all played up to their form through the long Masters season, and subsequently hammered the fruit juice and coffee in the splendidly organised presentation dinner. Noteworthy in the speeches were Sue Strachan's recollections of her friend Fiona McLean, who is sadly missed. We o-75s can reflect on the good fortune of having been able to compete against a great group of Welsh and Irish and Scottish opponents.

**Aubrey Waddy**  
**Team Captain**

### WOMENS OVER 55 RESULTS SUMMARY

| Team  |  |  |  |  | Total | Position |
|---|---|---|---|--|-------|----------|
|  |   | 20  | 18  | 16   | 54    | 1        |
|  | 0   |   | 1   | 0  | 1     | 4        |
|  | 4   | 20  |   | 18   | 42    | 2        |
|  | 7   | 20  | 8   |  | 35    | 2        |

### WOMENS OVER 60 REPORT



We all arrived in Edinburgh on Friday 5th May in good spirits and eager to play squash, although there were a few niggling injury concerns. We were able to have some good warm-up time and practice on the courts before our first match against Ireland.



Unfortunately, Ireland only had 4 ladies so our no 5 Lisa Tolhurst had a dead rubber against the Scottish reserve. She was able to play within herself and to test out her back. Everything was good and she won comfortably. Next on court, Nicky Horn produced an excellent performance and won her match 3-0, 11-5 11-6 11-5. No 1s went on court next and Rose Bamber played very well to win her match against Rosie Barrie 3-0, 11-3 11-4 11-4. Fran Wallis also started strongly and won 3-0, 11-4 11-1 11-4. Lastly, Isobel Smith took to court and had a slightly close game as she took care of her knee but won 3-0, 12-10, 11-8, 14-12. So a fantastic team performance which gave us confidence moving forward and we were able to celebrate two birthdays in the team.

Saturday morning saw us playing Wales who turned out to be our strongest opposition. Karen Webb started the ball rolling for England by winning 3-0, 11-6 11-2 11-5. Nicky Horn followed with another dominant performance controlling the T and winning 3-0, 11-6 11-3 11-4. On to our no 1s and Rose Bamber came up against an in-form and very confident Helen Barnard. The match was very competitive and exciting and the 4th game could have gone either way but Helen emerged the winner 3-1, 11-7 7-11 11-6 14-12. That put Fran Wallis under some pressure to win the match for England and she kept her cool to play really well and beat Sian Johnson 3-1, 11-8 7-11 11-7 11-9. Isobel Smith had an incredibly difficult task of beating Jill Campion and although she won the first game 11-8, she lost the next three 6-11 9-11 7-11. But England had won the encounter 3-2 to secure the bonus victory points and we were very relieved to put that behind us.

We moved into our Saturday afternoon match against Scotland two games in arrears so knew we all had to perform to our best ability. Unfortunately, Lisa Tolhurst's back was not 100% so Karen Webb played and got the team off to a great start by winning 3-0, 11-6 11-2 11-5. Nicky Horn was once again dominant playing excellent squash and she won 3-0, 11-6 11-3 11-4. Rose Bamber was up next and eager to play well and she certainly did winning 3-0, 11-7 11-7 11-6. So England had secured the team win but we were wanting to put as many points up as we could. Fran Wallis lost her first game but came out fighting and went on to win 3-1, 8-11 11-3 11-7 13-11. Unfortunately by the time Isobel Smith went on court her knee was beginning to give up but she continued to battle but lost 1-3, 11-8 6-11 9-11 7-11.



So in the end, England finished at the top of the table with 54 points, Scotland 2nd with 42 points, Wales on 35 points and Ireland on 1 point. The team worked very well together and were incredibly supportive of each other. A fantastic all round team performance with every player giving their best.

Well done ladies!

**Karen Webb**  
**Team Captain**