

2025 MASTERS HOME INTERNATIONAL WALES

Event Dates:	Friday 9 th - Saturday 10 th May 2025		
Location:	Sport Wales National Centre & Cardiff Squash Rackets Club		
England Teams:	Men's O40	Women's O35/40	Men's O60
	Neil Cross (Captain) Steven Davies Ross Kneller Paul McDonald Phil Rushworth Tony Webb	Gemma Barber (Captain) Natalie Davenport-Husdan Selina Harper Natalie Lawrence Keeley Peacock Kirsty West	Darren Withey (Captain) Alex Betts Mike Leonard Steve Martin Eamonn Price Nigel Bacon
	Women's O60		
	Polly Woodward (Captain) Mandy Akin Julie-Anne Pegram Heather Tweedle		



MENS OVER 40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		5	8	19	32	3
	20		19	19	58	1
	14	4		15	33	2
	7	3	9		19	4

MENS OVER 40 REPORT



England vs Ireland

The Men's Over 40s started their Home Internationals campaign against a strong Ireland side. Steve Davies started play at number 5 against Dermot McNamara. This was a brutal encounter that last 75 mins we the Irishman coming out on top in a 5-game thriller.

Next up was Ross Kneller making his England debut at number 3 against Pat Morrissey. Despite the complete contrast in styles Ross proved to quick around the court and won 3-0.

The number 1s were next up, with England's Phil Rushworth taken on Nigel Peyton. They had an epic encounter last year and not surprisingly, the quality of squash was very high. Phil came out of with a 3-0 win.

Next up was this year's Captain Neil Cross who played Mark Furlong. After a tight first game, Neil led by example and moved very well around the court to take the win 3-0.



The final match saw another England debutant Paul Macdonald, taken on Niall Rooney. This was another high-quality match which saw Paul come out victorious 3-1 sealing it with a backhand rolling nick. England off to a very solid start winning 19-4.

England vs Scotland

Day 2 kicked off with England playing Scotland. Tony Webb started proceedings at 5 with a very disciplined performance beating Ross Allan 3-0.

Next up was Ross Kneller who played hard hitting Callum Phillip. In a frantic match Ross got the victory 3-0. However, all 3 games went down to the wire.

Next up was Phil Rushworth who gave a solid disciplined performance beating Richard North 3-0.

Next up was Steven Davies who signed no signs of fatigue following his marathon match the day before having a convincing 3-0 win over Stewart Morrison.

In the match of leg, Paul Macdonald faced Callum Reid. Callum went 2-0 up but a determined Paul fought back to take this to a fifth game tie break. A couple of controversial decisions occurred towards the end of the decider, which saw Callum take in 12-10 in the fifth.

England vs Wales

The final match of the weekend was against Wales and what a great match this was.



Tony Webb got England off to a good start with a 3-0 win over James Powell.

Next us Was Ross Kneller who had use all his speed and fitness to get over the very skilful Scott Fitzgerald, which he did winning 3-1 with 4 tight games.

Next it was the turn of the number 1s with Phil Rushworth facing Nic Burt. This match went down to the wire with Phil coming out on top with a 3-2 victory.



Next was the turn of Capain Neil Cross who recovered from being 1 nil down to grind down his opponent Phil Regan to win 3-1.

The final match was a fantastic spectacle which saw Paul Macdonald against Jethro Binns. Both players gave there all and were feeling the effects of a third tough match of the weekend. Both absolutely knackered they treated the crowd to an excellent closing match which Paul won 3-1.



So, a win for Team England as they retained the Over 40s title. Some fantastic squash, banter and camaraderie.

Neil Cross
Team Captain

WOMENS OVER 35/40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		3	20	18	41	2
	18		20	20	58	1
	3	0		5	8	4
	9	1	17		27	3

WOMENS OVER 35/40 REPORT



Our event took place during the last weekend of 2024/25 Home International Championships, meaning 11 of the titles had already been secured, 7 of which had been taken by England and we desperately wanted to add to this number!

Furthermore, when looking at the (oversized) ladies o35/40 trophy, it is clear to see the dominance of England over the years, with our teams having only lost once since 1994; to Scotland in 2013. The pressure was therefore high to put in a winning performance.

Our team was strong through the order, with Selina Harper (playing at 3) and Natalie Lawrence (playing at 4) bringing their years of experience at the Home Internationals, alongside Kirsty West (playing at 1) and Keeley Peacock (playing at 5) who were debutants this year and eager to secure their first cap. Natalie Davenport-Husdan made her second appearance in two years (once again playing at 2 for the team) and the Captain completing her fourth year in four (bringing up the rear at 6).

We knew this was a strong team and there were notable absences in our opposition teams, with Tanya Scullion absent for Ireland, Lizzie Little having had to withdraw at short-notice for Scotland and a weakened Welsh Team toward the top of the order due to injury and pregnancy.

So, on Friday afternoon we set out to begin our campaign, against Ireland at Cardiff SRC, where the bright sunshine of a Cardiff May evening beat through the glass ceiling onto the court. The Captain stepped on court first against Patricia Ryan and, after a nervous start, secured the win in 3 games, leading by example. Next up was Selina, against Michelle Heraughty and taking the first two games convincingly, at 10-0 in the third game an "out of court" call on the service prevented a bagel, but Selina quickly finished the game 11-2. Kirsty then stepped on court, playing at 1 against Siobhan Parker who was playing at the top of the order due to the absence of Tanya Scullion. In a feat of consistency Kirsty won the match in 3, dropping 6 points in each game and was then able to celebrate her first cap, her first win for England and her Birthday all on the same evening.



A first cap and a Penblwydd Hapus for Kirsty

Keeley then took to the court to earn her first cap, against Helen Byrne, with her new Husband providing support and encouragement. Another nervous start but Keeley quickly overcame this to take another 3-0 win. The final match saw Natalie Davenport-Husdan demonstrate absolute focus and determination to win hers in 3 (11-3, 11-4, 11-1). Team England could not have asked for a better start to the weekend: England = 20, Ireland = 0.

Saturday morning and back at Cardiff SRC, where the morning May sunshine was blazing through the glass roof onto the other side of the court, our team got ready to take on Scotland, who we knew had had a tight match the previous evening against Wales (losing a narrow 3-2). Again the Captain led from the front, against Catriona Smith winning the first game convincingly (11-5) but allowing nerves to get the better of her winning the second game 11-9 but dropping the third 9-11, before regaining control and taking the final game 11-5 to begin the morning with a 3-1 win. It was at this point that our 2024 Captain and 2025 reserve player Michelle Knight arrived with our top supporter Sandra Knight to cheer on the team against

Scotland and Wales. Michelle has had a tough year due to injuries and only narrowly missed selection this year, but still came to support, showing her commitment to the team and to our sport. (She also returned the trophy, avoiding embarrassment at the awards ceremony on the Saturday evening!!). Next on court was Selina against Sara Brown, where Selina proved too strong for the Scottish player, taking the match in 3. Kirsty then stepped on court against Katy Temple, who was now playing at 1 due to the late withdrawal of Lizzie Little earlier in the week. In a feat of mind-blowing consistency Kirsty took the match in



3 games, dropping 6 points in each game, to match her earlier point score against Siobhan. Our next player on court, making her debut of this weekend, was Nat Lawrence who began with a few nerves, winning the first game 11-6 but then quickly overcame them to win the second 11-3 with a killer drop to end that game, she then polished off the match 3-0 with an 11-5 score in the 3rd. Finally, Natalie Davenport-Husdan went up against Sheena Logan, showing more nerves than the previous evening but winning the first game 11-5, then battling to take the second 12-10 before finally finding her stride again (after some tough love from Kirsty between games) to win the 3rd 11-4 and take the match 3-0. So, another strong performance from England showed dominance over Scotland: England = 20, Scotland = 1.



The final match against Wales was held at the Sport Wales National Centre where Team Wales had set up camp all weekend, notably lacking the blazing sunshine anywhere on the court and with much more viewing capability. First to step on court for the final match was Keeley against Rachel Green; again, some nerves crept in to the first game, however, Keeley took the second with a strong 11-0 before Rachel conceded in the third game due to injury. Next Selina was up against Sarah Creed, errors from Sarah early on along with sustained pressure exerted by Selina saw another 3-0 win for England (11-6, 11-4, 11-5). The next match saw Kirsty take on Stacey Gooding, this was never going to be a match England would expect to win,

however, undeterred, Kirsty started strong, winning the first point and forcing some uncharacteristic errors from Stacey, Kirsty went 6-4, 8-5, 9-6 up and took the first game 11-7 with a strong performance throughout and absolute pride amongst her teammates. The second game predictably Stacey came back fighting to win it 11-1. However, into the third game and Kirsty took an early lead again at 4-3 and after some consistent rallies Kirsty played a killer shot to bring the score back to 7-7 and then took the lead again to 9-7. A lucky shot enabled Stacey to equalise at 9-9 and she managed to scrape the win 11-9, despite an exceptional effort from Kirsty. Kirsty continued to show huge effort and heart in the fourth game, pushing Stacey to 7-9 but finally Stacey proved too much and took the fourth 11-7. What a performance by both players, but particularly from Kirsty to take it to Stacey all the way to the end of the match. Next on court was Nat Lawrence against Anna Adams where the first two games were a battle, with Nat coming out on top with an 11-9 and 12-10 win before finding her form and winning the third convincingly 11-3 to take the match 3-0. The final match of the event was Natalie Davenport-Husdan against one of the biggest characters of the Wo35/40 event, Rebecca Baker. This match was played in great spirit but in the first two games Natalie was just too much for Rebecca, taking them convincingly 11-5, 11-3. A few mistakes crept in at the start of the third game, which were monopolised by Rebecca, seeing the Welsh player go 4-0 up, however, Natalie fought back and took the third 11-9. England = 18, Wales = 3.

So, England score 58 points out of a possible 60 to take the win for the 2024/25 Home International Championships, beating Ireland 5-0, Scotland 5-0 and Wales 4-1. I could not be prouder to have been selected as the Captain this year and to have led this awesome group of ladies to such a dominating win. Excellent individual performances all around and a great team spirit throughout the weekend.



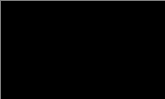
Our win was made even more special by the other teams playing in Cardiff: Mo40, Wo60 and Mo60 teams all winning their events, making ours the only weekend of this season where England achieved a clean sweep.

Finally, from me it just remains to thank the organisers of the Welsh event Russell Edwards and Tomos Rosser, the Home International committee, especially our England Squash Masters rep Allen Barwise, all the tournament referees throughout the weekend and everyone who came to support us. Special thanks to Michelle and Sandra Knight for coming all that was to support us against Scotland and Wales and finally thanks to my amazing team: Kirsty, Natalie, Selina, Nat and Keeley. Congratulations to you all, here's to the memories!

Gemma Barber
Team Captain



MENS OVER 60 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		5	20	20	45	1
	20		20	20	60	1
	3	2		0	5	4
	3	3	20		26	3

MENS OVER 60 REPORT



After receiving the call to captain England's finest over 60's I found it hard to do anything but accept the privilege. After the initial selection process and all the points observed I fell upon 5 talented individuals. However, the lead up to the weekend came with withdrawals.

A fine, talented, sociable array of individuals descended on Cardiff. Darren Withey (Bucks), Eamonn Price (Herts), Alex Betts (Middlesex), Nigel Bacon (Essex), Mike Leonard (Bucks) & Steve Martin (Yorkshire) arrived in the Welsh

capital city. We all assembled at Cardiff Squash Club for a brief chat in the sunshine to confirm ranking and order of play for the next few days along with the all-important social itinerary. After a short captain's meeting we then took the customary team photos and prepared for our match against Ireland. An impressive start by all from the team of Price, Betts, Withey, Martin & Bacon resulted in a 5-0 win and a couple of celebratory drinks and a walk back to hotel.



Saturday morning, yes at 9.30 am, we were up against Scotland and a slight change in line up with debutant Mike Leonaord taking his place at the expense of Steve Martin, but no change in the result. Another impressive 5/0 win with only Price and Betts dropping games against Colin Grant and Brian Robertson respectively, with the latter having a 5 setter. After a light lunch, we prepared for the home nation match against a strong Wales team which was scheduled for a 14.00 start. 1st on was Steve Martin who got us off to a good start despite a tricky, hard-fought match with a gutsy 3/2 win. Next on was Withey to play the highly experienced and talented Gary Hales. However, Withey sprinted off to a 2-0 lead before Hales pulled one back, albeit in vain as Withey went on to overpower his opponent. Price was up next to play the resurgent Richard Murphy though Price showed what a serial winner and a very tough opponent he is himself with a very commanding 3/0 win and giving the team an unassailable lead to become CHAMPIONS 2025. Mike Leonard was up next to play Jon Evans with Leonard taking a 2/0 lead before his opponent having to retire through injury. We all wish him a speedy recovery. Final match up was Betts v Fenner – Evans and what a match with Betts successfully pulling through. Another 5/0 win yet the scoreline was closer than it reads. After handshakes all round we were delighted to have retained the trophy and the captain set about popping open a bottle of captain Withey's champagne to celebrate before enjoying the dinner & evening presentation.

Despite the two pull outs from squad, we had no major concerns and each team member made the experience so enjoyable. Thanks to all the England teams present over the weekend which were also successful in retaining trophies and all supporters, Squash Cymru, and all the other players from Ireland, Scotland and Wales for an awesome weekend.

Special mention to all my teammates:

Steve Martin who has had an impressive season and rounded it off with 2 spirited matches.

Alex Betts who showed passion, and total dedication despite not being happy about his displays and his concern for his squash levels.

Mike Leonard, my Bucks teammate, being awarded his England debut.

Eamonn Price who showed as always what a seriously fierce competitor he is and always has been; and Nigel Bacon for making himself available after the late call up and obliged with 2 faultless displays.

Finally, big thanks to my squad of players for playing and being so sociable throughout the weekend and making it so enjoyable.

Darren Withey
Team Captain

WOMENS OVER 60 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		5	12	9	26	2
	10		12	10	32	1
	2	1		1	4	4
	5	3	12		20	3

WOMENS OVER 60 REPORT



After a frantic build up to the weekend with injuries we arrived in sunny Cardiff to try and retain the title. The first match on Friday afternoon was against Ireland. First up was Julie-Anne Pegram against Mary Keyes. Julie-Anne stormed ahead winning the first 2 games, but Mary had a real fight back in the 3rd which she won 12-10. Julie-Anne went on to win the 4th and getting the team off to a good start.

Next up was our Number 1 seed, Mandy Akin playing Rosie Barry. Mandy took control of the game and her skill and speed proved too much for Rosie and she won 3-0.

With this tie now won, Heather Tweedle went on determined and played with power and accuracy to take a 3-0 win.

Great start to the weekend, 1st match won, now on to the games on Saturday.

First match saw us take on Scotland. First up was Julie-Anne against Jennifer McAuley. Her opponent was quick out of the blocks and although Julie-Anne ran and ran, she lost the first 2 games. However, never giving up she went on in the 3rd, played some lovely drops and boasts and won that making it 2-1. Unfortunately, although digging deep, she couldn't quite manage to win the 4th and lost 3-1.

Next up was Mandy against the highly talented Sue Strachan. In very determined Mandy style her variety of shots moved Sue all-round the court and she took the 1st game. In the 2nd, Sue got into her stride, testing Mandy with her deep shots but Mandy fought on and won this game. The 3rd was a nail biter with both players playing some fantastic shots but Mandy taking this 16-14 coming out a victorious 3-0 winner.

With the match at 1-1 it was all on the last match – Heather against the very fit Rosie Wilson. Heather's shots were played with pace and conviction, pushing her opponent to the back of the court and then playing some beautiful drops and boasts. She took the match 3-0 to secure a fantastic win for the team.

We had now won 2 matches, and the title was on the 3rd match against Wales who had also won both their matches. Going into this crunch match we were 1 point ahead.

First up was Julie-Anne playing the very tricky Lynne Davies. The first game was a thriller with both players chasing the ball down, playing great shots and Lynne won that game 15-13. Not to be beaten, Julie-Anne went on in the 2nd determined to win and won that game. Lynne took the 3rd game and in the 4th Lynne went storming ahead but thanks to Julie-Anne's determination she pulled it back to 11-9. However, she couldn't quite clinch the match and Lynne won the 4th making it a 3-1 win for Wales.

We were now up against it having to win the next 2 matches. First on was Mandy playing Jill Campion. A very tight 1st game with Jill playing lovely lob serves and trying to take the pace out of the ball which prevented Mandy from getting into her stride straight away. Tight game with Jill winning 13-11. Pressure was now on. The 2nd game saw Mandy get well and truly going, playing very pacy shots and she ran away with the 2nd game. There was no way she was going to lose this and took the 3rd and 4th games, playing amazing squash and in her usual way, throwing herself on the floor determined to get shots. Fantastic performance.

So, it was all on the final match, for the title. Heather played Fiona Courthoys and just to keep us on our toes and the crowd excited she lost the 1st game, with Fiona's lobs getting the better of her. However, after that Heather dictated the pace and timed her boasts to perfection. With speed, pace and determination she didn't allow Fiona to play her game and absolutely determined she was going to win, she won the next 3 games bringing the title back to England.

What a fantastic effort by all my team and it was an honour to be captain. Every player gave their all and it showed in the results, well done.



I would like to thank Squash Wales, the referees and staff at both venues for hosting such a fantastic weekend and finally, congratulations to the other England teams, making it a clean sweep for us. England were victorious and the celebrations began and carried on well into the night and there my report stops.

Polly Woodward
Team Captain