

## **NEWS ARCHIVE 2012**

### **January 2012**

#### **Individual Handicap Competition**

The clubs first major competition of the season, the individual handicap, reached an exciting conclusion on 6 January, with Stephen Rowsby, facing 12 year old Oliver Walls.

The match was played using "American scoring" up to 15 points for each game. Stephen as club number 1 had to start on minus 41 points each game. This resulted in a gruelling game for both players with the lower handicap player needing to avoid any costly mistakes whilst they are trying to catch up on points with their opponent.

Last years winner Stephen was fully aware of the mountain that he needed to climb and the tactics required. However Oliver, as befitting his national ranking of 7<sup>th</sup> in the UK at U13 level, was not going to be fazed and was able to win the first game 15-6. An exciting second game saw Oliver only 3 points from match victory, when Stephen got second wind, and with a spell of error-free squash and dominating at the front of the court, he pulled the game back to win 15-12.

Although the momentum seemed to have tilted in Stephens direction, Oliver regained his composure for the final game and came back fighting with some superb shots and took the final game 15 – minus 12.

Congratulations to Oliver, who marked his first trophy at Sedgefield with an impressive overall display, and left the large number of spectators in no doubt that there will be more silverware to follow!

#### **Mid-Term Teams Report**

Following last seasons successes for our teams in the Durham and Cleveland leagues, this season has proved to be more challenging, particularly for the men's teams. The loss of a couple of key players from the first team, has had a knock-on effect to the strength of all teams. Currently the 1<sup>st</sup> team lie 2<sup>nd</sup> from bottom in the second division having won 2 and lost 5 matches, although individual praise should go to Robert Pearce who lies 4<sup>th</sup> in the individual player points table for this division. The second team, having won promotion last year, lie 3<sup>rd</sup> from bottom in Division 3, having won 3 and lost 5 matches, whilst the 3<sup>rd</sup> team are holding a mid-table position in Division 5 having won 4 and lost 3 matches.

However the ladies team, having won promotion last year, are consolidating their position in Division 1 having won 3 and lost 3 matches. Marie Priest currently sits in 5<sup>th</sup> place for individual player points

## **March 2012**

### **Free Coaching Opportunities**

We have received funding to run a comprehensive series of coaching sessions throughout the club, for both squash and racketball. The sessions will be open to the whole community and aimed at all ages and levels.

It is likely that sessions will be run on Saturday mornings & Sunday evenings (juniors), Saturday afternoons (adults), Sunday mornings (Racketball) and hopefully a daytime midweek course (adults)

The courses will last for 16 weeks with the first 6 weeks free. More details will be published in next months Sedgefield News. In the meantime, please contact Chris Rowsby on 621125 to register interest or find out more

### **Club Booking System and Website**

March sees the launch of our revamped website, [www.sedgefieldsquashclub.co.uk](http://www.sedgefieldsquashclub.co.uk). The site will be regularly updated with news, details of forthcoming events, and results. We are also commissioning a state-of-the-art electronic court booking system which will allow members to book courts via the website, in addition to booking at the club

### **Sports Relief**

On 24 March, the club is running a number of events to raise money for Sports Relief. In the morning there will be a junior members squash blitz. In the afternoon there will be an adult squash blitz using old style wooden rackets (with towelling grips!), and in the evening there will be a quiz and social event at the Nags Head. Please see the website and club noticeboards for further details

## April 2012

### **Sport Relief**

The squash club ran a number of events over the Sport Relief weekend in order to raise money for the charity.

Junior coaching was replaced by a “squash blitz” competition where all participants are put into teams with the idea being to score as many points as possible within a continuous 10 minute spell on court

The adults contributed by changing the format of the club afternoon to a wooden rackets session, a taste of the 1970s, complete with towelling grips but thankfully not 1970s sports wear! Compared to today’s light rackets with large sweet spots, the older rackets felt more akin to wielding a club. Those who were old enough to remember playing with them originally did struggle to comprehend how they had ever managed to hit a ball with any degree of power or accuracy.

Following this session, members were just able to muster enough strength to lift a pint or two in the Nags Head for an evening social and quiz

The following weekend a group of 8 juniors undertook a 24hour sponsored “squashathon”, ensuring continuous play on court for the full period, which meant that each individual played for an average of 8 of the 24 hours.

With sponsor money still coming in, the club has so far raised over £300 for Sport Relief

### **Teams Report**

The end of the season for the Durham and Cleveland County leagues returned mixed fortunes for our teams.

The ladies team came a very impressive second in the ladies division 1, especially notable given it was their first season in this division. With a good core of players, and other players, both new and experienced, likely to join the club next season, we plan to field a 2<sup>nd</sup> ladies team in the leagues.

In the men’s leagues, both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> teams were relegated from divisions 2 and 3 respectively. Having lost a number of key players at the end of last season, it was always going to be a challenging year, but both teams will be looking to regroup next year and push for promotion again. The 3<sup>rd</sup> team finished a comfortable third in division 5 and again are in a strong position to push for greater things next year



*Some of the juniors who participated in Sport Relief*

## May 2012

### **Finals and Presentation Night**

The formal end of the squash season was marked by club finals night and the annual presentation evening. Sporting celebrities and Hollywood A listers.....once again failed to respond to their invitations. However a transformed Ceddesfeld Hall was filled with club members for a family night, quiz and the presentation of trophies from throughout the season.

The roll of honour read as follows:

	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Runner-Up</b>
Under 11s	Jack Stephenson	Chloe Hill
Under 13s plate	Flynn Robinson	Chris Warburton
Under 13s	Oliver Walls	Daniel Toas
Under 15s plate	Thomas Dunlop	Cameron Storey
Under 15s	George Peden	Oliver Larcombe
Girls plate	Chloe Hill	Eleanor James
Girls	Hannah McIntyre	Gemma Hill
Junior handicap	George Peden	Oliver Larcombe
Junior plate	Daniel Toas	Calum Dunlop
Juniors	Robert Pearce	Oliver Walls
Mens XL	Steve Welton	Chris Bunting
Handicap	Oliver Walls	Stephen Rowsby
Ladies plate	Marie Priest	Sue Smith
Ladies	Emma Rowsby	Emma Larcombe
Club plate	John Cant	Rob Emery
Club closed	Robert Pearce	Mark Simpson
John Rowntree Trophy		Robert Pearce
Ladies Player of the Year		Sharon O'Donnell
Mens Player of the Year		Mark Simpson

This seasons success of the ladies team, who came second in the Durham and Cleveland County Division 1, and won the ladies league cup, was recognised, along with individual praise for Sharon Brown who won the Durham and Cleveland individual Ladies Masters competition earlier in the season

At the other end of the scale, the usual “DAFTA” awards were presented to individuals, for bringing themselves or the club into disrepute throughout the season. The stories behind the awards are far too lengthy to go into here, but should you see Gordon “Rubber Gloves” Peden, Robert “it’s a racket not a weapon” Pearce, John “Big Gun” Cant, Sharon “Pants” O’Donnell, or Linda “Driving Ban” Cummings, I am sure that they will explain further!

Squash activities continue throughout the close season with adult and junior coaching programmes, and a Village Games event coming up, before leagues, competitions and team matches recommence in September



*Photo: The winners and runners-up of the club competitions*

### **Women “Try Sport” Day**

Sedgefield Squash & Racketball Club held a Women TRY Sport event on Thursday June 21st... the courts were booked out exclusively for women & girls to use between 5 pm and 9 pm. Coaches and equipment were available.

The event coincided with Sedgefield Village Games which are running between 17th June and 11th July.

This is a celebration of sport in the village, and many of the local Sedgefield sports clubs are holding events with the aim to let as many local people as possible try sport.

On the day, we had 4 new non-squash playing ladies and 2 new non-squash playing juniors turn up to play, as well as a number of women who have only just started playing squash and took the opportunity to meet other new players and have a game and some coaching.

On the whole the evening was a success and we would hope that a number of the women who came to try squash would continue to play



## August 2012

The squash club participated in the Sedgefield Village Games by holding an open morning for juniors on 7 July. During the course of the morning, around 60 children turned up, at least 40 of whom had not played the game before. At one point we had around 25 children on-court at the same time! We hope that some may get an appetite to come down on a Saturday morning more regularly. Junior coaching resumes on 1st September, so please feel free to contact us if you want to give it a go. A demonstration was put on the village green at the Grand Finale, on a damp and wet Wednesday night in conditions not entirely conducive to the game! Some of the older juniors played a game of volleys against our portable wall, whilst the younger ones demonstrated the equipment used and some basic drills.



2012-13 looks to be an exciting season ahead, with both mens and ladies entering additional teams into the Durham and Cleveland leagues. In particular, big things are expected from the ladies, having finished runners up in Division 1 last season, and boasting some new players this year. On the home front, we are looking to complete refurbishment of the balcony area and enhance coaching provision for adults and juniors. This season will also see an inaugural racketball competition, to be held in November. The season kicks off with a friendly team handicap competition on 29 August, the ideal way to get match fit for those who took a break over the summer.

New members are always welcome. Please contact Chris Rowsby on 621125 for more details

## **September 2012**

The club was well represented at the recent North East Regional Junior closed championships. The North East area encompasses clubs from the Humber to the Tweed with some very strong junior sections, and so provided a very tough competition. In the Under 17 category Robert Pearce came overall 6<sup>th</sup>, whilst in the Under 15s Oliver Walls achieved 9<sup>th</sup> place and George Peden came 13<sup>th</sup>. Additional players from Sedgefield across different age categories are expected to compete in the forthcoming Durham and Cleveland County closed competitions.

At a domestic level, the new season commenced in the now traditional way with the team handicap competition, which fielded 35 participants, either dusting off the closed season cobwebs or putting into practice what they had learned during the summer coaching programme. The final results were very close (a moral victory for the handicappers!), but the winning team consisted of Robert Pearce, Peter Redshaw, Simon Hill, Jean Gillespie, Gareth Maloney, Rory Varley and Sharon O'Donnell

The club has managed to secure an exhibition match on 30 September with World number 1 ranked squash player, James Wilstrop, visiting Sedgefield. He has also agreed to take on some club members! Further report and photos in next months edition

## October 2012

### **An Historic Evening**

On 30<sup>th</sup> September, Sedgefield Squash Club was proud to host the current world number 1 ranked squash player, England's James Willstrop, to play an exhibition match at the club. In front of a crowded balcony, James initially took on various club members for 5 minute spells before playing a game each with our top 2 team players, Stephen Rowsby and Robert Pearce (with most spectators getting a certain amount of satisfaction from seeing these 2 being given the runaround for once!)

James then played his main exhibition match against top County players, Josh Harris and Chris Gillespie. The matches were followed by a question and answer session in Ceddesfeld Hall along with photo opportunities and a book signing, with James and former ladies world champion, Vanessa Atkinson. James showed himself to be a really good sport, and had some great insights on keeping fit, training, and the bid to make squash an Olympic Sport in 2020. On court the spectators were amazed as to how quickly he was able to get to the ball, despite opponents best efforts, and all learned much from watching his movement and positioning. However club veteran, Ken Turner, was able to teach James a trick or 2 by beating him in 2 consecutive rallies with cheeky drop shots from James's serve! We believe a call-up to the England coaching team may be on the way.....



*James Willstrop  
warms up on court*



*James and Vanessa Atkinson sign books and answer questions  
in Ceddesfeld Hall*



### **Junior County Closed Competition**

Durham and Cleveland County held their junior closed competitions during September and the squash club was well represented across many categories. Congratulations in particular go to Robert Pearce and Oliver Walls who won the U17 and U15 boy's competitions respectively – both particularly competitive categories. Robert also had to play his final in the knowledge that he needed to hold some energy back to take on World Number 1, James Willstrop, that evening! George Peden made the semi-finals of the U15 boys, beating club colleague Daniel Toas on the way. In the U17 boys, George and Oliver, along with Rory Varley and Oliver Larcombe, all competed strongly, with Oliver Larcombe coming runner-up in the plate competition. Additionally Robert made the semi-finals of the U19 boys. In his first competition, Flynn Robinson represented the club in the U13s. Our girls also did the club proud with Gemma Hill (runner-up, U15 girls), Chloe Hill (runner-up U11 girls), and Jessica Weatherspoon holding her own against the boys in the U9s mixed.

## December 2012

At the mid-season break of the Durham & Cleveland Squash leagues, our teams are all in very strong positions to challenge for promotion at the end of the season. The 1<sup>st</sup> team top Division 3 by a healthy margin, having won all their games. Having endured the disappointment of relegation last season, we hope that they will bounce back to a more competitive league next season. The 2<sup>nd</sup> team, who were similarly relegated last season, are joint leaders of Division 4, having only lost 1 game.

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> team are well placed in third in Division 5, which is proving a very tight league with the exception of the bottom 2 clubs. The 4<sup>th</sup> team, newly created this year, have gradually climbed up to the top of Division 6.

The ladies 1<sup>st</sup> team have found their division more competitive this season, and currently lie in 3<sup>rd</sup>, although have played 1 game less than the top 2 clubs. The ladies 2<sup>nd</sup> team lie closer to the bottom of their division, although have competed well in their first competitive season.

Individually, the top 10 points scorers across all divisions contain 4 Sedgefield players - Stephen Rowsby, Mark Simpson, Oliver Walls, and Gary Hetherington. In the ladies, Anne Holmes is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest points scorer

In the juniors, our Under 11 team (Jack Stephenson, Chloe Hill, Robert Peacock and David Worthington) performed superbly in their first ever match, winning by 213 points to 171 against Norton U11s, who are always a very strong side. The Under 19s put up a brave performance against Yarm, but our relatively young side lost 284 points to 236. The Under 15's (Oliver Walls, George Peden, Daniel Toas and Josh Hetherington) posted a big win in their first match of the season, winning 360 points to 141 against Barnard Castle.



*The junior Under 11 team (L-R), Robert Peacock, Chloe Hill, David Worthington, Jack Stephenson*