

## **NEWS ARCHIVE 2014**

### **January 2014**

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

The Durham and Cleveland Squash leagues reached their halfway point with an overall positive showing from Sedgefields teams.

The 1<sup>st</sup> team hold a comfortable lead at the top of Division 2, having won all their games so far. A great result given that they were only promoted at the end of last season. Fingers crossed that this run continues and the team can win promotion to Division 1

The 2<sup>nd</sup> team have found it tougher going in Division 3 and are currently 3<sup>rd</sup> from bottom, although comfortably ahead of the bottom 2. We would hope that this position can be consolidated in the second half of the season if the first choice team remains available and injury free

The 3<sup>rd</sup> team top Division 5 in what is shaping up to be a close run league, with only 10 points separating the first 4 teams. Nothing can be taken for granted in the second half of the season, although with 5 of their 7 remaining games being played at home, promotion must be a realistic target.

Also in Division 5, the 4<sup>th</sup> team hold 5<sup>th</sup> place, despite having only lost 1 more game than the 3<sup>rd</sup>s, which goes to show what a close league it is shaping up to be. The next "derby" match is scheduled for 29 January; with both teams looking to gain as many points as possible it will certainly be a competitive match!

The ladies 1<sup>st</sup> team sit in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Division 1, and whilst leaders Yarm are a long way in front, Sedgefield sit only 2 points behind Darlington and will be fighting hard for 2<sup>nd</sup> place over the next few months.

The ladies 2<sup>nd</sup> team sit 4<sup>th</sup> out of 5 in Division 2, although having won 2 and lost 3, it is still a credible haul. With the addition of a couple of juniors (allowed in the ladies leagues under local rules) for the second half of the season, this will provide some much needed strength in depth to the team.

All in all, a good first half to the season and we hope to report on some successes at the end of March

#### **Racketball**

The club held its inaugural racketball competition at the end of November. With a bouncier ball and shorter racket, racketball still provides a good workout, although is arguably lower impact than squash. The competition was won by Peter Redshaw who beat Simon Hill in the final. With both players being new to the sport, they learned the hard way that typical squash tactics and shots did not translate well to racketball! However it was Peter who adapted quicker, to edge what were some close games and win the match 3-0. We hope that this will be a regular fixture on the calendar in future seasons, and welcome players who wish to take up the game.

## February 2014

### **Individual Handicap Final**

The annual club handicap competition was played during December and January. The final was contested between Stephen Rowsby and Mark Atkinson. On his way to the final, Mark was looking for a hat trick of Rowsby victories in the competition, having beaten sister Emma and father Chris in earlier rounds.

Stephen was conceding a large handicap of minus 52 points per game, and therefore could not afford to make any mistakes.

In the first game, Mark made steady progress, whilst Stephen had to play solidly but cautiously. As Mark looked comfortable to win the first game, Stephen rallied, bringing the scores to 14 all before an uncharacteristic unforced error handed the first game to Mark

However in the second game, Stephen made a strong start, taking a few more risks, and posting 25 points in succession before Mark was able to answer. Mark slowly started to pull some points back before Stephen edged the second game 15-13

The final deciding game found Mark with little energy left in the tank, whilst Stephens experience showed, continually moving Mark around the court and by the time he leveled the scores at 5 all the result was no longer in doubt. Stephen won the final game 15-8 but not before a little burst of cheeky exhibition squash from both players to entertain the crowd. With the game lasting a total of 75 minutes both players should take credit for an energetic and entertaining game.

### **Junior Squash**

The Second round of the Inter-County Championships saw three Sedgefield Juniors in action for Durham and Cleveland. Rob Pearce & Dan Toas represented the U19's helping the county to reach final for the second consecutive year beating North Wales & Lancashire. Dan produced the performance of the day against Lancashire's Max Wynne-Jones winning 3-2 after being 0-2 down. Oliver Walls managed wins against Leicestershire & Merseyside for the U15's who narrowly missed out on qualifying for the final.

The Pontefract Silver competition held over the period between Christmas and New Year saw Oliver Walls achieve 9<sup>th</sup> place in the Boys U15's losing only one match to Cole Becker from the USA. Dan Toas finished a creditable 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Boy's U17's his first Silver Tournament.

The major event in the Junior Squash world, the British Junior Open, was held in Sheffield at the start of January. The events attracted over 420 players from 36 nations across the globe. Oliver Walls participated in the Boys U15's, and after a very tough first round draw against India's Adhitya Raghavan (who finished 4<sup>th</sup>), won 4 of his six games to finish 49<sup>th</sup> overall

## March 2014

Sedgefield's teams had another very successful season in the Durham and Cleveland County leagues with 2 of our men's teams securing promotion

Having been promoted into Division 2 this season, the first team have won the division and will be promoted into the top flight next season. At the time of writing, with 2 games remaining, Sedgefield remain unbeaten and Stephen Rowsby, Robert Pearce and Oliver Walls all sit in the top 5 divisional points scorers, with Stephen and Robert battling it out for divisional player of the season.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> team were also crowned champions of Division 5 in what turned out to be a competitive and closely matched league. George Peden comfortably topped the divisional points scorers ahead of 2<sup>nd</sup> placed Simon Hill, and should be a cert for divisional player of the season. In the same league, our 4<sup>th</sup> team secured 4<sup>th</sup> spot, and with the emergence of a number of players within the club this season, the 4ths should be in a good position to push for promotion next season

The 2<sup>nd</sup> team had been promoted into Division 3 this season, and despite a slow start to the season, finished in a comfortable 6<sup>th</sup> place, and again will look to build on this next season.

2014-2015 certainly looks to be an exciting season for the club, and with the County's best players visiting Sedgefield, first team nights are likely to be very well supported.

In Ladies Division 1, our ladies 1<sup>st</sup> team repeated last years 2<sup>nd</sup> place behind a very strong Yarm team. Anne Holmes and Marie Priest were 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> divisional points scorers respectively, whilst the Ladies 2<sup>nd</sup> team look set to finish mid-table in Division 2 with 2 games left to play.

The Durham and Cleveland annual presentation evening will be held in May, and like last year, Sedgefield expect a strong turn out and a good haul of silverware to bring home!

## April 2014

### **Isle of Man Squash Blitz**

A team of 7 - Jonathon Slee, Stephen Rowsby, Robert Pearce, Peter Redshaw, John O'Donnell, Chris Rowsby and Lewis Neasham and 7 supporting members of the club travelled to Douglas in the IOM on the 28th March for a weekend of Squash. Lewis was "adopted" by the Chester Le Street Five, on the way over on the ferry, so the team became 6.

For the lower third of the Sedgefield team it was intended to be a fun event, combining squash with socialising, but the top 4 players had their sights set on winning the blitz. 14 teams entered the competition and on the first day Sedgefield were leading the way on cumulative player points scored.

The second day started well, Sedgefield winning their first match. The semi final against Norton 'A' proved to be a hard fought match, it came down to the last game with Jon Slee just needing to maintain a score within 10 points of his opponent, he lost by 7 points and as a result for the first time in 5 years, Sedgefield went in to the final, against tough opposition Kessingland Lads 'A'. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly the team lost, but came a credible second and won £150 prize money.

*The "Sedgefield 7"*



*Team + supporters hold the runner-up trophy aloft!*



### **Sport Relief – Squashathon**

Between 5pm on Fri 28th March, and 5pm on Sat 29th March, the club held a 24hr squashathon with continuous play over this period on court. The night-shift was manned between 7 of our older juniors (under supervision from Gary Hetherington), who came armed with squash rackets and sleeping bags. From Saturday morning onwards the younger juniors braved the residual odour of teenager, to keep play going until the adults took over from mid-afternoon. In total, a fantastic £220 was raised for Sport Relief

## Junior Squash

Trumping our IOM teams achievements in the “international” arena, Oliver Walls travelled to Oslo to compete in the U15 Norwegian Junior Squash Open at the start of April. The first matches were played in a box league with Oliver winning all his three games 3-0 against Norway's Gard Aasness Ackerstrom, Daniel Estensen and Sweden's Tor Carleke.

Moving into the semi final to play number 1 seed Pavel Shsherbina from Russia, Oliver produced his best squash of the weekend to win 3-0. In the final he faced Sweden's Christoffer Segerstedt, again winning 3-0. This was Oliver's first international title.



*Oliver after his final with runner-up Christoffer Segerstedt*

The North East Coastal Challenge saw a good entry from Sedgefield competing at Redcar Squash Club. Jessica Weatherspoon finished 4th in the girls U11's, with Chloe Hill reaching the semi-finals of the girls U13's plate, and James Knowlson competing in the Boys U13's. In the final of the boys U17s, Oliver Walls lost 1-3 to Northumbria's Jamie Todd (Nationally Ranked 16), with Dan Toas reaching the semi-finals. And finally Rob Pearce won the Boy's U19's beating Redcar's Luke Mabbutt 3-0.

The current England Rankings see Oliver Walls at 8th in the U15's, 61st in the U17's, & 136th in the U19's. George Peden is 140th in the U17's, Dan Toas at 167th in the U17's, and Rob Pearce at 33rd in the U19's.

The English National Championships held at University of Surrey in Guildford produced great results for Rob Pearce who, after the disappointment of losing his first game, battled through to the Plate Final of the Boys U19's losing to the Middlesex's Paddy Harrison 3-0. Oliver Walls then achieved his best ever result in a national championship finishing 6th in the Boys U15's, losing to No. 1 ranked England player Tom Walsh of Sussex in the Quarter Finals.

## May 2014

Once again, the squash season came to a close with the finals of the Club Closed Competitions. Some great games were played over the course of 2 nights, ranging from Under 11's to Over 60's. A packed balcony watched all the finals, and demonstrated again the need for a third court with a better viewing area. Presentation evening was held for the first time at the Parish Hall, and proved to be a success with the hall filled with members and families. In the main competitions, it was once again the mother and son double act of Jean and Chris Gillespie who took the honours for the Ladies Closed and Club Closed. The full roll of honour read as follows:

	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Runner Up</b>
Club Closed	Chris Gillespie	Stephen Rowsby
Ladies Closed	Jean Gillespie	Linda Cummings
Mens Plate	Chris Bunting	Chris Rowsby
Ladies Plate	Emma Rowsby	Sharon O'Donnell
Over 40's	Mark Simpson	Chris Bunting
Over 50's	Jeff Sinclair	Steve Welton
Over 60's	Rob Emery	Don MacLennan
Junior Closed	Robert Pearce	Oliver Walls
Junior Plate	James Knowlson	Adam Foakes
Girls Closed	Gemma Hill	Chloe Hill
Girls Plate	Jessica Weatherspoon	Jenny Walker
Under 15's	Oliver Walls	Daniel Toas
Under 15's Plate	Daniel Skilbeck	Gemma Hill
Under 13's	James Knowlson	David Worthington
Under 13's Plate	Jessica Weatherspoon	Chloe Hill
Under 11's	Robert Peacock	Jessica Weatherspoon
Player of the Year	Stephen Rowsby	
Ladies Player of the Year	Linda Cummings	
Junior Player of the Year	Daniel Toas	
Club Member of the Year	Simon Hill	
Junior Member of the Year	Jessica Weatherspoon	

As is now traditional, “DAFTA” awards were handed out for less distinguished, performances & incidents over the season, or just plain old bizarre. The hall of shame as follows:

Chris Gillespie	The only plate he is ever likely to win!
Linda Cummings	Second DAFTA awarded for motoring offences
Lewis Neasham	Believing the Isle of Man was a foreign country
John O’ Donnell	Cake Maker by appointment to the Ladies team
Stephen Rowsby	The coach from hell!

### **D&CSRA Presentation Evening**

2 weeks after the clubs presentation night, a strong contingent attended the Durham and Cleveland Presentation Evening, held in Norton. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> teams collected their divisional championship trophies and the following individual awards went to Club Members

Division 2 Player of the Season	Stephen Rowsby
Division 5 Player of the Season	George Peden
Ladies Player of the Season	Anne Holmes
Most Improved Junior	Daniel Toas

Sedgefield were disappointed not to be awarded Club or Small Club of the Year (awarded to Yarm and Bedale respectively), given the clubs achievements over the season. However next season again promises much with a long awaited return for our 1<sup>st</sup> team into the Division 1, and the other teams all looking to build upon last seasons results

## **September 2014**

The new squash season starts again in September. With the 1<sup>st</sup> team being newly promoted to Durham and Cleveland Division 1, we are promised the County's best players at the club over the course of the season. A first choice Sedgefield team of Chris Gillespie, Matt Marshall, Stephen Rowsby, Robert Pearce, and Oliver Walls means that we expect to compete well in this division. No doubt the balcony will be packed with home support which has to be worth a few extra points for the team!

Over the summer our Club and County junior champion, Robert Pearce, went to Madrid to compete in the Spanish Junior Open. Coming up against players of all nationalities, Robert finished a very creditable 7<sup>th</sup>, not least having to play in temperatures around 35°C, which significantly affects the way that the court plays. Robert eventually lost to the competitions number 1 seeded player, who himself went on to contest the final.

Saturday morning junior coaching starts again on 6 September. For the autumn term, these sessions will be FREE as a result of the AAP funding that the club received at the end of last year. We hope this will encourage some more new juniors to take up the sport. Places will be limited though so please contact Simon Hill on 629417, [snhill@btinternet.com](mailto:snhill@btinternet.com), or through the club website if interested.

## October 2014

The Durham and Cleveland County Closed junior competitions were held during September. This year, 8 Sedgefield juniors entered and we are proud to say that we had champions in 3 age groups, a first for the club.

Oliver Walls won both the U19 and U17 boys categories. To add some spice, the U19 final was against club mate and reigning U19 champion Rob Pearce. Whilst Rob would have started as the slight favourite, Oliver pulled off a tremendous performance to take the match 3-1.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Jessica Weatherspoon took the U11 girls title, and then went on to compete very impressively in the U13 girls category, finishing in 3rd place.

Our other junior entrants all put in strong performances. George Peden and Dan Toas made the last 4 of the U17s (so Sedgefield contributed 3 of the 4 semi-finalists in this age group). James Knowlson picked up the U15s plate competition, and Richard Flanagan competed in both the U11 and U13 boys, and Chloe Hill in the U13 girls



*Junior County Champions, Jess Weatherspoon & Oliver Walls*

The annual curtain raiser to the clubs season, the Team Handicap competition, was held over 5 nights in September. 35 members signed up and competed in a good natured competition that gave everyone the chance to contribute towards their team scores. As ever, the handicappers must have done their job well, as the results were close, but Chris Gillespie's team of Dan Toas, Steve Welton, Rob Emery, Kevin Amer, Sharon Brown, and Leanne Gillespie took the trophy.

## **November 2014**

### **Inter-Schools Competition**

We celebrated the tenth year of the Sedgefield primary schools mini-squash competition on the morning of October 23<sup>rd</sup> welcoming, for the first time, five contestants: newcomers Bishop Middleham, and old-stagers St. William's (Trimdon), Trimdon Juniors, Hardwick Primary (Sedgefield), and Sedgefield Primary. We also had a new approach to pre-competition training: Diane Harker, supported by a partnership between Sedgefield Squash Club and 'Grass Roots funding' through the county association and England Squash, delivered taster sessions to the whole of years 5 and 6 at all five schools in early October. Stephen Rowsby and Oliver Larcombe provided follow-up training for school teams. James and Oliver Larcombe organised the round-robin competition.

Each has five players but this year we had a simplified format with a minimum of two girls per team and no other restrictions. Two teams, including the winners, included three girls. To maintain a round-robin format, which with an extra school now featured ten rather than six matches, we shortened each game to 'first to 7 point-a rally' scoring (instead of first to 11).

The competition was a resounding success, with many excellent performances from children new to the game as well as more experienced players. Last year, we said we couldn't have a closer competition, yet amazingly, it nearly was. Three teams entered the final round with only 13 points separating them (with 35/ match available) and again the title wasn't decided until the final game.

Final results: 1 Sedgefield Primary 123pts (4wins); 2 Sedgefield Hardwick 118 (2); 3 St. Williams 117 (3); 4 Bishop Middleham 82 (1); 5 Trimdon Juniors 54 (0)

Top individual scorers (for each place in the team) were No1: Jessica Weatherspoon (Sedgefield Primary) 28 pts; No2: Cameron Mutcaster (Sedgefield Hardwick) 25pts; No3: Jack Murray (St Williams) 28 pts; No4: Ryan Easton (Sedgefield Hardwick) 28pts; No5: Anya Murphy (St Williams) and Danny Welsh (Sedgefield Primary) 25.

Sedgefield Primary will now represent the area in the Durham and Cleveland inter-primary schools competition early in 2014.

### **North East Regional Junior Championships**

The North East regional championships, held at Pontefract, had three Sedgefield juniors competing. Oliver Walls and Dan Toas in the boys under 17's gave good performances which saw them finishing 5th and 11th respectively. Jessica Weatherspoon competed in the girls U11's finishing 4th.

In the first stage of the inter-county championships the Durham & Cleveland teams, Sedgefield was represented by Rob Pearce (Boys U19's), Oliver Walls, George Peden and Daniel Toas (Boys U17's) and Jessica Weatherspoon (Girls U13's). Rob posted a great win over senior county player Cai Younger with a 3:2 result, with Oliver, George and Dan all winning their matches against Lincolnshire.

### **Farmers Market**

The club brought the portable wall along to the Sedgefield farmers Market on 2 November. Thankfully the weather was kind to us, and many children visiting the market were able to come and try out their skills against the wall. Many had never played any type of racket sport before. All in all, it was a fun morning and we hope that we can return come back again at some point

*Children try out the portable squash wall on the village green*



## December 2014

### **Mid Term Teams Report**

At the half way point in the Durham and Cleveland leagues, our 6 teams have all had a tough first half to the season, which would perhaps be expected, given all 4 mens teams have achieved promotion in the last 2 years, and our ladies are the only club in the leagues fielding 2 teams.

The first team have made a good solid start in the County premier division, playing against the County's best players, and in many cases, "ringers" brought in from further afield. Their record so far of 3 wins and 6 defeats needs to be put in the context that we have played the top 3 clubs twice already, so would expect the end of season result to look far more balanced. With home grown players such as Stephen Rowsby, Rob Pearce and Oliver Walls as regulars we should be very proud of this teams achievement so far, and support at home games has been fantastic.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> team have had probably fared best of all our teams, and with a record of 3 wins and 4 defeats, they sit 3<sup>rd</sup> in Division 3, with a possibility still of promotion at the end of the season.

The newly promoted 3<sup>rd</sup> team have won 2 and lost 5 matches in Division 4, although all games have been close and therefore they would hope for a mid-table finish.

Whilst the 4<sup>th</sup> team have lost all matches so far, all but one were 3-2 defeats and therefore the overall result does not truly reflect performance, and therefore we would hope that victories will follow in the New Year.

The ladies 1<sup>st</sup> team again have had a tough start to the season, losing a couple of last seasons players and with other ladies teams becoming stronger. Having won 2 and lost 5 matches, they would hope to retain their position in Division 1. The Ladies 2<sup>nd</sup> team, have posted one win so far, but all games have been against other clubs 1<sup>st</sup> teams. However our ability to put out a 2<sup>nd</sup> team reflects very well on the number of ladies playing squash at Sedgefield.

To summarise, a shaky start overall but small improvements in the second half of the season should yield significant results!

### **Racketball Competition**

The club held its second annual racketball competition in November. The final was a repeat of last years, with Peter Redshaw holding onto his title, by beating Simon Hill 3-1. Both players felt that their racketball had improved significantly from last years final, and had got to grips better with the fact that the game does require a different approach and technique to squash!