

## **NEWS ARCHIVE 2015**

### **January 2015**

#### **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!

## **February 2015**

### **Individual Handicap Final**

The annual club handicap competition was run over Christmas and New Year, and this years final was contested by Peter Redshaw and Kevin Amer, both of whom have contested these finals in recent history (Peter winner in 2010 and runner-up in 2013; Kevin runner-up in 2011).

Peter had to concede 41 points to Kevin in a best-of-3 final, playing each game up to 15 points. Peter started strongly but eventually Kevin got into his stride and was able to go 13-2 up, before Peter rallied to clinch a nail-biting game 15-14.

In the second game, Peters greater squash fitness started to show, and making very few mistakes, he was able to quickly claw back the deficit to level points with Kevin at 8 all. With the match seemingly in the bag at this point, Kevin managed a last ditch effort to challenge some tightly contested last points before Peter finally sealed the victory 15-10.

## March 2015

It has been almost 2 years since the squash club started its project to extend its facility by building a 3<sup>rd</sup> court. However, a significant milestone has now been achieved with planning permission having been granted by Durham County Council. The planning process took far longer than originally expected and the club had to explore a number of different building designs in order to minimise impact to the grounds and trees behind Ceddesfeld Hall. The new court will now be constructed at the front of the existing building, designs have been drawn up, and it is hoped that works will commence over the next few months once a contractor has been appointed.

The club and committee are hugely excited by the prospect of extending the building, which will enable more squash or racketball playing opportunities to both members and the wider community. The club is also keen to engage with any community groups who may like some free squash or racketball “taster” sessions putting on. Club Chairman, Gordon Peden said “We want the community to enjoy our fantastic facility and for it to cater for old & young, beginners & advanced alike, so if you are interested in trying out either sport (or even getting back into it) then please get in touch via our website: [www.sedgefieldsquashclub.co.uk](http://www.sedgefieldsquashclub.co.uk)” .



## May 2015

The official squash club season came to an end at the end of April with the club championships. Once again there was large participation from members and many people came along to watch and support both the semi-finals and finals. The Club Closed competition, Chris Gillespie and Matt Marshall provided a mouth-watering prospect, both due to the quality of the players, but also that it would be one of the most closely fought finals for some years. Chris and Matt did not disappoint, with a superb match of determination, agility and skill, which Matt eventually won 3-2, after being only 2 points away from potential defeat in the 4<sup>th</sup> game.

In the Ladies competition, Emma Rowsby clinched her 4<sup>th</sup> finals victory with a 3-0 win over Linda Cummings, whilst Oliver Walls won the junior final, beating George Peden in another superb match. Elsewhere, both Jack Stephenson and Jessica Weatherspoon did brilliantly to contest and win 2 junior finals each in the same evening.

The full roll of honour read as follows:

	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Runner-Up</b>
Club Closed	Matt Marshall	Chris Gillespie
Ladies Closed	Emma Rowsby	Linda Cummings
Junior Closed	Oliver Walls	George Peden
Mens Plate	Daniel Toas	Stefan Reay
Ladies Plate	Sharon Brown	Sue Smith
Over 40's	Mal Bell	Chris Bunting
Over 50's	Jeff Sinclair	Gary Hetherington
Over 60's	Rob Emery	Ken Turner
Girls	Jess Weatherspoon	Gemma Hill
Junior Racketball	Jack Stephenson	David Worthington
Under 15s	James Knowlson	Alfie Phillips
Under 13s	Jack Stephenson	Charlie Phillips
Under 11s	Jess Weatherspoon	Alexander Young

At presentation evening, held at the Parish Hall on 24 September, the following additional awards were presented

Mens Player of the Year	Leon Lamb	Club Member of the Year	Ken Turner
Ladies Player of the Year	Emma Rowsby	Junior of the Year	Richard Flanagan

## **June 2015**

### **Team Squash**

Following 2 seasons that saw considerable team success for Sedgefield in the Durham and Cleveland leagues, it was inevitable that this season would be focussed on consolidation rather than promotion, and all the teams put in strong and spirited performances over what proved to be a tough year.

The men's 1<sup>st</sup> team competed in the first division for the first time in many years. Led from the front by County standard players, Chris Gillespie and Matt Marshall, the team put in a very creditable performance, and whilst it could not match the top 3 clubs, they competed strongly against the rest of the division, finishing 6<sup>th</sup>. It should also be noted that Sedgefield fielded the youngest team in the division, with 4 juniors turning out for the team over the season. It is also noteworthy that Sedgefield do not pay for players outside of the club to play for its teams, which many other clubs do. First team matches always drew a large crowd to the club and we would hope that our 1st team now become a regular fixture in the County's top league.

Elsewhere the 2<sup>nd</sup> team finished 6<sup>th</sup> in Division 3, despite losing some key players to injury over the season. The 3<sup>rd</sup> team shrugged off a slow start to the season to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> in a closely fought Division 4. In Division 5, the 4<sup>th</sup> team finished 5<sup>th</sup>, despite posting only one win over the season, but their final result reflects that fact that the other games were only narrowly lost.

The ladies had a tougher year, losing some key players during the season, and both ladies teams finished bottom of Ladies Division 1 and 2 respectively. However, it is a credit to the ladies section that Sedgefield remains the only club to field more than one ladies team, and were able to turn out full teams to each match. Hopefully some strengthening of the teams next season will lead to a better outcome.

### **Durham & Cleveland Presentation Evening**

However, the Club's efforts off the court were rewarded at the Durham & Cleveland annual presentation evening when Sedgefield were awarded Club of the Year. This award recognised how well the club is managed, and how it strives to cater for existing members at all levels, and promote the game within the community.

Additionally, individual awards were presented to Chris Gillespie, for his County team performances throughout the season, and to Robert Pearce in recognition of his service to the junior County teams

## July 2015

The squash club, particularly the junior section, played a starring role at this years Sedgefield Day.

Now in it's third year, this years events were focused around sports and science. As a result, the squash club brought it's portable mini-squash wall onto the village green on a rather wet Saturday for people to come and have a go. Additionally the younger juniors gave a demonstration of drills, and held a game of "squicket" in the exhibition circle.

Despite the conditions, which were hardly conducive to squash, the portable wall attracted many people to come and try it out throughout the day and we were successful in highlighting to the community both the sport and the club.



## **September 2015**

### **Pre-season Competitions**

The new season has got underway with the usual pre-season competitions plus a new event for this year. As a curtain raiser to the new season an invitational Sedgefield 11 played a match against a Bannatynes 11, with proceeds raised going to fight cancer. Sedgefield were able to field a "ringer" at number 1 in the shape of ex world no 1 and Commonwealth silver medallist James Willstrop, who played the current County champion Gareth Lumsdon. At one point, another Bannatynes player came on court to help Gareth out, but James was still able to put on a masterclass against both! A great afternoon was had by those who played in or viewed the matches, and the event raised £203 to help the fight against breast cancer.

The annual squash blitz was held on 5 September with 20 members playing in intensive 6 minute bursts over the course of an afternoon. The winning team consisted of Chris Gillespie, John O'Donnell, Emma Allen and Sharon Brown.

The team handicap competition took place over the course of September, and was well supported by members. Chris Gillespie made it a pre-season double by captaining the winning team of John O'Donnell, Neil Bunney, Craig Weatherspoon and Amanda Hetherington.

### **Durham & Cleveland Junior County Closed Competitions**

September also saw the Durham and Cleveland Junior County Closed competitions, and Sedgefield was again well represented with 7 juniors competing. Again, the club had a great year with existing County champions Oliver Walls and Jessica Weatherspoon both retaining their titles. Oliver won both the U19 and U17 boys, and Jessica bagged the U13 and U11 girls trophies, beating fellow Sedgefield player, Jenny Walker in the U13 final, in addition to coming runner-up in the U15 girls final. Elsewhere, James Knowlson and Jack Stephenson came 3rd & 4th respectively in the U15 boys, and Richard Flanagan was runner up in the U15s plate competition. Alexander Young, making his debut at County level also put in some strong performances in the U11 boys competition. It is great to see a healthy crop of juniors coming through the ranks at the club, and competing in County and regional competitions.

### **New Racket and Ball Skills Sessions**

Getting familiarisation with rackets and balls at an early age, can greatly help children with coordination. It will also act as a great foundation if they wish to go on and play a range of sports including tennis, squash & badminton (or even beach bat & ball!)

A new series of coaching sessions, aimed at 4-7 year olds will be held on Saturday mornings between 10.45 and 11.30am at Sedgefield Squash Club (behind Ceddesfeld Hall), starting on 5 September. These sessions will be taken by qualified coaches and will involve fun and games activities to help develop general racket and ball skills, and movement. Children do not need any equipment, just a pair of clean trainers or gym shoes to change into for the session.

We hope to see a number of budding racket stars of the future taking their first formative steps at Sedgefield!

## November 2015

### **Inter-Schools Competition**

We celebrated the eleventh year of the Sedgefield primary schools mini-squash competition on the morning of October 22<sup>rd</sup> welcoming, for the second time, five teams. This year Stephen Rowsby provided and practice sessions to all 5 schools, prior to the tournament. James Larcombe organised the round-robin competition, assisted by Chris Rowsby, Craig Weatherspoon, and Jane Larcombe who helped with marking, photos, and some last minute coaching.

Each school brought five players with a minimum of two girls per team. Schools play a round-robin format, four matches per team.

The competition was again a resounding success, with many excellent performances from children new to the game as well as more experienced players. As the last two years have been incredibly close it finally proved impossible to top that, and so it came to pass that only a major slip-up could have prevented Sedgefield Primary from retaining their trophy as they entered the final round. However, second place was hotly contested with only seven points separating three teams with 35 points to play for. Despite losing 33-30 to Sedgefield Hardwick, St Michael's School, picked up enough points to achieve the runners-up slot in only their second appearance at the tournament.

Final results: 1 Sedgefield Primary 121pts; 2. Bishop Middleham 110pts; 3. Sedgefield Hardwick 107pts; 4. St. Williams 102pts; 5. Trimdon Juniors 61pts

Maximum points scorers (28 pts): Joe Hennessey (St William's), Bethany Rapley (Sedgefield Hardwick), Jessica Weatherspoon, Roan Lee, Joseph Morrison (all Sedgefield Primary)

Top team scorers: Georgia Smith (Bishop Middleham) 26 pts; Oliver Byrne (Trimdon Juniors) 20 pts

Sedgefield Primary will now represent the area in the Durham and Cleveland inter- schools competition – provisional date: March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016.

### **World Squash Day**

World Squash Day is an annual concept, instigated by the Professional Squash Association, and this year, clubs were encouraged to raise money for UNICEF. Sedgefield joined in the fun by running a "squash in pyjamas" day. Juniors who turned up to Saturday morning coaching, and adults who came to the club afternoon, all turned up in a mixture of PJs or onzies – some were obviously borrowed, but thankfully none were inappropriate for a family orientated club! Some members followed up the day with a "drink in your pyjamas" evening round the village hostelrys. In total, around £250 was raised for UNICEF.



## December 2015

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

At the halfway point of the Durham and Cleveland squash season, the outlook for the rest of the season looks positive for Sedgefield's teams.

The 1st team have had a great start, winning 6 of 8 matches in the 1st Division. The team currently lies 5th in the division, although are only separated from 2nd place by 9 points, which can quickly be recovered if they have a strong second half of the season. Home matches have once again seen a packed balcony in order to see the County's best players in action.

In Division 3, the 2nd team have led the division for most of the season, and at the halfway point lie in second place albeit with a game in hand. By contrast, the 3rd team, who have lost some key players to injury, lie at the foot of the same division. It will be a big ask to avoid relegation but the team has had some close performances so a "great escape" cannot be ruled out!

The 4th team have put in solid performances in Division 5, lying 5th out of 10, and have again introduced some new players to team squash this season.

The Ladies 1st team have had a remarkable turnaround from last season, and are in 2nd place in Ladies Division 1. Whilst the Ladies 2nd team sit at the foot of division 2, although once again, Sedgefield are the only club who have been able to field 2 ladies teams.