

2024 MASTERS HOME INTERNATIONAL SCOTLAND

Event Dates:	Friday 19 th - Saturday 20 th April 2024		
Address:	Edinburgh Sports Club		
England Teams:	Men's O40	Men's O60	Women's O35/40
	Tony Webb (Captain) Steven Davies Ross Gore Phil Rushworth Anthony Savage Jason Varrie	Alex Betts (Captain) Eamonn Price Bryan Beeson Darren Withey Nigel Bacon John Parkes	Michelle Knight (Captain) Heather Joy Natalie Davenport-Husdan Gemma Barber Marie Elcock Polly Roylance Smith
	Women's O60		
	Polly Woodward (Captain) Mandy Akin Hilary Kenyon Tammy Bennett		



MENS OVER 40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		17	20	20	57	1
	5		17	20	42	2
	0	4		19	23	3
	0	1	4		5	4

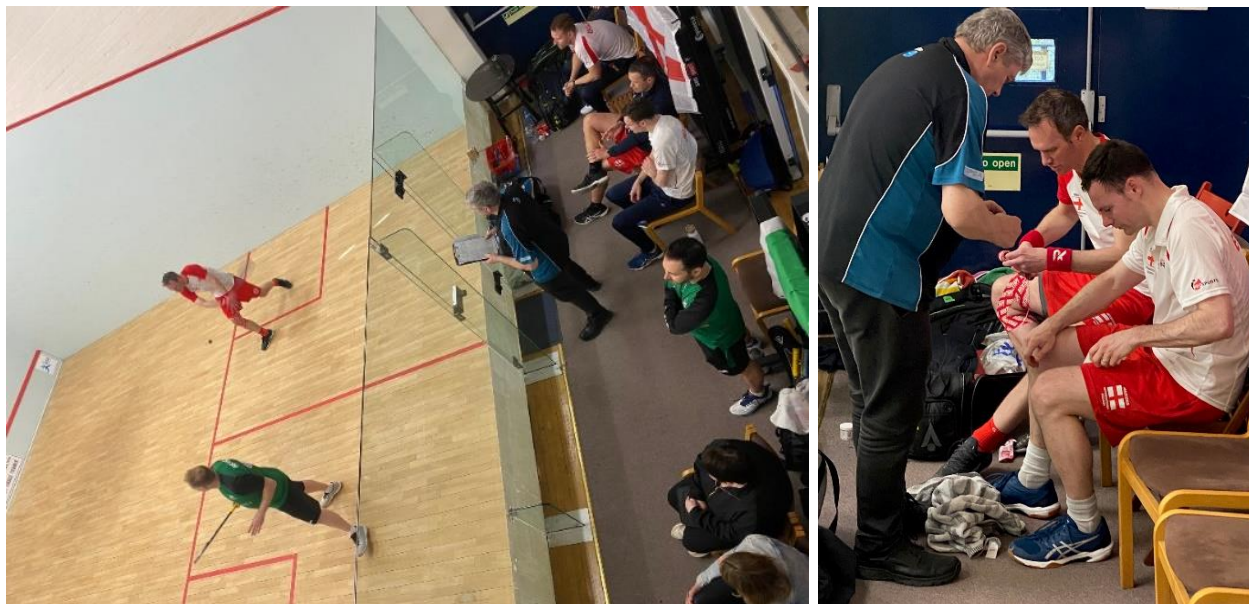
MENS OVER 40 REPORT



The captain arrived in the city of Edinburgh a few days early to soak up the ambience and immerse himself in the Scottish culture, history and the arts. Sun Tzu (The Art of War) stated "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles", advantage England Captain..... I thought.

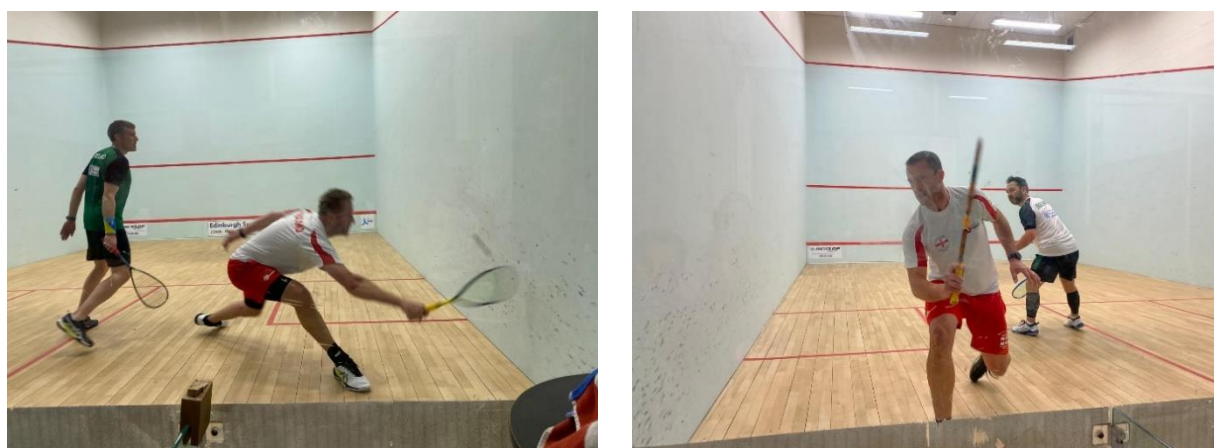
Team England's first match was against the Irish. On paper the closest match of the weekend, and it was imperative England got off to a good start. On a show of ultimate faith in the players, the captain subbed himself, and opted for experience over beauty. First up was Steve Davies against Pat Morrissey.

The first game set the tone for the match with an extremely tight and nervous affair. Pat (one of the sponsors of the Irish team) stuck in well, extending the rallies making the game long one. He was strategically (claimed in the bar later) aided in this quest by Steve who decided that the front of the court was a no go area, and so a one player length game ensued. 11-8 to England, Steve was looking dominant, but could he continue only using half the court to bring the match home?.... No was the answer, and after two rallies in the second game, Steve found the front corners (they were there all along), and ran away with the next two games 11-3, 11-5 for a 3-0 victory. Pat was quick to point out that he is available for all your plumbing needs, please call Pat Morrissey Plumbing (as long as you're in Ireland ☺).



Photos 1 – A packed in crowd watching Steve Davies get England underway against the Irish (Left), Phil “The Hold” Rushworth receiving some medical attention during his epic battle with Nigel Payton (Right)

Next up at No 3 was Sav who was eager not to spend any time messing about. His opponent, the Irish greyhound Mark Furlong, who like his name, looked prepared to do some running. After tough opening three rallies, Mark lifted a floaty straight forehand lob, which was met by an almighty crack, followed by a straight rolling nick. Once the dust had settled, and the crowd had regained consciousness, discussion turned to the “Hammer of Sav” which had dispatched the ball to the next life in such a manner. Rumour spread around the weight of Sav’s racket, what material was it made of? Could a normal person pick it up? (Not Steve, his rackets weighs 90 grams!!!). Anyway, a shot defined as a statement in time, Sav ran away with the match to another 3-0 victory for England, 11 6, 11-7, 11-9.



Photos 2 – Anthony Saville’s “The Hammer of Sav” being deployed (Left), Ross Gore looking smooth (Right).

England were 2-0 up with the No 1 strings gracing the court, Phil Rushworth vs Nigel Peyton. On paper, this was the match of the weekend, and it did not disappoint, in excitement and quality. Phil “The Hold” Rushworth started strongly, turning and moving the hard hitting Irishman to all corners of the court. After a first hard fought game,

“The Hold” was 1-0 up, but the buzzing in the air notified that this was anything but over. Towards the end of a second tough game Phil hit the ground hard after tripping over Nigel’s trailing “Asal” leg. Shouts and calls aplenty on both sides put the referee under pressure, without any safety of a video review. Following a short blood injury break for Phil’s elbow (later he would claim his right hip was hurt), the last few points of the game were played out resulting in a 12-10 win for “The Hold”. England were 2-0 and looking at clinching the match, however Ireland’s Peyton had other ideas. Just when you thought someone couldn’t keep tanking the ball at that speed for an entire match, Nigel came out to prove everyone wrong. For the next two games Peyton upped the intensity with a combination of supreme movement and clean, hard hitting to pile the pressure on the Englishman. The Irish took the third game, and an extremely tight fourth game where “The Hold” faked the crosscourt flick and played the straight drop, only for Nigel to ghost the forehand cross-court (honestly he effectively went and played the ball... which wasn’t there!), only to turn around and play a backhand length to the awe of the crowd, 13-11 to Peyton. The match was 2-2 and the Irish were back in, and looking to turn the tide of the fixture. The fifth game did not disappoint with both players maintaining the extremely high quality throughout. It was back and forth, with no player looking like a clear winner. “The Hold” was twisting and turning the Irishman in circles, however he was matching it with continued power creating a spectacle of squash. Phil reached match ball at 10-9, which resulted in a hard fought rally resulting in a clear stroke call for the Englishman.... “Let Ball” was the decision (without trying to be biased, it was an absolutely clear stroke), so play continued. The next rally, another lengthy affair, ended with a request for a Let for Peyton... (definitely a let, everyday)... “No Let” was the decision..... A controversial end to a fabulous match, and it was a real pleasure to watch, “The Hold” taking it 3-2 after 75 gruelling minutes: 11-8, 12-10, 8-11, 11-13, 11-9. England now had the match in the bag 3-0, however as we know, England expects...

Whilst the action was unfolding on court, elsewhere, in the bar England’s travelling single man “barmy army” and No 1 fan Elliot Gore was pitched in his own battle with the Edinburgh Squash Club Chef. Panini-Gate is now the subject of an international investigation, suffice to say, Elliot did make it back to the courts in time before his brother went on much later in the fixture. The team were also well hydrated, “don’t worry, I had a pint yesterday” reassured the captain.



Photos 3 – Match of the weekend between Phil Rushworth (Eng) and Nigel Payton (Ire) 3-2 – 11-8, 12-10, 8-11, 11-13, 12-10 75 mins. A demonstration of the spirit of the event (Left), Jason Varrie making his England debut (Right).

Next up, making his England debut was Jason Varrie, with an extremely difficult act to follow and a talented opponent in Niall Rooney. The debutant was nervous, giving Rooney control of the first game, with the Irishman taking it fairly convincingly 11-6. However, the second was a different beast, with Varrie taking the bit between the teeth and chasing the ball down. Just as fellow countyman Ross Gore and the captain were discussing Varrie’s past tendency to dive around the court as a younger man, Varrie must have overheard and the Superman dive was deployed.... Not once, but twice, in the same rally! England couldn’t ask for anymore effort, however the Irishman still had too much quality, squeaked out a 3-0 victory 11-6, 12-10, 11-9.

Last on, with food in the bar going cold, courts being swept, lights turning off and taxis waiting was England regular Ross Gore taking on Kev Moore. Ross was as usual Mr Smooth, and excelled at being better in every

aspect around the court. Too smooth, too quick, too tight, too good! Gore secured the England victory 11-4, 11-6, 11-6 for a 4-1 match score putting England in a commanding position for day 2.

Sickness is an issue every captain dreads, especially when it's himself making the phone call. Two pints of lager and a packet of Campylobacter had been consumed and a very dark day began for the captain, with no way out of his hotel bathroom suite. On the positive side, the vast amount of time sat on the thinking chair gave the captain ample consideration for important strategic decisions to be made. The Welsh had suffered two serious injuries leaving them with four players, so the decision was made (over the course of a few hours) to rest the England No 1 following his brutal match, and put faith in the debutant Varrie to lead the English line against the Welsh in Match 2. This decision was backed up by the brutal display of the English team, who went through the Welsh as quickly and whatever went through the captain that morning! (I can't add any more of a description, as I only have one view / venue to describe and it was pretty bland from where I was sitting).

England two from two, and staring victory in the face, the captain made a dash across Edinburgh for the photoshoot (the second quickest he moved all weekend) ready for the last match against the host nation. Following a quick shower and 15 mins of boast and drive, the captain quickly ruled himself unfit, and returned to his "strategic oversight position" and left it to the rest of the team to bring the silver home.



Photos 4 – MO40s Team England and proof the captain did get some kit on (Left), Captain Webb taking some strategic time out again (and wearing everything he owns to stop the shivers) (Right).

"Steady as a rock", "Steady as she goes!" and "Steady, Eddy" are a few sayings, however none are more descriptive than "Steady as Steve Davies". First up against Scottish opponent David Simpson, Steve put on a statement display for the rest of the team to follow, pushing the ball around the court. No mistakes, and no way through for the Scot Simpson, Steve had a bagel in the oven and he served it piping hot, gourmet style. The form continued for the rest of the match, 3-0 Davies, 11-0, 11-6, 11-1.

Second on, the Hammer of Sav was back with lighting rippling around the grommet strip as the ball was beasted about the court. Sav's victim opponent Graham Lind got to work doing a decent job of getting the ball back and trying to limit the damage being caused on the forehand side. A heated (and loud!) exchange of words between players and the marker came out of nowhere in the second, which echoed across the neighbouring balconies, however it was the Englishman who came away with it 3-0, 11-7, 11-9, 11-2.

Back on court following his morning rest was England No 1 Phil "The Hold" Rushworth against the older Scot Allan Tasker, who had represented Scotland at O45 the previous weekend in Nottingham where he came up against the formidable Mick Biggs. Out for revenge, Allan was looking at raining on England's parade, which had already started as the Ladies O60s were showered and on the balcony with bottles of wine to hand! "The Hold" started where he left off on Friday, sending his opponent the wrong way on numerous occasions, and taking a fairly quick 2-0 lead.

However, the third was much closer, with Tasker pushing Phil all the way in to a tie break, however it was England who came out on top 12-10 to take the fixture and retain the trophy for another year.

With the next two rubbers now dead, it left both Ross Gore at No 4 and Jason Varrie at No 2 to rub some more salt into Scottish wounds, and both players obliged. Pretty smooth 3-0 wins over their Scottish counterparts Barry Masson and Iain Young followed, with England wrapping up the tie 5-0 and worthy champions for another year!

I would like to thank Scottish Squash for hosting the event (Phil and Allen who ran the tournament desk), all the staff at Edinburgh Squash Club for looking after the players, as well as the referees who marked all the matches, meaning we didn't have to. The quality of some of the squash was excellent, and thank you to all the players from the opposing nations who played in the right spirit and made the event such fun. Lastly I want to say a special thank you to my team who played exceptionally throughout the weekend, as well as looking out for me when it was clear I wasn't at my best. I did make it out (late!) for the evening reception at the club, however only managed a pack of paracetamol and two gin and tonics. Reflecting on Sun Tzu, I definitely know myself better than I did at the start of the weekend! I will endeavour to return and make up for it on the court as well as at the bar next time around!



Photos 5 – Men's O40s Home International Champions 2024 – England (and proof that the Captain did make it out of the bathroom eventually!).

Tony Webb
Team Captain

MENS OVER 60 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		20	19	20	59	1
	0		7	3	10	4
	3	17		20	40	2
	0	20	4		24	3

MENS OVER 60 REPORT



For some unfathomable reasons the England Squash Masters Committee saw fit to ask me to captain again in a return trip to Edinburgh after last year's over 55s contest. While I was, of course, honoured to be asked and, quite frankly, like a rat up a drainpipe to accept, I did feel some concern for the short-term memory loss, an issue for Masters as we progress through the age groups (!), of our Committee. They clearly had forgotten the chaos of last year's leadership, sorry, inadequate captaincy. But I suppose, when they went through the team (no room for discretion this year), they thought "cripes, who do we select out of this hapless lot?!". There is, of course, another explanation: that my five other team mates turned down the offer!

Anyway, we had a great team, much more youthful than last year, which sounds counterintuitive but not to Masters as we “advance”! Who would not want to captain former National & Open champions (not just Masters either!), European title holders and, OK, Nigel & me? More seriously, though, we arrived in Edinburgh with a very strong team.

This year there would be no cock-ups about exchanging gifts courtesy of commentator extraordinaire Barwise’s message that it had all been agreed that we wouldn’t exchange gifts; except it wasn’t as the Welsh generously excavated more slate from their mines (have the mines not run out yet?!). So, the confidence of the organisational skills of the captain had taken yet another battering, exacerbated by bumping into the other England team captains, who seemed, shall we say, well prepared. The only recourse was to utter the pathetic “less is more” refrain to the numerous questions of have you done this, have you done that?

Fortunately, we had a playing team of great skill, preparation and intensity and we had a solid 5-0 win on Friday evening versus the Irish. That led to challenging questions over dinner such as should we have two pints or three pints to prepare for the Welsh? I won’t disclose where the decision landed because of GDPR considerations but despite enduring the dubious comforts of the Britannia Hotel we had another solid 5-0 win on Saturday morning. The timing of our matches meant that there were lunchtime problems for a couple of our more athletic team members, who struggled with a hearty dose of lasagne 30 minutes before match time. The rest of the team thought that this would be excellent prep for the contest against our hosts. Another excellent match with a 4-1 win to take the spoils but chapeau to our good friend, Colin Grant, who came back from 2-0 down to take the great scalp of our illustrious #1, Bryan Beeson. It was a tremendous match with top class “proper squash” from both players and, as you can imagine, was one of the big highlights of a magnificent weekend. The Scots have a way of pulling out top notch performances at the ESC!

As you would expect all teams celebrated appropriately on Saturday evening and our team had a splendid time with our Women’s team, allegedly in the same age group. For some reason we ended up at Fingers again and my friend is still waiting for a response to last year’s question: “how do you explain to your partner a credit card expense at Fingers?”. The best indirect answer from one of our team, who may have a need to avoid embarrassing questions about his expenditures, was “good reason to use cash!” Enough said.

Thanks to our team, Bryan Beeson, Eamonn Price, Darren Withey, John Parkes and Nigel Bacon; and thanks to our hosts, our opponents and the referees. We had an absolute blast.

Alex Betts
Team Captain

WOMENS OVER 35/40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		20	16	16	52	1
	1		6	0	7	4
	11	20		6	37	3
	10	20	18		48	2

WOMENS OVER 35/40 REPORT



To I was truly honoured to be asked to Captain the 2024 O35/O40 Ladies Team at the Home Internationals in Scotland. All season we have had an extremely competitive group of ladies who all proved worthy of a spot on the England Team. I knew whoever my team was we would be amazing as we had such a great depth. 2 ladies who were originally selected to play unfortunately could not make it, Natalie Lawrence, and Selina Harper, you were very missed, and we hope you recover from your injury soon Selina.

Looking at the trophy when we won it last year, I noticed that the England Ladies Team in the O355/O40 age group had not lost since 2013 (and only once since 1994). Although this was an added pressure, I never had a doubt in my mind that with the incredible team I had beside me we wouldn't do well. Congratulations to Polly Roylance Smith, Gemma Barber, and Heather Joy for being selected for the team again and a special congratulations to Natalie Davenport-Husdan and Marie Elcock on their 1st Home Internationals Debut.

Session 1 vs Ireland



Our 1st match was against last year's runners up, Ireland. The tournament kicked off with our #5 seed Marie Elcock against Cara Davies, Marie was understandably nervous for her 1st Cap and despite fighting hard for the 1st game, Cara narrowly won it 11-9. Marie's nervous must have subsided, and her confidence and ability shone through with her playing exceptionally well, winning the next 3 games 11-9, 11-2, 12-10. Up next was our #3 seed Heather Joy against Sarah Keenan, Heather played a very solid game, played outstandingly, and proved way too strong for her opponent, winning convincingly in straight sets 11-4, 11-3, 11-6. Our #1 seed Polly Roylance Smith was up next against Tanya Scullion. Tanya pushed Polly hard in the 1st game and the 2 ladies had some unbelievable rallies, but Polly managed to clinch the 1st game with a 12-10 win, Polly stepped up her game even more, dominated the court and went on to win the next 2 games 11-6, 11-9. This now put us in a 3-0 lead which was a very relaxing position for me to go on court next with. I was up next against Helen Byrne and being my 1st match of the tournament, I was extremely nervous! After a bit of a nervous start taking the 1st game 11-7, I relaxed and felt extremely comfortable, managing to win the next 2 games easily 11-1, 11-2. Natalie Davenport-Husdan stepped on court looking fired up and ready to take on Siobhan Parker. Despite it being her 1st cap, Natalie was calm and confident winning the 1st 2 games convincingly 11-4, 11-3, Siobhan managed to work Natalie a little harder in the 3rd, but Natalie did not let her in, powered through and won the match in 3 straight games, 11-8 in the 3rd. 5-0 to England.

England 20 points, Ireland 0

Session 2 vs Wales

After finding out who the awesome ladies were that were chosen to represent Wales, we knew that this would be a very tough match for us and to say our nerves were through the roof would be an understatement!!



1st up was our #5 seed Gemma Barber against Anna Adams. Gemma has had a very challenging season due to injury, but she was so dedicated in her rehab, and I am so proud of her for coming back fighting after overcoming all the adversities she faced, this proves just what an incredibly talented player she is. Gemma played some amazing squash and convincingly took the 1st game 11-5. Anna managed to challenge Gemma in the 2nd narrowly winning it 15-13. After this game, Gemma said to me, 'Chelle I don't know if I can do this' - to which I responded, 'well you have got no other choice, so you are just going to have to!' – (bit of tough Captain love!) She asked me to get her a banana for after the next game and wow she must have really wanted that banana because she won the next game 11-4 and in record time. She did not let up and again dominated the 4th winning it 11-4. Our #3 seed Heather Joy was back on for what we knew would be a tough match against Gemma Davies. Heather managed to comfortably win the 1st game 11-5 but Gemma came back fighting and despite some incredible rallies and outrageous winners from Heather, Gemma managed to clinch the next 3 games 11-9, 11-4, 13-11. Our #1 seed Polly Roylance Smith was up next against Stacey Gooding who is a former Pro Player. I know Polly was extremely nervous for this match after their encounter at the British Nationals but after a shaky start and Stacey winning the 1st game 11-4, Polly demonstrated what a fine player she is by levelling up the game score winning the 2nd 12-10. Despite playing incredibly well and challenging Stacey with some hard rallies, Stacey took the next 2 games 11-3, 11-4. This unfortunately put England 1-2 down on the score board-leaving the responsibility of levelling the score down to me! I was up next against the wonderful Rebecca Baker; we are such good friends off the court but we both knew what was at stake and we quickly had to turn into rivals on court. From the very 1st point, it proved that this was going to be a brutal match for us both! I managed to take the 1st game 11-8, but Rebecca came back fighting and I lost the 2nd 8-11, I knew from the 1st 2 games that it was absolutely crucial for me to try and secure the 3rd game, which I managed to narrowly win 11-9. Rebecca once again fought back and forced me to make errors which resulted in me dropping the 4th 6-11. We were now level 2-2 and the realisation of what was at stake if I lost this match, (that we would lose our chance at winning the whole tournament) brought the significance of this win to a head - Wales obviously wanted to win this to secure them as Tournament winners so the fight was on! I remember being neck and neck and at 7-6 to Rebecca and we had the most brutal rally of the match. To try and end the rally, Rebecca did a magnificent drop shot and with nothing else to give, in true 'Michelle Style', I pulled out a dive and managed to win the rally. I looked over at Rebecca and was very relieved to see she was just as tired as I was and from there, I managed to dig deep and bring it home 11-8. (I'd like to apologise to my team and our supporters for the heart attacks I gave you!!) We now needed a fiercely determined lady to win and secure us a 3-2 match win and we all know that Natalie Davenport-Husdan is exactly that so who better for the challenge. Natalie was up

against Jenny McKenna, a well-known name on the circuit and an extremely talented player. We knew that this was going to be a tight match and with both ladies hitting some exceptionally good shots and retrieving the ball so well, the 1st game did not disappoint but Natalie managed to narrowly win this game 11-9. As expected, Jenny did not give up and came back on to win the 2nd 11-7. Being 2 matches all and 1-1 in the final match, you could feel the tension in the room at this point, proving just how much both nations wanted the win. Despite an impressive performance from both players and an epic battle, Natalie managed to come out victorious winning the 3rd 11-7 and the 4th 11-7, securing another win for England. 3-2 to England

England 16 points, Wales 10

Session 3 vs Scotland

After Scotland ending up at the bottom on the table last year, we massively underestimated how much stronger they were going to be this year. What we thought would be a comfortable win ended up being yet another epic battle!



Our #5 seed Marie Elcock was up 1st again against Catriona Smith. It was evident to see during the warmup that this was going to be a tight match, but Marie got stuck in straight off the mark, played some exceptional squash and took the 1st 2 games 11-8, 11-9. Catriona came back on and took Marie by surprise with her counterattack and Marie unfortunately dropped the 3rd 2-11. This however did not deter Marie and she played a phenomenal final game of her tournament and convincingly won the 4th 11-5, giving us a dream start. I played at #3 next and I was up against Mhairi Gritz, although I have previously beaten her, Mhairi is such a solid player and I had had an epic 5 setter in the morning, so I knew it was going to be a challenging match for me. Mhairi responds well to a game with a slower rhythm and structure, so my game plan was to try and play an attacking fast paced game. Despite my efforts she responded well, and I had to fight hard for every single point throughout the match. I managed to win the first 2 games 13-11, 11-8, however, she played some amazing squash and narrowly won the next 2 games 15-13, 12-10. I found myself in yet another hard 5 setter, but I managed to secure an 11-6 win in the 5th. Next up was our #1 Polly Roylance Smith against Lizzie Little. Both ladies played incredibly well, they had some fantastic rallies and we got to witness some brilliant winners from both ladies throughout the match. Unfortunately, despite the closeness of the match, Lizzie managed to have the edge and won 11-4, 12-10, 11-8. Gemma Barber played at #4 and she was up next against Sheena Logan (with England 2-1 up in matches). Gemma managed to secure a 2-0 lead relatively quickly 11-8, 11-7. It looked like it was going to be a comfortable 3-0 win for Gemma but in true fighting

spirit, Sheena took the next 2 games 11-7, 14-12 – we had another 5 setter on our hands, so close and we didn't know if our nerves could take anymore!! However, Gemma walked on court for the 5th game and if she was nervous, she did not display it at all, she appeared so calm, focused, and executed her game plan with confidence. She continued to dig deep, and hit solid shots throughout the game, winning 11-9 in the fifth. This was one of the most incredible matches of the tournament with both players literally giving it their all. We all ran down and whilst we were all celebrating and hugging Gemma, she was very confused until she realised that she had just secured us a win and we had won the tournament no matter what happened in the next match! The final match of the tournament was our #2 Natalie Davenport-Husdan against Katy Temple. After her tense decider match in the morning, we were relieved that Natalie could go on court this time knowing we had secured the win. This was an exciting game with a clash in styles with Katy Temple utilising the extra high ceiling in her favour to execute her scandalous lob serves and shots. Although the slower paced game unsettled Natalie in the 1st causing her to drop it 6-11, Natalie adapted well, changed her responses, and secured the next game 11-6. Katy took the 3rd 11-7 but again Natalie displayed her amazing talent and fight within and stole the 4th 11-8. After a well contested 5th game with some exceptional squash from both ladies, Natalie narrowly lost 11-7. 3-2 to England.

England 16 points, Scotland 11

This tournament proved one of the most competitive we have ever had which made the win even sweeter!

On behalf of the team, we would like to congratulate the Welsh, Scottish and Irish Teams and thank them for such a fantastic weekend. Thank you to Scottish Squash for hosting, to Edinburgh Sports Club for the venue and a special thank you to Allan McKay, Philip Lyons, and their team for making the tournament such a great success.

On behalf of the team we would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our supporters that travelled to Scotland to support us, to the Men's O40, Ladies O60 and Men's O60 who often finished before us and supported us, to Brown and Mason Group Limited for sponsoring our Team Towels and last but not least to my mum Sandy Knight who supported us, looked after us all and who everyone quickly adopted as their 'Squash Mum' for the weekend!





I would personally like to congratulate the team for your incredible performance, you were all outstanding. Thank you for dedicating everything you had to the team, we all had so much fun, you played hard, and you pursued victory with honour and an admirable level of sportsmanship. You represented England with pride and integrity, and it was an absolute privilege to Captain such an amazing team of ladies.

Michelle Knight
Team Captain

WOMENS OVER 60 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		14	13	12	39	1
	2		3	12	17	3
	3	13		13	29	2
	3	5	5		13	4

WOMENS OVER 60 REPORT



What a fantastic weekend we had. Our team of Polly Woodward, Hilary Kenyon, Mandy Akin and Tammy Bennett travelled to Scotland to try and retain the title.

The first match on Friday afternoon was against Ireland. First up was Polly Woodward in her first cap for England against Mary Keyes. Showing a few nerves in the first game and tinning a few drops and boasts, she got into her

stride and took the first game 11-6. She then went on to take the next two giving the team a good start to the weekend.

Next up was our Number 1 seed, Hilary Kenyon playing Rosie Barry. After some early point nerves she soon settled into her game. moving a quick Rosie Barry all around the court and taking the first game 11-8. Fired up and determined she went on for the second game and powered her way to win that 11-3. Hilary had found her accuracy in her wicked hard and low forehand whip and her skill and shot choice proved too much for Rosie and she took the third 11-5 giving us a 2-0 lead.

The final match on court was Tammy Bennett against Maureen Duke. In the first 2 games Maureen played some fantastic drops, plucking the ball out of the air and getting the better of Tammy. However, Tammy the terrier was not for giving up and she started to control the game in the third playing tight and pacey shots not allowing Maureen to play as many of her trademark drops. She battled her way in the third to an 11-8 win. With dogged determination she went on for the fourth and continued her march and took that game 11-5. So, 2 each and back on court for the decider. Our tenacious Tammy was not for losing and won that 11-7.

1st match won, now on to the early game on Saturday morning.

Saturday morning saw us take on Wales. First up was Tammy against Fiona Curthoys. This was an extremely tight match from start to finish. The first game went to Fiona 11-9 with Tammy becoming a little frustrated with her slow serve and struggled a bit to return them. However, in the second she dealt with them better and there were some fantastic rallies but Fiona edged a 13-11 win in that game. So, Tammy was down 2-0 but as we know Tammy never gives up. She goes on for the third and had us on the edge of our seats – It was nip and tuck and Fiona had 3 match balls which Tammy saved and with her determination Tammy won that game 12-10. The fourth game saw Fiona's slow serve frustrate Tammy but she fought on and narrowly lost that 11-8. So a 3-1 loss to us and all on Hilary and Mandy Akin.

Next up was Hilary against Jill Champion. Hilary got into her stride quickly, the accuracy of her shots was amazing and she took the first 11-8. In the second game she piled on the pressure, twisting and turning Jill and playing fabulous winning drops and boasts to take the second 11-6. With determination she went on for the third and powered her way to take that 11-5.

With the match at 1-1 it was all on the last match

Mandy was our hope and played Sian Johnson. With her lovely new pink bionic leg brace she bounced on to court ready to do battle. She soon settled into her stride and took the first one comfortably 11-4. The second was a little closer but a determined Mandy, who only threw herself on to the floor once, took that 11-7. Sian battled through, recovering from a calf injury but Mandy proved too strong for her and she powered her way to an 11-4 win and taking the match for us.

We had now won 2 matches and the title was on the 3rd match against Scotland who had also won both their matches.

First up was the captain, Polly Woodward who was determined to get the team off to a flying start. Playing Jennifer McAuley, she stormed through the first with decisive shots taking it 11-4. However, the second game was a nail biter with both players fighting for every point. Jennifer started playing more drops but Polly, finding some speed, picked them up. It was nip and tuck all the way with both players having game balls, but Polly finally won that game 16-14. The third game started evenly but Polly took a few points lead and won that 11-8. Pressure off slightly now for the other 2 players.

Next up was Hilary against Rosie Wilson. The first game was very tight with a very fit Rosie chasing everything down. Hilary started a little nervy, and with our hearts in our mouths we watched her fight for every point and finally take that game 13-11. The second game was not such a nail biter fortunately, as Hilary settled into her game and played some lovely tight squash putting Rosie under pressure and taking that game 11-5. Off she came, full of beans and went on for the third totally determined. She played some fabulous squash, showing her strength and range of shots and romped home to an 11-2 victory. Fabulous win and clinching the title for England.

So, with the match now won, the final tie was the legend Mandy Akin against the infamous and very experienced Pauline Douglas. Let the battle begin and what a battle it was, taking 5 games to decide the winner in a well humoured contest. The first game was another nail biter with both players chasing the ball down. Mandy playing to length and Pauline trying to drop and boast as much as possible. Mandy's determination and skill came through with her taking that game 12-10. The second game saw Pauline play some awesome boasts and she took that game 11-8. In this see saw match, the third game started and Mandy with grit and determination (and good shots I guess!) won that 11-6. The next two were equally as good but Pauline picked up some wonderful shots and played some fantastic boasts and won those games 11-7. 11-7. A great match played by two stalwarts of the game.

England were victorious and the celebrations began and carried on well into the night and there my report stops.



I would like to thank Scottish Squash, the referees and staff at Edinburgh Sports Club for hosting such a fantastic weekend and finally, congratulations to the other England teams and special thanks to my wonderful team of Hilary, Mandy and Tammy.

Polly Woodward
Team Captain

