

Press Release

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ELLAND'S PHOEBE SUTHERS CLAIMS SINGLES AND DOUBLES TITLES AT 2020 NATIONAL DEAF TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Elland's Phoebe Suthers took her career tally of National Deaf Tennis Championships titles to seven over the weekend after the 17-year-old claimed her fourth successive women's singles title and her third mixed doubles title at the 2020 event organised by the LTA at the National Tennis Centre in London.

Suthers, who returned home from last year's World Deaf Tennis Championships with gold, silver and bronze medals across her junior and singles events, maintained her unbeaten National Championships record against Middlesex player Valerie Copenhagen to win her fourth women's single title 6-1, 6-0.

She then partnered Wiltshire's Lewis Fletcher to their second successive mixed doubles title as the World Championships silver medallists eased past Esah Hayat and Copenhagen 6-0, 6-1. After retaining both titles she won at the 2019 National Championships, Suthers said:

"It was great to be back on court and winning and I'm very pleased to take home both titles again. I served well and was consistent, despite the difficult conditions. Lewis is a very good doubles player, we communicate well on court and know each other's games and movement and that helps. We didn't miss much and played really well.

"It was a very well-organised tournament and felt very safe at the NTC. I'd like to thank LTA tournament director Claire McCulloch for arranging everything and all the people involved did a great job."

Suthers also won the mixed doubles National Championships title with 18-year-old Hayat in 2016 before they claimed the junior mixed doubles gold medal together at last year's World Championships in Turkey.

However, their hopes of retaining their European Championships junior mixed doubles title over the summer were ended by the pandemic, as were Suthers' hopes of winning her second women's singles and doubles titles at the Slovenia Deaf Open. She added:

"I've really missed competing in the Slovenia Open and European Deaf Championships this summer, as both were cancelled, so this is the first competitive tennis I've been able to play since lockdown. I'm now hoping to get some hearing competitions in before Christmas, depending on the lockdown restrictions."

Fletcher, Hayat and Suthers are among the players on the LTA's Deaf Tennis Performance Programme now building towards the 24th Deaflympics, which are due to take place in Brazil in December 2021.

Find out more about how to get involved with disability tennis through the LTA Open Court Programme, which supports over 500 venues across the UK to deliver disability specific sessions including learning disability, wheelchair, visually impaired and deaf tennis. The programme is funded by Sport England and the LTA and delivered at a local level.

To find out more about the LTA's work with disability tennis, head to www.lta.org.uk/play or email disabilitytennis@lta.org.uk.

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- Please credit attached photos to the LTA.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

ABOUT THE LTA:

The LTA is the National Governing Body of tennis for Great Britain. We are here to govern and grow tennis, from grassroots participation through to the professional game. Our vision is “Tennis Opened Up” and we’re on a mission to grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable. We work with schools, with volunteers, with coaches and with venues across the whole country. We also represent the interests of over 685,000 Members, men and women, girls and boys, playing on more than 23,000 courts. The LTA runs and supports a network of 11,500 approved tournaments for players of all ages, the four corner-stones of which are the premier grass-court events leading up to The Championships, Wimbledon: the Nature Valley Open (at Nottingham), the Nature Valley Classic (at Birmingham), the Fever-Tree Championships (at The Queen’s Club, London) and the Nature Valley International (at Eastbourne). For further information about the LTA and tennis in Britain, visit www.lta.org.uk or follow us on Twitter @the_LTA.

