

TRAM LINES

YORKSHIRE TENNIS NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2024
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NATIONAL JUNIOR CHAMPION AIMS HIGH

INSIDE LEXUS IKLEY TROPHY
CLUB NEWS PLAYER PROFILES
INCLUSIVITY COACHING FOCUS
PADEL SPOTLIGHT COUNTY
CHAMPIONSHIPS UNIVERSITY
OF THE YEAR

PLUS KEY COUNTY CUP HIGHLIGHTS





We've now come to the end of a busy summer of activities on the tennis and padel courts and it was a privilege to meet so many of you back in June at the first Redmayne Bentley Yorkshire Tennis Day held at the Lexus Ilkley Trophy.

The rain never stopped but it didn't matter as attendees, including community groups, players and parents from the RPDC, schools and clubs ranging in age and ambition, enjoyed a great social occasion. More details of the day can be found on page 22

There were, as always, some **fantastic performances** from our players on the courts around the county, across the country and further afield. **The Yorkshire County Tennis Championships and Seniors' County Tennis Championships** took place at the end of August at John Charles Centre for Sport and at Huddersfield Tennis and Squash Club respectively. You can find out all about the championships on page 3 opposite.

The **Dunlop Yorkshire Tennis Doubles League** was completed in September and the inaugural **Dunlop Yorkshire Padel League** was completed in October. Congratulations to all the clubs who played in these leagues. All the details of the winners can be found on pages 9 and 26. You can also read about the heroics of our **Yorkshire international players** on page 12.

A huge thank you to those representatives of the **Yorkshire County Cup Teams** who have played in the County Cup Race. It would be wonderful to win this

auspicious award again.

Yorkshire is currently in a creditable third place.

Mention should also be made of the **13 Senior teams, from O40s to O75s**, who have battled throughout the summer and clocked up many miles to play their matches.

Congratulations to the three teams that made it to October's finals in Southampton. All the County Cup details can be found on pages 4 and 5

Yorkshire now has an operating Regional Player Development Centre based at Leeds Beckett University. Programme Manager, Steve McLoughlin, working with Richard Crabtree's excellent coaching team, are bringing this all to life. **Nick Fitzpatrick, Yorkshire's new Performance Lead**, is working hard to create a high-quality county performance club coaches' structure, alongside Coach Engagement Lead Angela Crossley. Find out more about Nick, his background and his plans on page 19.

Please also remember that Yorkshire Tennis provides

interest-free loans, through Advantage Yorkshire, for clubs looking to make improvements. It's really easy to apply and all the information can be found on the Yorkshire Tennis website.

You will also see that **Tramlines has had a refresh** which is all part of the new look and feel for the Yorkshire Tennis identity. The aim as well is to support and promote padel within the county and so you will begin to see how we are differentiating tennis and padel in all we do. We hope you like it!

Finally, **volunteers** are at the core of everything that happens in tennis and padel within Yorkshire. Thank you to all you do in your different roles around the county. **2025 LTA Awards** have been launched recently so please recognise volunteers who have made efforts to promote and deliver tennis and padel in Yorkshire. More details can be found on page 22. As always if you feel you would like to contribute in a volunteer capacity within Yorkshire Tennis, please get in touch.

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Yorkshire Tennis and Dunlop – two brands in an exciting new sponsorship deal

“Dunlop and Yorkshire Tennis are delighted they have signed a deal until end of 2025 for Dunlop to be the Official Ball Sponsor of Yorkshire Tennis. Tennis and Padel Leagues are sponsored by Dunlop and use of the Dunlop ball will be promoted in all matches in the Dunlop Yorkshire Tennis Doubles League and Dunlop Yorkshire Padel League. A discounted ball offer will be available to all clubs competing in these leagues and details of this offer will be circulated shortly. An offer for Yorkshire tennis coaches to obtain discounted Dunlop clothing and equipment is being developed and will also be circulated shortly.”

Dunlop is a long-standing household name and many tennis and squash players will remember using the wooden Dunlop Maxply tennis and squash rackets and Dunlop Green Flash shoes. In those days there really wasn't a lot of choice! Dunlop has come a long way since then. The company, Dunlop



■ Chris Baird, marketing manager, Dunlop Sports with Steve Jones, chair, Yorkshire Tennis

Slazenger, was sold in a management buy-out in 1996 and in 2004 was sold to Sports Direct but since then the brands under their ownership have been sold or licensed to other companies. Dunlop Sport was sold to Sumitomo Rubber Industries in 2016.

Nowadays Dunlop looks for opportunities to partner with sports, players, clubs and coaches in order to obtain maximum reach for the brand.

Young tennis players, like Jack Draper, Mark Ceban the 15-year-old who won 2024 Wimbledon U14s Boys' Singles and Hollie Smart, runner-up in the 2024 Wimbledon U14s Girls' Singles, are all sponsored by Dunlop.

Other tennis players sponsored by Dunlop include Liam Broady, Wimbledon doubles champion Henry Patten and World No2 wheelchair tennis player and gold medal winner at 2024 Paris Paralympics Yui Kamiji. Aimee Gibson, British No1 padel player, is also sponsored.

Closer to home, Luke Johnson receives sponsorship as do some of Yorkshire's young players like Max, Neo and Thea Hodgkinson. Local tennis leagues, including Bradford and District, Calderdale, Huddersfield and District and Sheffield and District, all receive exclusive offers.

Yorkshire clubs and centres, John Charles Centre for Sport, Leeds Beckett University, Chapel Allerton Lawn Tennis and Squash Club, Harrogate Squash and Fitness and Hallamshire Tennis and Squash Club, all have sponsorship arrangements with Dunlop.

YORKSHIRE COUNTY AND SENIORS' COUNTY TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024

Many new champions crowned this year

John Charles Centre for Sport hosted the Yorkshire Tennis County Championships and Huddersfield Tennis Club for the Seniors' County Championships during the week of 26th August 2024.

The [full list of County Championships winners](#) can be found online. Notable winners include:

Scott Hillerby winning the Men's Singles trophy for the first time and the Mixed

Doubles with Molly Robinson. 15-year-old **Bethany Pratt** won the Women's Singles, was runner-up in the Women's Doubles with Emilia Linley, and was the winner of both 18&U and 16&U Girls' Doubles with Emilia Linley. **Emilia Linley** in addition won the 18&U Girls' Singles title.

Theo Webster won both 18&U Boys' Singles and Doubles titles and **Samuel Hawkins** was champion in

12&U Boys' Singles, 12&U Boys' Doubles with Alexander Crowther and 14&U Boys' Doubles with Deyvon Butlin.

Emmanuella Idemudia triumphed in the 11&U and 12&U Girls' Singles whilst **Isabella Egglestone** won 10&U Girls' Singles and Girls' Doubles with Amal Khan.

Hunter Henderson was a multiple winner in the 8&U Boys' Singles, 9&U Boys' Singles, 10&U Boys' Singles

and 10&U Boys' Doubles with Isaac Ellis.

Thanks go to the referees Tom Lemon, for the Championships, and Becky Lee for the Seniors. Additionally, the umpires, court supervisors, parents, photographers, spectators and, of course, all the players must be thanked for taking part in these important county events.



■ Hang Kei Wu



■ Scott Hillerby



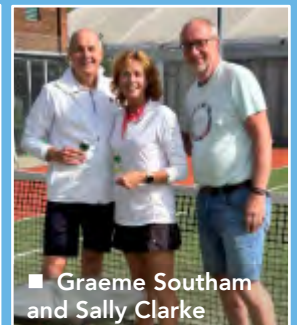
■ Theo Webster



■ Alessia Piani and Emmanuella Idemudia



■ Lleyton Cunliffe and Hunter Henderson



■ Graeme Southam and Sally Clarke

Yorkshire Seniors' Championships were won by:

Singles/Doubles	Age Group	Champion
Men's Singles	O35s	Tomas David
Men's Singles	O40s	Tomas David
Men's Singles	O45s	Hang Kei Wu
Men's Singles	O50s	Steve Shipley
Men's Singles	O55s	Dave Mangham
Men's Singles	O60s	Paul Layfield
Women's Singles	O35s	Danielle Brown
Men's Doubles	O50s	Gavin Hosford/Steve Shipley
Women's Doubles	O50s	Louise Lister/Wendy Stirke
Mixed Doubles	O55s	Graeme Southam/Sally Clarke



■ Emilia Linley

How Yorkshire's County Cup teams performed in 2024: key highlights

● Great performance by **Women's Summer County Cup team** (pictured right). With three 5-4 wins it was all very close and remain in Group 1 at Eastbourne in 2025. Jessica Ren and Bronte Murgett were the top performers.

● **Men's O35s team** remain in Group 1 for 2025. Despite just one win they achieved more rubbers than Leicestershire and Cheshire. Thanks to Richard Crabtree who played and won all of his matches.

● **Boys' 18&U** played three rounds of matches and won all of them so are promoted back to Group 1. Congratulations to



● **Women's O60s team** were **National Champions** in 2023 and made the finals again this year. Unfortunately they lost 2-3 to Surrey in a closely fought event. Congratulations to captain Belinda Turnbull, Gill Brook, Wendy Stirke, Louise Lister, Cath Davies and Cathryn Johnson.

● **Men's O70s**

reached the national finals and played Kent but lost 1-4.

● **Men's O75s** was a new team in 2023. They were promoted to Division 1 and in 2024 not only won their division but also beat Kent in the National Finals and are Champions. Congratulations to captain Wilf Jessop, Gregory Pearson, David Allerton, John Andrews, Giles Hinchcliffe and John Williams.

Hoyland, Louis Hull, Henry Redfern, Joe Mazingham, Louis Stewart, Max McGregor, Thomas Nailer, Tom Oliver and Harry Abel.

● George He achieved the best record winning all eight matches he played in the **Boys' 10&U team**.

● **Boys' 9&U team** came out on top winning the division on rubbers and sets. Hugo Asmussen was the best performer at the finals.

● **Girls' 9&U** won all their matches with Lizzie Greatorex-Hughes and Ella-Grace Chan each playing eight matches and winning seven of them.



Kouros Anssarizadeh, Luke 2024 Summer County Cups: results

Men/Boys	Result	Women's/Girls	Result
Men's Group 2	6th, relegated to Group 3	Women's Group 1	3rd, stay in Group 1
Men's O35s Group 1	2nd, stay in Group 1	Women's O35s Group 1	4th, relegated to Group 2
Boys' 18&U Group 2	1st, promoted to Group 1	Girls' 18&U Group 1	3rd, relegated to Group 2
Boys' 14&U	Didn't qualify	Girls' 14&U	Didn't qualify
Boys' 12&U	Qualified, 4th in Finals	Girls' 12&U	Didn't qualify
Boys' 11&U	Qualified, 5th in Finals	Girls' 11&U	Didn't qualify
Boys' 10&U	Champions in North Finals	Girls' 10&U	Qualified, 4th in North Finals
Boys' 9&U	Champions in North Finals	Girls' 9&U Q for Finals	Champions in North Finals
Men's O45s Division 1	3rd, stay in Division 1	Women's O40s Division 3	Champions of Division 3a
Men's O50s Division 2	5th, relegated to Division 3	Women's O50s Division 1	2nd, stay in Division 1
Men's O55s Division 1	2nd, stay in Division 1	Women's O55s Division 2	Champions Division 2b
Men's O60s Division 1	2nd, stay in Division 1	Women's O60s Division 1	Champions Division 1a National Finalist
Men's O65s Division 1	5th, relegated to Division 2	Women's O65s Division 2	2nd, stay in Division 2
Men's O70s Division 1	Champions of Division 1b, National Finalists	Women's O70s Division 1	3rd, stay in Division 1
Men's O75s Division 1	Champions of Division 1a and National Champions		



■ Champions in North Finals: 9&U Girls



■ Champions in North Finals: 9&U Boys



■ Promoted: 18&U Boys



■ Second place in Group 1: Men's O35s



■ Champions in North Finals: 10&U Boys



■ National Champions, Men's O75s



This year's Lexus Ilkley Trophy tournament had the strongest entry to date, best ever ticket sales and the courts, despite all the rain, were in amazing condition. Additionally, there was a vastly increased public area for food and relaxation plus a big screen which showed matches in play on the Centre Court, as well as Euro 24, creating the ultimate village of food, drink and entertainment.

■ Rebecca Marino, winner of the women's title

Centre Court seating capacity was increased again this year to 1,300 and ticket sales for the last four days were sold out. Audiences were treated to some excellent tennis with sizeable crowds on all courts for singles and doubles matches throughout the week.

A total of 1,800 school children participated in tennis on the all-weather courts, as part of the club's Outreach Programme, and they thoroughly enjoyed watching the tennis on Centre Court.

Qualifying commenced on Saturday 15th June with free entry for spectators but the day was a wash-out as the rain never stopped. Fortunately, apart from the occasional rain delay during the rest of the

week, the Men's ATP Challenger and \$100,000 ITF Women's World Tour events were successfully completed on time.

During the rain delays, spectators could enjoy the big screen with tennis from Queens, singing, dancing and quizzes with a fabulous DJ and of course a variety of hot and cold food and drinks.

There was no rush to leave the grounds at the end of play as the big screen was showing Euro 24 matches and eating and drinking could continue for the evening.

The Men's Singles draw included two former ATP Top 10 players, **Richard Gasquet** who won his first-round match on his 38th birthday and

David Goffin, 33 and also South African **Lloyd Harris** who had just won the 2024 Lexus Surbiton Trophy.

David Goffin won his 21st career singles title, and first title on grass, with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Harold Mayot who had beaten Gasquet in the round of 16.

There were a host of up-and-coming young British players in the **Women's Singles** draw including teenagers Mingge Xu, Hannah Klugman, Ella McDonald and Ranah Stoiber.

The best performances, reaching the quarter-finals, came from Ella McDonald and 22-year-old Sonay Kartal. Sonay recently won her first WTA title at the Jasmin Open,

Tunisia, and has soared up the rankings to make the top 100.

The women's title was won by Canadian Rebecca Marino who defeated Frances' Jessika Ponchet 4-6, 6-1, 6-4. This was Rebecca's second W100 singles title of the season and her career and her first on grass.

The Men's Doubles title was won by USA's Evan King and Reese Stalder. This was their eighth ATP Challenger Tour title together as they defeated Christian Harrison and Fabrice Martin 6-3, 3-6, 10-6.

This event included Leeds player Luke Johnson with his new partner Indian N Sriram Balaji and crowds were large when they were on court. Unfortunately, they lost in the quarter-finals in a highly entertaining match to the experienced pair of Marcus Daniell and Matwe Middelkoop.

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TENNIS AND SO MUCH MORE AT THE 2024 LEXUS ILKLEY TROPHY



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French/Romanian duo of **Kristian Mladenovic and Elena Gabriela Ruse** who were top seeds beat second seeds Quinn Gleason and Qianhui Tang 6-2, 6-2 in the **Women's Doubles final**.

As always, this tournament relies on its staff and volunteers, mostly club members, to make it all possible. They work tirelessly, including over many months, on the grounds, volunteer recruitment, hotel arrangements, player housing, transport, advertising and social media, ball crew training and so much more. It really is a massive team effort.

Next year's tournament will be a week earlier, 7-14th June 2025, as the grass court season has been re-vamped. Ilkley will be sharing the date with the new WTA 500 tournament at Queen's Club as women's tennis returns to the London venue for the first time in 50 years.

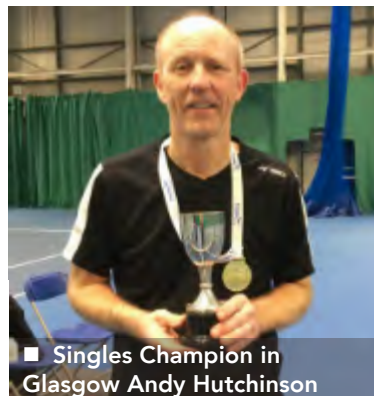


■ Sonay Kartal in action at the Ilkley Trophy



■ David Goffin, winner of the men's title

■ Several of Yorkshire's senior county players started the year at the ITF Scottish Masters Championships in Glasgow. Clare Johnson, Paul Layfield, Roger Kuhlmann, Andy Hutchinson and Miles Collett all took part. Whilst Paul and Andy reached the semi-finals of the Men's O60s Singles, Andy made it to the finals and was the champion.



■ Singles Champion in Glasgow Andy Hutchinson



■ Doubles Champions Becky Lee and Gillian Kilner



■ Singles Champion in Bournemouth Gill Brook



■ Finalists Belinda Turnbull and Gill Brook



■ Doubles Champions Neil McPherson and Wilf Jessop

YORKSHIRE SENIORS ON TOUR

■ The British Open Masters Indoor Tennis Championships at Wrexham in February saw Andy Hutchinson participate in the O60s Men's Singles and Doubles events, his first year in this age group, and Wilf Jessop in the Men's O75s Singles. They both reached the finals of their respective events.

■ The British Open Masters Clay Court Championships at West Hants Club in Bournemouth took place in May. Wilf Jessop won the O75s Men's Doubles with Neil McPherson. There was success in the Women's O60s where Gill Brook won the Singles and Doubles titles, the latter with Belinda Turnbull.

■ The British Masters

tournaments moved to grass in August – firstly the British Closed Masters Grass Court Championships at Wimbledon, followed by the British Open Masters Grass Court Championships at Eastbourne. Yorkshire's players had great success at Wimbledon as follows:

- Paul Ranson, O55s Men's Singles Champion
- Andy Hutchinson, O60s Men's Doubles Finalist with Neil Howitt
- Wilf Jessop, O75s Men's Doubles Champion with Neil McPherson
- Becky Lee & Gillian Kilner, O50s Women's Doubles Champions
- Gill Brook, O60s Women's Singles Champion



■ Grass Court Champion Paul Ranson

- Gill Brook and Belinda Turnbull, O60s Women's Doubles Finalists

■ At Eastbourne, Wilf Jessop won the Men's Doubles crown with Neil McPherson in the Men's O75s, whilst Andy Hutchinson was a finalist in the Men's O60s Singles and Men's O60s Doubles.

■ For any tennis player, being selected to play for their country in the World Championships is a tremendous honour. Wilf Jessop was selected for the Great Britain O75s Men's team in March in Turkey. In the team event Wilf contributed significantly to the achievement of seventh place out of 16, whilst in the individual events he was a Gold Medal winner in the Mixed Doubles with partner Marjorie Love. Andy Hutchinson, Gill Brook and Cath Davies were all part of the O60s GB teams that competed in Mexico at the end of April.

Dunlop Yorkshire Tennis Doubles League

Congratulations to the winners of the five leagues as follows:

- Men's Division 1: Beverley
- Men's Division 2: Skipton
- Women's Division 1: Roundhay 1
- Women's Division 2: Skipton
- Women's Division 3: Roundhay 2

Skipton Men were new to the league this

year and won Division 2. After just one season they will be in Division 1 and will be accompanied by the Skipton Women's team who have also reached Division 1.

Women's Division 1 saw Roundhay 1 win all eight ties and so usurped Huddersfield 1, Champions many times in recent years. The new Division 3 was won by Roundhay's second team, who also won all their matches



A YEAR IN THE TENNIS LIFE OF WILF JESSOP

When 2024 dawned, I had already received some good news.

Because the **World Championships** were taking place unusually early in the year – in March in Turkey – the **GB O75s team** had already been picked. And the initial news I was given was that I had to play off for the fourth spot in the team.

Luckily for me (but not for him) the other guy was struggling with a bit of an injury and so he let me take that final spot. This was to be my fourth time representing GB and I imagined that I would once again be named as number four.

However, over the weeks that were to follow, the picture changed. Our best two players were unfortunately compelled through injury/illness to withdraw from the team. And, as the Championships drew closer, it then became apparent that, due to my ranking points, I was going to have to play at number one for the team! Quite a shock – but also an honour.

Considering the depletion suffered by our team, we feel we competed manfully, finishing a creditable seventh out of 16 countries, matching our 2023 outcome. Personally, I was more than happy to win three of my singles – against the number ones from Australia, Belgium and Ireland – and only losing to two



Wilf Jessop, pictured with his World Championship mixed doubles partner Mary Love, reflects on a year playing seniors tennis

guys who are ranked in the world's top 10.

So, it was straight on to the **Individuals**. In the **singles and men's doubles** I was unlucky enough to draw the Canadians - fresh from winning the team event! Those matches went pretty much as expected. However, I had a good run in the consolation singles, reaching the final and losing a long match to a French guy. Over the fortnight I had surprised myself by playing nine singles matches in the space of ten days. I rarely play singles back home.

Where I had rather more luck was in the **mixed doubles**, because I got to partner Marjory Love, fresh from gold medal success in the women's O75s team event! Marjory doesn't look intimidating in the slightest: five foot nothing and quiet as a church mouse but opponents take her lightly at their peril!

Thanks to Marjory's ranking, we were seeded second, behind the Spaniard Jairo Velasco Ramirez and his Italian partner, Pinuccia Sacchi Caridi. Velasco was ranked world number one in both singles and mixed doubles. In fact, in the mixed he had finished every year for the previous six (at least) at number one. We duly reached the final without too many alarms and so faced the top seeds.

Well, Velasco's tactics were, to say the least, unusual. When he served, even from the deuce side, he got his partner to stand

at the back of the forehand tramlines. And that's pretty much where she camped out for the entire match, allowing Velasco to dominate the rest of the court. When called upon to play a shot, forehand or backhand, the Italian woman would invariably hit a topspin lob, irrespective of where we were on the court. Any weak reply from our side would be ruthlessly dealt with by the Spaniard at the net.



Faced with these bizarre, yet masterful, tactics, we found ourselves down by a set and 4-1. We weren't really finding the answers that we needed. But then, at that point, we somehow managed to stem the tide. Marjory caught the Italian lady with some astute short balls and, point by point, game by game, we clawed our way back into the match. We claimed five games in a row to take the second set!

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The match tie-break was a real see-saw affair, neither team getting more than a point or two ahead. The score reached 8-all. Then 9-8 to us – match point! I then did something I hadn't done all match. Marjory was engaging Velasco in a typical cross-court rally – and I decided to gamble. I dived across the net to intercept – and won the match with a backhand volley that surprised everyone, me included!

So, a gold medal in the World Championships. That is now displayed alongside the silver I won playing with another mixed doubles partner, Shirley Fox, five years earlier. Marjory showed her undoubted class by also winning gold in the singles and silver in the women's doubles. It was certainly a lucky day for me when she agreed to be my partner!

At home, my successes came in men's doubles events, partnering Neil McPherson. He proved he currently has my number at singles, beating me in the



final of the GB Indoor Championships in Wrexham, and then again in the semifinals of the GB Clay Court Championships at Bournemouth. However, as a pair we have remained unbeaten in 75+ events, winning at Bournemouth, Wimbledon and Eastbourne. The only frustration was at

Wrexham where we had to "play down" due to a lack of entries, losing comprehensively to the eventual winners.

On the county front, Yorkshire's O75s team – newly formed last year – won division 1A of the Inter-County Championship and beat Kent in the National Finals to claim the national title. And my club, Hallamshire, will be playing Streetly TC in a repeat of the 2023 final, hoping to retain our inter-club title.

At a family level, my son, Dom, and I fell just short as we tried to retain our doubles title at my "local" club, Hallam Grange in Sheffield. And finally, for the first time, I'm going to partner his son – my grandson – Sebastian, in a social tournament at the club. I sincerely hope that playing the game of tennis over the years to come gives those two Jessops as much enjoyment as it has given me.

MEET SCOTT HILLERBY YORKSHIRE TENNIS MEN'S SINGLES CHAMPION 2024

Scott Hillerby has just embarked on a new phase in his life. He's left Leeds to commence a three-year Mathematics degree at Nottingham University. That's after spending the last year at Leeds Beckett University where he studied Economics and was also playing a lot of tennis. This gave Scott time to consider exactly what he wanted to study following a busy period leading up to A Levels.

Tennis at Leeds Beckett included training with some of the high-level players and coaches and playing for both the first and second university tennis teams. Scott won a lot of matches and felt his game improved significantly.

He appreciates the support he received from Steve McLoughlin and Paul Johnson during this period. His improved game will undoubtedly help him to play for the top tennis teams at Nottingham.

In terms of tennis training and playing for the county, Scott has been coached for some 10 years

by Ben Mitchell at David Lloyd Leeds and trained once a week with Cultiv8. His first County Cup was for the 10&U team and he subsequently played for all the age groups including 18&Us twice. He first played for the Men's team in the 2022 Winter County Cup and was part of the winning 2023 Winter County Cup team.

Post University Scott is considering a number of options. He would like to travel and perhaps play some tournaments on the Futures circuit but will probably need to work for a while to secure the finances!

His brother, Adam, is currently studying for a Masters at a US university, and that is another consideration for Scott as he could combine playing tennis with gaining a formal qualification.

In the meantime, Yorkshire Tennis wishes Scott all the best during his time at Nottingham and looks forward to him helping the team defend their 2023 title at the Group 1 2024 Winter County Cup in Bath in November.





"The first goal is always to secure entry into the Grand Slams, so the Australian Open in January is something we are looking towards, but as well I would like to finish the year inside the 50s."

What an amazing year Luke Johnson has had playing doubles. He achieved a career high ATP Doubles ranking of 64 in June 2024. In his own words Luke describes his year:

"To get into the **Grand Slams** directly with my own ranking was a big goal of mine. Originally when I started the year ranked 120 in the world my goal was to make Wimbledon directly given you need to be usually around the top 70 in the world to make the cut off.

'After a really good first 4/5 months of the year (Luke had won four Challenger titles at this stage), making the French Open was amazing.

'Being in on my own ranking just gives a different feel when you walk into the tournament, no one has given you a wild card, you are in because you have won the matches to get you there. You believe you deserve to be there.

"I have a **new partner** for the remainder of the year, **Sander Arends from The Netherlands**. I'm really excited about the partnership and we will play together for the rest of 2024 and into

2025. These tournaments will be a mix of big Challenger events and then ATP tour events to finish in October and November.

"The first goal is always to secure entry into the Grand Slams, so the **Australian Open in January is something we are looking towards, but as well I would like to finish the year inside the 50s**. This would allow myself and Sander to look at playing many ATP Tour events in the first few months of next year."

Luke won two Challengers with Sander at Porto and at St Tropez and made the second round of the French Open with previous partner Skander Mansouri. After the US Open, he had some time at home and this included being a practice partner for the Davis Cup team in Manchester.

Henry Patten made his debut here after winning Wimbledon with partner Harri Heliovaara and has seen his ranking increase from 69 at the end of 2023 to a high of 12 in August 2024. Luke has major ambitions as a doubles player and, with a new partner, 2025 will surely herald some more career milestones being achieved.

Paul Jubb is back playing regularly and in September 2024 reached his highest ATP Singles ranking of 186

Tramlines reported in 2023 that Paul Jubb had been plagued with injury for a significant part of the year but was on the comeback trail. He started 2024 at 669 in the rankings so has made tremendous progress as he's playing regularly on the ATP Challenger circuit.

He reached the final of the Glasgow Challenger in February and reached semi-finals in three other Challengers. He also played Queen's this year, Wimbledon and US Open. Many readers will remember Paul's first round match at Wimbledon where he just lost out in five sets to Thiago Seyboth Wild.



Following Naiktha Bains' tumultuous 2023 season, 2024 has been tough

The Leeds/Australian player attained a WTA Doubles ranking high of 87 in October 2023 after reaching the Wimbledon Women's Doubles quarter-final with partner Maia Lumsden.

Naiktha's last match of 2023 was at Osaka WTA in September after which she fractured her rib and had four months off court without even any training. She's

been playing again this year and made doubles finals at an ITF in February and at WTA Rouen with Maia Lumsden in April.

She won ITF tournaments at Nottingham in July and at London in August but could not repeat her 2023 success at Wimbledon in this year's tournament. Naiktha's ranking has dipped to 178 at end September but she has returned to Australia and will be looking to stay fit and healthy and play a lot of tennis.



Thorncliffe uses power of social media to raise funds for resurfacing

Thorncliffe Tennis Club, a small club in North Sheffield, was formed in 1952 and currently has some 60 members. The club is based in one of the poorest areas of Sheffield, a more working-class area, and earlier this year members were warned that closure was a possibility unless vital repairs took place.

Club chairman, Stephen Hague, told BBC Radio Sheffield that Thorncliffe was the only club in the north of the city and prided itself in being cheap and accessible for all.

The court surface was last laid 18 years ago and was clearly in need of relaying at an anticipated total cost of £50,000, and in addition the floodlights required upgrading as well as the clubhouse.

Fundraising – what Thorncliffe did

In early January 2024, the club contacted the Yorkshire Post newspaper who sent photographers and a reporter down, featuring them in a lengthy article and discussing the cause in the editorial section.

The club then followed this up by contacting BBC Look North who filmed a three-minute slot, gaining Thorncliffe publicity across the county, which was then linked to a Crowdfunding campaign. That campaign raised around £13,000, and simultaneously they were able to raise £7,000 from a Sport England grant, and £10,000 from the local Parish Council.

Money already held by the club would cover the rest of the court resurfacing needs. Additionally, various clubs in the Sheffield and District League assisted the tennis club along with members of other clubs.

The power of social media made it all possible and work on the courts, undertaken by Platt Construction, SC Sports and Steelphalt, commenced in August.

What next?

The club's upgraded courts have not only future-proofed the club but they have gained new members thanks to both the new facilities, social media campaigns and publicity generally.

Plans to introduce pickleball to the club presents another opportunity to attract new players and the continued work to support under-represented groups illustrates the importance of the club in the local community.

Local MP helps Heworth mark 100 years of tennis with triple celebration

Heworth Tennis Club recently celebrated its one hundredth birthday marking the occasion with the official opening of the **Trish Leach Pavilion** and the recently refurbished and renovated courts.

90 club members, families and local community members gathered at the club. The event was attended by Rachael Maskell, MP for York Central and Heworth Councillors Claire Douglas, Ben Burton and Robert Webb, who were impressed by the warm and inclusive community spirit on show.

In her address to the crowd Rachael Maskell championed the importance of local sport clubs to health and wellbeing, whilst paying tribute to the volunteers who work tirelessly to make them a success.



Trish Leach, a former committee member, was a key figure in getting the new clubhouse pavilion built, working tirelessly to secure the necessary funding and consents and then coordinating the construction work.

After a lot of setbacks, the building got the go ahead in 2014, so it was fitting, that ten years on, members and their families gathered to officially name it the 'Trish Leach Pavilion'. The new plaque was unveiled by Trish herself.

During the celebration day, **a family**

fun session saw over 20 children of all ages take on a variety of games, including some enthusiastic participation from parents! Attendees then enjoyed cakes galore, sandwiches and a doubles tournament in the sun.

Heworth Tennis Club now has over 220 members from juniors to adults, so it was fitting that those of all ages and abilities were able to enjoy the day. A memorable event for all involved and the club looks forward to celebrating more milestones in the future.

Andy Lucas, chair of Liversedge Tennis Club describes how he and other club members enjoyed the opportunity of a lifetime at The All-England Club.

The first balls were hit on the grounds of Liversedge Tennis Club on 26 September 1895. The club was planning to celebrate its 125th birthday in the Summer of 2020, which turned out to be the summer of Covid restrictions.

A contact had informed me the previous year that the All-England Club runs the 'Centenary Club', inviting a number of tennis clubs to the site as a thank you to them for providing grass roots tennis for over one hundred years.

I am not just the chairman of a local tennis club, I am a tennis geek and thought the idea of the Centenary Club was the opportunity of a lifetime. There was no Centenary Club running in 2020 due to the pandemic but in January 2023 I received an invitation for six of us to attend the **Centenary Club Day on 7th September 2023**. Of these six players, four were to be granted the opportunity to play on the courts and two were to be nominated spectators.

The Wimbledon experience

Given our distance from Wimbledon, the club very kindly paid for our accommodation in Wimbledon the night before and we had a lovely afternoon walking around Wimbledon, drinking in the bars and an evening meal in the Ivy.

On the day of the event, we were quickly whisked up to the Members' area where we were treated to pastries and coffee on the balcony. There were eight clubs represented that day, ranging from North to South, from small venues to enormous ones and there was even a club representing the civil service.

We were given two guided tours during the morning. The first was round the museum and the second was an all-access tour of the site, seeing the players' areas, the recently refurbished media centre, the hospitality suites and other areas generally off limits to ordinary members of the public.

Our tour guide was Dan Bloxham, head coach of the All-England Club and he could not have been more warm, engaging and responsive to

our questions if he had tried.

Following lunch in the hospitality suite, and after changing in the players dressing rooms, we were accompanied to Court No4 where we met Dan Bloxham for 'warm-ups', a mixture of dexterity and hand-eye co-ordination drills. At one point I shouted to my clubmate Simon 'put in some chuffing effort'.

We were later told by Dan that he had taken thirty seconds to Google the meaning of the word 'chuffing' as he was close to lambasting us for using swear words on the hallowed turf. After confirming it was only a matter of emphasis Dan without hesitation told us 'it was the first time that word had ever been heard at Wimbledon'.

For the mixed doubles matches we were on the

THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME





■ PERFECT DAY: who's who...



practice courts behind Court No1 and on Court No4. We played three doubles matches of fifty minutes each and played some incredible players.

When the matches were over everyone filtered back to get changed in time for dinner. Realising we had some time we cheekily asked whether Dan Bloxham (dressed in tennis whites) wanted to play some tie breaks against us and he was so kind in obliging. His level of skill is absolutely off the chart and we created a moment of a lifetime for my friend Simon when within the space of three points he hit the best serve of his life to ace Dan followed by

the best volley of his life to hit it past him once again.

Whilst this was happening, and unbeknownst to us, Wimbledon gave an opportunity for the spectators to play on some of the other courts and our friend Kate was very excited to see Jamie Murray practicing on the adjacent court, asking for a photo which I have no doubt will be a treasured possession for years.

After beers in the changing room we were invited to a champagne reception and dinner. We were fortunate that Dan Bloxham had decided to sit on our table for the evening meal. He quickly decided he would leave his bicycle at the

club and began drinking red wine. Prior to that day I had never drunk red wine. My first ever experience of it was a tasting session led by the head coach of Wimbledon. A rather bizarre anecdote but to me it underlined what the day was about, people representing the greatest tennis club on the planet mixing with everyday volunteers.

At half past ten the coach arrived to take everyone back to the hotel which was, at best, one third full. We went with the other players and Dan into Wimbledon Village where we had drinks until two in the morning before saying our goodbyes.

Wimbledon – the next day

The following morning, five of my team had the most awful hangovers and I have a now iconic club photograph where four of them are on the floor of the hotel around midday the day after the event, struggling to move.

We returned to Yorkshire with a 'once in a lifetime' set of memories and a number of new friends, after an experience few will be lucky enough to take part in. From all at Liversedge Tennis Club we cannot say how perfect the day was and encourage anyone, if their club is over a hundred years old, to send the same speculative e-mail I did four years ago.

Developing inclusivity at Graves Tennis Centre

Following on from the successes in 2023, three wheelchair tennis groups take place every week at Graves Tennis Centre in Sheffield: two are coached; and one (pictured right) is self-led on Saturday mornings.

Ten wheelchair tennis players attend and earlier this year Paralympic athlete, Dahnon Ward, trained at Graves in the run up to the Paris Paralympic Games.

The coaching team at Graves is committed to improving their inclusive tennis skills and were delighted when **Junior US Open Champion, Joshua Johns** (right), delivered a wheelchair workshop to the coaches who got to experience what it is like to play wheelchair tennis and what the key differences are in comparison to able-bodied tennis.

Graves is also the training base during the winter months for **South Yorkshire Visually Impaired Tennis Club (SYVITC)**. As part of their desire to improve their skills in coaching visually impaired tennis, the coaching team had the privilege of welcoming Frankie Rohan, GB VI Coach, to Graves to deliver a workshop.

They learned a lot about how to communicate and adapt their coaching methods to support visually impaired players. >>>[Read more about SYVITC on P18.](#)



In the November 2023 edition of **Tramlines** there were reports on a number of initiatives to promote tennis participation in communities that have traditionally been hard to reach. There were also articles about promoting diversity and inclusivity. This edition reviews how some of these and indeed other new, initiatives have developed over 2024.

Helping children in underserved communities play and enjoy tennis

Meet Breaking Barriers Tennis Association (BBTA)

BBTA is based in Leeds, which started towards the end of 2023 and after a six-month pilot programme was awarded a grant from the LTA Tennis Foundation to help continue their work to open up tennis within their local communities.

Children and families from under-served communities face multiple barriers when thinking about tennis, including the cost, weather, perceptions and lack of access to equipment. This project, therefore, was set up with the aim of making the game accessible to all.

The programme takes an integrated approach so that children from under-served communities access and play tennis in traditional tennis



venues in Leeds for free. Not only do these children get to experience tennis, and all the benefits that come with it, but it also brings together groups and communities from different backgrounds who may not normally meet, truly working to Open Up tennis.

BBTA has partnered with four local tennis centres in Leeds which are all within a mile of some of the most deprived areas – Chapel Allerton Lawn Tennis and Squash Club, John Charles Centre for Sport, Leeds Beckett University Tennis

Centre and Armley Tennis Club.

The first phase was successful as it enabled children and families from the community to experience tennis in the same way other children do. They found that good, fun coaching by LTA accredited coaches in good tennis facilities has seen children thrive.

However, it's not been without challenges as it has been uncomfortable for some. This programme is for the longer term aiming to embed tennis and physical activity into the lives of children from under-served communities, allowing them to reap the social, mental and physical benefits of playing tennis.

Getting more girls into tennis – a pilot project in York run by Joanne Middleton

Joanne Middleton is a PE teacher and tennis coach and struggled to get schools to enter the annual district tennis tournament, as opportunities for juniors, especially for girls, at schools and at clubs appeared to be limited. A project was therefore established to develop tennis at schools and clubs, aimed particularly at girls. **For schools** it was about developing the tennis offer within the curriculum and making stronger links with clubs. **For clubs** the focus was on social tennis with girls' participation the primary aim but boys were not excluded.

Schools Experience

There were two secondary schools involved, with Years 7 and 8, and several primary schools, with Years 5 and 6, in York. Ten hours of tennis coaching was delivered in each school during PE lessons in the summer term. For PE staff there was on the job tactical and technical CPD training.



In total tennis was delivered to over 300 girls and to several teachers. Feedback was very positive and resulted in an increase in pupils attending after-school sessions. A major issue, however, was limited or unsuitable equipment for the age of the players.

Follow up offer at clubs

Stage 1: two clubs were involved, Fulford and York.

Fulford focused on secondary schools and York on primary schools. They funded two hours of free coach-led social sessions every week for a

month. The first hour was for girls only whilst the second hour was for both girls and boys.

The girls were there to try tennis, went to the club with friends, met others and were having fun whilst learning some basic tennis skills. Rackets were provided. Attendees were a mix of social, economic and ethnic backgrounds.

Stage 2: Fulford Tennis Club. After the initial free month, the sessions continued with a small charge of £3 for non-members or an annual

membership of £35. In total there were 25 children playing over two hours.

There was a definite buzz with the girls coming straight from school, there were team games and some stayed after the session to play table tennis. This social aspect is exactly what teenage girls respond to.

Competition day

A competition was held at both Fulford and York Tennis Clubs during school time with 12 to 16 pupils from each school. Half the time was spent on court whilst the other half was about socialising and having a lot of fun.

Learnings

One interesting outcome was that the young people took the opportunity to independently book courts at Fulford Tennis Club and organised tennis outside of structured sessions. Some booked on to holiday camps, regular coaching and even played in teams.

Fewer new boys came into the club as most attending social sessions already came to coaching whilst many of the girls were completely new to the club.

Developing inclusive tennis at Barnsley Tennis Club

Alice Robson, head coach at Barnsley, has been working with her team of coaches to develop disability tennis at the club. A group has started on Saturday mornings, run by coach Sara Robson who has a passion for tennis, is an ex learning disabilities nurse and for some years was a support worker for children who cannot access the school curriculum.

Sara's Saturday sessions currently have two players, Alex and Poppy, and Sara is keen to increase the numbers. Additionally, adult sessions are being set up as well as outreach in schools.

The club is working with organisations, like Better Lives and Acez, who provide training and support to deliver inclusive tennis activities to disabled young people as well as those with long-term health conditions.



Alex, who is 18 and attends Sara's Saturday morning session, has learning difficulties and has written a short article for Tramlines.

“Hello, my name is Alex, aged 18 and I play at Barnsley Lawn Tennis Club in the inclusive session. I joined the training last year. Poppy joined in the summer and my carer, Paul,

joins in and Amanda (Poppy's mum) also.

I enjoy filming about tennis and also that I have someone else to play with. The one thing I don't like is when I have to pick up all

the balls because my back ends up killing me!

My You Tube channels are @Elevators, Tech and Studio Life and @Taylor's tennis training and we need you to subscribe as it's always appreciated if you do.

Thank you so much Sara for training me and to start the Taylor's training channel. ”

Alex loves his technology and between him and carer Paul they have developed the You Tube channels and upload new videos once a week for tennis and three times a week for elevators. Tennis currently has 18 subscribers and elevators over 270.

Readers, please subscribe to these channels and make this young man's year!

Three years on, activities galore and more to come

South Yorkshire Visually Impaired Tennis Club (SYVITC) provides award winning inclusive tennis to the visually impaired community of South Yorkshire and surrounding region. Now in its third year so much has been achieved.

The club plays at **Brentwood Tennis Club** and **Hallamshire Tennis Club** and thanks to a Sport England grant will be having indoor training sessions at **Graves Leisure and Tennis Centre** this winter.

In 2024, a number of players participated at the **Sheffield and District Annual Tournament** in three events – B1 Mixed Singles, B2+ Women's Singles and B2+ Men's Singles. Winners were Sid Tamblin, Pamela Amour and Jordan Hayles respectively.

SYVITC players competed at a number of **regional tournaments in Newport, Loughborough and Newcastle**. These players gained valuable tournament experience and connected with the wider VI tennis community, both nationally and internationally.

Several players also attended **specialised coaching camps** which provide participants with tailored coaching, designed to enhance their skills and develop their love for tennis. These camps are funded by **The Dan Maskell Tennis Trust**, in collaboration with the LTA.

The **Annual Summer Picnic** took place at Rother Valley and the sun shone! It was a day of members and volunteers coming together for a day filled with laughter, old-school games and community bonding.

One of the highlights of the season was the **Play your Way to Wimbledon tournament**. After qualifying through the regional/national competitions, Yorkshire's visually impaired tennis community made an impressive showing with seven of the 26 finalists residing in the region.

Congratulations to the Yorkshire players who reached the finals:

- Roy Turnham – B1 Men's
- Megan Paul – B1 Women's
- Ameen Menon – B2 Men's
- Bethan Jones and Janiece Wallace – B2 Women's
- Lydia Wrightson and Rosine Pybus – B4/5 Mixed

Reflecting on the experience, Ameen Menon (pictured above) said: "Qualifying to play at Wimbledon was an



■ Ameen, Janiece and coach Ben

unbelievable moment in my life and is without a doubt the pinnacle of my tennis journey so far. As a visually impaired player, being part of this competition makes me feel that I am truly part of the wider tennis family, and completely included in the sport.

With my wife and brother present, I had a sense of pride, and I was humbled to be alongside the two founders of

SYVITC, Janiece and Ben, my coach, without whom I would not be in the sport. I'm inspired to push on and improve my game...who knows, one day, I may represent my country playing VI tennis".

Exciting news is that after much dedicated work by David Wallace and Jess Redfearn a **Yorkshire Tennis VI League** is being

piloted on 30th November at Graves and, if all goes well, will run from March - September 2025.

Matches would be held in indoor venues in Yorkshire and players would compete in matches for most of the day. Rather than a team winning a league it will be an individual winning their category. Doubles is also being piloted. Everyone wishes David and all VI players good luck on 30th November.

Yorkshire Tennis is committed to opening up tennis in the county and any enquiries would be warmly received by Nat Wright via enquiries@yorkshiretennis.org.uk

From football to tennis and a successful 30-year coaching career



INTRODUCING NICK FITZPATRICK NEW CHAIR, YORKSHIRE TENNIS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT GROUP

NICK Fitzpatrick has taken on a vast role that has developed and grown over the last ten years under previous chair, Karen Mitchell, which Nick is focussed on evolving.

Overall, the role exists to provide a platform for player development through the performance pathway. In reality this is achieved through an active Performance Management Group responsible for the management and training of all County Cup teams from 8&U to O75s which involves the Chair working very closely with all county captains and liaising with Yorkshire coaches and parents.

Yorkshire won the County Cup Race in 2022 and the County has achieved top three status for a number of years. **Nick's vision** is to win the County Cup Race again but all of this depends on the success of Yorkshire's players combined with developing strong relationships with coaches, players and parents.

Nick is currently spending time meeting these groups as he familiarises himself with all of the Yorkshire Performance activities. So, who is Nick? What skills and experience does he bring to help Yorkshire Tennis continue to thrive?

Football was Nick's first sporting love which he played to a high level from a young age but, as in many families, he

was dependent on his dad taking him to training. When Nick was unable to get to football training he decided to try tennis and could walk to local club Rawdon.

He enjoyed receiving coaching from Liz Wilson and others and played Yorkshire League and other competitive events at Rawdon until the age of 24. He also played for the county, achieved a ranking of No2 in Yorkshire and a national ranking of 40 at 18&U level, but never won any Yorkshire Championships titles as he always lost to Paul Robinson!

Nick was keen to play tennis full-time but parental influence guided him towards academic qualifications and he achieved a degree in Materials Science and Engineering from Sheffield University. However, tennis was Nick's passion and so his career as a tennis coach began.

After taking his tennis qualifications in 1992/3 he started at Ilkley Lawn Tennis Club where he spent 10 very enjoyable years developing their performance players and played for the club in the national premier league.

Then, at the age of 33, with a great job and stable income, he gave up his role at Ilkley to become Head Coach at Thongsbridge Tennis Club. At the time the club had limited sporting facilities and no club house but had ambitious plans which have come to fruition with Nick as head coach and his appointment as general manager in 2016.

Twenty years on, Thongsbridge has developed into one of the premier clubs in Yorkshire from both a facilities and performance perspective. The club now boasts four heated indoor acrylic

tennis courts, seven outdoor all-weather floodlit tennis courts, two mini floodlit tennis courts and a fully equipped gym, with tennis coaching and gym programmes supported by seven tennis coaches and four gym instructors.

Many of Yorkshire's current crop of performance juniors play at Thongsbridge including four who played in this year's 18&U County Cup and one who went on to play for GB. The new RPDC also hosts three Thongsbridge players.

During Nick's tenure Thongsbridge has produced more than 70 players who have represented Yorkshire and six players that have played for GB. The club is also home to Paralympian Antony Cotterill and an interview with Antony can be read on page 20.

From a personal perspective Nick has two children Barney and Daisy. Daisy is studying for A Levels in Psychology and Health and Social Care but has no interest in tennis! Barney is a tennis professional who left Britain at age 14 to train at the Nadal Academy.

He's back in Leeds now although he's only recently started competing again after two years out with the debilitating inner ear Meniere's disease. He played in this year's Men's Summer County Cup team and was a finalist at LTA Lexus British Tour event at Ilkley. He's coaching at David Lloyd Leeds but is aiming to play on the tour again once he has gained some sponsors.

Everyone at Yorkshire Tennis wishes Nick success in this huge role and in his mission to regain the No1 position in the County Cup Race.



FROM HGV DRIVER TO PARALYMPIAN ATHLETE

A young man with his world in front of him – 21 years ago Antony Cotterill was about to start a new job in USA. He had worked for some years as an HGV mechanic on US military bases around Europe and in UK and was planning a move to a US military base in USA. Antony played a lot of sports including tennis, football, rugby, cycling etc.

Just before the move he and his friends, together since primary school, went on holiday to Cyprus. Messing around by the pool at a night club, Antony slipped and broke his neck. He had an operation in Cyprus, where he had a titanium plate put in his neck, spent two weeks in ICU followed by 14 weeks of bed rest and then six months in a spinal injuries unit back in Southport.

He could have become depressed and just sat at home feeling sorry for himself. Fortunately for Antony he met an ex-patient of the hospital, Mark Eccleston, former World No1 Wheelchair Tennis player, who became a key inspiration for Antony.



MEET ANTONY COTTERILL YORKSHIRE'S TENNIS PARALYMPIAN AND INSPIRATION TO ALL

After meeting Mark, **Antony took up wheelchair tennis** and played regularly at Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre. He was positive and determined to get on with his life. He purchased a small apartment in Southport, using funds from insurance policy payouts, to ensure he could easily get to the tennis centre.

Antony met so many people who helped him progress as a

person as well as a wheelchair tennis player. After a year he started competing in wheelchair tennis events across the UK, made some finals and has never looked back.

During this period he met his partner Debbie and moved to Thongsbridge where they live today.

Antony joined the GB Tennis Development Programme and as he progressed moved to the Performance Pathway Programme. For five days a week Antony spent three hours per day on court followed by 1-2 hours of speed and agility sessions. Once he became an elite athlete, Antony received UK Lottery funding and performed well.

His goals were the 2008 and 2012 Paralympic Games in Beijing and London respectively but, unfortunately, he didn't qualify but continued to play on the Wheelchair Tennis Tour. His improved performances ensured **he represented GB in both 2016 Paralympics in Rio and 2021 Paralympics in Tokyo.**

Although he lost in the first

round of singles at both tournaments he did make the fourth round of doubles in Tokyo. Antony was hoping to participate in 2024 Paralympics in Paris but in December 2021 was informed he was not going to be selected and was therefore unable to continue to play on the tour as his funding and sponsorship came to an end.

Again, never to be knocked back, Antony remained very positive, continues to play tennis and has turned his hand to **coaching**. He's a Level 3 coach and keen to help people wanting to give tennis a try and particularly those with a disability.

Antony can be seen on the courts at Thongsbridge as well where he helps with the junior coaching. Most of his personal coaching is at weekends whilst during the week he has been employed by the Youth Sport Trust and Great Athletes, to visit schools to give talks and coaching sessions to encourage take up of tennis. It also means children get to see what it's like playing tennis in a wheelchair. This takes place primarily in the North of England.

What's next for Antony?

Antony has concerns that there is limited awareness of disability tennis and so much untapped potential. He's been involved in **Have a Go Days** at some of the LTA's top performance centres at Nottingham, Bolton and NTC but numbers attending are low.

He works with some of the key individuals in Yorkshire involved in disability tennis, including Joe Newman-Billington at Graves and Louise Assioun at Leeds Beckett University.

Antony is of the view that the best place to start is in primary schools with disabled children who don't play as they don't know how to access tennis. With such passion for the sport and amazing enthusiasm, Antony will be a key player in the coming years in helping make disability tennis more mainstream.

Aiming to become Yorkshire's next top tennis professional

Max Hodkinson might only be 11 but he's packed a lot of tennis into his short career. In August this year, Max went one better than 2023 at the **Lexus Junior National Championships** as he won both the 11&U Singles and Doubles crowns.

Over the last year he's also played in some **major events in Britain and in Europe** and achieved great success. These have included; representing the **11&U and 12&U GB Junior National Teams at the Tennis Europe Winter Cup** where he played against the best players in France, in Germany and in Turkey; **winning several 11&U events across Britain** and was a finalist in the **12&U Lexus Junior International Tennis Europe event at West Hants Club.**

In April, Max was invited to the **IMG Future Stars Tournament, at the Tatoi Tennis Club in Athens**, which features the world's best boys and girls aged 12. It also offers a holistic educational and cultural experience to help the players, parents and coaches prepare for the professional tour.

Max was one of the youngest players there and made it to the quarter-finals. This prestigious event was attended by many famous faces and agents including Patrick Mouratoglou, Ben Draper and Clinton Coleman, an IMG scout. Apart from playing at the event Max was asked to be part of an IMG documentary about young talented juniors which recently aired on TV.

Max is coached by **Richard Crabtree, Cultiv8 Tennis Academy's Head Coach**, and is a full-time player at the Yorkshire RPDC based at Leeds Beckett University. Tramlines asked Max's mother, Zsuzsi, how the family, with three

children all playing county tennis, fit in work, school, holidays, social time with friends and at the same time train and play tournaments across Yorkshire, Britain and in Europe.

Not surprisingly, the family has to be exceptionally well organised with grandparents and coaches helping out. For competitions abroad the RPDC

arranges for a group of players to attend.

Their schools are very supportive and the children still manage to achieve good academic results.

Zsuzsi stresses that it is important that they have **time off from competition to release pressure and enjoy their childhood.** The family tries to have one weekend in

each term away where they can enjoy bike rides, swimming, a visit to a cinema or a theme park to go on roller-coasters!

This summer they had a week's holiday in Hungary where they enjoyed so many activities after a busy summer of County Cups, Regional, National and International events.



MAX HODKINSON

Coaching and training for three children and playing competitions around Britain and internationally is expensive. As a full-time member of Yorkshire RPDC Max receives LTA funding, and he also receives funding from Backing the Best programme.

This is managed by SportsAid for Sport England and supports athletes who would face difficulties

progressing without financial help. Dunlop also provide racket and clothing sponsorship.

Max will now need to compete more frequently in tournaments abroad against the best players in the world if he wants to accomplish his dream of becoming a professional tennis player.

Next stop is the famous **Junior Orange Bowl International Tennis**

Championships in December which brings together 800 of the top ranked 12U and 14U junior boys and girls from 76 countries. Andy Murray won the 12U in 1999 so could this be Max's year?

■ **If any reader is interested in sponsoring Max or any of Yorkshire's players or teams please contact Marketing@Yorkshiretennis.org.uk**

2025 LTA Awards presented by Lexus – nominations open now!

These awards highlight the incredible achievements and contributions of people in tennis and padel across Britain. We have many inspirational volunteers, coaches and officials in Yorkshire who could be nominated.

Yorkshire has amassed several national awards in the last few years and in **2024 the county had two LTA National Award winners – Sam Salt, Performance Coach of the Year and Leeds Beckett University, University of the Year**

This is your chance to nominate those worthy of recognition for all they do. Further information including the criteria for each award category and a link to the simple nomination form can be found here: <https://www.lta.org.uk/what-we-do/lta-tennis-awards/>

The categories are: **Club of the Year • Coach of the Year • Performance Coach of the Year • Tennis Opened Up Award • Park Venue of the Year • Competition of**



the Year • School of the Year • University of the Year • Lifetime Achievement Award • Official of the Year • Volunteer of the Year • Young Person of the Year • LTA President's Award.

Please take the time to recognise and so thank those making such a positive difference to tennis in Yorkshire. **Note, nominations close November 30th, 2024.**

Yorkshire Tennis Day at the Lexus Ilkley Trophy



Redmayne Bentley

This was a fabulous social event, held in the tournament marquee on the opening day of the Lexus Ilkley Trophy.

Everything kicked off with delicious pastries and drinks, followed by short presentations from Yorkshire Tennis President Karen Mitchell and Yorkshire Tennis Chair Steve Jones.

All attendees then enjoyed a buffet lunch,

strawberries and cream and of course drinks from the bar.

The plan to watch tennis on all grass courts and an exhibition padel match was scuppered by the relentless rain. However, everyone made the most of this social occasion, with players, friends, clubs, coaches, parents, board members and patrons mingling amongst each other. There was certainly

plenty of fun and laughter!

A silent auction was also held with prizes donated by Dunlop Sports, Wilkes Vending, Lexus Leeds and Cannon Hall Farm. Thanks go to Redmayne Bentley for their sponsorship of this event.

Yorkshire Tennis hopes to repeat Yorkshire Tennis Day at next year's Lexus Ilkley Trophy but without rain so including watching tennis and padel.





WHAT'S ON OFFER IN YORKSHIRE

A few years ago the LTA introduced the concept of LTA Coach Development Centres (CDCs) across GB. Each CDC has an exclusive jurisdiction and responsibility to service coach education needs within a cluster of counties.

There are 12 CDCs across Great Britain and Leeds Beckett University (LBU) is responsible for providing courses in Yorkshire. These include:

- Delivering qualifications – Assistant, Instructor and Tennis Coach
- Continuous Professional Development from the Official Course Menu
- Coach Forums
- Professional requirements – First Aid and Safeguarding.

CDCs operate a hub and satellite structure of venues within their counties, ensuring that the needs of the local workforce are met.

For example, **LTA Assistant**

Readers will regularly see on the Yorkshire Tennis website and on social media ads and promotions all about tennis and padel coaching courses on offer at Leeds Beckett University and other venues around Yorkshire. There's so much going on it's easy to miss what this all means so here's a refresher.

courses from November 2024 onwards are being held at LBU, Nuffield Hull, Yorks St John University, Huddersfield, Graves and Queen's Halifax. Whilst those interested in



Padel Coaching can find an Introduction Course of one day at Huddersfield's Padel courts in January 2025 and a Level 2 Padel Instructor's Course of four days takes place at Wetherby Padel throughout March.

For **Safeguarding and Protection**, these courses are held regularly on Zoom lasting about three hours. **First Aid courses** are held at LBU throughout the year and are always promoted on social media given the interest, and

are not only for coaches but for club members as well.

Details of all upcoming Courses offered through provider Leeds Beckett University, can be found online at: <https://www.yorkshirtennis.org.uk/coach-and-teach-find-a-course/>

BELINDA TURNBULL

TOP YORKSHIRE COACH AND COUNTY PLAYER

How it all started

Belinda only started playing tennis at **age 13 at Woodhall Spa Tennis Club, Lincolnshire**. Her parents played tennis and her dad was the Chairman of the club. He arranged for the then county coach to do a block of lessons at the club.

After the first session Belinda pestered her dad to get her some tennis lessons in Lincoln. Almost immediately she was invited to play in the Lincolnshire B squad and then Lincolnshire A squad.

She played for Lincolnshire Girls at 16 and was in the main Lincolnshire County Cup Team in Group 2 also at age 16. An amazing achievement after less than three years of playing tennis!

In terms of a career, **Belinda qualified as a Veterinary Nurse** and moved to South Wales to work and continued to play tennis there. However, the pull of playing tennis abroad was too much so Belinda gave up her job and went to the **United States** with a friend.

They started in **Atlanta**, entered tournaments and stayed to coach. Then they moved to coach in **Captiva Island, Florida** and later **Hilton Head**.

A fabulous experience but then aged 23, Belinda returned to the UK where she completed her coaching qualifications (equivalent of Level 5) at Bisham Abbey and then took up a coaching post back at Woodhall Spa. Subsequently, a move to York came about as she had met future husband Paul.

Coaching at Poppleton Tennis Club

Belinda has been at Poppleton for 32 years. She visited many clubs in the area on first arriving in Yorkshire and when an opening for a coach came about at Poppleton she applied and was appointed.

Poppleton Tennis Club at this time had six tarmac courts, no floodlights and to quote Belinda 'was a dying club'. She started helping out with junior coaching

Belinda Turnbull is a Level 5 Coach, O60s County Cup Captain and lynchpin of Poppleton Tennis Club. TRAMLINES finds out more about her life and career in tennis.

and at a similar time a new chairman came on board and many new activities commenced and have never stopped!

Over time the courts have been renovated so the club now boasts six **floodlit courts of which three are new artificial clay**. There's a sports hall, conservatory, a new pickleball court and the next addition is a padel court.

300 members, of which half are juniors, participate in a range of activities including coaching which comprises adults, rusty rackets, men on Saturday mornings, ladies throughout the week, team practice, juniors on Saturday mornings, mini tennis in sports hall etc.

In winter the children playing tennis outdoors on a Saturday have toast and hot chocolate at the end so there's a real incentive to turn up! With her veterinary background many of the children bring their animals to be looked at, particularly guinea pigs and rabbits when they need their nails cutting!

Belinda is responsible for the **Coaching Team**, which includes son Nick and daughter Rebecca. Both Nick and Rebecca studied, played and coached tennis at Leeds Beckett University before joining Belinda as coaches at Poppleton. She also does most of the admin for the club.



Belinda's sporting career

At Poppleton, Belinda is captain of the first mixed team in the York and District League; she plays Women's Yorkshire League at Rawdon; and is captain of the very successful Yorkshire Women's O60s County Cup team. They were National Champions in 2023 and finalists in 2024.

Over the years Belinda has played in all seniors' County Cup teams. In the last two years she has been playing singles and doubles in some of the ITF Seniors' tournaments and her successes this year can be read about on page 9. Apart from tennis, Belinda likes running, walking the dogs and baking

Looking to the future

Now 62, Belinda is planning on reducing her admin role at Poppleton. If she did less coaching, she would spend more time running. Her aim is to play in the Four Nations tennis tournament and continue to play in the Seniors' tennis tournaments.

However, that depends on remaining injury-free. Belinda is an advocate of personal training where she focuses on both the upper and lower body and keeps trim. Her excellent advice is to always warm up before and always stretch after playing tennis or any other exercising.



Since Tramlines last reported on padel developments a year ago, several courts have been built across Yorkshire and many more are in the pipeline – both new venues and additional courts on existing sites. The latest venue to open its doors is Slazenger Padel in North Leeds. In this edition the focus is on Yorkshire's tournaments and players. However, to start with the LTA has just announced a new padel strategy with new personnel to drive developments forward.



LTA Padel Strategy

Mission and objectives to end of 2026, the first phase, include:

- **Increase awareness of padel** from 20% to 40% of the population and interest in playing from 7.5% to 15%
- **Increase number of annual padel players** from 129,000 to 400,000 and **monthly players** from 65,000 to 200,000
- **Increase number of padel courts** from 350 to 1,000
- **Grow padel coach and activator workforce** from 40 to 700
- **Enable ten players to break into the top 200 and two players into the top 100 and inspire the padel audience**

To achieve the above, six strategic pillars have been identified: **INVEST, GROW, ENGAGE, DIVERSIFY, PERFORM AND LEAD.** Investing in the visibility

of padel and its infrastructure; growing the player and fan base; engaging, growing and motivating the padel workforce; developing opportunities to grow the appeal of padel; creating a pathway and support for players; and leading padel in Britain to ensure its safe, inclusive and sustainable.

LTA's head of padel, Tom Murray, has appointed Steve Yeardeley as padel manager and they aim to work across both padel grassroots development and performance.

Some of the plans to grow the player base include making the competition landscape more accessible and appealing to players. They've identified the need to have a closer working relationship with operators and venues and provide support to grow the coaching workforce.

They will also help to deliver the Padel

Performance Pathway that identifies, develops and supports the most promising British padel players.

National coaches will support GB's national teams, including their camps and trips to tournaments. A network of performance training hubs will be developed and working with other teams in the LTA they plan to develop padel coaches capable of developing players at each age and stage of the pathway.

To understand more about how LTA is planning to bring the padel community together, the **Padel Paper** spoke to Tom Murray, LTA's head of padel and Olly Scadgell, managing director of tennis development. The interview makes for interesting reading, particularly the plans for growing padel's infrastructure in a sustainable way. Visit:

thepadelpaper.com/lta-padel-strategy-tom-murray-olly-scadgell/

Competition in Yorkshire

Dunlop Yorkshire Padel League 2024

As padel continues to expand both in popularity with players and venues to play at, a new Yorkshire Tennis committee was formed at the end of 2023 to look at padel in the county.

Various initiatives were under consideration, including closed county championships, and the potential for an inter-club league to mirror the long-established Yorkshire Doubles Tennis Leagues.

A sub-committee, chaired by Simon Bickerton, was formed and all padel clubs in Yorkshire were contacted to ask for expressions of interest which generated a very positive response. The committee decided that for this first year, the competition would be aimed at purely club level players, with county standard and above and national top 100 players excluded for the first season.

The league was set up geographically to minimise



travelling, with men's and women's divisions playing fortnightly on set weekends in the league stage.

The North/East Division comprised Scarborough, Wetherby, Ripon, Harrogate Spa, David Lloyd York and Harrogate Surge in the men's, with the women's the same except Scarborough. In the South/West Division, Rawdon, Chapel Allerton, Ilkley and Huddersfield all put both men's and women's teams in.

Many of the matches were very close, with the eventual



semi-finalists being Chapel Allerton, Rawdon, Harrogate Surge and David Lloyd York in the men's event, and Rawdon, Chapel Allerton, David Lloyd York and Harrogate Surge in the women's.

Semi-finals were played on consecutive weekends in August, and the **inaugural finalists were Harrogate Surge v Chapel Allerton in the men's, played at Surge, and Chapel Allerton v David Lloyd York in the women's at Chapel Allerton, both played in October.**

The first Dunlop Yorkshire Padel League Champions were Harrogate Surge for the men (left) and Chapel Allerton for the women (far left). Both matches were 3-1 wins.

For 2025 the aim is to expand the league to include other new and existing venues, no player restrictions, and the potential for clubs to enter multiple teams depending on court availability and demand.

LTA software will be used to run the league, so team captains will be able to input results after their matches, which will also give updates on league positions.

Thanks go to Simon Bickerton (Chair), Peter Vann, Nicky Horn and the Padel committee, and all the team captains and players who have made the inaugural Dunlop Yorkshire Padel League such a success. Bigger and better in 2025!

Yorkshire teams and players

Performance in 2024 Great Britain and internationally

Congratulations to all the champions

■ National Padel Championships

Women's team was represented by Natalie Gill (captain), Elspeth Edwards, Sophie Cousins, Angela Wood and Sally Fisher

■ O40s County Championships

Mixed team represented by Gilly Smail, Sophie Cousins, Sally Fisher, Brett Pardoe, Tom Sanders, Martin Calvert, Ben Gudzulak and John Dunseath

■ O50s County Championships

Women's team was represented by Sally

Fisher, Sally Bickerton, Nicky Horn, Audrey Henderson, Gilly Smail and Helen Cowllrick.

■ In the World Seniors' Padel Championships

Yorkshire had a strong contingent of players in the GB Squads. Men were represented by Nick Holloway, Ben Gudzulak, Mike Tolman and Paul Jepson. The women were represented by Sally Fisher, Sophie Cousins, Natalie Gill, Nicky Horn and Angela Wood.

Next Championships are the inaugural LTA Padel County Championships, which are being held at the new Slazenger Padel in North Leeds from 29 Nov - 1st Dec.



Event	Men	Women	Mixed
National Padel Championships	Finalists	Champions	N/A
O40s County Championships	Finalists	Finalists	Champions
O50s County Championships	Semi-finalist	Champions	Finalists
O60s County Championships	Group only	Semi-finalist	Finalists
World Seniors' Padel Championships	19th overall	9th overall	





Competition across GB: the launch of Legends Padel Tour

the encouragement and support of Sally Brown (an O60s player who was frustrated by the lack of tournaments for the O60s player).

The first tournament held in November 2023 was designed to convince the LTA to start running official tournaments for women in the O60s category.

The LTA were of the view that there was not enough demand, but Sally and Sally knew otherwise!

Reflecting on the success of the first tournament, Sally said "Nicky Horn was a fantastic tournament director and created such an inclusive atmosphere at the Padel Hub, Slough, that everyone wanted more!

"We decided to run a second event sooner than we had originally planned, and in **June 2024 we ran another Legends and Phoenix Cup tournament at Surge Harrogate**, again with Nicky as the tournament director."

22 couples played this event. Annie Wodhams and Diane Caulcott from Essex,

with a combined age of 168, travelled to Harrogate and played amazingly. They were a pleasure to play.

To quote Rosie Connell, winner of the Phoenix Cup, with Louise Dalglish at both Harrogate and Slough: "This was the friendliest tournament I've ever played in. Everyone playing hard but most important supporting each other."

Pokita, the eco-conscious active-wear organisation, sponsored the event with some lovely activewear for the winners and it added an extra spark to the event.

The first three events in the calendar have already filled up. Events are designed around **5 levels of player - Beginner, Social, Club, County and National.**

At larger events, players are carefully levelled by court so that everyone has a great time, is developing at a pace that is right for them, and having fun along the way! At smaller events, specific opportunities will be created for players by level"

Exciting news for all O60s and O70s players across the country! The Legends Padel Tour, founded by Sally Fisher and Yorkshire padel coach Nicky Horn, creates peak padel experiences for the O60s and O70s player.

The tour features a year-long calendar of top-quality training events and fun American-style tournaments for both men and women 60 years and over. The majority of events are designed so that people can sign up individually.

Events are already planned around the UK and overseas and a highlight of the calendar will be the annual Legends Festival of Padel which, in 2025, will be held in Yorkshire (venue to be confirmed).

The Legends Padel Tour was inspired by the success of a couple of O60s tournaments that Sally had organised with

SALLY FISHER

GB SENIORS TEAM PLAYER AND PADEL INFLUENCER



■ Sally Fisher (third from left), with the Yorkshire O50s women's padel team

Sally Fisher started playing padel while on holiday, just six years ago and almost by accident. Now, she's competing with the Great Britain seniors' team and playing a key role in the development of the sport

How it all began

Believe it or not, **Sally Fisher, a native of Yorkshire, only started playing padel in 2018** whilst spending time in her holiday home in Sotogrande, Spain. Popping down to the local racquets club, she noticed that the padel courts were busier than the tennis courts, and since she was keen to meet new friends in the area, she joined in the padel social mix-in's.

What appears to be quite bizarre, is that at around the same time as Sally started playing padel, the **first Padel Senior World Championships** were about to commence in nearby Estapona and short of players for the women's GB Team, Sally was invited to join them, despite having never played a full padel match before! 700 players competed from 15 countries and this gave Sally her first experience of seeing how the great game of padel should be played!

Padel was very much in its infancy in Britain in 2018, there were a few courts spread around the country and no official UK governing body. Senior men were organised by Peter Vann and Tom Murray, now LTA Head of Padel, and Carolina Prado was organising the women. Both teams relied heavily on finding players who spent holidays, or lived, in Spain.

When Sally heard in 2021 that the LTA was not sending a women's team to the **2nd Seniors World Championships**, she volunteered to organise one. It was a struggle to find enough players, but with the championships delayed until 2022, Sally was able to galvanise a team, led by herself and Libby Fletcher, to represent GB which **finished 8th in the world**.

This guaranteed them a place at the 2024 World Championships and this achievement was key in creating the momentum that the senior women's game has enjoyed since 2022.

Sally has been keen to ensure as many women could be inspired and involved in the Seniors padel journey as possible. **She organised two GB Seniors events to which everyone was welcome**, one in Derby and one in Harrogate.

Nicky Horn had already started coaching padel in Yorkshire and had especially grown a keen following of senior female players. The first trial in Harrogate was full of players that Nicky had encouraged onto the padel courts, and it was a great success.

Sally is one of Yorkshire's most experienced senior international padel players, but she is quick to point out:

"This is more a matter of good fortune, rather than great skill. I am extremely grateful for all the opportunities I have been given and one of my absolute all-time padel highlights was being a part of the Yorkshire teams and winning the inaugural Open and O40s UK Padel National County Championships.

"Then to have the honour of captaining Yorkshire's O50s women's and mixed teams was very special. We are lucky to have such strength in depth in Yorkshire and a fabulous team camaraderie."

>>> CONTINUES ON P30

>>> CONTINUED FROM P29

Sally Fisher's background and how it has benefited Women's Padel

Sally was brought up in Ilkley, attended Moorfield and Bradford Girls Grammar Schools and then studied Geography at Newcastle University. Her first sport was hockey which she played at School, County and British University levels.

Sally's vast experience and significant capabilities as a corporate lawyer and management consultant has put her at the forefront of helping others develop a passion for padel and enjoy the health and social benefits that come from sport.

In early 2024, Sally led an international campaign to encourage the Federation of



International Padel to increase the three age categories in their championships for women, to match the five categories they had been running for men.

That campaign was successful, hence the 3rd World Championships in 2024 was the first to have the same number of

female as male player categories (35+ to 55+).

Sally is excited about her launch this year of the Legends Padel Tour (see P28), "I am passionate about ensuring the older player in the UK has lots of great padel opportunities. I think we can lead the way internationally in the opportunities we create for our 60+ and 70+ player. There has been a special atmosphere that combines friendly welcome with competitive spirit and laughter, at the Legends events we have run so far. We already have over 100 players keen to get involved in our calendar of events. As our first events are already oversubscribed, we are looking to add more so everyone who wants to, can get involved."

Nick Holloway's padel journey started, as for many, when he was with friends on a tennis holiday at La Manga. This was in 2005. They didn't know the rules, so booked a lesson with a coach and from then on they were all hooked!

Nick originally played tennis, including for the O40s and O45s Yorkshire County Cup teams, and also premier Yorkshire League Squash for Huddersfield Tennis and Squash Club, but padel has taken over.

He and his friends carried on visiting Spain and played padel every year at La Manga until the padel courts came to Huddersfield in 2011 after a big push by Peter Vann and other members of the club.

Apart from playing recreationally, Nick was playing regularly in tournaments which were predominantly in London, with Peter Vann. In 2018 Nick and Peter won the first British Senior Open and this brought them into selection for the GB team in the inaugural Senior FIP World Championships hosted in Estapona that year.

Peter and Nick also played together in the 2021 FIP World Cup Qualifying event in Dublin, and helped the Senior GB team to secure a place in the FIP World Cup Finals hosted in Las Vegas later that year.

Nick co-captained the GB Men's Senior team at the World Championships in Spain in April this year and captained the O50's Yorkshire Men's team in March where the team reached the semi-final.



■ Nick Holloway (far right) pictured with Game4Padel team mates Ben Gudzulak, Martin Calvert and Paul Jepson

NICK HOLLOWAY PADEL COACH AT HUDDERSFIELD LTSC

Nick was also instrumental in the first National Open Age Padel Championships, played in November 2023, where Yorkshire's men were runners-up, missing the winning spot by a whisker in a nail-biting championship tie-break

Nick as a coach

Apart from playing the sport Nick is a fully qualified padel coach something he was not expecting to do as he was running his own gardening business following a successful 30-year career in the Police.

However, everything changed when Game4Padel upgraded and covered the two outdoor padel courts at Huddersfield in 2021. Although Nick was already coaching, he

wasn't qualified. Game4Padel were keen to progress his coaching and so he took a course to qualify as a coach and was offered a role at Huddersfield.

Earlier this year training became more serious and more professional with Game4Padel. Nick and Natalie Gill, also a coach at Huddersfield and captain of Yorkshire women's and O40s Yorkshire women's padel teams, attended with a few others Oliva Nova, Game4Padel's Spanish MBA training centre with Spanish coaches. They achieved the MBA's CPC+ qualification with head coach Ximo Piera giving his important input to the course.

Nick is very grateful for the investment by Game4Padel providing the initial training, and now has a much better knowledge of padel.

Padel at Huddersfield

With padel starting at Huddersfield in 2011, players like Nick are vastly experienced. Seven players from Huddersfield represent Yorkshire or Yorkshire Seniors and have been selected to represent GB in international competitions.

All these players have significantly developed their padel skills by working closely with Nick. Huddersfield Box

leagues organised and run by Nick include the GB/County players, and people from all across Yorkshire and the North of England are keen to join these leagues given such a high standard of play. A recent addition is Nick Matthew former World No1 Squash player.

What's next for Nick

Nick is currently at home recovering from a partial knee replacement and his focus is on getting stronger. He's back coaching six weeks after the operation and everything is going well. He has goals for the future, wants to focus on the development of padel coaches as well as players, and is very determined to return playing better than he did previously.

Leeds Beckett University was a Yorkshire Tennis Award Winner and LTA National finalist in 2023 but in 2024 the university went all the way to become the winner of the 2024 LTA University of the Year Award.

One of the most highly regarded tennis universities in the UK, Leeds Beckett University (LBU) has over 150 students involved in either performance, development or recreational tennis. It has developed over the last 25

years into a major county and regional hub for playing, coaching and officiating and helping students to engage with all of these aspects has become a key selling point of the University Tennis Club.

For students wanting to play tennis the opportunities are vast. For those wishing to be involved in team tennis there are eight men's teams, four women's teams and two development teams. The first teams are in the top divisions and play the very best players from the major universities. The 2023 winning Yorkshire Winter County Cup teams included five Leeds Beckett students.

All players, whether in performance or development groups, are involved in training sessions with the coaches who

are based full-time at Leeds Beckett.

Students wishing to go down a coaching route are able to benefit from Leeds Beckett's position as an LTA Coach Development Centre (CDC), delivering a range of educational programmes including tennis coaching qualifications and continuous professional development. 52 current coaches around Yorkshire are ex-students and 16 of the 20 clubs in the Leeds area have a head coach who attended the university.

As readers will know (as outlined in Chairman's intro), Leeds Beckett University is now the home of the young players, aged 10 to 14, involved in the Yorkshire Regional Player Development Centre.

Cultiv8 Tennis, led by Richard Crabtree, provides the coaching for the RPDC, for other elite performance Yorkshire players, at junior and senior levels and also for students at LBU.

Yorkshire players and coaches involved at LBU include:

■ **Steve McLoughlin.** Steve is Lead coach at LBU, captain of Yorkshire Men's Summer and Winter County Cup teams and Yorkshire RPDC Programme Manager.

■ **Paul Johnson.** Paul is Assistant Coach at LBU, Assistant Captain of Yorkshire 18&U Boys' County Cup team and Head Coach at Roundhay Tennis Club.

■ **Tom Horsfall.** Tom is LBU Tennis Club Captain and President and coaches Yorkshire 8&U team.

■ **Nicola Tweedy.** captain of Yorkshire 12&U Girls' County Cup Team, Cultiv8 junior programme and nutritional support manager.

■ **Jo Cunliffe.** Operations Manager, LTA Coach Development Centre.

LEEDS BECKETT 2024 LTA NATIONAL AWARD WINNER



Tom Horsfall's background is Yorkshire through and through! From Settle, Tom's first tennis club was Austwick and to advance his tennis career he subsequently trained at Ilkley Lawn Tennis and Squash Club where he was a part of the junior performance set up. After A Levels he studied Business and Economics at Leeds Beckett University and is currently in his second year of a Masters.

As a junior who played

many county-level tournaments, playing for the university was clearly a priority. As well as playing competitively for LBU, this year he's also been playing on the British Tour at various venues across Britain.

With opportunities for coaching on his doorstep Tom became interested in that side of the game which now includes coaching at local clubs Roundhay and Thorner. He also assists with the

younger Cultiv8 and RPDC players. He really enjoys coaching which he finds both fun and engaging.

For LBU Tennis Club, Tom has a number of responsibilities including; overseeing the day to day working of the club; communicating with various media channels; seeking sponsorship opportunities; overseeing charity events; organising teams with head coaches; overseeing finances;

and organising transport for BUCS matches.

So, what's next for Tom?

Post-university, one option is to continue to develop his coaching career but he would consider playing in ITF Futures events. In any case, given the knowledge he has gained from his university education and practical experience at LBU's Tennis Club, opportunities should be plentiful!



TOM HORSFALL LBU STUDENT, COACH AND PLAYER

LTA launches new strategy backed by refreshed regional team

The LTA launched its new three-year strategy earlier this year, focused on transforming communities through tennis. To do this, the LTA is focussing on three areas – making tennis welcoming, enjoyable and inspiring to everyone. The new strategy is striving to build on the previous five-year strategy of Tennis Opened Up, that saw an unprecedented growth in participation. This included the number of children playing tennis once a week, growing to a historic high of 700,000, and adult participation reaching 2.6 million playing monthly and 5.6 million adults playing annually.

Investing in parks tennis

The Parks Investment Programme has now been running for the last two years and this has seen the LTA work with 210 local authorities across the country to refurbish around 2600 tennis courts in 850 parks. This has involved a capital investment of approximately £40 million and has already resulted in an additional 400,000 people playing tennis in parks and 58% of the investment has taken place in areas of deprivation.

Local authorities in Yorkshire have seen a significant level of investment with parks in Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale, Sheffield, Doncaster, Scarborough and the East Riding, all benefiting from the programme. A key

element of the programme has been the creation of sustainable operating models to ensure that local authorities are able to maintain and replace park courts in the future.

Free Parks Tennis sessions have been launched at many sites to engage a new generation of players in the parks. This also provides the opportunity for local people to get involved as Parks Activators and support delivery of the sessions on a weekend. Local Tennis Leagues provide the opportunity for people to play friendly and competitive tennis in the parks.

Re-structure in LTA regions

In order to put itself in the best position to deliver the new strategy, the LTA took the

decision at the start of the year to refresh its structure within the regions. This has involved creating a new, enhanced delivery manager role that will enable members of the area team to focus more specifically on projects that will grow participation.

The restructure also involved redrawing the regional boundaries. The previous North and Midlands Teams, have been replaced by a new North & Midlands East Team (NME), as well as a North & Midlands West Team.

Yorkshire sits in the NME, alongside the East Midland counties of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire, as well as Durham & Cleveland and Northumberland in the North East, and Cumbria.

MEET THE NME REGIONAL TEAM



Paul Bennett returns from a successful secondment as Head of Parks Investment, to lead the newly-formed NME Team, and as such is well known to the county. Paul brings a wealth of experience from having previously led the LTA North Team for many years and before that was the Yorkshire Tennis Manager.

If you need any support with a project in your area, then please get in touch with a member of the team, who will endeavour to help.

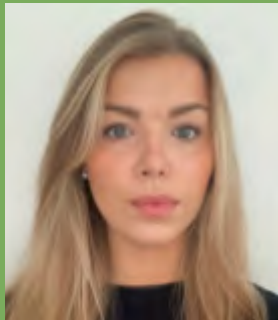
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YORKSHIRE TEAM

Yorkshire will now be covered by a team of four delivery managers. They will be responsible for executing strategic area plans and activities locally, taking a unified approach that maximises impact to grow tennis participation. The team has a strong blend of experience in tennis, as well as having added experience from other sports and industries.

■ **Paul Sheard:** Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield in West Yorkshire; South Yorkshire; York. Paul brings a huge amount of experience, having worked for the LTA for 17 years in regional roles across the North and Midlands. Paul is a level 4 tennis coach and referee and previously headed up tennis at Graves Tennis Centre in Sheffield.



■ **Laurie Haines:** Leeds and Bradford in West Yorkshire. Laurie returns as a DM in the NME Team from her secondment to the Parks Investment Delivery Team, where she has overseen significant investment refurbishing park courts in the North. Laurie has worked for the LTA since 2015, originally being based at the North Regional office in Leeds, before becoming a Participation Development Partner in 2019.

■ **Tom Mapp:** East Yorkshire, Hull and East Riding; Craven, Richmondshire and Hambleton in North Yorkshire. Tom is a new member of the delivery team. He's worked at the LTA for four and a half years. He transitioned over from the Competitions Team, where he covered the nine counties in the Midlands.



Tom has worked in sports management for over 20 years and previous roles include the RFU's National Schools Manager, Competitions and Solutions Manager for the Youth Sport Trust, as well as a Director of Sport at a large boarding school.

■ **Sian Foley:** Harrogate, Ryedale and Selby in North Yorkshire. Sian joined the LTA as a delivery manager in June, having previously worked for England Netball as a development officer and head of coaching. She also formerly worked for UK Coaching as a coaching consultant and the Football Association. Sian most recently worked for Direct Line Insurance as an account manager, whilst also volunteering as the chair of Yorkshire Netball Association.



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