

2017 MASTER HOME INTERNATIONAL ENGLAND

Event Dates:	Friday 5 th - Saturday 6 th May 2017		
Address:	Nottingham Squash Rackets Club, Nottingham		
England Teams:	Men's O40	Men's O60	Women's O35/O45
	Christian Donelan (Captain) Ashley Bowling Paul Boyle Jonathan Gallacher Jamie Goodrich Joss Hargrave	Stuart Hardy (Captain) Rustom Bativala Mark Cowley Simon Evenden Stephen Johnson Colin Shields Geoff Walton	Louisa Dalwood (Captain) Kate Bradshaw Rachel Calver Keeley Johnson Natalie Lawrence Natalie Townsend



MENS OVER 40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		12	19	20	51	2
	15		20	17	52	1
	3	4		6	13	4
	0	8	17		25	3

MENS OVER 40 REPORT

The England 040's team travelled to Nottingham as a determined bunch to do their best to try to wrestle back this age group title from current holders Ireland, who have held the bragging rights from the previous two seasons in this event. The final line up for the squad this year comprised of the following players:



Left to right: Ashley Bowling, Jonathan Gallacher, Joss Hargrave, Christian Donelan (Capt), Jamie Goodrich and Paul Boyle.

England v Ireland, Friday 5th May, 17:00hrs

First up was England v Ireland on the Friday night in a tie that was set to decide the outcome of the weekend but will probably go down as a contender for one of the most nail biting and exciting nights of team squash in the Home Internationals. Christian Donelan and Neal Murphy got proceedings underway for the 5th strings and Murphy ascended to a two nil lead (11/9 and 11/8) before Donelan settled and then levelled at 2-2 each take the 3rd and 4th games 12/10 and 12/10. In the fifth, Murphy kept a lid on proceedings from the start and through gritted teeth, won the first match for Ireland, 11/7 in 69 hard fought minutes.



3rd strings then took to the court in an intriguing matchup between England's Jonathan Gallacher and Ireland's Jon Hurley. Gallacher was out of the blocks early with a commanding start to win the first game 11/2. In the second, Hurley then began to find his range combining good length with deft touch drops from the back, finding the nick on many occasions to take the 2nd 11/7 and level at one all. The next two tense games didn't leave many finger nails untouched and were shared at 12/10 to Gallacher in the third and Hurley 12/10 in the 4th to leave the match delicately poised. In the 5th, despite a great effort from Gallacher, Hurley continued to create opportunities in some brutal rallies to attack and find the nick at vital moments in the game and won out 11/7 in 71 minutes. A very entertaining match from the two big men, leaving Ireland two up.

At 1st string, Jamie Goodrich was required to steady the ship against Rob Staunton who, inspired by his team mates previous performances, was in a mood to finish the tie early for Ireland. Goodrich was steadfast however and despite his usual slow start losing the first 11/9, quickly levelled the second 11/3. Staunton rallied hard to take the third to a tie break but again the Englishman had the answers to win the third 16/14 and then sealed the 4th 11/6, with some "Morton Frost like" lobbs and follow up precision volley drops, to drain Staunton of any further resolve, winning 3/1 and keeping England in the tie.



4th strings then entered the fray with Paul Boyle tasked with continuing the charge and keeping the pendulum of momentum swinging back to England, against the vocal and enigmatic Nick Staunton. Both players started energetically and it was Boyle who nicked a tight first game 11/9. He never looked back after that, maintaining the momentum and turning the screw in the next two. Moving forwards to good effect after each shot, to dominate the centre of the court, Boyle capitalised on anything left loose by the Irishman, to clinically win the next two 11/6 and 11/4 in 30 minutes and set up the tie for an exciting deciding match.

2nd strings Ashley Bowling and Irish Captain Dara O'Flynn took centre stage in front of an increasingly large crowd of spectators and two vocal sets of supporting team mates, on Nottingham Squash Club's Court 10, for what was set to be truly special match and a roller-coaster ride of emotions right until the end. O'Flynn opened the scoring taking the first game 13/11 but Bowling retained his composure in the second and third games, constructing and then finishing rallies well with positive shots. With the overall tie now entering into its fifth hour, Bowling continued to play positively throughout the 4th game, leaving O'Flynn on the wrong end of some very long rallies and open mouthed to suck in some much needed oxygen when finding himself at 10/5 match ball down. What then followed was perhaps the most enthralling series of rallies between both players, in

particular from O'Flynn, who managed to find a second wind to stay in each rally at the same time as doing courts sprints to chase down each shot. O'Flynn was somehow then able to return with interest, Bowling's searching shots, responding with fine lobs and drops, to extend just beyond the comfortable reach of his opponent and prevent Bowling from delivering the final winner. O'Flynn amazingly levelled to 10 all and then take the lead to 11/10. Bowling then levelled to 11 all with an audacious inch perfect forehand drop shot winner, on the return of serve from the back of the court. This produced a lovely moment in the pause between rallies as both players exchanged a knowing nod and a smile. This was reflective of the mutual respect both players had for each other, in the recognition of the battle they were in and the elevation of the standard of play and accuracy required to now even just win a point between them. O'Flynn managed to close out the 4th game 13/11 after two further extremely long and high quality rallies, interspersed with a few tense let calls to draw level at 2-2 and shift the momentum back in favour of Ireland. With the time standing at 22:05, it was O'Flynn who maintained the momentum to win the fifth 11/4, completing amazing comeback to win 3-2 and the tie for Ireland, after 87 draining and enthralling minutes. The match produced a standing ovation from a packed gallery that had both sets of supporters on their feet to applaud the two players giving it all for themselves, their team mates and their shirts.

England v Scotland, Saturday 6th May, 10:00hrs

In at 5th string for the morning match was England's Joss Hargrave v Scotland's Scott Hay. Charged with getting the team off to a good start, Hargrave started quicker than his opponent, using his long reach to cut off any loose drives and work his opponent around the court to full effect, closing out the first decisively 11/3. Hay then managed to get a better foothold in the match with a better start in the second but Hargrave aAshklways managed to keep comfortably ahead to win the second 11/7. Hay rallied again in the third but it was to no avail as Hargrave was able to absorb the pressure and keep the momentum on his side. He ran out an eventual winner in the third 11/8 and 3/0 in the match to get England off to a confident start after only 23 minutes.

3rd String match saw Jonathan Gallacher line up against John Kynoch. Gallacher was able to start well in the match and despite some early resistance in the first game was able to close it out comfortably 11/5. Gallacher then continued to exert his dominance, closing out the second game 11/2. That momentum was continued into the third and Gallacher, in no mood to give anything away cheaply to his opponent, won it 11/4 and closed out the match in 22 minutes.

The most eagerly awaited match of the tie was at first string between Jamie Goodrich and Peter O'Hara and see whether Goodrich would be able to obtain his first win over the British 040's National Champion. O'Hara was however in no mood to allow that happen and unleashed his traditional shock and awe style of squash to win the first two games 11/7 and 11/5. Goodrich then re-set the balance by moving up the court to disrupt O'Hara's flow. With a fantastic effort, Goodrich was able to draw level in what was becoming a very physical match as both players fought to control the centre of the court. In the 5th game O'Hara found a way to reset his aim and retrieved exceptionally well to get in front from the outset. He then closed out the final game of this first string match 11/3 in 61 minutes.

4th string match was a re-match between Christian Donelan v the unorthodox Blair McKenzie, following their first encounter in the 2013 Home Internationals in Glasgow. Neither player opened more than a two point lead throughout the first game and it was McKenzie who reached game ball at 11-10 which Donelan then saved to level at





11-11 and then won the next two rallies to win the first 13/11. After that McKenzie was not able to find any consistency to build his way into the rallies and the second and third games fell to Donelan 11/8 and 11/7 to complete the 4th string match 3-0 in 25 minutes.

2nd string match saw Ashley Bowling v Barry Masson to complete the tie. Bowling eased his way through the first two games quite comfortably winning 11/3 and 11/1. The third saw Masson get a little more into his stride keeping in contention until midway through the game. Bowling then proved his class by stepping up a gear to close out the final game 11/6 and completing a 4-1 win for England.

Saturday 6th May. England v Wales. 14:00hrs.



At 5th string saw an interesting match up between Joss Hargrave v welsh journeyman Matt Lloyd-Lewis. In what was predicted to be a potentially close encounter, Hargrave left onlookers in no doubt from the opening rallies that this latest journey for Lloyd-Lewis was going to be a bumpy ride. Hargrave raced clear from the start and whilst there were some good rallies in the opening exchanges, the pace set by Hargrave was too strong for his welsh opponent to cope with and he quickly sealed the first game 11/2. The second was also a similar story to the first with long rallies but again Lloyd-Lewis simply did not seem to possess the armoury to continually absorb the relentless onslaught from Hargrave, again winning out the second 11/3. In the third it was again all Hargrave who kept a lid on Lloyd-Lewis' early advances to prevent him from obtaining any reasonable foothold in the game. Hargrave completed his second and final match of the

weekend undefeated in an England shirt, winning two out of two matches and never looking troubled in the process, much to delight of his mum in the crowd, who played every shot with him!

3rd String match lined up Jonathan Gallacher against the experienced Jonathan Davies. In the first game Davies used all he could muster to attempt to close out the first game but Gallacher held on to weather the storm. Forcing a tie break and then taking advantage of loose cross courts by Davies, Gallacher attacked with volley kills to the front to win the opening game 12/10. The scorelines in the next two games again saw Gallacher emerging as the victor winning 11/6 and 11/8 in what was a close and competitive game despite the score line suggesting otherwise. This was Gallacher's first Masters Home Internationals weekend and the result wrapped up his second win of the day and he will no doubt be keen for more in the future.



1st string match brought together England Number 1 Jame Goodrich v Paul Johnson. As expected this went to form with Jamie pressing forward with a business like performance in a last ditch attempt to catch Irish on points who were wobbling slightly against the Scots. Goodrich won 3/0, with a scoreline of 11/7, 11/2 and 11/8. Managing to avoid his traditional slow start he worked Johnson around the court to take advantage of the short

recovery period his opponent had between matches. Although Goodrich was looking the fresher of the pair, sources were unable to verify if this helped him get to the bar any quicker afterwards?

4th Strings paired up England's Paul Boyle v Welsh danger man and seasoned campaigner - Matthew Crowley. Boyle imposed himself on the match from the outset. Crowley was unable to offer much resistance as the fresh legged Boyle scampered around the court to easily retrieve Crowley's shots and ping him with his classic Exocet-like length, penetrating hard and low from the back of the court. Boyle ran out the comfortable winner 11/4, 11/3 and 11/3 to further increase the pressure on the Irish who were now only 1 point ahead of the English in the points standings.

2nd string match paired up England's Ashley Bowling v the stylish Lloyd Forkan. Forkan definitely looked pumped up for this one, stretching his own shirt and Bowling, to a tie break in the first game. Bowling remained in control however to close out the first game 14/12. In the second, following some hard opening rallies, Forkan's attempts to engage in banter with anyone who would talk to him to gain some precious seconds, wasn't enough in the end to stem Bowling's incoming tide and he washed away Forkan's waning resistance to win the second game 11/7. The third was a similar story with Bowling racing to 10-5 up and 4 match balls. But even another slight wobble in concentration to let his opponent back in to 11/8, was nipped in the bud by Bowling. The Englishman closed out the match and a great weekend of squash to seal the runners up position for England, as Ireland managed to convert their last game to finish ahead of England in the table by a solitary point.

The bragging rights remain with Ireland for another 12 months who were deserved winners (but only just) following their victories in the three international matches over the weekend to pip England to the post by a solitary point. This was a fantastic effort by the England team and was testimony to the spirit and determination showed by all the players following the result on the Friday evening, not to lie down easily and make it as difficult as possible for Ireland all the way to the end. The acting captain could not have asked any more from this fantastic bunch of players and from all the players families and friends who came along to support, who did themselves and their country proud.

In addition special mention must be made to injured England Captain Ben Hutton for all his hard work in administering the captains duties in the initial phase following selection. And also Peter Marshall who like Ben, was also unable to play this year due to injury. Special thanks is also in order for our "on-call" reserve Mike McLaughlin, who remained on stand by until the 11th hour before the start of the first match in case of any further injuries to the squad and late call up being needed. We look forward to seeing you guys all back in action for the start of the new 2017/18 season very soon.

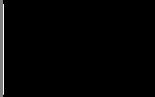
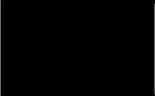
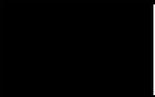
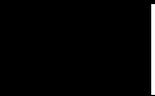
Thanks to Martin Pearse, Jon Gliddon, Adrian Wright, Alison Goy, and Dave Hardern, Andy Murray, Brian Brock and all involved from England Squash Masters for all their hard work and support behind the scenes. Final thanks to Nick Hargreaves and all the team at Nottingham Squash Club for hosting the event and looking after us all so well.

And whilst we may not have got the result we wanted on the court, it was definitely a victory for England in the bar afterwards!

Christian Donelan



MENS OVER 60 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		20	20	20	60	1
	1		4	5	10	4
	3	18		18	39	2
	2	17	6		25	3

MENS OVER 60 REPORT



The Men's o-60 England team are in the diminishing number of England Men's teams not to have lost the Home Internationals. (The 50s and 55s are there too). And this group have never been on a losing team at any age group. So, as we went to Nottingham there was a lot to live up to.

Due to several injuries, we became a squad of seven. The Captain wanting to take no undue chances with the catalogue of injuries and infirmities. The playing order was agreed without dissent as 1. Mark Cowley(Middx), 2. Steve Johnson (Lancs), 3. Rustom Bativala (Warks), 4. Stuart Hardy (Capt.) Middx, 5. Simon Evenden (Northants), 6. Colin Shields (Durham), 7. Geoff Walton (Cheshire).

First up was Ireland and debutant Walton made a successful International start and set the team off with a solid 3/0 win. Captain Hardy followed at no. 3 dropped a game to the fast and frantic Bert Cotter before coming through in four. Cowley scowled and bludgeoned his way through Martin McDonnell at top string for the win while Shields and Johnson efficiently wrapped things up with straight game victories. 5/0 England.

It should be mentioned that the epic tussle of the weekend between England and Ireland Men's o-40s was going on and the third match was mid-way as the 60s completed their 5/0. And the younger team played to 11 while the older to 15 points!

Apart from setting the order, the only thing the captain needs to do is ensure his team don't start celebrating too early. And the players stayed focussed went to bed (reasonably) early as the Scots awaited in the morning. They had beaten Wales and we thought they would be our main threat.

Simon Evenden at 5 got England off to a terrific start with a powerful performance over John Charles and Rustom Bativala played his normal intelligent game to overcome last years Scottish Champion Paul Harris in four. At no. 1 Cowley had his hands full against the talented Robin Ridley. In a match that swung all ways the England no. 1 prevailed in five entertaining games to secure the match. A relieved Stuart Hardy then took on the over 65 no. 1 John Rae who last week had won all his matches at top string in the older group. Hardy put in a good performance and overwhelmed Rae in three straight games.

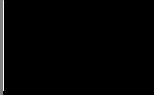
It only left National Champion Steve Johnson to tidy things up and he duly obliged beating Peter Shivas 3/0 for another 5/0 score line.

After a short break it was back on against Wales who had beaten Ireland and with a good showing could clinch second place. 'Magic' Walton returned at no. 5 and was not as assured as the day before. Against the mobile Wyn Davies the match went one way then the other. A tight five setter looked inevitable and so it was. To Geoff's great credit, he held his nerve and won 20/18 in the fifth! His best trick of weekend. At no. 3 Evenden proved to physically strong and quick for the talented Paul Mills and discouraged him with some great retrieving. 3/0 England. Mark Cowley again showed why he has World and British Open titles behind him as he showed his class against new Wales star Adrian Aldridge, again closing out the match. Colin Shields, always reliable in an England shirt proved too strong for Graham Bastion at 4 and Bativala finished off the weekend in style with a beautifully crafted win against David Wright to give England their third 5/0 win.

So, three maximum 5/0 wins to England and the Home International Championship safely retained. The celebrations went on fairly late and as always there was a great party atmosphere. There was a presentation from England Squash Masters to Dave Hardern who is standing down a Home Internationals organiser after 13yrs. in the role. His assistant, Alison Goy will take over next year. Also thanks to Adrian (the Silver Fox) Wright for his I.T. input and for not exploding.

Stuart Hardy

WOMENS OVER 35/40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		20	20	18	58	1
	0		0	0	0	4
	2	20		6	28	3
	4	20	20		44	1

WOMENS OVER 35/40 REPORT



After a surprisingly straightforward build up to the weekend, the hottest debate was whether the team could carry off wearing both the new top and skirt together or if we needed to split them — if nothing else there was no mistaking who we were!

The opening game was against Ireland and probably the most gracious and complimentary team I've ever played against. Our opening line up was Keeley Johnson, Rachel Calver, Louisa Dalwood, Natalie Lawrence and Natalie Townsend. Each Irish player fought admirably with some great rallies and winning shots, particularly from Jo Hussey in her last game against Natalie Townsend and Saoirse O'Sullivan in her first game against Keeley. However, they couldn't match a raring-to-go England side who produced a 5-0 team win, everyone winning 3-0.

After watching the England/Ireland men's over 40 heart-stopping decider until late on the Friday evening, we hadn't quite managed the early night we had anticipated before our Saturday morning match against Scotland.

Kate opened proceedings confidently taking an early lead 11-5. Her opponent started to lob to slow things down on a court where the ball seemed to die in the back corners. However, Kate kept her cool and played a tight game to win the next 11/7 and the last convincingly at 11/3. A huge coup for the team was that Kate's coach Bob Maison then volunteered to stay on and became the team coach for the day.



Louisa at number 3 started her first international match decisively to take the first 11/5 against Ailsa Polworth. Ailsa then changed tactics and managed to tighten play considerably to level it at 1-1. Taking things early enabled Louisa to keep Ailsa under pressure to take the next two games for a 3-1 result.

The previous evening's match between the number 1s had been a fierce battle so Keeley went on court to play Senga MacFie expecting to have a challenging game. Under tense conditions Keeley won the first 11-7 by playing great lengths and timely drops. In the second game, an apparently self-inflicted blood wound to the forehead caused everyone to have a crash course in the rules and interpretations thereof, which were still being debated long after the match had ended. After quite a long break Senga returned bandaged up. Fortunately, rather than put Keeley off, the break had strengthened her resolve and with phenomenal focus and great shot selection she became clinical in her play to win the next two games 11-3 and 11-7.

Natalie Lawrence, also in her first international match, followed on at number 4 against a well-known adversary Pernille Thomson. A very friendly game followed with Natalie playing some beautifully tight lengths, moving well and making Pernille cover the corners of the court extensively. Natalie won the first two games quickly 11-1 and 11-3. Whilst Pernille fought back in the last game, the volleying Natalie responded which put her opponent under so much pressure, she took the last 11-7 for a 3-0 win.

Finally Rachel at number 2 went on against Katy Temple. She dominated the rallies from the start with great accuracy to take the first 11/7. Katy came back fighting and took the second 8/11 with some impressive volley drops and lobs into the back corners. The third saw Rachel up the pace and work Katy round the court with great shot selection to take the next two 11-5, 11-5 to give the team another 5-0 win.

The last match saw England playing Wales for the title, both teams having two 5-0 wins under their belts.

At number 5, Natalie Townsend took an early lead against Jill Griffiths 11-5. Jill played the best that any of the English team had ever seen her play and pushed Natalie in the second with long, tight rallies making Natalie work hard to win the second game 12-10. Natalie's speed, determination and short game gave her the edge though and she took the last game 11-8.

Louisa then went on against Anna Vaughan Hawkins. The first game proved to be the longest of the entire women's tournament with long rallies, power and great court coverage by both players, with Louisa finally taking it 15-13. Anna came back fighting and took the second 11-5. Anna kept the pressure on playing a very hard-hitting and tight game and whilst Louisa fought to the end, she couldn't convert the opportunities losing the next two games 8-11 and 9-11.

Keeley then went on against the Welsh number 1 Hannah Wright Davies. The first game was a showcase of the highest quality squash – both players demonstrating their strong technical skills and physical ability. Keeley took the first 12-10 but Hannah responded with a decisive second game win 11-5. This was the wakeup call Keeley needed to raise her game to another level to take the third 11-2. Hannah is not known for ever giving up and pushed Keeley in the fourth but Keeley was on a mission! She was relentless in the pressure she put Hannah under to edge an 11-9 result for a 3-1 England win.

At number 4 Kate made short work of her match against Rachel Cooper. She controlled the game from start to finish playing beautiful drops, tight lengths and covering the court with a speed Rachel couldn't compete with. Kate won 11-3, 11-4, 11-3 to secure the match and championship for England.

Finishing the match at number 2 were seasoned internationals Rachel and Helen Barnard. Rachel started strongly to take the first 11-5. Helen took the second 11-3 by slowing the game down. This prompted Rachel to up the pace, accuracy and pressure which Helen couldn't match earning her a well-deserved 11/4, 11/5 result.

A few awards:

- 'spontaneous hero' – Bob Maison for patiently watching every match, brilliant positive attitude and great support
- 'most generous gesture' – Paul Boyle for filling the ladies' trophy with champagne
- 'best singing' / 'worst singing' – isn't always the Irish men?

England retained the championship title, well done to everyone and thanks to organisational skills of Adrian, Dave and Alison for a great weekend.

Louisa Dalwood

