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## December 2022

Welcome to the latest edition of CUSRC Newsletter.

We hope you enjoy reading it and let us know if you have any ideas and suggestions on how we could make it better!

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# Blues Varsity 2023

18th February – Blues Varsity at R.A.C

Please keep this date free for a day of spectating and support at the Royal Automobile Club, as both the Men's and Women's teams defend their Varsity titles.

As they say, light blue is the right blue.

Add to Calendar



We also have a packed schedule of matches against the usual travelling teams, think Jesters and Escorts, as well as some of the London Clubs. Any alumni looking to support the right blue at these fixtures would be very welcome! See the fixture list on our website below for more information:

<https://www.cusquash.com/fixtures/>

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## A Historic Victory - CUSRC vs. Jesters

by Ellie White

It's a grey and rainy day at the end of October. Term is ramping up, with deadlines on the horizon. These things do not matter, for today CUSRC battles for glory against the established strength, ability and experience of The Jesters. Today is not about the individual, but the Club. There is no 'I' in the word team.

Arriving at the University Sports Centre at the appointed time of 2:45, we find a group of Jesters lacking their characteristic jingly hats and comedic smiles; they have been waiting for 45 minutes. After sheepish apologies for miscommunication from both sides, we get to work.

The space behind the 5 glass-backed courts fills with the sound of carefully considered lobs, intermingled with dynamic drives and the occasional grunt due to a particularly effortful lunge to the front. Music to our ears.

This year, CUSRC has been strengthened by the arrival of new talent, with Gustav Runerjö heralding from Sweden, Syameer How crossing the equator on his journey from New Zealand, and Alex Cope tackling the horrors of the M11 to reach Cambridge from the depths of the urban jungle called London. Magic was in the air. For the first time in 12 years, players new and old from the Cambridge side banded together to capture a historic 10-4 victory over the Jesters. Hurrah!

A special mention goes out to our Men's Captain, Benjamin Adams, who delivered a masterclass in strength and style, only dropping a single point during his match at 1st string. Gustav provided entertainment for all in an ultimately victorious 3-1 battle at 3. Despite impressive resistance from the Jester's player, who put his all into retrieving Gustav's attacking volleys, drops and drives, there could be no match for the Swedish Viking.

And now, onto the main event: the dinner. This year the dinner was held at the Great Hall of Newnham College. An impressive space which was far too high brow for the squash players who filled it. The food was delicious, and the wine free-flowing. Interesting conversations echoed around the table, from one end dissecting whether there is a tangible difference between

playing one shot in ten ways and ten different shots from the same position (something to think about), whilst a dubious banker at the other tried to convince the surrounding students to put everything into bitcoin while they still could.

After being unceremoniously kicked out of the hall at 10pm, the group stumbled to the nearby bar of Selwyn College, and the games ensued. Traditional Jesters games were played, newcomers abused with kitchen utensils, and suit trousers ruined; nothing out of the ordinary.

The event was a celebration of good sport and company, and we look forward to seeing the Jesters next year.





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## CUSRC makes a return to Cambridgeshire Leagues

PP1 Match Report 05.10.2022

By Max Fryer

### Cambridge 1s vs Swavesey 1s

A brand-new season of high octane, heart-thumping, racket-smashing squash. I don't know about you but I'm excited!

The first fixture of the season was by no means a doozy. Swavesey SC brought a stacked-to-the-rafters team with players including coach Ali and ex-blues captain David Roper to battle the brand-new Cambridge 1s in what was a positive spectacle of squash. Not only was the quality sky-high, but there was history. We have fuel. We have matches. Let the fire begin.

#### #5 Max vs Arran

Returning to his much-riden steed, Max opened at #5 with a very sturdy performance that set the tone for the rest of the evening. Though similar in racket skills, it was clear that Max had the fitness edge over Arran and surely made the most of it, not letting himself get picked off by Arran's clever though at times sloppy offensives. 11-7. 1/0

In the second game, with renewed energy and confidence to boot onlookers saw Max cut some very neat dropshots from the back of the court that court Arran off guard. Good use of height to slow things down. 11-6. 2/0

I'd like to write that with almost Amr Shabana-like grace rallies were built up, positional high-grounds taken, and weak returns swiftly dispatched to lead to a clean 3-0 win but in truth the third game was very scrappy. A seemingly total lack of game plan from Max. Arran owned the initiative and eventually clinch the third. 11-8. 2/1

With such talent on later in the evening though, there was no space for shoddy squash. The third game was a comprehensive return to boil for Max, with clear intent to target Arran's backhand (his forehand) and make the most of the loose balls. Quite anticlimactic with a very quick 5-point lead for Max. Arran was feeling more fatigued also which compounded the situation and lead to a speedy victory for Max and the first win of the season for the Men's side! 11-3. 3/1

#### #4 Matthew vs Nick

Last season, Matthew got into the habit of trouncing #3 seed players and staying unbeaten for several months. Playing #4 seed this evening therefore was a testament to the strength of this new squad. In a characteristic no-nonsense fashion then, he played accurate considered squash, relying on experience and control rather than brute force and power to craft a lead and capitalize. Very clean. 3/0 (11-7, 11-8, 11-6)

#### #3 Gustav vs Tom

Playing his debut match for CUSRC, the Swede sensation took no time at all to deliver his first dub of the season. While this supporter was otherwise indisposed, by all accounts this was a very promising first outing indeed. Good deception and a solid foundational game were rewarded with a calmly confident 3/0 victory. (11-7, 11-3, 11-9)

#### #2 Alex vs David

This match was in some ways the event of the night. Unlike the first seed game it was bigger than the individual players. This was the CUSRC of old taking on the CURSC of today. Before long we had a fast-paced attacking game of squash on our hands with the poor ball scarcely reaching the back wall before it was craftily thwacked back. There was no doubting the experience of the players both in the maturity of their rallies and their honesty with lets and strokes, a very classy game indeed. David seemed to be getting the upper hand with some poignantly placed boasts though at the business end of the first it could have gone either way. Less experienced players would have learnt plenty on how to slow down the pace to your advantage, as Alex did in between the rhythmic length hitting down the walls. After a closely fought 15 mins, Alex edged out and took the first game. 11-7. 1/0

The second game was, while still entertaining, much shorter. Rallies that would have been reset in the first were more lazily finished with several balls hitting the tin. Alex's constancy in knowing when to take on the attack and when to play more positionally really shone through with a dominant robot-like game of few errors. He was rewarded

with an early lead that he pounded homeward to take the second 11-2. 2/0

The third sought to drive the point home. In squash it's not enough to be able to play all the shots. It's being able to play them 2-0 down after 30 mins of powerful, energy-sapping rallies. With few exceptions Alex played a lovely balance of attacking/defending squash and came through the gates sprinting, taking the 3rd and final game 11-2. 3/0. A statement for this season.

### #1 Benjamin vs Ali

This was one of the most mentally taxing squash games I've witnessed in a while, for both players and supporters. It was not victory that each player sought - at 4-0 up Cambridge had already taken the win - but total squash dominance.

The first point was an omen of what was to come. Benjamin characteristically leapt onto a tight backhand drive from Ali and in attempting to reach the ball, moved into her. A very standard let scenario was made into much more of a fiasco than either side wanted to see with Ali taking a break to massage her back, clearly feeling Benjamin had tried to go through her rather than around her. The ref would be earning their bread tonight.

In contrast to the #2 seed game, this was a very explicitly tactical game with heavy hitting being used sparingly to capitalize on positional advantage. Dead-tight dropshots were a known adversary going in, so Benjamin did a brilliant job neutralizing and counterattacking. Lots of lobs, some nice wrist work, good retrievals from both players. Benjamin narrowly took the first. 11-7. 1/0

The second game saw the grim tension build to a climax. Ali left the court on a number of occasions to discuss decisions that had been made and to ask clarification on strokes and lets given. Four serves were retaken because they'd been taken too quickly. As one onlooker eloquently put it, the vibes were off. Sometimes you get fish pie for dinner, other times it's plain pasta. C'est la vie. However, retaining an impressive mental fortitude Benjamin was able to close an early point deficit, take the lead and just about convert the game. 11-9. 2/0

The third saw a cleaner fight, with the pressure having already been released in the second. A characteristically brilliant serve from Ali was met with a very good-looking three wall boast nick. It was as if the ball was celebrating getting out of the second game alive. I know I was. This was not a typical gam, so it was fantastic to see Benjamin play *his* squash and come out on top. 11-1. 3/0.

Sore legs all around but a very successful night. Rest up. We go again next week.





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## CUSRC Success at Cambridgeshire Closed

By Anant Gupta

After three long days of gruelling squash matches at the Cambridgeshire County Closed Championships, CUSRC triumphed in taking home both the Mixed B Open and Women's B Open titles.

Juliana Ganendra began the Mixed B Open with some tough matches. In her first match, despite her determination to push her opponent to the back of the court, her opponent's short drops and deceptive play made them difficult to defeat, leading to a 3-0 loss. Juliana's subsequent game in the Mixed B Open Plate was also a tough battle. Being two games down, she pushed on to win the third with consistent, tight drives, but eventually lost 3-1. In the Women's Open, Juliana displayed her fierceness on court; her signature hard, deep drives and tight drops led her to a swift 3-0 win with only 9 points dropped throughout the match. However, after being matched against an incredibly strong number 1 seed, she lost 3-0 in the semi-finals.

Ella Jennings, having entered not one, not two, but three different categories in the tournament, made it clear from the offset that she was intent on a victory. Starting with the Mixed B Open, she faced difficult opponents in both her first match and the resulting plate match, leading to two 3-0 losses. The brutal matchups did not stop there; beginning the Women's Open by playing the number 2 seed, Ella fought valiantly but lost 3-0. In the resulting plate match, her opponent's high lobs proved difficult to counter, resulting in another 3-0 loss. Nonetheless, Ella proved she was truly in her element in the Women's B Open. With careful, controlled placement of the ball, she dominated the court in her first two matches, leading to two 3-0 victories. In the final match, Ella charged through with aggressive drives and effective drops for a two game lead. Staying focussed and determined in the third game, she secured a 3-0 win with a triumphant 15-13 game score, claiming the Women's B Open trophy!

Anant Gupta's first Mixed Open match saw him hitting tight drives and deceptive boasts, leading him to a 3-0 win. Then, having to play his very own coach James Powley in the next round, he displayed stamina and determination by hitting retrieval after retrieval to lead two games to one. However, James' phenomenal ball control eventually defeated Anant 3-2. His courage did not stop there, as after winning the resulting plate match 3-0 with only 6 points lost, he found himself in the Mixed Open Plate final. Having played in a badminton tournament in the morning, this was his 9th sports match of the day; despite pouring every last ounce of energy into the plate final, his opponent's killer volleys countered his lobs to lead to a 3-2 defeat. In the Mixed B Open however, Anant's pace and deception awarded him with 3-0 win after 3-0 win after 3-0 win, ready to face the number 2 seed in the final. With carefully controlled drives and stunning drops, he triumphed with yet another 3-0 win, becoming the Mixed B Open winner!

Honourable mentions go to our coaches, James Powley and Rob Dadds, who won the over 45's and the open respectively.

A great weekend of squash and sporting success was had by all!



