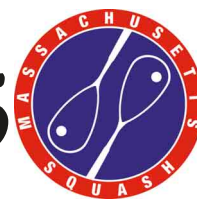


Mass Squash News



Massachusetts

Squash

Newsletter

President's Letter

Halfway through my first year as President, I have learned a lot about other squash associations from my participation on US Squash's Local Association Committee. What seems to set Massachusetts Squash apart from our other larger peers is the wealth of volunteers we can rely upon, especially those who join our Board. The Massachusetts Squash Board meets monthly and covers a wide variety of topics to provide maximum service to our members. First, I would like to thank the immediate Past President, Eric Godes, who serves a vital role as a sounding board and advisor on topics that need consideration.

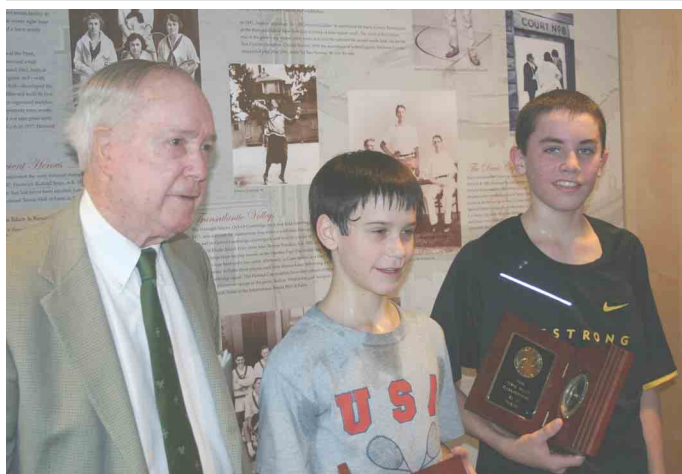
During every meeting the discussions are recorded by our secretary, Bill Boardman (occasionally backed up by Past President and Membership Secretary, Carl Cummings). The results are circulated by email and formally approved as the first order of business at the next meeting. Treasurer Nat Lovell then reports on our finances. Quarterly, Tom Poor reports on the performance of our endowment, professionally managed by Windward Investment Management. Our operating revenues come primarily from dues, league fees and yearbook advertising. Carl Cummings, Membership, Linda Watts, League Scheduling and Simon Graham, Yearbook, help Nat to explain the financial trends by reporting on collections.

Following the financial discussions, we turn to our major operational areas. Dan Reagan, Dominique Farinaux-Dumas and Bry Roskoz report on the status of league and tournament play. Over 500 members participate in the weekly league play. Thanks to the help of some excellent captains, there have been virtually no problems in this area this year. Preston Quick, our Pro Liaison, and Simon Graham were instrumental in helping to organize the Grand Prix series of tournaments held at five local clubs. The State Tournaments will be collecting applications soon. Look for an announcement soon in your email and on the web site. This year your association made a significant contribution to the Howe Cup women's team event in Boston under the direction of Meredith Johnson. The Junior Committee, headed by Tom Poor, then reports on its busy schedule of tournaments for younger members.

The next regular agenda items concern communications with members. The all-print system in use ten years ago has been increasingly augmented by electronic means, first the web site (managed by Merrill Martin) and more and more by email. The Board has spent time discussing the tradeoff between keeping you fully informed (with reminders) and not inundating you with unwanted (and ignored) mail. Let us know how we are doing. Sarah Lemaire still does a wonderful job of supervising the production of three newsletters per year.

Finally, the Board spends time on Other Business. Much of the recent discussion has focused on ways to provide services for more members, especially those that are not involved in league or tournament play. Look for some announcements on free clinics coming soon from Erik Kirby. Lenny Bernheimer has been pushing discussions about ways to further our mission of supporting squash in Massachusetts by employing some of our endowment funds. Talk to a Mass Squash Board member at your club if you have any suggestions for us.

—Sam Magruder
President



Frank Millet (left) posed with the BU15 finalists from the Millet Junior Open: Dylan Murray (middle), winner, and Taylor Trutone, finalist



Kate Blood sets up for a backhand during her Howe Cup B match.

Kidsquash: An Inclusive Community Squash Program

By Tariq Mohammed

Before jumping to conclusions about whether Kidsquash is just another urban squash program, one has to first understand its model. Satinder Bajwa, Founder and President of Kidsquash—a 501c3, nonprofit organization—explains that the program aims to make squash accessible to all juniors while growing the base of the game. To help spread his message, Bajwa has coined the phrase, “Squash for all, all for squash.”

While urban squash programs tend to select a handful of disadvantaged kids, Kidsquash is open to everyone, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances. Since its inception in 2004, the program has reached approximately 100 kids (from both public and private schools), of which 50 percent attend the Saturday morning clinics on a regular basis.

Kidsquash would not be possible without the support of Harvard University, who donates their court time. Equipment is provided to those who do not own a squash racket, protective eyewear or squash balls. Clinics are run by Lead Coach Karim Mattar, a former top-ranked junior from Egypt, along with volunteers from Harvard’s men’s and women’s varsity squash teams. In addition, Kidsquash encourages peer to peer learning by asking the more experienced participants to help with coaching.

Some of the Kidsquash highlights from the ongoing 2007–2008 season involve the Cambridge Boys and Girls Club and the Andover Youth Squash Association.

The Cambridge Boys and Girls Club joined the program in the fall of 2007. They heard about the program through the Cambridge Youth Sports Commission. Having had no prior exposure to the sport, 10 kids from the Cambridge Boys and Girls Club are now enthusiastic, aspiring players.

Also, in the winter of 2007, members of Kidsquash and the Andover Youth Squash Association (AYSA) competed in their first-ever dual squash match at the Murr Center. Squads from both teams competed in a friendly but spirited round robin format with Kidsquash players, winning the overall match 10–6. The Kidsquash squad will travel to North Andover to play at AYSA’s courts at the Brooks School in March.

To learn more about Kidsquash, please visit our website at www.kidsquash.com



First-Ever Players Cup Squash Circuit Culminates in Boston with Launch of Players Cup

\$25K in First-Place Earnings the Largest in North America

Tourneys in New York City, Dayton, Toronto, Portland and Richmond Lead to Top Player Showdown in Boston

BOSTON - November 15, 2007 - A bigger, bolder, brassier game of squash takes off in North America. The Players Cup Circuit is comprised of five world-class pro tournaments sanctioned by the Professional Squash Association (PSA), the international governing body for world-ranking professional squash competition. Boston will serve as the pinnacle of competition as the Circuit's top players clash the first-ever Players Cup Squash Championship, a special playoff event.

Beginning in New York City on January 10 and ending in Richmond, VA on March 1, the continuous five-tournament series will climax with the Players Cup in Boston March 4-7. The \$50,000 Players Cup is an 8-man, single-elimination competition presented over four nights at the Back Bay Events Center. Six competitors will qualify for the Players Cup based on their cumulative prize money earned in the five preceding events, while two players will earn a berth through local qualifying events.

"With the Players Cup Series, we now have a perfectly coordinated winter pro squash schedule with events that all North Americans can follow. Nimick's plan to conclude with the Players Cup brings me back to the days of the Mennen Cup in the early 1980s, when the top eight players in the world came to Toronto for a special, invitation-only event that electrified the squash world," notes James Zug, author, *Squash, A History of the Game*.

John Nimick, Players Circuit founder and three-tournament promoter explains, "This city has a rich tradition of hosting world-class squash, and we are very excited to add to that wonderful legacy by launching the Players Cup here in Boston. This event is a true slam-bang showdown. Eight of the world's best players will qualify to compete for a winner's purse of \$25,000, which will be the largest first-place prize money ever awarded in North American squash history."

The inaugural Circuit events will take place in January and February and lead immediately to the playoff event in Boston. Nimick continues, "Squash has grown considerably in North America, and this sort of elite, end-of-season event will showcase the sport in a new and more focused way that is sure to thrill sports fans." Governed by US Squash (www.us-squash.org), more than 400,000 people play squash in the USA, and the sport is growing strongly at the junior and college level.

Zug concurs, "Having the Players Cup in Boston, the heartland of squash and the home to some of the greatest pro tournaments, college teams and the world's first after-school youth enrichment squash program, makes it the perfect way to end the winter squash season."

The Players Cup Squash Series will feature the top male players on the PSA World Tour, including world #1 Amr Shabana (EGY) and #2 Ramy Ashour (EGY), perhaps the most dynamic players in the field, as well as #3 Gregory Gaultier (FRA), #4 David Palmer (AUS), #5 James Willstrop (ENG), #6 Nick Matthew (ENG), who moved up four rankings this month alone, and #7 Thierry Lincou (FRA), all competitive players at the top of their game. The highest ranked North Americans in the top 50 are Shahier Razik (#25, CAN), Graham Ryding (#38, CAN) and Julian Illingworth (#50, USA).

2008 Schedule:

January 10-16: Bear Stearns Tournament of Champions, Grand Central Terminal, NYC

January 24-27: EBS Dayton Open, Dayton Squash Center, Dayton, OH

February 13-16: PACE Canadian Classic, Toronto Convention Center, Toronto, ON

February 20-23: West Coast Bank Oregon Open, Multnomah Club, Portland, OR

Feb. 25-Mar. 1: Davenport Pro Championships, University of Richmond, VA

March 4-7: Players Cup, Back Bay Events Center, Boston, MA

2008 Players Cup Schedule:

Quarterfinals Tuesday, March 4, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Quarterfinals Wednesday, March 5, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Semifinals Thursday, March 6, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Finals & Exhibition Friday, March 7, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.



For more information on The Players Cup, see page 11.

Further information will be available soon at www.playerscupsquash.com.

Boston Women Dish About The 2007 Howe Cup

by Kara Kardon

2007 was an historic year for the Howe Cup. This year's cup saw more participants than ever, with over 220 women from across the nation competing at Harvard's Murr Center. The Howe Cup is the annual National Women's Team Squash Tournament at which levels A–D team singles and doubles compete in a weekend-long fest of sport and camaraderie. For those of you who have participated in a Howe Cup, you will know it's a tournament different from all others. It combines the competitive aspects of a national-level tournament, replete with city pride, with the atmosphere of a reunion of old friends with a strong common bond. It is the culmination of many hours of team practice and ranking and comparable hours selecting and procuring just the right team tank top and matching skirt.

Boston was selected last fall to host this year's tournament, and Meredith Johnson was appointed chair of the tournament committee. She and her team worked diligently during the off season to ensure that the 2007 Howe Cup would exceed the expectations of US Squash and the ladies who travel just east on the turnpike or great distances to play in this tournament. The Boston women responded to the call for participation with enormous enthusiasm. Boston fielded 2 A teams, 4 B teams, 4 C teams, 3 D teams, and several doubles pairs, for a total of over 70 Boston women in the event. The work of Meredith and her committee paid off handsomely as well, with a hugely competitive tournament and an engaging and entertaining weekend for all. The Boston women were particularly thrilled when Dominique Farinaux-Dumas was awarded the Feron's Sportsmanship trophy for her contributions to women's squash.

I had the opportunity to ask several of the committee members about their tournament experience:

- **Meredith Johnson:** Committee Chair
- **Wendy Ansdell and Margaret (Elias) Gerety:** A coordinators
- **Liz Brecht:** B coordinator
- **Dominique Farinaux-Dumas:** C coordinator
- **Coleen Phillimore:** D coordinator

Margaret and Liz, tell me about the composition of the Boston teams in your divisions and their results.

Margaret: There was great diversity in our Boston A teams—we had the Howe Cup veterans, providing us with maturity, wisdom, and crafty-shot making skills, but we also had a lot of fresh new faces, who infused the teams with energy, enthusiasm, and a lot of talent. It was also nice to see at least one of our players come up from the B division ranks to play for her first time in the A division. Boston took the A gold and bronze—not too shabby! Our longstanding rival, the Philly A1 team, went home with the silver.

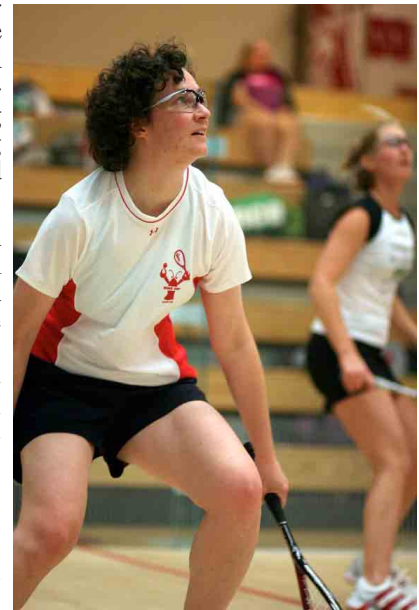
Liz: This year's B draw featured 80 women's players competing on 16 different teams. Our youngest and one of our strongest team members was Ali Rubin at 16. At the older end, we had... well never mind. My life might be in danger if I mention the people involved at the older end. We had players from clubs all over town, including the University Club, Concord-Acton and Cross Courts. Ultimately, Connecticut B2 edged out Seattle for the win, with Boston coming in at 3rd, 5th, 8th and 10th places. I was impressed by the high level of play across all the teams.

Dominique, what about the Cs?

Dominique: The Boston Cs were 4 of the 11 C teams in the draw this year, coming in 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th. Our players ranged from 20 to 60 years old, and only a couple of players were first-time Howe Cup players. C1 lost to NJ in a close final 2-3 after losing to them 1-4 in earlier round play. We had some exciting moments on court, but for me, and I know that I am not the only one to feel this way; the tournament is about seeing the familiar faces year to year.

Coleen, tell me about this year's D draw.

Coleen: There were 3 Boston teams entered in the Ds. The D division is pretty new to the Howe Cup; only 1 team entered last year and they were thrown into the C draw, which was not much fun. This year, there were teams from Baltimore and Lancaster, and two enthusiastic squash players from Cincinnati who we added to a Boston team. Most players in the D division had good competitive matches. The Boston D1 team won the final against Baltimore, dropping only two matches all weekend (at #1). One of the Baltimore women had her grandchildren there with homemade signs, and had Mr. Baltimore (some man with a Maryland flag cape) cheering for her. The Boston D teams were from several of the Boston clubs: CASC, CRFC, Maugus and BSC Allston. Our oldest participant was Barbara Beckwith at 70 years old on Boston D2. This was her second Howe Cup. Barbara played her first Howe Cup in the B division many years ago.



Beth Collins keeps her eye on the ball during a Howe Cup B match.

2007 Howe Cup (continued)

Margaret and Coleen, describe some of the match highlights of the weekend for me....

Coleen: There were some tough matches in the D division. Ton Ton Russell and Shifteh Fahr each had close matches with Lisa from Lancaster, PA. Unfortunately, Lisa popped her plantar tendon during the match. Luckily, Michelle daSilva knew where all the medical supply stores were in the area, and ran out and got Lisa some crutches. We hope to see Lisa from Lancaster next year fully recovered.



Liz Young prepares to hit a forehand against city-mate Maria Mayorga in a Howe Cup C match.

Margaret: One of the highlights was watching our old Boston teammates, Orla and Sue, who seceded to the Philly team this year, square off against us in the finals.

How would you compare the 2007 Howe Cup to other Howe Cups in which you participated?

Liz: Based on the food alone, I would say this was one of the best Howe Cups to date that I have taken part in. I mean free S&S deli lunches three days in a row?? That was worth the tournament fee itself. But seriously...Meredith and her team did an amazing job. This was the best run tournament that I have ever taken part in.

Dominique: The increased number of players added to the event's credibility, and Meredith has certainly set the bar fairly high for the next tournaments!

Margaret: This year's Howe Cup was well represented by new mothers. It's not to say that there haven't been new mothers participating in past years' Howe Cups, but the number of babies at the Murr Center and comments to the effect of, "Wow, she had a kid 10 weeks ago and she's playing that well!?" seemed particularly pronounced this year. It's

a great sign of the commitment these women have to the game of squash and to their teammates. And special thanks must also be given to all the teammates and family members who lent a hand in babysitting while Mom was on court!

Meredith: Boston is an incredible place to be in squash. We have an amazing group of women who like to play league and love to take in the world afterwards, together. This is a place where there are so many interesting individuals, no weekend squash tournament would be quiet or bland. There is also a phenomenal core group of people who gave so much to the Howe Cup weekend; it would never have been as successful without their efforts.

Do you have any advice for the upcoming men's team competition to make it as much fun as the Howe Cup?

Liz: I think first and foremost, they need to really work on better outfits. Something a little more revealing than the traditional shorts and polo shirts. Women's Howe Cup 2007 proved that we are good with racquets and even better with our fashion sense.

Finally do you have any words of wisdom for the Philadelphia ladies hosting the 2008 Howe Cup?

Dominique: Having all the matches in one venue is a great selling point for all potential players.

Meredith: I wish Philly and Demer plenty of time in the day to cover all of the details and to have a ton of fun meeting people when the weekend arrives. Thank you, Boston, and best wishes, Fairmount.

Liz: The ladies of Howe Cup like to dance...Philadelphia better not forget that!

Margaret: Don't skimp on the alcohol for Saturday night—Howe Cup women clearly like to play their Sunday matches on a well-developed hangover!

And Dominique...how does it feel to be recognized nationally for your contribution to women's squash?

Dominique: I was really surprised, because all these gatherings are only possible as people participate. As more players participate, the recruiting is becoming easier as returning players go out and convince other players, telling them how much fun they had... I just feel very lucky to be living in Boston where women's participating in squash is increasing. It is great to be able to spend the weekend with ladies from many different backgrounds. The best reward is to feel the camaraderie throughout the weekend...to watch all the ladies on the dance floor on Saturday night is a bliss for me.

A bliss for you...I see. Said as only Dominique could....and on behalf of Meredith and the tournament committee, we couldn't have said it any better.



Sabrina Davies sets up a shot during a semifinal Howe Cup match

Same Old: Tierney Wins Again

2008 University Club Pro-Am Doubles

The University Club Pro-Am doubles tournament has been held for eleven years. **Sandy Tierney** has won more than half the time, even not playing two of those years. This time, playing with University Club professional **Nadeem Osman**, he escaped in the quarterfinals by the narrowest of margins, a 15-14 fifth game victory over former winner **Jamie Fagan** and partner **Matt Jenson** (Sea Island, GA), and then cruised through the semifinals and finals. Their opponents in the semifinal were first-time player **John Hailer & Ayman Karim** (Wilmington) and in the final, last year's champion **Mac Davidson & Pat Malloy**. The latter pair had advanced with a tight three-game conquest of tournament organizer **Lenny Bernheimer & Joe Pentland** (New York).

The University Club Pro Doubles Championship and its sister tournament, the University Club Pro-Am Doubles Championship, have become an important mid-January fixture on the ISDA Professional Doubles Tour. With 2 sponsors, 72 patrons and 16 amateur players providing financial support for the event, the professionals competed in both the Professional and Pro-Am tournaments for \$32,000 in prize money. In addition, the level of play in both tournaments brought out sizeable galleries throughout the weekend. This year, the finals reverted



East Draw: Champions - Sandy Tierney & Nadeem Osman (Boston); Finalists - Pat Malloy (Boston) & Mac Davidson



North Draw: Finalists - Tyler Millard (Toronto) & Court Chilton; Champions - Jamie Fagan & Matt Jenson (Georgia)

to Sunday after brunch and provided a riveting contest between the new combinations of **Damien Mudge** (NY) & **Viktor Berg** (Vancouver) vs. **Chris Walker** (San Diego) & **Clive Leach** (NY). The former pair won in four entertaining games, notching their second victory in the eight ISDA tournaments played to date.

The North Draw in the Pro-Am was composed of teams that won their first match, but lost in the second round of the main draw. As noted above, **Jamie Fagan** lost the fifth game by a point when he inexplicably grooved the final serve to Tierney's lethal forehand, immediately resulting in a reverse corner winner. Jamie & **Matt Jenson** had an easier time in the North draw, winning first over **Dave Riccio** and Union Boat Club pro **Preston Quick** in four, then disposing of newcomer **Court Chilton & Tyler**

2008 University Club Pro-Am Doubles (continued)

Millard (Toronto) in three abrupt games. Court & Tyler had had their hands full in the semifinals with **Mat Sibble & Mark Price** (Rye, NY), emerging in four games.

Moving to the West Draw with some hurt feelings and sore muscles were losers of the first-round matches. **Joel Kozol**, playing with **Chris Walker**, lost a long five-game struggle with Hailer & Karim, and then retired to the massage room, where he was declared a “no go” for the next day. He was ably substituted for by **Dave Murphy**. **Jon Hartnett & Ben Gould** (NY) rebounded from a disappointing four-game loss to first handle **Doc Grossman & Doug Lifford** (Boston), and then survived a five-game match with **Dave Dali & Ben Howell** (Boston) before bowing to **Matthew Kozol & John Russell** in another five-game match in the finals. Jon, with John Hailer, is the current State C champion and viewed this week-end as a tune-up for the State tournament. Kozol & Russell, in the meantime, won four-game matches over **Jim Bildner & Chris Spahr** (Boston) and **Marty Stocklan & Damien Mudge** (NY) on their way to the ultimate victory in the finals.

The South Draw was reserved for West Draw quarter-final losers. **Chris Walker & his new partner Dave Murphy** eased past the Lifford-Grossman tandem to win a thrilling five-game final by a single point over Bildner & Spahr. The match was a steady



West Draw: Finalists - Jon Hartnett & Ben Gould (NY); Champions - Matthew Kozol & John Russell (NY)

exchange of forehands between Dave and Jim, with Dave making just one more at the end. The fashion plate award of the tournament went naturally to **Steve Wolfe**, who donned pink sweatpants from Victoria’s Secret for each match. He and partner **Jeff Mulligan** (NY) bowed in four to Spahr-Bildner, who wore sunglasses to shield their eyes from the glare. Spectators were not so fortunate.

This year’s event was universally acclaimed the most successful of eleven, with generous financial sponsorship, spirited play and full galleries, supplemented by a delicious dinner Friday evening and brunch on Sunday. Doubles continues to grow at the University Club and Boston in general, and with luck, may lead to a new court at the Union Boat Club.



South Draw: Finalists - Chris Spahr (Boston) & Jim Bildner; Champions - Dave Murphy & Chris Walker (San Diego)

Adult Leagues: Mid-Season Reports

Women's 3.5/4.0

by Bry Roskoz, League Chair

Unlike other Massachusetts Squash leagues, the women's 3.5/4.0 league has four teams with assigned players due to the small number of players and their uneven distribution across clubs. The league's four teams are named after our favorite sports teams—Bruins, Celtics, Patriots and Red Sox. League matches are held every other week and rotate around area clubs. While the squash is of course terrific, the "social hour" after the squash is what everyone really comes for. Recent league nights have featured some serious Italian fare, couscous, pork tenderloin and of course some good wine. League nights also attract non-players, who come just for the fun.

Lest people think that it's ALL about the social hour, we do actually play, keep score and have league standings. A little over halfway through the season the aptly-named Patriots are undefeated in team matches and have won an astounding 90% of individual matches. Even more impressive is that they have maintained this record without the #1 and #2 players for many of the matches—reminding us of when Drew Bledsoe got hurt. The Patriots are captained by league rookie **Caroline Shannon** with the "offensive line" of **Naomi Bradshaw, Liz Brecht, Lisa**



Margo Grossberg smiles between points in her Howe Cup B match.

Evans and Bry Roskoz. Like the NFL, the other three teams are strategizing how to beat the Patriots but it's safe to say they're a shoo-in for the play-offs.

The Bruins, Celtics and Red Sox are in a heated battle for the remaining play-off berth. Will the Bruins, led by #1 **Corey Schafer**, 16-year-old phenom, be able to pull it out against the other teams' "experience" and "maturity" (read: legs that are 1-2 decades older)? Will **Kara Kardon** continue to execute her flawless "butt out"

drop shots to provide the jump the Celtics need? Can the fearsome twosome of **Lauren Holleran** and **Neely Steinberg** lead the Sox to victory like Manny and Big Papi? Stay tuned for women's 3.5 league drama and intrigue coming soon to NESN... or at least a MA Squash web site near you.

Women's 2.5

by Sarah Lemaire, League Chair

Having recovered from the Howe Cup, the Women's 2.5 league is off to a great start. As expected, Maugus Club won all their matches handily to start off the season. But, last week, they lost three of four matches to C-A, who are the surprise holders of second place in the league. The SquashBusters team

lost **Liz Young** this year, while C-A's #1, **Peg Sestrich**, is undefeated in league play this season.

The other surprise is the rise of the UClub. After several years where they depended on **Beth Collins** for points, UClub added **Erin Hurson, Mary Ni, and Ton Ton Russell** to their roster, making them a much more competitive team. (Ton Ton's fashion sense was recently featured in *The Boston Globe's* Living/Arts section; we're all working on trying to emulate that!)

The Harvard Club's top two are **Betsy Johnson** and **Phoebe Slanetz**. BSC-Waltham depends on victories from **Debbie Carr** and new mom **Jimena Velarde**; if they both show up for the same match, they'll be tough to beat!

Jennifer Lesnick is also playing well for BSC. Cambridge Athletic Club sports a new name, but many familiar and players. I can't remember a time when **Maria Mayorga** was not their captain. Their roster is deep and enthusiastic, but **Sue Hill** was slowed by an injury she suffered at the Howe Cup. Most recently, Cambridge lost to BSC by only four points, in the closest match in a long time.

The league social took place at Flash's on January 8, with a crowd of around 26 league players and special guest, Howe Cup chair **Meredith Johnson**. Thanks to MA Squash for supporting this fundraiser, and for all the players who came out.

50+

by Sam Magruder, League Commish

The first half of the 50+ season of 2007–2008 ended with Maugus mounting a determined challenge to defending champs Boston Racquet Club. The two teams entered 2008 tied for the lead at 32 points. Concord-Acton and the Union Boat Club remain within striking distance, while the Harvard Club and Milton will need miracles to move up the standings. Captain **Keith Munsell's** team has been anchored by the undefeated **Mark Dickenson**, who finally defeated last year's number one player, **Barclay Douglas** of the BRC in a tight 3-2 decision when the two teams clashed in mid-November. Despite that Dickenson effort, that match was won by BRC 3-2. Maugus had built up a nice lead early in the season, but dropped into a first place tie with losses in the last two matches to Concord Acton and Union Boat Club. **Martin Deale, Larry Hargraeves** and **John Totman** are pulling much of the load for Maugus. The incessant pressure to perform from Captain **Mike MacDonald** has every player on BRC's roster recording a winning record. The most points



Melissa London pounds a forehand in her Howe Cup C match.

Adult Leagues: Mid-Season Reports (cont'd)

have been posted by **Rip Hastings**, **Jack Dane**, **Ken Weber** and the comeback player of the year, **Tom Mellor**.

The next tier is populated by Concord-Acton and Union Boat Club, led by Captains **Kevin Hollister** and **John Hemenway**. CASC boasts four undefeated players, **Roger Jones**, **Jim Cronin**, **Bob Melanson** and their captain, **Kevin**. One of the league's great shooters, **Jon Smith**, leads the point parade for the Boat Club, closely followed their steady #1 player, **Philip Laird** and the powerful **Archie McIntyre**.

The Harvard Club and Milton are fighting to stay out of the league cellar. Captain **Bob Bray** has employed his secret left-handed weapon to great effect as **John Catlin** leads the team with five wins. **Mike Spatola** has quietly put together a very good start to his season. The Harvard Club is struggling with subpar performances for several key players as no one has a winning record. **Len Miller**, who is perennially rehabbing his hamstring, leads the team in points. The team is probably waiting for an inspirational speech by Captain **Fraser Walsh** outlining the necessary half-time adjustments.

Open 5.5

by *Chris Lang, League Chair*

Everyone Likes a Good Horse Race

With six weeks left in the season, the 5.5 thoroughbreds—last year's defending champion Tennis & Racquet Club, the UClub Two, the Union Boat Club, and the UClub One stallions—are all neck and neck as we round the bend and make our way into the home stretch. It is literally too close to call and the MSRA 5.5 Blue Ribbon is up for grabs.

Other equines in the annual challenge have made great strides, but the likes of the Harvard Club, The Boston Racquet Club, and the league hospitality favorite Concord-Acton Squash Club may really have to make a "pit stop" for an EPO injection or two if they are to have any hope of sprinting toward that which is taking shape as a photo finish in the standings, which will determine who makes it to the playoffs. Underdogs are famous for making comebacks, but after checking the odds with Bartleby the bookie, *I prefer not to* hedge that bet.

That said, stranger things can happen and with 5.5 League Chair, Chris "Clubber" Lang, sidelined for the rest of the season with what his physician has been quoted as saying is a "substantial tear" of the common flexor tendon, the T & R may have to scramble to find a new jockey to take his place. The good news is that as we enter the home stretch, each and every stride, gallop, and crack of the proverbial whip is going to count. These horses can all run and run *very* well when the pressure is on and the milk bottle and bragging rights are up for grabs.

To quote the newly svelte Suki Singh from stable Sports Club LA, while watching Raschid Ragragui take a hard-fought salt-licking from Mike Semprucci recently, down 0-4 in the 4th, "Come on, we need some points **NOW!**" ~ every point, every game, and every match counts!

Open 4.5

by *Dan Reagan, League Chair*

Every year is different—as players move up/down or away, and as new players/teams enter the league. This year is no exception. Last year's powerhouse T&R is substantially

changed. And we are glad to welcome Cross Courts and their fantastic new facilities to the 4.5s. We have a newly reconstituted Maugus team, and virtually all other teams have new players...Good!

UClub is the dominant team at the season mid-point, with an 87% winning percentage. Maugus MIT, and Union Boat have all fielded strong teams, winning over 70% of their matches. Can any of them take U-Club in the second half? Let's see!

T&R, Concord-Acton, and BRC occupy the middle, all having posted solid performances. BSC Allston has done an admirable job with a small roster. Cross Courts have struggled in their rookie year! Harvard Club struggled early on with player availability, however that has since been corrected; we look forward to seeing a revitalized Harvard team.

4.5 league has great dynamics. Match reports consistently indicate lots of good competition and sportsmanship, friendly atmosphere, and no reports of any "difficult" match situations. We have terrific captains who show great leadership and stay on top of their duties!

Open 4.0

by *Simon Graham, League Chair*

We're off to a great start again this season; there is again one team streets ahead of the pack as last year, but this time it is the BSC Waltham team who are out in front—last year's top team from the BRC is still up there though, despite losing several of their best players to the 4.5 league, and we're going to have a battle all the way to the finals of the playoffs.

It's great to see the team from the new Cross Courts club in the league; anytime we see a new club open in the area it's good news for all of squash and, despite being in the bottom half of the standings at the half way point, they have a number of top players including some who will almost certainly be ranked at the end of the season.

With the promotion of the dominant players from last season, the rankings at this point have a number of new names, and the provisional half-time individual rankings are as follows:

<u>Ranking</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Club</u>
1	Francisco Galicia	MIT
2	Ian Cooper	Cambridge Athletic
3	Edward Lew	BSC Waltham
4	Timothy Watkins	BSC Waltham
5	Naveen Cherukuri	Boston Racquet Club
6	Paulo Milko	Cross Courts
7	Victor Mireku	MIT
8	Brian Hicks	BSC Waltham

Last but by no means least, I want to thank all the individual players who make the league challenging and fun and who make my job easy. I particularly want to congratulate everyone for the incredibly low default rate this year—just 3% or 7 of 220 matches won by default—this is a great improvement and shows everyone's commitment to the league.

Open 3.5

by *Merrill Martin, League Chair*

From the season start through the end of 2007, the new club Cross Courts lead the league in points. Then, at the begin-

(continued on next page)

Adult League Mid-Season Updates

(continued)

ning of the new year, we have had a new leader, with Milton Academy assuming the #1 position with an astounding 76% winning percentage. Cross Courts remains close with 73.5%. Following these two teams, BSC Waltham, Cambridge Racquet, Tennis & Racquet, Harvard Club and the Union Boat Club have winning percentages between 50% and 52%. Boston Racquet, Concord-Acton, BSC Alston and M.I.T. have win percentages in the 40's, from 40% to 46%. The Longfellow Club, with only a 24% winning record, maintains their enthusiasm in all of the matches they've played.

This league has had only a few defaults in total this season, much better than last year due to the efforts of captains and players in consistently fielding teams.

The first snowfall of the season hit on December 13th, a Thursday. Gridlock in Boston prevented most teams from playing. Kudos to the MIT and UBC teams that actually played 3 of 4 matches that night at the UBC club. How did the M.I.T. players make it there anyway?

Following this disaster, there was an admirable effort by team captains to reschedule their matches; only one set of teams could not work out a reschedule arrangement due to the holidays. And another could reschedule only 3 of the 4 matches. All of the rest were able to play all of the 4 team matches! This event demonstrated the 3.5 players dedication to the game of squash and to our league.

Open 2.5

by Carl Cummings, League Chair

The Open 2.5 League is like the Triple A baseball leagues—it's where the up-and-comers cross paths with the over-the-hill-or-never-quite-made-it gang. Unfortunately, not enough new up-and-comers were recruited this year to replace the ones from last year who up-and-went and, consequently, the league has only nine teams, the fewest in recent memory. Among the missing were perennial entrants Concord-Acton, University Club and Longfellow. The league felt even smaller at the start because of several defaults. T & R looked to take up some of the slack by entering two teams, but the effort proved overly ambitious and the teams had to be consolidated, necessitating a rejiggering of the schedule. And one captain (who need not be named here) neglected to look at the calendar, so that his team failed to show for its first match—at home!

On the courts, Harvard Club (largely u-and-c) and Andover (largely codger but aging like fine wine) are neck and neck for first place. Newton Squash ["& Tennis", if anyone cares] (primarily codger) is pretty comfortably in third place, while Boston Racquet Club (mixed) and FoMaMA (way codger) are tied for the fourth and last playoff position and could still be overtaken by either or both of BSC Waltham (more experienced) and Cambridge Athletic (less experienced but springier). Although it's mathematically possible for any team still to crack the top four, Union Boat Club, historically known for its late season rushes, may have waited too long this year, and T&R has never fully recovered from its early (dual) identity crisis.



Howe Cup teammates Debbie Carr and Phoebe Slanetz



First-time Howe Cupper Melanie Bianchi



Dominique entertains Hannah and Rebecca Kniker during the Howe Cup



Maria Mayorga catches her breath during her Howe Cup semifinal.

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Session III	March 6th	7:00pm	Semifinals
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Produced by Event Engine, Inc., John Nimick, President
To purchase tickets please contact
Melissa Winstanley:

877.524.5685 (Toll Free)
mmwinstanley@aol.com
www.playerscupsquash.com

For more information on The Players Cup, see page 3.

Mass Squash News Spring 2007

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION may be obtained from P.O. Box 51611, Boston, MA 02205-1611, or membership@ma-squash.org, or www.ma-squash.org.

Comments or suggestions may be addressed to: Sarah Lemaire, Editor, MSRA News, slemaire@verizon.net.

Sign Up Now for the MA Squash State Softball Championships!



Details and online signup form have been posted on the MA Squash website: <http://www.ma-squash.org/>

This tourney is **free** to all MA Squash members. Most matches are self-scheduled, although details can differ by flight.

Finals will occur Thursday night, April 3 at a location to be announced. This is a good event every year. There will be good squash, and complimentary refreshments will be provided. All finals matches are played then and finalists must be able to play on finals night.

This is a fun tourney and is another great way to get competitive matches at your skill/age level. You may enter more than one event, although there are some restrictions. Details on the site.

Entry deadline for some flights is February 1—so go to the site and signup now! It will only take you a minute to enter. Join us in this terrific annual event.

Championship Divisions:

Open Skill Levels: 5.5, 4.5, 4.0, 3.5, 2.5

Men's Age Groups: 35+, 40+, 45+, 50+, 55+, 60+, 65+, 70+

Women's Skill Levels: 4.5+, 3.5, 2.5

Women's Age Groups: 35+, 40+

Softball Doubles Skill Levels: 5.5, 4.5, 3.5

Finals:

All singles finals are **Thursday, April 3**, starting at 5:00 pm. The location will be announced. finalists must be able to play on finals night. Softball doubles finals are **Thursday, April 17** at 6:30pm at Concord Acton Squash Club.

Entry Fee: Free to all current MA Squash members. \$65 for non-MA Squash members.

Key Dates:

- Women's 4.5+, 3.5, 2.5, are **March 29 and 30** (starting at 9am) at SquashBusters, through semi-finals.
- Men's age groups and Open skill levels are self scheduling beginning **February 4**, through semi-finals.
- Women's age groups are self scheduling beginning **February 10**, through semi-finals
- Softball Doubles are self scheduling beginning **March 4** and can be played at Concord-Acton or The Maugus Club through semi-finals.

Entry Deadlines:

Open Singles - February 1

Men's Age Groups - February 1

Women's Age Groups - February 1

Women's Skill Level - February 29

Doubles Softball - February 28

Restrictions/Guidelines:

Skill Level entrants may not enter a division below, or more than one division above, their appropriate level. A player's appropriate level may be determined from league and tournament play and some players may have a skill rating posted at the USSRA's web site. If you are uncertain which level is appropriate for you, please consult with the coordinator for the division you wish to enter. Please submit a separate entry for each division you wish to enter.

List of contacts if you have questions is out on the site: <http://www.ma-squash.org/>.

Millet Junior Tournament, Jan. 19-21, 2008

by Jim Sullivan

Once again, Harvard University hosted an US Squash junior tournament. Tim Wheaton, Harvard's AD, saw to it that all the infrastructure necessary to a well-run tournament was in place. We are very grateful for the gracious hospitality. The players and parents always know that Harvard is a great forum.

There were 182 entrants in this tournament, the second Millet Junior Tournament, named for Frank Millet, the legendary squash coach at Milton Academy, but in a real sense in recognition and honor of all the squash coaches who brought the game along through the years to the quality and popularity it enjoys today. Being a selection tournament, it draws the highest ranked players from across the country. Over three hundred matches were played. Conor O'Malley from U. S. Squash was the tournament director, and Tom Poor and his crew ran the show.

GU13: Sabrina Sobhy (1) and Margaux Losty (2) met in the finals, each having won their prior matches, 3-0. Losty won the first game, 9-7. Sobhy settled down after that and won the next three, 4,2,3. Kimran Bajwa (6) finished 3rd, and Jenny Scherl (5) finished 4th. Emmy Uible won the Consolation, and Lauren Leizman won the Plate.

GU15: Amy Smedira (1), the winner, lost only one game in her four matches. Her finals opponent, Katie Tutrone (3), faced stiff competition through the draw, and it took a five game match to prevail in the semis. Claudia Regio (2), who lost to Tutrone in the semis, finished 3rd. Haley Mendez (5) won 4th. Olivia Fiechter (4) won the Consolation, and Gabriella Garr won the Plate.

GU17: The trip from Bellevue, Washington was well worth it for Yarden Odinak (1), the winner, besting each of her opponents, 3-0. However, Elizabeth Eyre, finalist, was not to yield easily, pushing each game to the limit. The first went to 10-9, the second, 10-8, and the third, 9-6. This final was well played on both sides of the ball. Drops, volleys, cross courts, tight rails with good pace, lobs, all were used. Each player had good anticipation, and chased each ball down. The rallies were long and fast. The match demonstrated how well the game can be played by two fit, talented and determined players. Stephanie Vogel (4) finished 3rd, Hallie Dewey finished 4th. Vidya Rajan won the Consolation, and Abigail Jenkins won the Plate.

GU19: Amanda Sobhy (1), the finalist, met little resistance on her way to the finals, as was the case for Julie Cerullo (2), the winner, both players veterans of junior squash. Cerullo won the first game handily, 9-2. Sobhy, an excellent shotmaker and strategist, didn't seem on her game. However, in game two, she came alive, and the game was electrifying. Cerullo was not caught off guard, and rose to the uptick in competition. Each rally, each point was hard won. Finally, it was 8 all. Set two was chosen. Back and forth, hand out after hand out. The pauses between serves lengthened, as each player was reaching into her reserves. Sobhy prevailed, 10-8. Cerullo left the court to use the ninety second break to recoup. How it happens, why it occurs, no one can explain; is it mental, physical, both? Sobhy yielded in games three and four, 2 and 1. Katie Ballaine finished 3rd, and Katherine Giovinazzo finished 4th. Alexis Saunders (4) won the Consolation, and Alli Rubin (8) won the Plate.

BU11: In pool A, Claude Smith won his three matches, but not before two of his opponents took him to four games. Ryan Murray won two of his three matches, one of which was a five-game seesaw battle. Carson Spahr won one of his three matches, but the two in which he did not prevail were very close, one lasting four games, and the other, five games. James Bell, the fourth player played valiantly, learned a great deal and will surely be back stronger than ever. In pool B, Senen Ubina won both his matches. Will Ruggiero won one match. Zach Meszoely played strongly, but did not prevail.

BU13: Mason Ripka (1), the winner, met little resistance throughout. Max Martin (3), finalist, met stiff opposition in the semis from Benjamin Leisman(4) who took two games. Jordan Brail (5) finished 3rd, and Leisman (4), 4th. Kevin Flannery (11) won the Consolation, and Cheraaq Bajwa (13) won the Plate.

BU15: There was no seeding in this draw. Dylan Murray, the winner, is an exceptional player, highly ranked nationally and internationally, made his way through the draw with little resistance. Taylor Tutrone, finalist, likewise found little resistance in the draw. Edward Columbia played well, and was beaten by Murray, and finished 3rd. William Douglass finished 4th. Sam Conant won the Consolation. Guy Davidson won the Plate. This was a strong draw with very good play throughout.

BU17: None of the players were seeded in this draw. Gary Player and Tyler Smith dominated, and faced each other in the finals. The first game, each was probing the other's game, playing patiently, not risking much. Smith prevailed, 9-5. Game two opened with Power coming on aggressively, picking up the pace; he won 9-3. Game three was the highlight of the match—long, intense rallies. The speed picked up, causing several let situations, contested sometimes even by the prevailing player, who thought a stroke would have been the right call. All was done in an appropriate manner. It merely indicated the intensity. Game three went to Smith, 10-8. Power won games three and four, 4 and 3, Power, winner, Smith, finalist. Brandon McLaughlin won 3rd, and Zuhaib Mohiudinn took 4th. Christopher Jung won the Consolation and Tom Mullaney won the Plate.

BU19: Todd Harrity (1), ranked #1 in the country, came to play. His play is precise and patient. He makes very few errors. Every ball that can be is volleyed, quickening the pace. The 25-player draw contained some of the very best players in the country. Harrity (1) won all his matches, 3-0. Chris Callis (2), highly ranked in the country, met more resistance on his way to the finals, needing four games in two of his matches. Harrity (1) just poured it on until his opponent, even one as talented as Callis (2), made an error. Harrity (1) prevailed, 3, 2 and 1. Alex Domenick (3) finished 3rd, and Thomas Mattson (4) finished 4th. Nick Sisodia won the Consolation, and Sam Clayman won the Plate in a stirring five-game match against Adam Vartikar.

Local Players at the Mass Junior Open and Millet Tournaments



Millet BU13 Plate Winner: Cheraag Bajwa (Cambridge, MA)



Millet GU 19: Plate Winner - Alli Rubin (Boston, MA) and friend



Mass Junior Open BU17: Plate Winner: Ronald German (SquashBusters)



Millet BU19 Plate winner: Sam Clayton (Gloucester, MA)

The Massachusetts Junior Open Jan. 4-6, 2008

230 junior players entered the tournament. Harvard University provided the Murr Center courts. Tim Wheaton, Harvard's AD, coordinated everything with the sponsoring committee, Mass Squash Junior Committee, so everything ran smoothly. We thank AD Wheaton and Harvard for making its facility available to the community. A strong contingent of SquashBuster players entered. The majority of players were from New England states, but entrants came from Florida, Georgia, California and Oregon.

BU13: There were 31 entrants. Anders Larson (1) met little resistance until the semis when it took four games to defeat unseeded Atticus Kelly. Arhum Saleem from Georgia was unseeded. He first faced Benjamin Krant (2). Saleem won that match in four. He then met Charaq Bajwa (3) in the semis. Bajwa (3) took the first game 9-6; Saleem won the 2nd 10-9. Saleem took the next two 9-6, 9-3. In the finals, Larson beat Saleem 10-8 in the 1st game, Saleem won the 2nd 9-2. Larson won games 3 and 4, becoming the winner. Kelly won 3rd, and Bajwa won 4th. Krant (2) won the Consolation, and Leyton Johnson won the Plate.

BU15: There was a full draw of 32. Edward Columbia (1) won his first two matches easily, but met unseeded Eric Cameron from Oregon in the quarters. The first game, from the first serve to the last point, was a close hard-fought contest. The score went to 9-8, then 9-9. It was Cameron to serve. The rally began, but not with the speed and luster of its predecessors. Finally, a ball Columbia could not reach, Cameron, was up, one game to love. Columbia (1) won the next three games easily. Pehlaaj Bajwa (3) in his first three matches, only yielded one point. In the semis, Bajwa (3) played Nicholas Greaves-Tunnell (2) in the best match of this division. From the outset, it was obvious that the talents and style of play would produce a fine match. Bajwa(3) won game one, 10-8. Greaves-Tunnell seemed to have Bajwa figured out and won games two and three rather easily. However, Bajwa pushed back and won game four. At 2-2, Bajwa took control, moving his opponent around, and won game 5, 9-2, and went on to the finals. Columbia played flawlessly. Bajwa was still recovering from the five-game match the day before. Columbia won in three. Greaves-Tunnell finished third and Liam Quinn finished fourth. Cameron won the Consolation, and Harrison Liftman won the Plate.

BU17: This draw of 42 was the largest of the tournament. Liam McClintock (1), US Squash #1 in BU15, played up. He faced Julian Kirby (2) in the finals. Kirby, older and over six feet, and McClintock, 13 and just over five feet, did not seem to promise a competitive match. Kirby could volley a lot of shots, and McClintock would have to scramble to reach balls. As the game one progressed, it became evident McClintock was a worthy opponent, winning game one, 9-5. Unfazed, Kirby came back, pushed hard, took command, and won games two and three handily, 9-2, 9-0. McClintock refused to fold. He took game four, 9-4. The stands were abuzz. Long rally followed long rally, each point coming hard. At two all, there were great shots, great shot selection on both sides. Slowly, Kirby began to pull ahead. As he had done throughout the match, McClintock literally threw himself forward on the court to reach a ball. Kirby finally prevailed, 9-4. Jack Ervasti (3) and Taylor Foehl (5) lost in the semis and played each other for third and fourth place. Ervasti prevailed in three. John Lamont from Montreal won the Consolation. Alexander Greaves-Tunnell won the Plate, and Ronald German won the 2nd loss Consolation.

BU19: 25 players faced each other in this draw. The top four seeds met in the semis. Gary Power(1), who was playing up, beat Harry Smith(4) in four. Will Sullivan(2), also played up, and beat Adam Vartikar(3) in a five-game match. In the finals, Sullivan took game one easily, 9-2. The match then changed. As hard as Sullivan worked, Power used precision in shot selection and execution and won the next three games quite decisively. Smith (4) and Vartikar (3) vied for 3rd, 4th, Vartikar prevailing in five. James Wilson won the Consolation. Chris Doucette won the Plate.

GU13: There were 14 entrants, and the quality of play showed the advance the younger players are making in squash. The trip from Florida for Chloe Chemtob (1) proved worthwhile. It took her four games to defeat Kimran Bajwa in the semis. Unseeded Lindsey Dewey from Connecticut was the finalist. Kimran Bajwa won third, defeating Samantha Chai, who finished fourth. Hannah McCormack(2) won the Consolation, and Lekiera Gray won the Plate.

GU15: This draw had 23 players. Kate Calihan (1) yielded only three points leading up to the final. Her opponent, Gabriella Garr (2) only yielded six. Garr took command early and won games one and two, 9-6 and 9-5. Calihan gained some focus, and although game three was an uphill battle for her, she won 9-7. Games four and five went to Calihan. Meyha Sud (4) and Erin Golueke (3) played for 3rd and 4th, and Golueke prevailed. Ariel Posner won the Consolation, and Sarah Hargreaves won the Plate.

GU17: There were 39 players. Sommer Carroll (1) and Courtney Jones (3) each made her way to the final, winning their semis 3-0. Carroll won the first game 10-8; Jones won the second, 10-8. There were few loose shots, tight rails with good pace, lobs to relieve pressure, hard, low, wide cross courts. Games three and four went to Carroll. Dori Rahbar (4) and Sarah Loucks (6) played for third/fourth place. Throughout, the rallies were great squash. Shots were made seeking weakness in the opponent's game. None was found. Rahbar (4) won games one and three, 9-3 and 9-6; Loucks won games two and four, 9-5 and 9-3. Just looking at the scores, one might surmise the each game was won rather easily, but that was not the case. The pace of the match was extremely fast; there were a number of handouts and long rallies. Game five was a classic, even though both players seemed physically spent and perhaps mentally exhausted. However, the reserve kicks in, stirred by the desire to win. The final score was 9-7, Rahbar. Laura Caty won the Consolation. Corey Schafer (2) won the Plate, and Brittany Luby won the 2nd loss Consolation.

GU19: 22 players were in this Draw. Stephanie Vogel (2) yielded in four to Taylor Booth (3) in the semis, and went on to take 3rd, defeating Courtney Bogle who finished 4th. Rhett Nadas (1) met little resistance on her way to the finals. There she met Taylor Booth. Nadas overcame a very worthy opponent, Booth. Kyla Sherwood won the Consolation, and Shanna Hsu won the Plate.

Many parents expressed their thanks for a well-run tournament, and several pitched in with the cleanup and folding and stacking chairs. The players met a lot of old friends and made some new ones. Good luck to all, and particularly the U19s, seniors now in high school, who will go on to college this coming fall.

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