

# MSRANews

MASSACHUSETTS SQUASH RACQUETS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## President's Letter

Alex Beam, the Boston Globe columnist whose work I enjoy and admire, sometimes writes about squash. I hope I am not "outing" him but I have it on good authority that he actually likes the game and has been seen at the occasional U.S. Open session and even playing (though not at the Open!). His regard for the skill and athleticism required, particularly at the higher levels of play, is evident. To quote from his column written in anticipation of the recent match between Harvard and Trinity: "I know what you're thinking: Dinky little kids in shorts hitting a squishy ball against a wall. Think again. Squash is fast, rough, and plenty physical."

But an Alex Beam column about squash isn't complete if it doesn't also tweak the game's elitist reputation, either explicitly or subtly. Even the column about the "warfare" to be expected when the Harvard and Trinity teams meet, which is largely about how recruiting for those teams no longer relies on merely sweeping the "St. Grottlesex campuses," still refers in passing to "that tiny fraction of Caucasian America that follows squash ... ." Perhaps it's liberal guilt (no reflection on Beam's politics, about which I know naught; as near as I can tell, he's an Iconoclast).

Squash carries the unfortunate image that it is played only by swells, the game of Bertie Wooster and his friends. The popular image overlooks, among other things, programs like SquashBusters. And I may be moving in the wrong circles (there's actually not much doubt of that), but I have yet to meet a player who plays for anything but the joy of the game.

At the MSRA, we are dedicated to supporting and promoting squash only because of our enthusiasm for it. No other purpose could explain how I became president.

—Carl Cummings  
MSRA President

## Boston A1 Team Takes the Howe Cup

Less than 24 hours after the Boston Red Sox clinched their Game 7 victory in the ALCS over the New York Yankees, a record 35 Boston-area women headed to the Big Apple for another athletic showdown: the 45th annual Howe Cup. With the financial support of the MSRA, seven Boston squash teams competed, two in the A and C divisions, and three in the B division.

Wendy Ansdell captained the A1 team to victory, playing the Cup-clinching match on Sunday afternoon before a large and enthusiastic crowd. The Boston A1 players included Wendy at #5, Shona Kerr at #4, Carlin Wing at #3, Hope Prockop at #2, and Margaret Elias, at #1. The A1 team won their pool convincingly, with wins over New York A2 (5-0) and Philadelphia (4-1).

This set up a semi-final match with Boston A2, which finished second in their pool by virtue of a win over the Mid-Atlantic team headed by WSPA touring pro Natalie Grainger and a close loss to New York A1. The A2 team was led by captain and #1 Jeannie Blasberg, followed by Orla O'Doherty at #2, Sue Lawrence at #3, Sue Rafuse at #4, and Hope Crosier at #5. The A2 team won only one of those matches—Sue Lawrence over Carlin Wing—putting Boston A1 in the final against New York A1 and Boston A2 in the 3rd/4th place playoff against Philadelphia A1.

The experience of the Boston team paid off. Margaret lost to U.S. women's team member Meredith Quick, but Hope Prockop, Carlin, and Shona recorded straight-set victories, and Wendy won a five-set, come-from-behind nail-biter over Dana Betts, the win that sealed the Howe Cup for Boston.

Boston A2 was overmatched in the 3rd/4th place playoff and lost 1-4. Only Sue Lawrence, who was undefeated throughout the Cup, won her match against Dawn Grey.

The MSRA entered three B teams in a field of 13 tough teams. The B1 team, included captain Pam Larson, Meredith Johnson, Kate Lytle, Liz Steffey, and Neely Steinberg. B2 was captained by Kara Kardon, and included Leslie Mann, Bry Roskov, Wendy Irwin, and Chrisy Jones. Jothie Karthigesan ably lead the B3 team, which also included Liz Brecht, Lisa Evans, Rachel Welty, and Tina Wu.



Former MSRA president Jeannie Blasberg receiving the USSRA's Women's Achievement Bowl from then-USSRA CEO Palmer Page at the Howe Cup banquet.



Boston's A1 team receiving their Howe Cup trophy (L-R): Carlin Wing, Margaret Elias, Wendy Ansdell, Hope Prockop, Shona Kerr, with Howe Cup Committee Co-chair Zoe Brunson

The B1 team demolished their opponents in Pool B, beating the New York B3 team and the Seattle team without dropping a match. However, in the semi-finals, they came

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# Jerry Martin Broken Racquet Open

by Jerry Stonehouse



Christophe Dupupet (l) and Jordan Berns

The second annual Jerry Martin Broken Racquet Open squash tournament was held January 7–8 at the Boston Athletic Club. This racquetball, handball, tennis and squash tournament was established to honor the late Jerry Martin, a life long resident of South Boston, and General Manager of the Boston Athletic Club.

The competition was fierce. The University Club's Sam Thayer bested Kumudu Gunasekera of the Boston Sports Club in the Men's 4.5/5.0 division final, 3-0.

Concord-Acton's Christophe Dupupet defeated Jordan Berns of the Boston Racquet Club in the Men's 3.5/4.0 flight, 3-2.



Sam Thayer (l) and Jerry Stonehouse

There was an auction & dinner reception following the Saturday competition. The proceeds from the event were donated to the Boys & Girls Clubs of South Boston, Jerry's favorite charitable organization. Thanks to all who participated to make this event special. We'll see you again next year!

## Howe Cup *(continued from page 1)*

up against a tough team from Connecticut and lost, 3-2. In the 3rd/4th playoff, the B1 team regained their form and handily defeated the New York B1 team, 4-1.

The B2 team finished second in Pool C, defeating a first-time team from Houston and falling to the New York B1 team. But they came back to win their 5th/8th place playoff match against a tough team from Baltimore, 4-1.

The B3 team faced some strong opponents in Pool A, but they finished third among four teams. They lost to the Washington B1 and Connecticut teams, but defeated the New York B2 team. To continue the October dominance of Boston teams over New York teams, they handily beat New York's B3 team, 4-1, in the 9th/12th place playoff.

Boston C1 finished in second place, headed by captain and tireless C team organizer Dominique Farinaux-Dumas. The C1 team, with Suzy Schwartz, Kerry Wellington, Bernadette Dixon, and Becky Lingard, overwhelmed their opponents in pool play, defeating NY C2 (5-0), Baltimore (5-0), and Philadelphia C2 (3-2).

That matched them up with Boston C2 in the semis. Boston C2 upset New York C1 3-2 in their first match, with Peg Sestrich notching



The Boston Howe Cup C players (L-R): Kerry Wellington, Sarah Lemaire, Peg Sestrich, Suzi Schwartz, Bernadette Dixon, Becky Lingard, Betsy Johnson, Bev Pankrat, Dominique Farinaux-Dumas, and Carey Jaros

the tie-breaking win for Boston. Other C2 players included Betsy Johnson, Bev Pankrat, Sarah Lemaire, and Carey Jaros. (Carey subbed for the C2 team with less than 24 hours notice.) The Boston C1 team dominated this match, with only Bev Pankrat pulling off an upset for Boston C2.

The C1 team then met up with a strong Philadelphia C1 team, with only experienced Howe Cupper Bernadette Dixon winning her finals match. The C2 team played Philadelphia C2 in the 3rd/4th playoff (both Philly teams met in the other semi!) and won convincingly, 4-1, to place 3rd out of 7 teams in the C division, right behind Dominique's C1 team.

Saturday night found most of the Boston players at the annual banquet, eating, socializing, and dancing, while trying to keep abreast of Game 1 of the World Series. The highlight of the evening was when Jeannie Blasberg was surprised with the USSRA's Women's Achievement Bowl. This award was created in 1955 by Mrs. John Prizer to be awarded annually to the woman who makes the most notable contribution to the sportsmanship of squash and the advancement of the game. Jeannie is very deserving of this award by virtue of her accomplishments on and off court. She served as president of the MSRA, chair of the MSRA Junior Committee chair, and is



The Boston Howe Cup A players, Front row (L-R): Jeannie Blasberg, Sue Lawrence, Hope Crosier, Sue Rafuse. Back row (L-R): Shona Kerr, Wendy Ansdell, Carlin Wing, Margaret Elias, Hope Prockop, Orla O'Doherty

currently the USSRA treasurer. She captained Boston A2 this year, and risked life and limb in New York to show her loyalty to the home team—her Red Sox cap was never far from the top of her head!



# Mass Junior Open 2005

by Jim Sullivan

With 212 entrants, Harvard University's Murr Center with its sixteen squash courts filled up quickly in the late afternoon of January 7, 2005. Juniors from ten states and Canada were to participate. There was a buzz of excitement as the warm ups began for the first matches. The very thorough preplanning and preparation were evident from the start. Tom Poor, chairman of the MSRA Junior Committee, was the Tournament Director. Suzy Schwartz was at the nerve center from the first match through the last, assigning courts, taking in and recording score sheets, making sure the players marked and refereed the match following theirs. Tom was constantly on the move, making certain everything was running smoothly. A score of volunteers helped and filled in where needed. During the tournament, and by e-mail afterwards, compliments about how well the tournament was run and how welcome the players and their families felt cascaded in. On January 9, 2005, when the courts emptied, the last players and staff had departed and the lights turned off, 426 matches had been played.

## BU11

Winner: James Fulham  
 Finalist: Oliver Booth  
 Third: Edward Columbia  
 Fourth: Jay Losty  
 Consolation: Michael Hurlbut

## BU13

Winner: Parker Hurst  
 Finalist: Gary Power  
 Third: Liam McClintock  
 Fourth: John Lamont  
 Consolation: Sam Conant  
 Plate: Shakeele Scott

## BU15

Winner: Jack Ervasti  
 Finalist: Will Sullivan  
 Third: Charles Gertler  
 Fourth: Peter Dylan Murray  
 Consolation: Alex Kurth  
 Plate: Le Sean Wells

## BU17

Winner: William Hartigan  
 Finalist: Matthew Candal  
 Third: Christopher Vernick  
 Fourth: Harry Smith  
 Consolation: Rees Sweeney-Taylor  
 Plate: Patrick Williams

## BU19

Winner: Nikko Hrdy  
 Finalist: Christopher Plimpton  
 Third: Bucky Marshall  
 Fourth: Christopher Reid  
 Consolation: Alex Heitzmann  
 Plate: Teddy Panarese

## GU13

Megan Murray  
 Ariel Posner  
 Caroline Feeley  
 Kate Calihan  
 Roxana Mead  
 Andrea Tran

## GU15

Alexandra Van Arkel  
 Taylor Booth  
 Maggie Remsen  
 Sarah Loucks  
 Dori Rahbar  
 Chapin Duke

## GU17

Alia Aziz  
 Samantha Buechner  
 Hannah Conant  
 Rhetta Nadas  
 Morgan Smith  
 Eliana Saltzmann

## GU19

Hannah Laverty  
 Kate Gormley  
 Helen Woolworth  
 Libby Denniston  
 Krissy Rubin  
 Stephanie Abrams



GU19 finalists: Hannah Laverty and Kate Gormley



Suzi Schwartz and Tom Poor look over the draw at the Mass Junior Open



BU17 finalists: William Hartigan and Matthew Candal



BU19 finalists: Nikko Hrdy and Christopher Plimpton



BU11 finalists: James Fulham and Oliver Booth



GU19 Semi-finalists: Helen Woolworth and Libby Denniston

# Playing Junior Squash

by Will Sullivan

I'd never even seen a squash game when I first picked up a racquet as a requirement of P.E. in fifth grade. I enjoyed it right from the start. It was intriguing. When I would watch good players, I figured maybe some day I might be as good. I decided to stay with it. I've been playing for over three years, and I had no idea what lay ahead when I started. It was obvious you had to be in good shape. Speed and endurance are essential. Hand and eye coordination and good racquet skills are required.

The hardest part for me is the mental part. How to stay focused. How to keep my head in the court. I have to think. Where's my opponent? Stay away from loose shots. Hit rails and crosscourts hard and low. Keep him in the back corners. Use the lob. Hit a boast. Hit a drop. All these things flutter through my mind while I'm racing to reach a ball and still trying to breathe at the same time.

I still play football and lacrosse, but squash is my first sport.

I'm on the school team now, but my real love is tournaments. Traveling to different cities and colleges. I've been to Trinity and Yale in CT, Princeton in NJ, Dartmouth in NH, and Harvard and M.I.T. in Cambridge. I've played guys from all over the country and from several foreign countries, and I've made a lot of friends. If you've ever been in a tough, grueling five-game match with long rallies and some 10-8 games thrown in, when it's over, both winner and loser feel a closeness, like they went through something together.

Sometimes, I'll stop by a BU11 match, and remember back when I played at that level. I don't remember being as good as they are.



Mass Junior Open BU15 finalists: Jack Ervasti and Will Sullivan

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MSRA News is published three times per year.

MSRA P.O. Box 51611 Boston, MA 02205-1611

PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION: PrintCentre, Inc.

4 Arlington Road, Needham, MA 02492

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE: David Adams, Barbara Beckwith, Carl Cummings, Fran Donlan, Eric Godes, Simon Graham, Kevin Hollister, Kara Kardon, Sam Magruder, Tom Poor, Phoebe Slanetz, Jim Sullivan, Will Sullivan, and Virginia Valdez.

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, MSRANews, slemaire@verizon.net.

# Adult League Wrapup

Open 5.5

Dave Adams, League Chair

Team	Points	% Won
Tennis & Racquet	35	87.5%
University Club	35	87.5%
Concord-Acton	31	77.5%
Union Boat Club	24	53.3%
MIT	21	46.7%
BSC - Allston	18	45.0%
Mo-Squad	17	42.5%
Boston Racquet Club	12	30.0%
Squashbusters	12	30.0%
Harvard Club	10	25.0%
Sports Club/LA	10	25.0%

The level of play in the open 5.5 league continues to improve. The top two teams thus far are clearly T&R and University Club who, when fielding their full teams, put on a great show. T&R features an impressive lineup headed by defending state champion Daniel Sharplin, with plenty of depth with Vineet Asthana, Mike Semprucci and newcomer, Mahir Kapoor. The UClub offers an equally impressive crew with recent Trinity grad Pat Malloy at #1. Jason Hicks, former state champ Doug Lifford, and Scott Poirier round out this team whose only loss was to the T&R on games. A likely postseason clash between these two favorites will feature squash of the highest caliber.

Standing in the way of front runners is a Concord-Acton squad headed by Dent Wilkins, a current Princeton player in Concord for the year. The return of prodigal son Dave Adams from a stint on the University Club team helped Concord to a strong first half of the season. The team added depth mid-season with the return of Paul Ansdell to league play after two-year absence due to injury. With this lineup, Concord-Acton could pose a threat to either of the top seeds in the playoffs.

The 4<sup>th</sup> seed for the playoffs is up for grabs with UBC, MIT, BSC-Allston and Mo-Squad all in contention. UBC will be strong if they get Mark Lewis into enough matches, but MIT stalwarts Irfan Choudhary and Ali Merchant and the greatly improved Naveen Goela will challenge UBC for the fourth spot. Lurking a few points back are two very different teams who will meet in the final 2 weeks of the season: BSC-Allston and Mo-Squad. BSC-Allston has tremendous league experience and talent, but will they have the legs to keep up with the talented young Mo-Squad players? Time will tell, but league pundits say home court advantage will pull the BSC team.

Open 4.5

Eric Godes, League Chair

	Team	Points	% Won
1	Boston Racquet Club	36	80.0%
2	Maugus Club	32	80.0%
3	BSC - Waltham	31	68.9%
4	BSC - Allston	34	68.0%
5	MIT	26	65.0%
6	Concord Acton	27	60.0%
7	University Club II	26	57.8%
8	Andover Racquet Club	24	53.3%
9	Union Boat Club	18	45.0%
10	Harvard Club	15	33.3%
11	Longfellow Sudbury	10	25.0%
12	Sports Club LA	9	22.5%
13	Harvard Business School	7	17.5%
14	Tennis & Racquet	4	10.0%

With two-thirds of the season done, the Open 4.5 league playoff picture is shaping up. Unlike most years, 2004-2005

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## Adult Leagues (continued from page 4)

seems to be the year of the “haves” and “have-nots.” Barring a miracle, T&R, HBS, Sports Club/LA and Longfellow will find themselves on the outside looking in come playoff time.

The standings show some unfamiliar names at the top. The turnaround story is BRC under the direction of captain-extraordinaire Dan Reagan. Finishing last year out of the playoffs, this motivated team is tied with Maugus for first place. Maugus, which snuck into the playoffs last year, employed shrewd recruiting techniques normally reserved for Concord-Acton and got players back from injury; they now appear to have the strongest top-to-bottom lineup in the league. Perhaps the greatest surprise at this juncture of the season is the disappearance from the league’s elite of formerly unbeatable Concord-Acton. Sitting in 6th place is unfamiliar territory for one of the largest squash emporiums in the East. Travel, injury and indifference have resulted in an inconsistent squad for the champion of the last two years. Don’t count them out, however, as Concord always seems to be ready when it counts.

Rounding out the top teams are BSC-Waltham, again is fielding a competitive team, and their cousins at BSC- Allston posing a challenge for international team of the year honors. Both BSCs are knocking on the door of the current top teams. The UClub II team and the MIT newcomers have also been impressive thus far. Nobody who has played them will rule them out of a possible championship run.

While the remaining weeks will primarily be played for playoff positioning, a few top teams have yet to face off against each other. Getting that mental edge and home court advantage should lead to some superlative squash the rest of the way.

### Open 4.0

#### Kevin Hollister, League Chair

Team	Points	% Won
Union Boat Club	30	85.7%
Concord-Acton	25	71.4%
MIT	27	67.5%
Tennis & Racquet	20	66.7%
BSC - Waltham	22	62.9%
Boston Racquet Club	20	57.1%
Cambridge Racquet	18	51.4%
Milton Academy	12	34.3%
Harvard Club	9	25.7%
University Club	9	25.7%
Harvard Business School	3	7.5%

The timing is perfect to review the results to date of this season’s 4.0 league and look ahead to what promises to be a very competitive end to the regular season. Each team has played every other team once and with five weeks of squash to go before the playoffs, there are several matches between the top teams left to be played. Eight teams will advance, but almost any team can still make it to the playoffs at this point. Several team’s lineups are changing as matches are played, and those that haven’t done well are now counting on their top players as the matches become increasingly important: past results are no guarantee of future performance, after all.

The next three weeks promise some great match-ups. UBC has a fair-sized lead at the top, but that could change when they host #3 BSC-Waltham next week, a team that beat them earlier in the season. This week, #4 CASC hosts #2 MIT, a team they lost to in week 1. As for the three “racquet” teams in the middle of the standings, #5 Tennis & Racquet plays #7 Cambridge Racquet and Fitness in two weeks, while #6 Boston Racquet is scheduled for both “easy” and “tough” matches, if one believes the standings. There is also a real fight for the eighth playoff spot, currently occupied by Milton Academy, but with the University Club and the Harvard Club close behind. It should be an interesting (and hopefully warm and sunny) February.

A couple of scheduling notes: after the next three weeks

of play, there is a bye week for the Presidents’ Day holiday (Thursday is the 24<sup>th</sup>). After that are the final two weeks of the regular season, at which point the playoff spots will be determined. The following week is another break, this for the Nationals, being played from March 16–20<sup>th</sup>. All 4.0 players are encouraged to participate. The first of three rounds of playoffs (in consecutive weeks) will begin on Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>.

### Open 3.5

#### Simon Graham, League Chair

Team	Points	% Won
Maugus Club	32	80.0%
BSC - Waltham	31	77.5%
University Club	30	75.0%
Concord-Acton	29	72.5%
SquashBusters	29	72.5%
Longfellow Club	21	46.7%
Tennis & Racquet	20	44.4%
Cambridge Racquet	11	27.5%
Sports Club/LA	10	25.0%
BSC - Allston	7	17.5%
Harvard Club	5	12.5%

Once again we have a good sized 3.5 league with 11 teams and around 90 players, of which a third are new to league play. We also have new teams from SquashBusters and the Boston Sports Club in Allston.

At the end of the first half of play, there are five teams vying for the top spot; for most of the time there were just four, but the SquashBusters team has been coming on strong in the past few weeks, recording three good wins in a row, including a defeat of the erstwhile first-place Concord-Acton.

Maugus is clearly the team with the best record so far with only two losses (to Concord-Acton and the University Club) and not dropping a point in any other match. Meanwhile, BSC-Waltham (previously Healthpoint), University Club, Concord-Acton and SquashBusters are effectively tied for 2nd place.

Behind the first five positions, Longfellow and T&R are vying for 6th/7th places, leaving one playoff position up for grabs between the bottom four teams.

### Open 2.5

#### Carl Cummings, League Chair

Team	Points	% Won
Maugus Club	34	75.6%
Tennis & Racquet Club	31	68.9%
Andover Racquets Club	29	64.4%
Boston Racquet Club	29	64.4%
Cambridge Racquet	29	64.4%
Concord-Acton	25	55.6%
Union Boat Club	24	53.3%
Friends of Millet @ Milton	23	51.1%
Longfellow Club	20	44.4%
BSC - Waltham	12	26.7%
University Club	9	20.0%
Sports Club/LA	4	8.9%

The Open 2.5 league is experiencing a very competitive year, with only a few points separating the top five teams in the standings and ten of the league’s 12 teams jockeying for the eight playoff spots. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*, as T&R, whose new captain, Matt Sturgis, had to start fresh when last year’s league champion roster moved up to the 3.5 league en masse, grabbed first place in week 10. Maugus also restocked after a year’s absence from the league, and new captain Richard Houde apparently recruited well—the team has been in or near first place all season. Fred Eustis brought Andover’s perennially strong team back intact and Bernhard Suhm has assembled another strong international contingent at Cambridge Racquet, while BRC did a little roster-tweaking that has brought it within the top five. Concord-Acton has

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**Adult Leagues** (continued from page 5)

been steady but unable to move into the upper bracket and UBC, although a little further back, has been showing signs of its annual late-season surge. FoMaMA has been the king of close matches, with a five-point victory and a one-point loss, among others. BSC-Waltham and Longfellow have struggled but are well within range to grab playoff spots. Sports Club/LA and UClub have suffered some default problems but could be spoilers as they prepare for next year.

<b>Women 3.5</b>		
<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>% Won</b>
University Club	32	80.0%
Concord-Acton	27	67.5%
Sports Club/LA	20	50.0%
Tennis & Racquet	15	37.5%
BSC - Allston	13	32.5%
Harvard Club	13	32.5%

**Women's 3.5 Squash – Who are These Women?**  
Submitted by **Kara Kardon, League Chair**

The women's 3.5 league is a collection of 6 teams of 4-7 players each. The league is all women, and the target player ranking is around 3.5, but have you ever wondered what characterizes the women in this group? We did a very casual survey (does not include every player, just those responding...about 75%) and found the following, sometimes surprising results...

**Age and Beauty:** Half of the players in the 3.5 league are under 30, with an average age of 33 and a generous range from 22 to 58 years old. We've got 3 players in their 40's and 3 in their 50's.

**Married – Some, with Children – Very Few:** Slightly less than half of the league members are married. We used a liberal definition (this is Massachusetts) of married to include domestic partnerships and engagements. Regarding children; only 5 of the respondents are parents, most of whom have only one child, rendering the author responsible for almost half of the league's collective children. Ahhh, the old woman in the shoe!

**Location, Location, Location; Current and Original:** Just less than one-third of league members are suburban dwellers and surprisingly, fewer hold foreign passports. Only two Asian-Americans, two Canadians, and a Greek woman contribute to the geographic diversity of our group.

**How Do You Get to Carnegie Hall?** The 3.5 ladies come to the league with an impressive average 12 years squash experience, 5 years in league. Response medians were somewhat lower, at 10 and 3 years respectively. Almost two-thirds of our league played varsity squash in college! Finally, three matches per week is the average current frequency of play with a normal distribution between 1 and 5.

<b>Women 2.5A</b>		
<b>Phoebe Slanetz, League Chair</b>		
<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>% Won</b>
Maugus Club	38	95.0%
SquashBusters	25.5	63.8%
Concord-Acton	23	57.5%
BSC - Waltham	19.5	48.8%
Harvard Club	10	25.0%
Tennis & Racquet	2	5.0%

With six teams and almost 50 players, the Women's 2.5A League is off and running mid-season. The Women's 2.5 League was split this year into two divisions: 2.5A and 2.5B. This was an experiment but the decision has worked out well, increasing the number of players and teams in the Women's 2.5 division. Within the past several years, the Women's 2.5 League has doubled from 6 teams to 12 teams, which is wonderful for women's squash in the Boston area.

Maugus leads the league with a near-perfect record. Cap-

tain Kerry Wellington, Szilvi Szombati, Becky Lingard, Lucy Bradley and Debbie Harrison are together one of the most competitive teams. SquashBusters includes some past Cambridge @ Murr team members who won the league last season, and the Concord-Acton team are not too far behind Maugus.

Both SquashBusters and Concord-Acton have strong players. From SquashBusters there is capt. Dominique Farinaux-Dumas, Bernadette Dixon and Liz Lambert, who should probably get the prize, if one existed, for the most mentally and physically fit player on the court. Concord-Acton has capt. Jennifer Moran, Peg Sestrich, Polly Vanasse, Sarah Lemaire, and Bev Pankrat.

In December, BSC-Waltham and SquashBusters defied the odds of squash and tied by matches, games and points. Yes, it is possible. In the end, both teams were credited evenly and awarded 2½ points, which seemed like the fairest decision. This is why the results above look a little out of the ordinary. BSC - Waltham (Healthpoint) continues to be holding their own with Jamie Banks, Debbie Carr and Laurie Manos, the captain.

The Harvard Club and the T&R have struggled some this year but their enthusiasm is undiminished. Not a surprise, the best matches so far for the Harvard Club and the T&R have been against one another. Azi Rahbar returned as captain and Liz Hurley is a welcome addition to the Harvard Club team. The T&R, led by Willa Rutherford, has a few new players who played for the SportsClub/LA team last year. It's turning out to be a great season, filled with squash and of course, fun.

<b>Women 2.5B</b>		
<b>Virginia Valdez, League Chair</b>		
<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>% Won</b>
Cambridge Racquet	37	92.5%
Maugus Club	28	70.0%
BSC Allston	21	60.0%
University Club	17	42.5%
SportsClub/LA	8	20.0%
Tennis & Racquet	4	11.4%

The 2.5B women's league was formed this year as a stepping-stone toward the 2.5A league, with 6 teams from clubs in Boston and the vicinity. This league has grown to 30 active players with mixed skill levels. Players range from 13 to 60 in age with varied experience, ranging from players who just picked up a racquet this year to seasoned college team athletes.

The four top teams are: Cambridge Racquet, Maugus, BSC Allston and University Club. Cambridge is the undisputed leader. This team is showing a skill level that will easily catapult them to the 2.5A league next year, and Maria Mayorga and Liz Schienfeldt are their best players..

Maugus celebrates its age diversity by currently occupying second place in the league. Maugus players range in age from 13 to over 35. The club's suburban location promotes lots of team spirit as many of the players carpool to away matches.

BSC Allston's four regular players: Lindsey Snyder, Cara Coscarelli, Ton Ton Russell (captain) and Jimena Velarde are becoming a solid and challenging team to the league leaders. BSC shares the plight of the newly formed league teams in its paucity of backup players.

The University Club has a maturing team with Shifteh Fahr, Lisa MacAlaster, Sarah Cortes and Virginia Valdez as new players. The team captain, Noelle Shiland, is the motor behind their team training and spirit. They even have a team uniform!

Players from the Sports Club LA (SCLA) and Tennis & Racquet (T&R) show lots of potential such as, Jill Murray and Amy Wagers from T&R, and Sandra Sable, Margot Mims, Carolyn Kim and Nirva Kapasi from the SCLA. Although both teams are struggling with lack of backup players and access to

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# MSRA-Sponsored Exhibitions

Thanks to the efforts of the MSRA and board member Simon Graham, MSRA members were treated to two outstanding exhibition matches in January.

## Sharon Bradey vs. Pam Saunders, January 15, Concord-Acton Squash Club

The first exhibition took place during CASC's winter tournament, The January Thaw. Before a vocal crowd of about 50, Sharon Bradey, former world #12 and head pro at The Harvard Club took on recent Trinity grad (she played #4 on their national championship team) and Mt. Holyoke coach Pam Saunders. Pam brought 12 of her Mt. Holyoke players to participate in the Thaw, but their enthusiastic fan support wasn't enough to overtake the experience of Sharon, who defeated Pam 11-4, 13-11, 10-12, 10-12, 11-3. Lest you think those scores are a typo, they follow the new pro tour scoring, point-a-rally to 11. At 10-all, one player must win by two clear points. Paul Ansdell reffed the match, keeping the mood light.

Sharon got off to a strong start and took advantage of Pam's initial nerves. Sharon's consistent deep shots had Pam scrambling to both back corners of the court, forcing her to boast. Pam's superb athleticism matched up well with Sharon's ability to anticipate where the ball was going. Once Sharon took over serving at 6-4, she didn't lose another point in that first game.

The second game was much closer, with the lead seesawing until Sharon won, 13-11. Pam settled down and loosened up, made fewer mistakes, and put her opponent on the defensive, winning the third game, 12-10. Pam fell behind in the fourth, but went on a tear with pinpoint drop shots, taking the score from 8-10 to 12-10. But Sharon took control of the match in the fifth game, allowing her younger opponent only three points and four serves.



L-R: Pam Saunders, Paul Ansdell, and Sharon Bradey

## Daniel Sharplin vs. Brett Newton, January 29, SquashBusters

The second exhibition took place at the SquashBusters Open, a fundraising event. Chris Smith, middle-school coach at SquashBusters and tournament director, introduced two local pros, Daniel Sharplin from the Tennis & Racquet Club, and Brett Newton, a coach at Brooks, Phillips Andover, and St. Paul's, who put on a great display of squash power and finesse. Daniel is the former national champion of New Zealand, was ranked as high as 77 in the PSA rankings, and was ranked fifth in world doubles in 1997. Brett spent 10 years on the PSA tour, ranking as high as 20. Brett reached the quarterfinals of the U.S. Open and the Pakistan Open. Brett has played in every major professional squash tournament, and once took a game off Jansher Khan! Wendy Ansdell reffed the match, and the men played point-a-rally scoring to 11.



L-R: Chris Smith, Brett Newton, Daniel Sharplin, Wendy Ansdell

The first game was highlighted by brilliant drop shots, tight rails, and long rallies, along with some typical exhibition antics: Daniel disguised his shots well and even slid across the floor after a shot. Brett tossed his racquet in the direction of one of Daniel's softest drops. While the score was tight throughout, Daniel finally drew ahead to win the first game, 11-9. In the second game, the score was close, and after Brett saved two match points, the game went to an 11-11 tiebreaker. Someone had to win by two points, but Brett

seemed to lose some steam, and Daniel took advantage, winning the second and final game 14-12.

### Adult Leagues (continued from page 6)

the suburbs, they remain committed to the league.

50 +		
Sam Magruder, League Chair		
Team	Points	% Won
Concord-Acton	24	68.6%
Boston Racquet Club	18	60.0%
Harvard Club	19	54.3%
Union Boat Club	19	54.3%
Maugus Club	15	42.9%
BSC - Waltham	13	37.1%
Milton	12	34.3%

The 50+ league produced a very competitive first half, led by CASC. They are closely followed by the BRC and the surging UBC. There were only four sweeps in the first six weeks of play and many very close matches. On any given Monday, anyone can win depending on the handicap match-ups and who shows up. The captains are selecting players carefully to ensure that as many players as possible qualify for the play-offs. While Milton and BSC-Waltham have had some tough

nights, they have the potential to come back strongly. The byes have had a big effect on total points won; 5 of the 7 teams have lead the standings at some point during the first half.

There are several strong new players in the league: Dave Goodare and Jim Cronin of CASC, Malcolm Davidson, John Ross and Everett Shorey of BRC, and Martin Deale of Maugus. Some crafty old veterans are also having good seasons, including Tom Quinn and Len Miller of the Harvard Club, Bob Loring at UBC, Dave Sutor of BSC, Larry Hargreaves of Maugus and the surprising John Catlin at Milton. New players who could pose a threat include the just-old-enough Dan Reagan of the Harvard Club, the now-healed Martin Tallett of BSC-Waltham and CASC's new recruit Dan Metraux.

Scoring in the league has gotten tighter after some early blow-outs as handicaps were adjusted. Since the third week, more than half of the matches have played to four or five games, with weeks 3 and 4 averaging 90%! The full season average is two-thirds of the individual matches go four or five games and only one-third are won by 3-0. Those sweeps get tough after you've won the first two and are now looking at a four point increase in your scoring differential!



# Tierney Wins Again: 2005 University Club Pro-Am Doubles

by Tom Poor

**Sandy Tierney** and his professional playing partner, Martin Heath, came out on top of 15 other pro-am teams in the University Club Pro-Am Doubles over the weekend of January 13-16, 2005. Sandy has won this tournament several times before, hence it was a surprise when team matchmaker John Nimick assigned Scotland's Martin Heath to him. Martin is new to doubles this year, but he comes with a former top ten world singles ranking and plenty of squash experience. In the final Tierney & Heath defeated last year's winner, **Malcolm Davidson** and his partner, Toronto's Tyler Millard, in four games highlighted by Sandy's reverse corner. Tierney & Heath's toughest test may have come in the semifinal where they defeated **Jamie Fagan** & Chris Derartnay (from Toronto) in five close games. Their previous victories were a



West Draw: Alex Pavulans, Dave Dali, Damien Mudge, Bruce Shulman



North Draw: John Connolly, Ben Gould, Mike Pirnak, Matthew Kozol

four game disposition of **Jay Hirshberg** & Doug Lifford (Boston) and a four-game conquest of **Doc Grossman** & John Nimick (Boston) in the opening round. **Lenny Bernheimer**, playing with host club pro Chris Spahr, lost in the semi-finals for the fourth straight year in five games, this time to the Davidson & Millard duo.

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 more than 50 patrons and 16 players providing financial support, the professionals competed for more than \$25,000 in prize money. In



East Draw: Sandy Tierney, Martin Heath, Tyler Millard, Malcolm Davidson

The North



South Draw: Gary Waite, Janie Coolidge, Tom Poor, Viktor Berg

Draw featured teams that won their first match but lost in the second round of the main draw.

**Matthew Kozol** & Michael Pirnak (Toronto) won by a point in the fifth over the Hirshberg-Lifford team. **John Connolly** & Ben Gould (Wilmington) suffered a one-point, fifth-game loss to Davidson & Millard in the main draw, but recovered to oust **Dave Riccio** & James Hewitt (Toronto) in four, then went five games to defeat Kozol & Pirnak in the final. John is the current State 50s champion (with Tierney) and has smoothly adapted to doubles.

In the West Draw, featuring first round losers, **Dave Dali** & Alex Pavulans (New York) overcame their initial loss to Kozol & Pirnak by posting three consecutive victories: first, over **Janie Coolidge** & Gary Waite (Toronto) in a three game match that saw narrow 15-14, 15-13 scores in the last two. Their second was another competitive match, this time with **Jim Bildner** who last year

snappped his Achilles tendon playing Dali and his partner, and Josh McDonald (New York). This four game win was a prelude to Sunday's comparatively easy win over **Bruce Shulman** & Damien Mudge (New York). Bruce & Damien had arrived in the finals with a three game victory over **Marty Stocklan** & Pat Malloy.

In the South Draw, **Steve Wolfe**, he of the resplendent pink warm-up suit last year, suffered the tournament's only injury when he twisted his knee in a first round loss to Riccio-Hewitt. **Tom Poor** substituted with Viktor Berg and promptly lost to Stocklan & Malloy in the West Draw, decimated by Marty's reverse corners at critical points. Poor & Berg then defeated **Joel Kozol** & Preston Quick (Denver) in three and narrowly survived Coolidge & Waite in the final.

And now, for this year's awards:

**Rookie of the Year:** Marty Stocklan—For pulling out some amazing shots at crucial times.

**Runner-up Rookie:** Bruce Shulman—Defeated Marty in the semis of the West draw.

**Most Underrated:** Dave Dali—Who flies below the radar each year and keeps winning.

(continued on next page)



## Pro-Am Doubles

(continued from previous page)

**Most Overrated:** Sandy Tierney—Of course. Why do we keep giving him great partners?

**Most Improved:** Matthew Kozol—Two years ago, he could hardly hit a ball; now he's returning bullets.

**Most Frustrated:** Lenny Bernheimer—Has now lost five-game semi matches four years in a row.

**Luckiest:** Mac Davidson—Wins every match in five games, even borrowing my racquet.

**Most Misguided:** Steve Wolfe—Continues to talk more about his last year's pink outfit than his squash game.

**Most Fashionable:** Jim Bildner—No socks, crumpled shorts and uncombed hair.

**Biggest Sleeper:** John Connolly—Singles, yes, but this good in doubles?

**Biggest Flamer:** Doc Grossman—Locked Pirnak out of the condo Saturday night; Pirnak ended up sleeping on Millard's floor.

**Most Expressionless:** Jay Hirshberg—Can't tell if he won or lost the point, game or match.

**Gentlest:** Janie Coolidge—Always blames herself when it was Waite's fault.

**Most Picked On:** Jamie Fagan—In the fifth game vs. Tierney-Heath, Jamie saw every ball.

**Most Encumbered:** Dave Riccio—Tried to play with a five-pound silver necklace.

**Grandest Patron of them All:** Joel—Whose grandchildren saw a sight they'll remember to tell their own grandchildren about.

As the finishing touches are put on the final draw memorializing the 2005 Pro-Am Doubles event in anticipation of its prominent display beside the University Club Doubles Court, entries are already being submitted for the 2006 Championship. Don't be left out!

### The SquashBusters Open SquashBusters, January 28–30, 2005

#### Open 2.5

First: Frederic Kerff  
Second: Peter Valberg

#### Open 4.5

Winner: Richard Schafer  
R/U: Kumudu Gunasekera

#### Open 5.5

Winner: Paul Tuffin  
R/U: Parth Doshi

#### Northeastern Black

Winner: Matt Dormer  
R/U: Steven Portela

#### Women's 5.5

Winner: Jeanne Blasberg  
R/U: Hope Crosier

#### Open 3.5

First: Zachary Leber  
R/U: Olumide Adebo

#### Open 5.0

Winner: Shashank Mallick  
R/U: John Gillooly

#### Northeastern Red

Winner: Colleen Fritz  
R/U: Sumit Sikka & Mu He

#### Women's 3.5

Winner: Tina Wu  
R/U: Lisa Evans

## Adult Tournament Results

### Middlesex Bowl/Wheeler Cup Concord-Acton, November 5–7, 2004

#### Open 2.5 (RR)

First: Jonas McCray  
Second: John Lam

#### Open 4.0

First: Ferdze Mahmood  
Second: Tim Arnold

#### Open 5.0 (RR)

First: Mark Varney  
Second: Shashank Mallick

#### Women's 2.5/3.5

Winner: Wenjun Jing  
R/U: Dominique Farinaux-Dumas

#### Open 3.5

Winner: Christophe Dupupet  
R/U: Simon Graham

#### Open 5.5

Winner: Dave Atkins  
R/U: Dave Adams

#### Open 60+ (RR)

First: Steve Steinberg  
R/U: Walter Frazee

### 2004 Summers Cup Union Boat Club, December 3–5, 2004

#### Open 4.5

Winner: Firas El-Khatib  
R/U: Peter Hodges

#### Men's 50+/60+

Winner: Ron Beck  
R/U: Chris Fox

### Beantown Open University Club, December 3–5, 2004

#### Open 5.5

Winner: Andy Matuch  
R/U: Tyler Hindermann

#### Open 3.5

Winner: Amrit Kanwal  
R/U: Scott Levy

#### Open 2.5

Winner: Steve Neumeier  
R/U: Jeff Brown

### Jerry Martin Broken Racquet Open Boston Athletic Club, January 7–8, 2005

#### Open 4.5

Winner: Firas El-Khatib  
R/U: Peter Hodges

#### Men's 50+/60+

Winner: Ron Beck  
R/U: Chris Fox

### The January Thaw Concord-Acton, January 15–17, 2005

#### Open 2.5 (RR)

First: David Scarbro  
Second: Mark Sullivan

#### Open 3.5

Winner: Alexander Nary  
R/U: Christophe Dupupet

#### Open 5.0

Winner: Nick Nevin  
R/U: Wendy Ansdell

#### Women's 3.5

Winner: Lisa Evans  
R/U: Dominique Farinaux-Dumas

#### Open 3.0 (RR)

First: Jeffrey Brown  
R/U: Dennis Philbin

#### Open 4.0

Winner: Sean Licata  
R/U: Steve Steinberg

#### Open 5.5

Winner: Parth Doshi  
R/U: Dennet Wilkins

#### Women's 2.5

Winner: Liz Lambert  
R/U: Maria Mayorga

# Talking on Court

by Barbara Beckwith

When you go on court, do you gab or do you go mum? Whatever your style, be aware—your partner’s style may differ.

I, for instance, like to talk on court. I coach myself (“Watch the ball!”), I berate myself (“Too loose!”), I comment post-facto on a good rally (“Great lobs!”). When I played on women’s C teams, I let the ref do the talking, but now that I play only “friendly games,” I can talk with impunity. It helps that the partner I play with three times a week is equally loquacious, so we’re compatible.

But I recently discovered, to my chagrin, that another player I enjoy playing games with, 2.5 player Moragh Ramage, can’t handle court talk. “My mind short circuits. I can’t concentrate,” she explains. Although she says, “I’m wired wrong,” I realize that her way is as legitimate as mine, and that my way disturbs her game. “Squash is a place in the head,” she says. “It’s like architecture: it has a shape—you and the walls. When someone calls “S...!” I’m thrown off guard.”

The world squash “conduct on court” rule number 17 prohibits “audible and visible obscenities, verbal abuse, dissent, and time-wasting.” Some players use quirky substitutes: “Oh my giddy aunt” is Concord-Acton Squash Club assistant pro and women’s 5.5 player Wendy Ansdell’s. Simple talking on the court is not, however, specifically disallowed except under the general prohibition of “offensive, disruptive or intimidating behavior.”

And it’s simple talking that’s often the issue. I asked players at my Concord-Acton Squash Club for their stance on “talking on the court” and got a range of opinions, all fervent.

“I never shut up,” says Coleen Phillimore, who admits she’s on the extreme end of the talkativeness spectrum. “I’m the queen of talking. I want to yak and make friends, and if other players can’t handle it, I don’t play with them.” Someone from the next court once called out, “Will you please be quiet?” But for Coleen, talking feels like a physical necessity. “It burns off steam and helps me relax and not overfocus on my ability—or lack of it. It keeps me breathing regularly. When I’m told not to talk in a tournament, I tense up. There’s no outlet, no release.”

Fellow 2.5 player Laurie Manos, whose needs differ, will tell Coleen, “Don’t take it wrong, but I’d prefer not to talk because it disturbs me.” Coleen is now trying to find a happy balance between friendly chatter and good sportsmanship. “I try not to talk DURING rallies. But I like to compliment the other person, so after every shot, I’ll say, ‘nice rail,’ etc.”

But talking on court is not always a friendly act. Players may talk on the court on purpose, as a deliberate strategy. “Some players like to talk to throw you off your game—it’s a head game out there,” says Anne Westcott. Even well-intentioned on-court remarks can give the talker an advantage over the opposing player. Says Sarah Lemaire: “If I say, ‘Ooh it’s out’—and then the ball is in—that’s not fair to the other person.”

It’s also a clue that your opponent can use to his or her advantage. “I’ll shout ‘You moron!’ at myself,” says Sarah. “But my teammates tell me that when I start talking during a match, they know my game is going downhill.”

Peg Sestrich, the top player on Concord-Acton’s women’s 2.5 team can turn it on or off. “I do it more in a friendly match, to lighten the pressure.”

Guys, I’ve noticed, seem rarely to gab. “Men don’t talk on court except to say, ‘Good shot’ or ‘Was that in?’” says Dave Phillmore, a 5.0 player. MSRA board member Simon Graham believes that silence on the court has to do with being competitive. “Part of game strategy is not being too friendly with the person you’re playing against,” says Graham. “If I talk to the person, I’m getting in tune with them. But I want to beat them rather than know anything about them.” He also sees talking as slowing down the game too much. “You’re there to exercise, not to chatter.”

Sue Rafuse, a 5.0 woman who plays on Concord-Acton’s 4.5 men’s team, agrees. “People at high levels know not to talk,” says Rafuse. She objects to any talk during play, including “Nice shot” compliments. If the other player speaks during play, even to say, “Nice shot,” she immediately reacts. “I’ll stop and say, ‘Did you say let?’” as a reminder that “Let” is the only word she expects to hear mid-rally. “People are taken aback,” she admits, but they do shut up.

But Hilary Yates is as bothered by silent fellow players as Rafuse is by one who talks. “When they’re all serious, I think they simply want to win the game and go. I think they’re not enjoying playing with me. It contradicts why I’m here—to have fun.” She also admits, “I’m a vocal person.”

The difference may lie in the level of skill and competitiveness. When D level player Gail Fitzpatrick plays with her husband Tom, a B player, “He’s so quiet on the court that I’m always thinking that he’s mad.” She has to remind herself that from his point of view, he’s concentrating on the game and leaving it to his body to react to each shot.

Whatever your gender, skill level, or personal style, it pays to check out not only your partner’s strokes during the warmup, but also his or her reaction to talk or no talk. If you don’t, you may get excuses the next time you call to schedule a game, and lose potential partners.

*[Ed. note: Barbara Beckwith has been playing squash for 15 years. A former member of The Mt. Auburn Club’s league-winning women’s C team, Barbara now plays recreationally at Concord-Acton. She is a freelance writer living in Cambridge.]*



# 2005 MSRA State Softball Championships

## State Softball Championships: Singles and Doubles

### 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: 5.0, 4.5, 3.5, 2.5; Women's Age Groups: 35+, 40+

Softball Doubles Skill Levels: 5.5, 4.5, 3.5; Age Groups: 50+, 60+; Men, Women, & Mixed.

### DATES:

- Women's 5.0, 4.5, 3.5, 2.5, are April 2nd and April 3th (starting at 9 a.m.) at Concord-Acton, through semifinals.
- Men's age groups and open skill levels are self-scheduling beginning Feb. 21st, through semi-finals.
- Women's age groups are self-scheduling beginning February 28th, through semi-finals
- Softball Doubles are self scheduling beginning April 1<sup>st</sup> and can be played at Concord-Acton or Maugus Club through semi-finals.

**FINALS:** All singles finals are Thursday April 14th, starting at 5:30 pm at SquashBusters. Softball doubles finals are Wednesday May 11th at 6:30 pm at Concord-Acton.

**ENTRY FEE:** Free to MSRA members. \$55 for non-members.

Register for the state championships at [www.ma-squash.org](http://www.ma-squash.org).

### ENTRY DEADLINES

Open Singles: February 11th

Men's Age Groups: February 11th

Women's Age Groups: February 18<sup>th</sup>

Women's Skill Levels: March 25<sup>th</sup>

Doubles Softball: March 25th

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. Some players may have a skill rating posted at the USSRA website. If you're uncertain which level is appropriate for you, consult with the coordinator for the division you wish to enter. Submit a separate entry for each division you wish to enter.

### CONTACTS:

#### Women:

Age Groups 40+, 35+: Wendy Ansdell 978-266-9665 [wendyansdell@mindspring.com](mailto:wendyansdell@mindspring.com)

5.0: Wendy Ansdell 978-266-9665 [wendyansdell@mindspring.com](mailto:wendyansdell@mindspring.com)

4.5: Orla O'Doherty [o.odoherty@squashbusters.org](mailto:o.odoherty@squashbusters.org) 617-373-7374

3.5: Kara Kardon 781-899-9850 [karakardon@comcast.net](mailto:karakardon@comcast.net)

2.5: Phoebe Slanetz [pslanetz@bso.org](mailto:pslanetz@bso.org) 617-742-3437 or Virginia Valdez 781-729-6015 [vfrangella@yahoo.com](mailto:vfrangella@yahoo.com)

#### Men:

Age Groups: Fran Donlan [fran.donlan@morganstanley.com](mailto:fran.donlan@morganstanley.com) (w) 781-681-4928

#### Open:

5.5: David Adams [dadams2@wso.williams.edu](mailto:dadams2@wso.williams.edu) 617-581-6250

4.5: Eric Godes [egodes@kobren.com](mailto:egodes@kobren.com) (w) 617-369-2300 (h) 781-444-0309

4.0: Kevin Hollister [khollister@helixtechnology.com](mailto:khollister@helixtechnology.com) (w) 508-337-5131 (h) 978-263-1140

3.5: Simon Graham [simon.graham@stratus.com](mailto:simon.graham@stratus.com) (h) 978-779-6010 (w) 978-461-7142

2.5: Carl Cummings [carlcummings@hotmail.com](mailto:carlcummings@hotmail.com) (w) 617-345-0444, (h) 781-821-5547

#### Softball Doubles:

Steve Steinberg [actonmgt@verizon.net](mailto:actonmgt@verizon.net) (w) 978-263-2989 # 2