

National Squash Club Championship Finals 2023



This past weekend Roehampton Club Men's, Ladies' and Over 35s national teams made their way to sunny Sheffield to compete in the National Club Championships, hosted by Hallamshire Club.

Men's Team: Nathan Lake / Adrian Waller / Charlie Lee / Joe Lee / Jonah Bryant / Ben Coates.

Ladies Team: Tesni (Tez) Evans / Satomi Watanabe / Jazz Hutton / Katie Malliff / Emily Coulcher-Porter.

The Ladies' Team played local Surrey club Surbiton in the semi-final and this match against a very strong team proved to be the most difficult.

Katie was first on and although the game scores seemed comfortable the rallies and match proved tricky, but Katie's quality and speed of movement proved too strong, winning the match 3-0.

Tez had made the short trip across from the Manchester Open having sadly lost the night before to play against Welsh national teammate Emily. This saw Welsh number one Tez against Welsh number two Emily. It was the perfect match for Tez to forget about the night before. A slow start by Tez and we were wondering if fatigue may be an issue. No chance as a tough battle ensued and Tez's quality of shot proved too good. After winning a close first game Tez never looked back to win 3-0.

Jazz, having also made the short trip after competing in Manchester gave a professional performance of concentration and shot selection. Well, a slight lapse in concentration to lose the third game but the result was never in doubt as Jazz reasserted her authority and quality in the fourth game. **Roehampton Club beat Surbiton 3-0.**

Game scores

Tesni Evans beat Emily Whitlock 3-0. 14/12, 11/7, 11/3.

Jasmine Hutton beat Alicia Mead 3-1. 11/4, 11/5, 6/11, 11/6.

Katie Malliff beat Hayley Openshaw-Blower 3-0. 11/5, 11/4, 11/2.

The Men's Team played Edgbaston in their semi-final.

The match got off to the perfect start with Nathan, world 32, delivering a top professional performance of how to beat a very dangerous player, George Parker world number 43, by giving him no route into the match. Nathan's tight width and correct shot choice nearly every time would frustrate George into a combination of mistakes or just not physically being able to get to the ball. Nathan did not let up for three games, an underestimate skill.



Adrian was against a tricky opponent in Simon Herbert. There were times when the rallies were frustrating Adrian with the movement patterns but when it mattered, Adrian remained calm and used his deception to get over the line.

Joe had a tough first game and it looked like the match result could have gone either way to those watching. In reality Joe had made Elliott work so hard for the first game he had nearly broken him. An added bonus for Joe was he also gave his body time to get used to the fast-paced squash. An increase in errors from Elliott and perfect placement of the ball from Joe saw the next three games go Joe's way.

Jonah showed maturity beyond his 17 years as he looked in control of his match from the outset. His speed and ball retrieval as the kidz would say 'is a joke'. As he develops his game to use this as a strength more than to retrieve it shows why he has all the attributes to go very high in the professional rankings. A little too many errors in the second game gave his opponent a glimmer of hope but this was quickly extinguished with quality squash in the next two games

Roehampton Club beat Edgbaston 4-0.

Game Scores

Nathan Lake beat George Parker 3-0. 11/5, 11/4, 11/3.

Adrian Waller beat Simon Herbert 3-1. 11/6, 10/12, 11/7, 11/7.

Joe Lee beat Elliott Morris 3-1. 11/13, 11/3, 11/3, 11/3.

Jonah Bryant beat Will Salter 3-1. 11/5, 6/11, 11/4, 11/4.

In the Ladies' Final Roehampton Club faced Edgbaston Priory.

A change of playing order saw the number ones go on first.

Satomi, on first, had come from Manchester that morning after losing in the semi-final the night before (amazing

performance, result, and commitment). Against a tricky opponent in Millie, Satomi started well and was showing no signs of tiredness after four tough matches in the previous four days.

Quality of movement and striking of the ball was too much for Millie to handle as she couldn't settle. The second started in the same vein with Satomi just too good but now Millie was asking more questions and extending the rallies to try to tire Satomi. Satomi held on in a close second game.

The third game was close but a few too many 'flicks' at the front of the court mid-way through the game saw Satomi lose her depth of shot and control of the rallies. Millie took full advantage to take the third game against a tiring Satomi. Some wise words in between games from 'coach' Jazz, helpfully assisted by me, saw Satomi refocus and not allow Millie to control the middle of the court. Satomi won the fourth game and the match 11/5.

Katie went on against Kiera, and while favourite on paper to win it would prove to be a test of patience. A slow start to settle into the match on a warm court, added to with Kiera playing well, Katie had to work hard for every point. This is exactly what Katie did, again with wonderful advice from Jazz, and after a very close first game Katie was just too good winning the match 3-0 and meaning Roehampton Club had retained the Ladies' National Club Championship title.

Although the result was now immaterial Jazz went on court to play Yashmita in a best of three. No coaching required in between games for Jazz as she quickly dispatched of Yashmita while treating the watching crowd to some wonderful winning shots.

Roehampton Club beat Edgbaston Priory 3-0.

Game Scores

Satomi Watanabe beat Millie Tomlinson 3-1. 11/7, 11/9, 7/11, 11/5

Jasmine Hutton beat Yashmita Jadishkumar 3-0. 11/3, 11/5, 11/0.

Katie Malliff beat Kiera Marshall 3-0. 11/9, 11/5, 11/2.

The Men's Team played Surbiton in the final.

A battle of the noisy supporters. Surbiton had numbers in depth while Roehampton Club support included chief vocal supporter / antagonist Michael Hill, whose support over the weekend along with Marc Newey, was greatly appreciated by all the Roehampton Club team.

First matches on saw Adrian play Raphael Kandra (world rank 28)

and Jonah play Josh Masters (previous high world rank 50)

Roehampton Club have played in this competition for ten years now and experience plays a part ... as we realised toward the end! The gut feeling was this result would be close regardless of the match scores and wow, it was close.



Rather than individual reports on matches I want to highlight the players' personalities how they represent the Club, enhance its reputation and brand nationally and globally.

Adrian's match was nothing short of world class against a top-class opponent. The match was fast, free flowing and like gladiators delivering near knockout punches they both kept getting back up. Adrian is the perfect team player, even two games down he knew the importance of the format and scoring. Each game could be vital, even points. His effort and desire to help the team was maxed out getting back to two games all with each game score so close. Gutting to lose 3-2 but it would prove to be huge overall. Good with restaurant recommendations too.

Jonah, against Josh was always intriguing. Josh can win a match as quick as Ronnie O'Sullivan wins a snooker frame. Jonah on the other hand can get to nearly any ball on the court. This match saw endless swings in momentum with everyone watching in awe. Jonah was giving everything and words of advice from Joe and I in between games show he wants to learn (wisely he listened to Joe a lot more than me!) What stood out though was a fist pump in later games, the care and pride he showed to help the Club and team try get a result. An unbelievable deciding game in which two players had given everything but Jonah crucially won.

Joe followed Jonah on court (Adrian was still battling away on the other court). Joe has been with us since the start of our national club journey and as with Adrian his experience and knowledge is invaluable. Joe might be a quietish character but when he speaks you listen ... he wants to make others better, his passion, knowledge of and enthusiasm for the sport is as good as anyone. Lucky for him I was there in between games to help him. An unusual first game that while Joe didn't do anything wrong, he also hadn't really done that much right to have won so easy. Advice, do the same

but be prepared it should get tougher. It never did. Joe quietly dismantled his opponent winning the tough battles when asked and playing the quality shots when opportunity presented.

Charlie had just got on court before Joe had won, not knowing the game scores. Charlie had a slight injury but his willingness to play the match for the team and Club showed why he is so important; without Charlie we would not have had the same opportunity to fight for the title. Although we were 2-1 up matches, Charlie might need to win a game to get the team victory and with this he gave his all to get over the line. A close first game went Surbiton's way and although Charlie knew Joe had won, the team still needed that game for the title. Another close second game went the way of Surbiton. Some quick maths by Steve Richardson assisted by Dave Newman who has a PHD in 'Quantum Thermodynamics in the strong coupling regime' (he's OK with numbers) meant we had retained the title by virtue of points on countback even if Charlie didn't win. Charlie lost the match but won us the title.

All four played as an important part in the win as each other ... as did all those involved even if not directly playing.

Both the Men's and Ladies' Squads are a team, one I hope all Members are proud of.

Roehampton Club beat Surbiton 2-2*.

Game Scores

Adrian Waller Lost Raphael Kandra 2-3. 9/11, 10/12, 11/8, 11/9, 9/11.

Charlie Lee lost Ben Coleman 0-3. 7/11, 8/11, 6/11.

Joe Lee beat Jack Mitterer 3-0. 11/3, 11/4, 11/2.

Jonah Bryant beat Josh Masters 3-2. 9/11, 11/9, 11/8, 6/11, 11/8.

**Roehampton Club win on points countback.*

A mention to the Over 35s' Team of Steve Richardson and Dave Newman who were runners up to Alderley Edge and thanks to Emily for stepping in to play.

