

Girls U21 Handicap Singles held at Radley 18th - 19th November 2023

Winner: Lydia Compton-Burnett

Finalist: Martha Raitt



Tournament Report:

The tournament was slightly down in numbers this year with a few players unavoidably dropping out at the last moment, however, the standard was extremely high. After the success of last year's tournament format, we again placed players into groups of with similar handicap and allowing the winner of the group to then go forward to play in the next group and so on.

Saturday's group only had 3 players and they all played well above their handicap! Eventually much improved Daisy went through as winner of the group.

In group 2 the matches were totally dominated by who could produce a decent serve. Martha v Daisy was the closest match in the group with Martha reeling off a series of topspin sidewall serves, where if the ball didn't hit the nick, it shot out high to the side and into the receiving player. Daisy who served well herself, rallied well to only lose 6 – 4 to Martha. Martha going through as group winner.

In the final group there was some excellent tennis. In some cases, the handicap was so large we had to apply the ruling that there should be no more than a 20-point difference. Alice Vyvyan Robinson with a 49 handicap, played with great composure throughout her matches when she gave away a minimum of 17 points in any match. Martha's serve went from strength to strength, and, in addition, she hit some lovely backhands to the base of the grille. Much improved Felicity's railroad serve was most effective in her match v Cordelia. Whilst Cordelia hit some good balls off the back wall, she couldn't quite get into the consistent rhythm that resulted in her winning the competition last year. Lydia, always very composed, showed that she was quick around the court, strong with her floor shots as well a good volleyer. Martha and Lydia came through as winner and runner-up of the group to play in the Final.



So, to the final. In the group match Martha had won 6 – 4, Martha was improving all the time and becoming more consistent, plus her serve was even more deadly. Would Lydia find an answer of how to return the serve well? Martha received 15 every game, Lydia was owe half 30. It was a **cracking** final! The game score went 1 – 0, 1 – 1, 2 – 1, 2 – 2, sometimes Martha going a game up, sometimes Lydia taking the lead by a game. Martha continued to hit some more nick serves and would go 40-love up but then Lydia managed to move out wide quickly to position herself well and hit awesome return of serves onto Martha’s backhand to chase 2 or 1 and 2. Martha hit several returns of serve accurately to the dedans, but Lydia volleyed beautifully on the stretch to save the point. Eventually, it was 6 – 6, another close game ensued with some good rests, Lydia making sure she got the ball back leaving Martha wondering what else have I got to do to do to win the point only to make a mistake, Lydia went 7 – 6 in the lead. Lydia who had also served well throughout the match then hit some good serves to go 40 – 15 up; so, 2 match points. Martha won the next point, still match point to Lydia. Then with an open court Lydia overhit the next point to give away a hazard chase. Martha then hit a good serve, but Lydia moved swiftly hitting a great length return onto Martha’s backhand so winning the chase and the competition.

With grateful thanks to Radley College for allowing us to host the event and to Chris, Nino and Alex for their marking throughout the weekend.

Report by Jill Newby

