

National School Girls Level Under 15 Singles & Doubles Championships 9th and 10th March 2024 at Wellington College

Singles Winners: Darcie
Doubles Winners: Darcie and Eadie



Singles Competition:

A wonderful seven different schools were represented in this U15 tournament; with a total of 12 entries. For relative beginners in the first group the play was exceptionally high. Every girl had at least two if not three different serves that they could play accurately. There were some very close matches; Erin and Diya both ran and rallied well but it was Alice and Eadie who played out the match to see who the group winner was. It was a very tight match with Eadie hitting some lovely backhands but Alice playing consistently also hitting some cracking volleys and eventually took the game 5 – 3 and thus going through as group the winner.

In the second group Millie and Charlotte hit some lovely cross court forehands. The group winner would be decided in the last match, Cecily v Alice. This went game for game, reaching 4 all 40 all. Left- handed Alice coped really well with hitting some great backhand return of serves; meanwhile Cecily made sure she got every ball back winning the final point to go through to the next group.

In this next group everyone retrieved well and attacked the ball when given the opportunity. Yet again, it took the last match on court, Jessica v Cecily, to decide who would go through. It was an excellent match, Cecily getting off to a good 2 – 0 lead but then Jessica found greater consistency, started volleying well and it went to 4 – 4. Jessica was at the serving end and hit some unreturnable nick serves to take the match and go through as group winner. Rose went through as runner-up with number of games won.

The level of play in this final group really went up in quality. Whilst Rose and Jessica had gained valuable experience from their previous group matches, it was Darcie v Georgia who were clearly head and shoulders above and they went through to the final with ease.

The final was going to be one 8-game set.

In their group match Darcie had taken some time to settle into the game and over-hit the ball whilst Georgia had calmly hit balls to a good length. This time Darcie got off to a flying start, serving to an impeccable length, taking a 5 – 0 lead. Georgia had hit some quality shots and knew she had to get down to and stay at the serving end. Georgia capitalised winning a couple of games with some excellent inside to out return of serves to Darcie's backhand to take it to 5 – 2. However, several times when Darcie was at the receiving end, she cleverly hit a sidewall boast to last gallery to get herself a chase and the serve. The standard of play in the last three games became even higher and whilst Georgia was quick about the court, retrieving well and volleying brilliantly, Darcie would continue to hit so accurately into both corners and hitting some beautiful cross court backhands just in front of the tambour to deservedly win the match 8 – 2 and the title.



Doubles Competition:

5 pairs competed in this competition from 5 different schools. 3 pairs featured in the first group which meant they would all play a one 8-game set with 2 pairs going through to the final group. This was a closely fought group where all the girls played confidently and showed their serving prowess. Excellent railroad services by Charlotte and Rose's strong volleying helped them to win both their matches and therefore to win the group, with Siena and Millie as runners-up having won one match. Special mention to Alice and Diya who had never played doubles before being relative newcomers to the game – both from Edgbarrow School and showing much potential.

The final group featured sisters, Darcie and Eadie, Georgia and Cecily as well as the winners and runners-up from the previous group. With 4 pairs in the group, they would play one



6-game set. Darcie and Eadie and Georgia and Cecily proved they were just too strong for the other 2 pairs and went through to the final of the competition.

The final would be a one 8-game set. Darcie and Eadie continued with their game plan of ensuring that Darcie dominated the play as she was clearly the strongest of the players on court. They took the first game, but Georgia and Cecily made it 1-1 with accurate serving which Eadie found difficult to return. The following game, Georgia served only to find that Darcie's accurate return of serves into the forehand corner were just too strong for Cecily to return, forcing errors each time, 2-1 to Darcie and Eadie. Not too disheartened, Cecily then served to Eadie and, again, her serves proved too difficult for Eadie to return. Games were level at 2-2. Georgia and Cecily then lost the service end when Darcie secured 2 chases which she defended successfully and won the game, making it 3-2. Despite Georgia and Cecily's constant efforts to stay at the service end, Darcie's consistency and her ability to retrieve proved just too difficult for Georgia and Cecily resulting in Darcie and Eadie winning the match 8-3.

Congratulations to Darcie on a successful weekend having won both the singles and doubles competitions. She also now holds both the U19 and U15 National Schools Singles titles.

Our thanks to Dan Jones and Adam Player for marking and overseeing the draw and to The Dedanists' Society for sponsoring the competition. Also, our thanks to Wellington College for hosting the competition and for providing a sandwiches and cake on both days.

Jill Newby and Alex Garside