

## National School Girls Level Under 15 Tournament Singles and Doubles 2023

4th and 5<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at Wellington College

Singles Winners: Darcie

Doubles Winners: Darcie and Martha



### U15 Singles

A magnificent 15 girls entered the singles competition representing 7 different schools. For many it was their first ever tournament and it was a question of whoever was at the serving end won the game. Similar to the U19 Schools, players were placed in groups with the group winner and sometimes the runner- up going through to the next group.

In the first group, Lola Chisholm and Millie Macleod, both Wellington, played very confidently and went through to the next group as winner and runner-up respectively. There were lots of tight matches in the next group. Despite some excellent serving Charlotte Poolman (Oratory) was unlucky not to win more matches. Lola and Millie continued to play well and this time it was Millie's turn to come top of the group and again gain promotion! In our third group, Isabella Wylie (Charterhouse) and Daisy Clifford (Oratory) demonstrated their tournament experience with Isabella winning the group with some particularly good forehands to the base of the tambour. In this next group all the matches were very close, irrespective of the final score. Clemmie Batstone (Wellington) and Martha Raitt (Hinchley Wood Secondary) went to 4 – 4 40 all, both players producing wonderful length serves with eventually Clemmie winning. Martha's next match was against Isabella Wylie and again this match went to 4 – 4 40 all with Martha winning on this occasion. Clemmie looking more attacking these days won her

remaining two matches and thus the group, but 2<sup>nd</sup> place went to Isabella who had the same number of match wins and games won as Martha but had lost fewer games.

The fourth and final group started with Darcie Blaber (Esher CofE High School) v Malati Rice (Redmaids High School). Darcie served first and took immediate control of the match with good serving and strong groundstrokes. Malati didn't get to the service end until the third game and that was not for long. Darcie proved too strong for her and took the match 5-0. Malati then played Isabella Wylie and despite good retrieving from Isabella, Malati had got her eye in and produced some strong hitting which was just too good for Isabella. Malati won the match 5-2. Isabella then played Clemmie both of whom had played each other in the previous group so knew each other's game. Despite a strong start by Isabella winning the first game, Clemmie took control with a 4-1 lead. Isabella fought back in the next game to win it from 40 all. However, Clemmie was too strong and took the match 5-2. Clemmie stayed on to play Darcie. Darcie took a 3-0 lead before Clemmie with fine retrieving clawed back a game. That was the only game Clemmie won despite each game being closely fought, Darcie taking the match 5-1. Darcie continued to dominate in her next match against Isabella beating her 5-1. The last match in the group saw Malati and Clemmie having a close match but with Malati taking the match 5-2 despite fine volleying from Clemmie.

Final: Darcie v Malati – Darcie made a nervous start by serving a double fault. However, she soon recovered and promptly took the first game. In the second game, Darcie showed us just how good her backhand is by stroking the ball to a decent length under the grille followed by some good retrieving and fine serving. Before we knew it, Darcie was leading 6-0. Malati got the next game showing us her strength of shot, winning it at 40-all and we thought this would be the beginning of the comeback! However, Darcie proved to be too strong beating Malati 8-1. Despite this loss, Malati showed good promise, hitting the ball with strength and volleying well. Congratulations to Darcie on winning the U15 title.

### U15 Doubles

Unfortunately there were some last-minute dropouts through injury, so the competition was reduced to 5 pairs. The first group comprised of 3 pairs playing an 8-game set with the winners and runners-up of the group going through to the final group of 4 pairs.

First on court were Isabella Wylie and Malati Rice v Charlotte Poolman and Daisy Clifford. Isabella and Malati started well and established a good lead. Despite some good serving by Daisy, it was clear that Isabella and Malati were too strong and ran out the winners 8-2. Isabella and Malati stayed on court to play Lola Chisholm and Sophie Davies. Lola and Sophie were playing in their first doubles competition having recently taken up the game. Isabella and Malati started strongly and were soon 3-0 up. In the fourth game Lola and Sophie pushed their opponents to 40-all but sadly just missed taking the game. However, they won the sixth game but failed to get any more games and were beaten 8-1. Two wins for Isabella and Malati meant they were through to the final group. The next match between Charlotte and Daisy against Lola and Sophie would decide who the second pair would be to compete in the final group. Charlotte and Daisy took an early lead and were soon 3-0 up before Lola and Sophie won their first game. It was soon 4-1 to Charlotte and Daisy, however, their opponents were

not giving in lightly. They fought back to 4-4 and then found themselves 6-4 up. Charlotte and Daisy fought back to 6-6 but then found themselves 7-6 down but they didn't give up. Being down the service end they managed to dominate the next two games with some fine serving and retrieving and finally took the match 8-7. Despite the loss, Lola and Sophie played remarkably well for their first tournament and show great potential.

The first match of the final group featured Darcie Blaber and Martha Raitt against Clemmie Batstone and Millie MacLeod (a newcomer to the game). Despite some good rallies, Darcie and Martha dominated the service end and won the match 5-0. Clemmie and Millie were hoping to do better in their next match against Isabella and Malati and indeed won the first game and were soon 2-1 up. However, Isabella and Malati fought back with some good volleying and strong groundstrokes and won the match 5-2. Malati and Isabella stayed on court and continued in the same manner as their previous match and proved just too strong for Charlotte and Daisy winning the match 5-2. Charlotte and Daisy then faced Darcie and Martha. Darcie and Martha were soon leading 2-0 through some strong play by both individuals, their underarm cut serves being particularly effective. Charlotte and Daisy managed to win the third game but it was clear that Darcie and Martha were just too good, winning the match 5-1. Darcie and Martha continued demonstrating just how strong a pair they were by comfortably beating Isabella and Malati 5-1. The last game of the group saw Charlotte and Daisy playing Clemmie and Millie. This match was poised at 2-2 before Clemmie and Millie took control and ran out the winners 5-2. So the winners and runners-up of the group to compete in the final were Darcie and Martha v Isabella and Malati playing an 8-game set.

Once again, Darcie and Martha started strongly taking a commanding 5-0 lead through fine stroke play by both girls, but particularly Darcie's backhand cross court which she played to a good length under the grille. Isabella and Malati put up a brave fight through some fine retrieving and volleying and managed to claw back two games. Darcie and Martha lead by 7-2 and despite another brave effort by Isabella and Malati to take a further two games, Darcie and Martha took the match and the title 8-4.

Our thanks to Wellington College for hosting this competition and for providing food and refreshments. Thanks also to Dan and Adam for their brilliant marking as well as assisting with some of the administration. Finally, our thanks to The Dedanists' Society for their generous sponsorship.

*Report by Jill Newby and Alex Garside*