

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY SQUASH RACQUETS CLUB

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026



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PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

I'm Raphie, the now ex-President of CUSRC. Firstly, thank you for your support as an alumnus! This newsletter arrives a little later than planned, thanks in part to the strange structure of the Part III Physics course, and to preparations for our upcoming Summer Alumni Event 2026. I write in the knowledge that my successor will have better time-management skills than I do.

As someone who is fairly present on the south-east squash scene (a so-called tournament-grinding merchant) I've had the pleasure of meeting far more active and still-playing CUSRC alumni than I ever expected. It is unfortunate, however, that a number of them are not yet in our database, which we have been steadily building over the past few years. If you know any CUSRC graduates who are not on our mailing list, I would be grateful if you could pass on this [link](#) so that we can continue to grow our network.

I am truly grateful for your help in keeping the CUSRC community vibrant, for both students and alumni. I'd also like to put up special thanks to our wonderful Alumni committee in particular to Arundhati Saraswatula, Pierson Klein and Adi Varshney for their contributions in editing the pieces of this newsletter.



I am very pleased with the club's Varsity performances this year, with the Cambridge Blues returning to the established normal order with two wins and the Men's Second Team retaining a hard-fought title. However, it seems like we're stuck in a whack-a-mole game at the moment, as unfortunately we were unable to keep hold of the Women's Second Team trophy. Despite a thirds successive year of three wins and one loss, with the way CUSRC is progressing, I fully expect to be reading about "a clean sweep across all Varsity matches" in the next couple of years.



A recurring message, but an important one: CUSRC continues to do its best to get people playing squash. As ever, the costs of running a club are increasing, and continued alumni support is invaluable in helping us provide an accessible route into squash at university.

This year, we have introduced a social membership for the club, with the aim of increasing accessibility across the university and giving recreational players a way to meet like-minded people. This has helped bring club membership to 100 for the year. It is a good start, but there is still a long way to go if we are to make squash as accessible as it should be in a city with surely the highest court density around. We would love to continue investing in the growth of squash at Cambridge University. If you wish to support the club, the easiest way to do so is [here](#).



I can't help but feel nostalgic as I write this welcome, as it marks the end of my time with CUSRC. Given that I arrived at university intending to focus on tennis, the way my time with the club has unfolded has been rather unexpected. My switch to squash, and my continued focus on it, is entirely due to the community that CUSRC has fostered throughout my degree.

Even though I now don't understand what any of the jokes made by our freshers mean, I still see CUSRC as both a platform for university squash and a way to meet some of your closest friends. I can only thank the club for how welcoming and vibrant it has been throughout my time here.

Raphael Reeves (President 25/26)



Looking up to the stands at an alumni event to argue that they deserved a stroke in social doubles



Past and more past presidents enjoying the post H&O Sunrise by the river



Average English scoring experience (this was in fact a best of 3 American match). Mr Reeves has always had questionable fitness.



WOMEN'S BLUES

After weeks of intensive training, including perfecting our serves as Aubrey Waddy will be happy to hear, the only important day in the entire squash and academic year was upon us. After a criminally early start in Hot Numbers, the Blues were bolstered by caffeine, carbs, and stunning colour coordination (on the women's side at least). Chasing a fifth-running varsity victory, the Cambridge women descended on the RAC in matching blue blazers, blue nails, blue grips, blue kit (hah, gotcha that part didn't change but you get the gist). No matter the result, at least it would be executed in style.

RESERVE: Hannah Manley vs Shradda Gautam

0-3 (Loss)

7-9, 8-10, 2-9

The only new member of the team this year, our varsity reserve, Hannah, kicked off the women's matches in her RAC debut. It was her first experience of the courts and playing with a large crowd of spectators, but she took it all in her stride and produced an impressive performance. Powerful serves and drives took her opponent aback and Hannah pushed every point to the limit with a nail-bitingly close first couple of games. It's cliché, but each could easily have gone the other way, particularly given her three-game-ball lead in the second. Sadly, it was not meant to be and while the Cambs League grind over the course of the year had clearly paid off, it didn't quite translate to the scoreboard on this occasion.

#5 Lana Howell vs Daniella Braw-Smith

3-0 (Win)

9-2, 10-8, 9-7

In what can only be described as the ultimate power move, Lana elected to perfectly mirror Hannah's scoreline, crucially, in Cambridge's favour. Balance to the univers(ity-rivalry)e restored. A controlled first game lulled us into a false sense of security, but in her newly gluten-free state, the whiff of a bagel threw her off and her opponent fought back hard with characteristic defiance (cue her later 2s varsity refereeing calls) and things got spicy at 8-8 in the second. Naturally, Lana had it under control the entire time and closed the match off with a close but definitive 9-7 finish. Another, this time pre-emptive, defeat of an OUSRC president*.

** incoming...*

#4 Florence Gibson vs Evelyn Murrell

3-0 (Win)

9-7, 9-0, 9-1

It was the jarring memories of last year's defeat: the racket-induced facial injuries, the wild, unfounded accusations of time-wasting and the raucous Ox*rd crowd that fuelled Florence's preparation this year (think movie training sequence). She returned another year older, another year wiser, and another year more cautious of doing the splits on court every ten seconds. To quote Florence herself, she "nearly bottled the first game" (clearly for the narrative tension and drama of this report, drawing on her extensive newsletter experience as social sec). But all was not lost as she locked in harder than she ever has in Caius library and flew through the next two. A masterful performance, securing her the coveted title of Women's player of the match and the corresponding obscenely large trophy. Her skills and successes don't end there, as she is also the producer of a Hollywood-quality Blues Varsity Instagram reel, which you should all go and watch.





#3 Izzy Sargent vs Tanisha Reddy

3-0 (Win)

9-1, 9-0, 9-0

There was, briefly, drama. A tragic lapse in concentration in the very first rally (historians will surely debate where it all went wrong) denied her the coveted triple bagel*. Oxf*rd, understandably unfamiliar with scoring points, celebrated as though they'd just secured the match itself. A good job that they got it out of their system too, because there was little outlet for it after that point. If the rallies were short, spectators' attention span for the match was even shorter, making writing my own match report rather awkward. There isn't really much more to say, so in the meantime, here is some food for thought...

*



#2 Michelle Tang vs Aria Appoo

3-0 (Win)

9-0, 9-0, 9-1

By this point in the fixture, Oxf*rd were rightfully losing all hope and switched tactics to damage control, now aiming to match their score in points to the score in matches, a bold statistical innovation. At least they could claim to have gone "two for two" at one point in the fixture. Surely no one would notice. Having been somewhat unwilling to join the matching turquoise accessories, Michelle opted to balance the added outfit malarkey with a minimalist but effective approach to the match. A graduate medic, she was suitably clinical and kept the scoreline just high enough to prove that it wasn't simply a walkover, even conceding 50% fewer points than last year, which sounds a lot more significant than it actually is.

#1 Ellie White vs Amelia Henley

0-3 (Loss)

5-9, 2-9, 1-9

Ellie was unlucky enough to contracted a back injury in the warmup, completing in the nick of time the full set of varsity squad members to report to me injured before the match. There were tragic pre-fixture scenes as she lay flat as a racket (?) on the changing room floor. But all was not lost as emergency ibuprofen acquisition by Natan, and characteristic determination got her back up and fighting fit. Since last year's face-off against the infamous Amelia Henley, Ellie has been hard at work, putting in hours of medicine, work and revision gym, squash, and sauna at Addenbrookes. Though we had high hopes, English scoring is unforgiving, and many tight rallies in a close and entertaining match unfortunately culminated in defeat. With the rate of Ellie's improvement, I am sure that Amelia will be thankful that her varsity run is at an end. We can only hope that the five-year Cambridge win streak coinciding with Ellie's presence in the team is merely coincidental.

Report by Izzy Sargent



MEN'S BLUES



Reserve: Jack Murzynowski vs Henry Tebbs

As the crowd built up over the course of the day, the temperature in the Royal Automobile Club slowly crept up; perfect for our absolute cannon of a reserve. The final addition to the squad, Jack was eager to show what he was made of. As it was his first year playing for CUSRC, Oxford were unaware of Jack's game. They chose the wrong strategy. Oxford's captain committed to a hard-hitting game with our resident ball-smacker, who in turn, caned the ball with such ferocity that his opponent was unable to keep up.

Win: 9-2, 7-9, 7-9, 9-6, 9-4

#5 - Weng Yean Kan vs Alex Banhidai

The rising temperature, however, was not to the benefit of Weng Yean, who tends to win most points in the front of the court. His propensity to hit loose cross-courts towards the lefty giant's forehand did not help either. His speed onto the ball did cause his opponent some problems, but he still ultimately lost the crucial second game. The captain did well to take the next set back, but with both players gasping for air throughout the last game, Oxford's accuracy and size proved too much for Weng Yean to handle.

Loss: 1-9, 8-10, 9-3, 4-9



#4 - Isac Andersson vs Patrick Foley

"A great matchup," Raphie assessed, and boy was he right. Isac tore the former Oxford #1 seed apart with his tricky timing, anti-metronomic tempo and raw power as his shots sent Patrick all over the shop. Isac had his Oxford counterpart completely befuddled, which was apparent from Patrick's looks of despair up to his Dad in the stands whenever Isac rebuffed the cross-court attacks. The Cambridge spectators felt some sympathy for Patrick; what can you do when your opponent knows your next move before you do?

Win: 9-1, 9-4, 3-9, 9-5



#3 - Raphie Reeves vs Eric Wang

During a private conversation between the President and the Captain, this match-up (and the 5th string) was deemed a must-win match. An attempt to scout the opponent out through Eric's former teammate at Harvard, Zach (Cambridge #7), was rather misleading. "He's good. Don't give him his forehand kill." It seems Zach forgot about all of Eric's other strengths as the smooth mover felt like an immovable wall for Raphie, who found it difficult to squeeze and point out of his opponent. Tough day at the office for the President in his final Varsity match, but the consistent effort and commitment he gave to this club well offset this one unfortunate result.

Loss: 3-9, 1-9, 3-9

#2 - Natan Weigenfeld vs Sean White

A year ago, Natan was ranked in the bottom-half of CUSRC's 40 members, and Natan pummelled his way up the ladder and landed himself at #7 on Varsity day. His climb to #2 has been nothing short of extraordinary, even bordering on prodigal. He lost the first set rather convincingly, but after some advice from Coach Rob Dadds, Natan turned the tables on his opponent. After a shot that sent his opponent the wrong way, the 19 year-old Phd student looked out at Rob with a cheeky smirk on his face as if to say, "I understand it now." After a long third game, Natan's endless engine was finally warmed up and revving, whereas his opponent's had run out of gas.

Win: 3-9, 9-3, 10-8, 9-0

#1 - Anant Gupta vs Adhish Kancharla

Having lost the decider to the same opponent last year, Anant had been eager for this rematch all season. Allegedly this was the reason he tried so hard in the team playoffs this season. Perhaps a little over-confident after last year's victory or perhaps as a tribute to his former captain - Adhish opted to win by 1 at 8-all in the first game. Anant punished this overconfidence by taking the game immediately.

Adhish is a strong player undoubtedly; he led for most of the first three games, winning the second and third games. It had been 58 minutes of squash already. Anant had no idea Natan had won at this point, and his hunger for victory was enough to keep him going. By the fourth game, Anant's relentless retrieving and attacks had taken their toll on Adhish's body. Fit as a fiddle, Anant took the final games with a clean, crispy bagel to bag himself the revenge win, the win for Cambridge, and a well-deserved Man Of The Match trophy. All in all, a great day of squash.

Win: 9-8, 7-9, 5-9, 9-2, 9-0

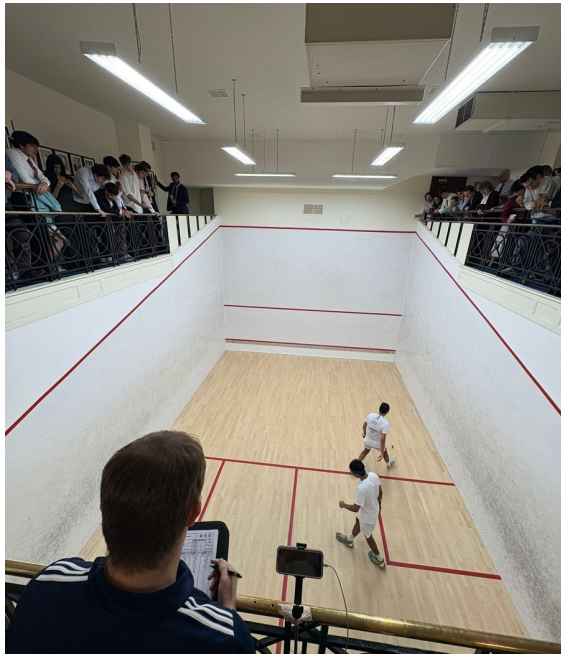
Report by Weng Yean Kan



Not one phone in sight as the Men's Blues Varsity match reaches its climax (aside from the one with the live stream that failed due to the underground nature of this prestigious venue)



MEN'S BLUES — MATCH GALLERY



Some subtle proof to say that Varsity refereeing decisions aren't made purely using a random number generator, despite the protests of some players



A bird's eye view of the squad that helps hide the vast range of heights in the team, much to Isaac's personal joy



A bird's eye view of the captain waiting for his opponent to return to battle

THE RESERVES

MEN'S RESERVES



After the high standards set last year, when Cambridge came close to a clean sweep of the Oxford Men's 2s, the pressure was firmly on the Cambridge men to deliver again. Oxford began 2026 in familiar fashion by making life complicated: first they could only field 13 players, then this was reduced to 12 at the last minute. With several of CUSRC's most valiant members left hovering around the cut-off line, a compromise was reached. The Oxford 2s captain would play twice, at positions 12 and 13. In a surprising flash of generosity, Oxford also suggested that every match should count towards the overall result, despite arguing against the same idea last year. Maybe they do have souls after all.

The day began with an early gathering at the central bus station. Cambridge was quiet, and there was no one to wave off our heroes. The first of two long bus journeys passed mostly in silence and quiet pondering (we were tired, and team-building is difficult at 6am) but spirits lifted on the second stretch as conversation turned to the task ahead.

The matches began slightly late, which we shall blame on the universe rather than any specific individuals. Aaron Macwhirter was first on court, with the squad watching to see whether waiting to see if a repeat of last year's lower order domination would occur. After a gruelling five-setter that pushed him to his limits, Aaron was narrowly beaten, and the day began with a loss for Cambridge.

The tide turned quickly. Joe Betts, our beloved former M2+ captain, arrived for his final match against Oxford having never dropped a game against them. He kept that record intact in emphatic style, taking a decisive 3-0 win and completing a clean sweep against Oxford across his years at CUSRC. Brandon then got the pulses racing with another five-setter, eventually edging it after letting it get to 10-8 in the final game. From there, Cambridge began to stretch away, with Wil, Shash and Alex all recording comfortable 3-0 wins. Some say Alex Glover didn't break a sweat, but then again, does he ever?



At 6-1 up, we needed just one more win to secure the overall victory. This was the moment of ecstasy the captain had been dreaming of, but he would have to wait a little longer. Elliot Park, our returning superstar and former Cambridge Master's student from an undisclosed number of years ago, was unable to convert his match. With the M3s and a truncated M4 unable to finish the job, all eyes turned to the M2s.



Neil started strongly, dispatching his opponent 3-1 with typical determination. A man who strives for perfection, Neil still managed to look so frustrated during the match that Anant briefly mistook his 9-1 lead for a defeat. That pursuit of perfection was tested again when Neil fumbled three match balls, before deciding that the moment called for something special: the fulfilment of a bet with a Mr Benjamin Pang. Out came a magnificent corkscrew serve, and with it came the win Cambridge needed. The trophy was ours!

Ben Pang, meanwhile, submitted a report of his own match that was approximately the length of the entire newsletter. It included such gems as, "There are matches, and then there are moments that become folklore," and described his contest as "something closer to attrition warfare than squash". He also claimed inspiration arrived when a voice cut through the tension with, "If I had one shot, one opportunity..." Sounds like he swallowed a dictionary. Still, he won 3-0, so fair enough, I suppose.

Next up was Jack Newey, who, hampered by illness, was unable to convert his match. Then Tom suffered an unfortunate calf cramp, leaving the M2s tied at 2-2. That meant the honour of the M2s, and indeed the whole club, came down to Zach Baskir.

Zach stepped into the arena and did not disappoint. With the crowd now packed around centre court, he produced a dazzling spectacle, seemingly guided by the spirit of Paul Coll. After three separate requests for court service to mop up the sweat from Zach's dives, he finally prevailed in a long and brutal battle, winning 3-2 and bringing the M2s contest home.

A final shout-out must go to all the club members who did not make the cut for the limited M2+ Varsity spots. Their dedication to training and league matches made my life as the captain a great deal more enjoyable throughout the season. We hope to see as many of them as possible back next year, though I think I've had enough of captaining for now. GDBO.

Report by Wil Jones





MEN'S RESERVES — THE SCORECARD

Seed	Oxford	Cambridge	Score
①	Stan King	Zach Baskir ✓	
②	Ed Wheeler	Tom Wight ✓	3-1
③	Daniel Seo	Jack Newey ✓	3-1
④	Ben Reynolds	Ben Pang ✓	0-3
⑤	Ahmed Diab	Neil Prabhu ✓	1-3
⑥	Matt Hitchens	Elliot Park ✓	3-1
⑦	Yusuf Kundgol	Alex Glover ✓	0-3
⑧	Yusuf Aggour	Shashank Bhandari ✓	0-3
⑨	Luke Trotman	Wil Jones ✓	0-3
⑩	Humayun Husain	Brandon McBride ✓	2-3
⑪	Will Gladston	Joe Betts ✓	0-3
12	Brian Chan	Arjun Rajkumar ✓	0-3
⑬	Brian Chan	Aaron MacWhirter ✓	3-2

The scorecard for Men's reserves varsity this year. You may be wondering why:

1. 12 is not circled
2. Elliot is in bold
3. Zach's score is typed in
4. Some numbers have ticks
5. Why is Brian Chan handwritten and circled

I don't know the answer to any of these, but I do know that the rightmost column denotes a dominant 9-4 victory for Cambridge.



WOMEN'S RESERVES



Cambridge LOSS 1-9

Annabel Davies
Devin McDonald
Karen Kan
Izzy Heath
Shreya Aggarwal
Alison Dauris (Captain)
Orla McMahon
Lucy Lapworth
Aayati Visaria
Lillian Auld

Friendlies:

Holly Curtis
Becky Turner

This year was another brilliant one for W2 squash, with lots of brilliant new faces joining the team. It's been especially rewarding to see not just the level of improvement across the board, but also how quickly everyone threw themselves into the spirit of the squad. The progress has been huge – with particular shoutouts to Annabel and Karen, both relatively recent converts to squash, who have come on in leaps and bounds and become formidable players in no time.

While the Varsity results sheet might not look especially kind at first glance, it really doesn't tell the full story. What stood out far more was the atmosphere: constant encouragement from the sidelines, genuine team spirit, and an all-round supportive environment that made the day so enjoyable. Everyone came away feeling proud (and maybe just a little exhausted).



The day itself got off to a slightly chaotic start, with a last-minute withdrawal from our second seed, Grace Harvey, who was much missed as we set off bright and early to Oxfrd. With the coach fashionably late, those fortunate enough to be travelling by car got things underway with three women's matches running in parallel: Lillian, Aayati, and Lucy all kicking things off. Every match was hard-fought, with everyone giving it their absolute all from the first rally to the last. Holly and Becky also played well, putting in a strong performance on the court.



In the middle of the lineup, Izzy, Shreya, Alison and Orla took to the courts and delivered some solid performances, keeping the momentum of the day going nicely. With plenty of long rallies and competitive points, all four showed great determination and composure, contributing to the team's overall effort.

Karen delivered our sole victory of the day – and what a match it was. After a strong start, play was briefly halted when she took a ball to the neck (never ideal), but in true W2 fashion she shook it off, got back on court, and powered through to secure the win. Devin's match kept spectators on edge, not least due to some enthusiastic (and perhaps slightly questionable) refereeing input from the sidelines, while Annabel impressed everyone with her movement and determination, covering the court with real confidence.



A special mention also goes to Theresa Drobnik, Sarah Bithell, and Emily Stonebridge, all key members of the W2 squad this year. Theresa and Sarah were busy rowing (huge congratulations to Sarah on her blades!), while Emily was occupied running the Watersprite Film Festival – clearly a squad of many talents. And of course, congratulations to Becky and Orla, who somehow managed the heroic double of squash varsity on Saturday followed by the Cambridge Half Marathon on Sunday – a truly elite combination.

All in all, it's been a hugely fun and memorable year of squash. Here's hoping that next year brings just as much energy, improvement, and team spirit!

Report by Alison Dauris



ALUMNI COMMITTEE UPDATE

What an outstanding term it's been for our CUSRC students. So much dedication, so many new recruits and a whole lot of excellent squash.

After a stunning Winter Alumni Event and dinner at the O&C last season, which members of all CUSRC vintages attended, a Summer Alumni Event is now in the works. It will take place at the mighty Cumberland Club and will be a pleasure to welcome back familiar faces, hopefully only slightly more jaded than before. Details will follow imminently.

One of the most significant achievements on the alumni front this term has been the names of female Cambridge squash players being listed, for the first time, alongside their male counterparts on the University Sports Centre court boards. With female teams dating back to the 1940s appearing on the walls, the addition reminds us that CUSRC has always had an exceptional female presence. Whether in 1946 or in 2026, squash profoundly shapes our Cambridge experience, so our thanks goes out to all members of the CUSRC community who worked to bring back pride in those memories. Current female membership at the club has reached new heights, and long may it continue. Particular thanks to Raphie Reeves, Juliana Ganendra, Sarah Howlett and Ellie White who organised the finalising of the boards, with support from over 30 alumnae and students who were instrumental in laying the foundations for this achievement. Progress, it turns out, looks bloody good mounted on a light blue board.

I am grateful for all the effort that the Alumni Committee members have put into working with the Student Committee to organise some fantastic events, proving that alumni enthusiasm for squash remains wonderfully resilient. Further thanks to Juliana Ganendra for hosting Alumni meetings, to Dave Simpson for taking minutes and to Pierson Klein and Adi Varshney for editing the newsletter. It's been a pleasure discussing CUSRC's future and its members' needs, not just for the club as it stands but for the many years ahead. If you would like to get involved in these discussions, please do email Juju at julianasganendra@gmail.com.

Cambridge University Squash Rackets Club



Alumni Squash and Dinner | September 2024



Aubrey Waddy | Ollie Pitman (Hidden) | Ollie Norton | Oliver Johnson | Raphie Reeves | Patrick Nickols | Benj Chesser
Mansoor Ahmad (Camera) | Dave Smith | Anant Gupta | Nikhil Sharma | Tom Williamson
Juju Ganendra | Pierson Klein | Lana Howell | Eleanor White | Ben Pang | Damin Kayani | Aditya Varshney



With allegiance to whichever shade of blue is buying me a pint,

Arundhati Saraswatula

On behalf of the Alumni Committee