

THE  
DEVON TENNIS  
COUNTY AWARDS

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE  
BRITISH TENNIS AWARDS

*Presented*

31<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2018



## County Awards 2017 presented 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018

All the nominees are so well deserving that we felt it was important that the reasons for their nominations should be shared with you. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to make these nominations and help us to recognise and honour those people and places that make your experience of our sport that much better.

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### 10 & Under Player of the Year nominations

#### 1. Jessica Johnson – Exmouth Tennis & Fitness Centre

Whilst still only 10 Jessica was playing up in 12 & Under events in 2017 having achieved an green 1\* rating. She always shows a great attitude towards training and is both a good athlete and sportsperson. Jessica gives 100% effort in training and competition and is a pleasure to coach. Her playing record speaks for itself:

- Represented Devon at 10 & Under and 12 & Under County Cup and won a lot of matches!
- Has won a series of Grade 3 events at 10 & Under and was accepted to compete in Grade 2 events. Has competed in full ball 12 & Under and 14 & Under throughout the second half of the year with good results.
- Jessica attends regional training camps and has a hopeful national future.

#### 2. Freddie Swannell – Exeter Golf & Country Club

I have been coaching Freddie now for nearly 2 years; during this time I have seen him progress from a beginner to a competitor as he has gone through each of the mini tennis levels. Both his abilities and his confidence have improved vastly, as has his love for tennis (which is very clear to see). From day 1, his attitude towards learning has been brilliant; always listening closely to my comments and corrections, and striving to implement them into his play, to great effect. As he moved into competitive tennis, again Freddie's attitude impressed me; his drive to do well has always been coupled with a very warm and friendly manner on court, his competitiveness has never turned into over-competitiveness and Freddie has always been very fair during matches. His head doesn't drop when the match isn't going in his favour, he remains upbeat and continues to try his best and use the good technique that he has learnt. I have seen a vast improvement in his matchplay as he has progressed to green ball especially; performing better in tournaments and team challenges, really beginning to utilise his power and attacking abilities which is resulting in some brilliant wins for him. Most recently, he has played some close matches against older/stronger players at the club; Freddie prevailed in these matches due to his fighting spirit, his focused mind and most importantly due to his hard work week in week out during his lessons. All in all, Freddie is a pleasure to coach; his natural ability alongside his hardworking nature and his cool mind on court all contribute to the success he is having. I am sure that as he continues to grow both in physical and mental strength he will continue to become a very good tennis player.

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### Junior Player of the Year nominations

#### 1. Ben Johnson – Exmouth Tennis & Fitness Centre

Ben had a great 2017. He has a great attitude and work rate on and off the court and is a great all round athlete!

- Represented Devon at the 12 & Under and 14 & Under county cups.
- Attended Regional Training and National Training Camps.
- Won various Grade 3 Regional Level tournaments at 12 & Under.
- Accepted in to Tennis Europe events and Grade 2s at 12 & Under.
- Currently ranked 43 nationally at 14 & Under.

#### 2. Matthew Rutter – Exeter Tennis Centre

Matthew has represented Devon County since the age of 9 years, and in some years has played for two age groups. Devon have been Runner Up twice, out of the group of six counties whilst Matt has been playing for the team and he hopes they can do one better in 2018.

Matthew regularly plays at the National level, both in the 14 & Under and 16 & Under age groups. Matt is one of the few boys nationally that qualified for both Grade 1s in their first year of 14 & Under (2016/17). Matthew also regularly plays at the International level with Tennis Europe and has recorded two wins at this level.

In 2017, Matthew has had a very successful year

- Tennis Europe Singles Title
- Tennis Europe doubles Title
- 2 x Tennis Europe doubles RU
- 2 x Tennis Europe singles RU
- 2 x UK Nationals Doubles win.

Matthew started his second year, September 2017, Ranked 14 & Under Number 1 in the UK.

Matthew is a member of the 16 & Under UK National training squad, having attended two national camps this year, as well as a recent screening day and tennis clinics with Tim Henman and Leon Smith. Matt is one of only 2 boys from his age group to be in the 16 & Under squad.

Matthew is a hugely motivated member of the Exeter Tennis Centre, where hard work is welcomed and a passion for tennis encouraged.

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## **Senior Player of the Year nominations**

### **1. Katie Wiltshire**

Katie is now playing at number 1 for her university, Nottingham Trent. This nomination is mainly for her commitment to Devon tennis. She has represented Devon at County cup. She has given of her time to assist with coaching at Sidmouth and Sidford TCs.

She is an amazing young lady who loves her tennis passionately and is a great role model, reliable and dedicated to the County and a great asset.

### **2. Linden Hardisty**

Linden is very supportive of tennis, is an excellent professional tennis coach and an active competitive player.

As County team captain Linden has managed and played in the Devon Vets 45 and 50's teams; he captained both of these teams this summer. His playing record in the Inter County 50's this year was six wins from six matches. Linden is currently ranked number one on the 50's LTA Rankings for the UK having entered five national tournaments. He achieved wins in the singles events in the 50's age groups at both the Fila English Senior Indoor Championships and the British Seniors Grass Court Championships. Linden also achieved good results in the Men's Doubles competitions, the best being a 'finalist' at the Fila English Senior Indoor Championships. On the ITF world ranking chart Linden is at 37 for singles and 95 for men's doubles.

I had the pleasure of supporting the GB teams in Miami the first week in November this year. Linden was a key member of the 50's team who played their matches at the Flamingo Tennis Centre on Miami Beach. There were some successes and some losses resulting in the team finishing 15<sup>th</sup> out of 26 competing countries.

As a valued member Linden has provided the Devon men's team players with some excellent coaching sessions before the commencement of the past two seasons' play. His ideas are based on a full knowledge of what is required to get the best results and can easily relate these aspects to an individual as well as the team. These sessions are always well supported and appreciated.

When considering Linden's coaching commitments it is remarkable that he enters these competitions demonstrating his commitment and enthusiasm for the game of tennis and then, shares that experience to make us all better players.

We take pleasure in nominating Linden for the award of Devon Senior Player of the Year and hope that this submission does justice to this special person's attributes when considered for the award.

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## **Young Coach of the Year nominations**

### **1. Ollie Sharpe – Exmouth Tennis & Fitness Centre**

Ollie's enthusiasm and drive to improve and learn is admirable. He has been County Captain for 9 & Under, 10 & Under, 12 & Under and assistant captain for 14 & Under age group County Cup teams. He acted as head coach for the Devon Academy 10 & Under group and with Tracy Brown, led the 9 & Under County Cup team to victory in the regional competition during the summer.

Ollie is in charge of the 10 & Under East Devon Academy at Exmouth and has coached three County champions this year. He also delivers the schools and competition programme in Exmouth.

Ollie gives great quality on court and players hang on to every word he says. He has a great ability to engage with them. For such a young coach he shows great understanding and also is able to deal with adverse situations with tact and professionalism.

Ollie has done all coaching from beginner adults to mini performance. He has helped Level 1 and 2s with their qualifications and gaining work experience. An all round great coach and go to person!

### **2. Jack Large – Exeter Tennis Centre**

Jack has been a part of the Exeter Tennis Centre team for just over 4 years, one year coaching full time then for 3 years when he was an undergraduate student where he completed his level 3 coaching qualification. He is now our student and performance coach and is a really motivated coach who is dedicated to making this his careers. He uses his wealth of tennis knowledge both at a playing level and coaching skills to support and develop his range of players. He has to adapt to his players as he works with a broad range of players from mini players, top national juniors to national student players. Since he has been employed he has gone over and above of what I would expect from a young coach, putting extra time to support his players and giving up his free time to support these Devon juniors at events. He is also committed to supporting the Devon Academy structure.

Despite being young and involved with the University students he maintains a great level of professionalism. He also helps support new aspiring coaches doing their level 1, 2 and 3 coaching qualifications.

Jack has helped develop our performance programme into something special and provides high quality coaching for players from across Devon. He also supports the centre with developing our mini red programme and is increasing our mini performance players. He also always volunteers at all our schools festival to help increase participation at a development level.

Jack's goal is to go onto to do his LTA level 4 senior performance coach course next year to help develop his coaching skills even more.

I really feel Jack deserves this award as he is so committed to develop players in Devon at all levels and always put 100% into his coaching in order to make his players/groups have a top level session.

### **3. Tia Sloman – Tarka Tennis Centre**

Tia has undertaken the role of Red Performance Coach at Tarka since Sept 2016 where she was assigned to improve our red players in number & standard. Tia has gone far beyond this creating 25 Red Performance players who mainly play twice a week. Two of the boys won the Devon Whirlwind Mini Tour in September 2017, Lincoln Boden was the overall Whirlwind Leaderboard winner & Freddie Lloyd was the Masters Finals winner. 6 players from Tarka competed in that Masters Finals which must be a record from one centre.

Since then we have more new performance reds all competing in Whirlwind events & Tia has now created a girls group of 8 red performance players who are also competing. She looks after talent id & gets involved with other coaches to push through possible future performance players. She is also involved in running junior teenage girls groups & adult sessions proving she is capable of diversifying her skills & knowledge.

Tia is also keen to develop her own coaching skills attending County & Regional training camps as well as looking to take her level 4 Performance award in 2018. She also runs all our Red Whirlwind & other red ball events so she is in touch with parents & players & helping them understand & enjoy competition.

She looks for areas where we can improve the mini programme & actively looks for new ideas & solutions.

Tia is an asset to Tarka & certainly to the future of our performance players, she is extremely popular with players & parents always keen to help & keep players in the game no matter what their background or standard.

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## **Coach of the Year nominations**

### **1. Liam Storey – Exmouth Tennis & Fitness Centre**

Liam delivers a high standard of coaching at every session with quality teaching skills which advance that players at every session with the perfect balance of discipline and humour. We have players from all walks of life and with his dedication we now have a great Academy that is a great success rate amongst the players. Part of our centre's work is to mentor young coaches and Liam has been inspirational in that. In the eight years I have worked at Exmouth with Liam he has turned our centre into a centre that inspires players to be the best they can.

### **2. Guy Leverton – Exeter Tennis Centre**

Guy has definitely helped improve all players' rankings and the squads are now full with a waiting list as every young high performance player wants to train with him. He emanates joy and passion for the sport and he has the extraordinary ability to transmit his high energy levels and enthusiasm and passion to the players of all ages. Anyone watching any of his sessions feels a buzz on the air - an extraordinary quality which I have never seen in a coach anywhere in the UK. Guy is innovative as he 'plays' tennis and doesn't just feed balls to the players.

He challenges them and demonstrates that if he can do it at the age of nearly 50 then there is no reason why they cannot. He never tires and even though he expects total dedication he knows how to make his coaching enjoyable which means that all the players work extremely hard for him and this is then mirrored in their performance in tournaments. All the players of all ages have total respect for him. His sessions are bubbling with noise, excitement, happiness, hard work and energy at 100% - very rare.

Guy not only coaches junior performance players but he is also an Education Tutor and assessor. He coaches players in wheel chairs, has coached the Invictus Tennis Team in the past, and also coaches up and coming young coaches. On court every player is an equal no matter what their background or their financial status and there is never any preferential treatment which encompasses also the team tennis ethos. He inspires young players and has definitely inspired my 13 year old son to continue to play tennis. Guy also organises trips to La Manga every year for junior players His extraordinary high levels of energy, passion and sheer enthusiasm for the sport is what encourages coaches and young people alike. He includes younger coaches in his decision making and supports them to grow and develop as individuals. He is a down to earth person and this is why all the young players can relate to him and for this reason they work so hard and achieve such amazing results

I can only say that it is thanks to Guy that my 13 year old son has not given up tennis and is starting to believe in himself. Since Guy has been coaching my son, he has grown in confidence on and off court. Guy is unique and deserves to be Coach of the Year. It is our way of thanking him for all he has done and is doing for my son and all the other players and coaches he has taken under his wing. An extraordinary person.

### **3. Tom Vinall – Alantic Raquet Centre**

When Tom joined ARC in 2015 there were 54 participants in the coaching programme. In 2017 this figure is now 305 with sessions being increased from once fortnightly to 6 mini red per week and 3 per week for all other categories. There is a total of 59 hours of coaching available on our 6 outside courts. Tom has increased his team to 3 full time and 2 part time coaches to accommodate all the extra coaching sessions provided in his programme. His total commitment and enthusiasm has re-invigorated the whole club and means we now have more kids and adults learning to play tennis.

Tom is very proud of his innovation of running Cardio Tennis and Tennis Xpress sessions alongside the Mini Red and Orange groups. This encourages the parents and carers of the children to join in with tennis based activities and are no longer standing around waiting for their child to finish their coaching. This has proved extremely popular and has increased adult participation and membership of the club.

Tom has links with 14 primary schools in the area. There are before, during and after school clubs where all abilities have the opportunity to play tennis. There is an arrangement with a local care centre for adults with learning difficulties to attend the club once a week where they have a coach led session. Tom also attends a special school once a week for children with all disabilities.

Tom starts our younger members as Tennis Leaders initially and then helps them towards their level 1 qualification. There have been 10 since he started. Tom was very instrumental in bringing a full time female coach to the club as he could see the value of having a female on the team. Tom is engaged in the Active Devon and The Royal Foundation Coach Core Scheme and he also provides Continual Professional Development sessions and mentorship for all ARC coaches.

Tom has a First Class Degree in English and Drama, he is a First Responder and a Level 4 Tennis Coach, all at the age of 24. He works tirelessly on behalf of the club and its members. Due to the opening of our new indoor facility in January 2018, it was vital that our coaching participation and club membership was increased. The club membership in April was 350 and in November 500. Therefore Tom has succeeded in not only increasing the amount of members in coaching, but the overall membership of the club.

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## **Official of the Year nominations**

### **Bill Ahl**

Bill is the County's highest qualified and longest serving referee.

On top of the usual tournament refereeing, Bill set up and managed competition circuits in the County for several years ensuring local competitive opportunities for our players from novice through to the more advanced players. He has organised and refereed the senior and junior County Championships along with countless other tournaments within the County and also beyond the County for the LTA.

Devon Tennis would like to recognise all Bill's years of service and thank him by presenting him with this, the inaugural Official of the Year Award.

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## **Education Programme Award nominations**

### **1. Atlantic Coast Co-Operative Trust (ACCT)**

Pupils are offered opportunities to take part in weekly curriculum lessons across the 9 schools in the Trust. During the year there have also been opportunities for a new initiative - before school clubs beginning at 8am and also after school clubs. 440 pupils per week are accessing these from the ages of 4 to 11. There have also been 3 Tennis festivals for the schools in the Trust to attend and most of the schools have supported these with teams. Events are held for Year 2, Year 3 and 4 and Year 5 and 6.

Tennis has been proven to support other learning in many ways. The skills the children are taught are lifelong skills of fair play, sportsmanship, co-operating with others, acceptance of rules and leadership opportunities - all role modelled weekly.

There is much evidence to link stimulation of endorphins through physical exercise, and early morning clubs are demonstrating the pupils are better ready to learn at 9am when they enter the classroom. One school in the Trust had a huge improvement in SATs results - was this because Year 6 did a comprehensive 12 week programme of tennis just before. Who knows? !

The 9 ACCT schools have been so pro-active in promoting and supporting Tennis within their schools and communities as well as promoting the work done by Atlantic Racquet Centre. They have jumped at any opportunity offered to them to give the children more opportunities to play Tennis and have always been totally supportive of the centre and our shared mission with the LTA to get more people playing more Tennis, more often. School newsletters and websites plus the handing out of fliers for our open days and coaching opportunities are taken on board by all schools. The school also offers its facilities for social events to promote Atlantic Tennis Centre within the community. Assemblies have taken on a new meaning! Superstars events are thoroughly supported by the schools. ACCT are a trustee organisation of Atlantic Racquet Centre.

ACCT is a fantastic community organisation here in Bideford who have embraced Atlantic Racquet Centre and tennis in an unprecedented manner. They are truly champions for the sport and deserve to be recognised for their above and beyond commitment and support to promoting Tennis in education. A Year 6 group in one of the schools chose Atlantic Racquet Centre as one of their "Leavers Trips" at the end of primary school. Their teachers embraced this and the school used sport premium funding for the cost of the coach. One 11 year old boy said it was "His best trip ever!!"

## **2. Ivybridge Community College**

Two main programmes are offered to pupils catering for their personal aspirations:

- (1) The Competition Pathway - for pupils looking to improve their performance for LTA ratings/rankings/County to Regional level with a view to gaining a scholarship to either a UK or USA University.
- (2) The Coaching Career Pathway - inspiring young players to gain recognised coaching qualifications to become full or part-time tennis/sports coaches and officials

The College programme combined with the Tennis Club's programme and indoor facilities offers pupils the opportunity to increase their weekly programme to 9 hours training per week plus another 3 hours voluntary assisting the coaches or referees in preparation for gaining LTA coaching qualifications. This year alone they have 3 pupils pass the LTA Level 1 course with two of them currently on the LTA Level 2, with a number of other pupils following in their footsteps. The College has further embraced tennis over the past three years by including a tennis BTEC for year groups 12 & 13. Many of the pupils help with the local primary school programmes and competitions gaining valuable life skills and learning to become good role models.

The College has been consistently supporting tennis for the past 20 years since 1997 when it gained Sports College status. A partnership was formed with the Ivybridge Tennis Club and its coaching programme with the joint aim of maintaining a healthy balance between academic and sporting success by providing pupils the opportunity to participate in an all year round tennis programme with minimal disruption to their academic studies. The success of the joint venture is highlighted with 5 ex-pupils gaining full time coaching positions at the club with numerous others becoming either career coaches elsewhere or part-time coaches combining with their University studies.

Actions speak louder than words..... when you consider that the Ivybridge Community College has supported the sport of tennis to the tune of over £100K over the past 20 years you realise how committed and dedicated they are towards tennis as a major part of the school's life. In July of this year the Ivybridge Community College was awarded LTA School of Tennis and this will now fully complete the participation pyramid for the masses with a dedicated, part time tennis coach based on site. The current structure from top down has now created a work force of skilled pupil ambassadors to roll out the new enhanced curriculum programmes for 2018.

## **3. University of Exeter**

The University offers a unique opportunity for students to develop into a tennis workforce at Exeter Tennis Centre. The Centre regularly runs levels 1-4 tennis coaching courses for which students are given discounts and receive mentoring. Currently over 20 student coaches (levels 1-3) work for the Tennis Centre, engaging with the community and enhancing their coaching skills and employability in a variety of sessions, from mini-tennis to high-performance teens, adult beginners to cardio tennis. The University is also hosting the Student Officiating Academy in 2018, with 13 students signed up to be trained into licensed Tennis Officials for free.

Students receive:

- Beginners - 3 hours/week
- Intermediates - 3 hours/week
- Cardio Tennis - 3 hours/week
- Free court time - 6 hours/week
- Development Squad - 3 hours/week
- 8 BUCS Teams (4 men's & 4 women's) - 12-14 hours/week
- Strength & Conditioning Gym/On-court (for top 20 players) - 3 hours/week

The University of Exeter Tennis Club is the largest student tennis club in the country, with 10 indoor courts. The club increased its membership from 500 to 534 from 2016-17, increasing participation by 4.68% over the past two



years. The University Tennis Coordinators, Tennis Club Committee and coaches provide as many opportunities for student tennis as possible, putting on a range of sessions.

The additional Tennis Coordinator offers more support for the students, as well as a focus on helping students into coaching. Providing students with coaching qualifications and hours to coach for the centre will help inspire more people to play. Charlotte Wallace, Tennis Programme Manager, has a good relationship with the student club. Student coaches usually help with centre sessions as well, therefore there is good communication among all the coaches, whether they are performance coaches for the centre or Level 1 student coaches. The Tennis Coordinators and Committee have a good link with Charlotte and Ann Williams (Course Administrator), making it more accessible to book students on for coaching qualifications and book courts for student events. Together, it creates a strong working force.

As a coach education centre it helps encourage students to volunteer for school events and festivals that the centre put on with local schools. For example, our Participation Officer, who has a good relationship with the University Tennis Coordinators, is able to communicate with students about an upcoming Mini Tennis Event, where students can gain more experience whilst helping in the community.

An example of using innovative marketing was at Freshers Fayre 2017. The club informed students that if they were in the first 50 to sign up to the club they would receive a free club t-shirt. This incentive, promoted via social media (Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat) encouraged students to sign up quicker. We also look to hold events (e.g. touchtennis tournament) before BUCS matches to get more students playing and then watching tennis, so in effect, it would keep them in tennis, which is again, promoted via social media.

Cardio Tennis has turned out to be the club's most successful session, with 65 students attending at peak time. The club's internal competitions, such as Box Leagues, proved to be successful with 70 students taking part throughout the year. The club has 35 people attending Development training, which is important for those who did not make it into BUCS.

The University Tennis Club and Exeter Tennis Centre work in partnership with Victoria Park Tennis Club to deliver a year-round coaching programme. This programme engages with the community by providing tennis to people of all ages (tots to adults) and all abilities (casual, beginners, improvers and performers wanting to compete). With the help of student volunteers, the Centre also runs regular mini-tennis festivals, holiday camps and city centre days to encourage participation from a young age.

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## **Competition of the Year nominations**

### **1. Westward Ho! Ratings & Rankings Tournament**

This year the tournament attracted 229 players, with a total of 338 entries in 28 events. The team have already met to consider the comments on the tournament satisfaction forms, in order to make further improvements to increase entries next year and to discuss new events now that the club will have indoor facilities too. One comment received on feedback forms "The indoor tennis and social facilities currently being developed will be a fantastic bonus and cannot fail to make the tournament bigger and better."

The tournament is very inclusive and competitors from age 5 to 77 played including children with special educational needs. 88% of competitors were very satisfied. Documented comments refer consistently to; " a very friendly atmosphere at the club , tennis played in a competitive but sporting atmosphere, organisers friendly and exceptionally helpful." Great value for money - you can pay a lot more than ARC's entry fees at other events and not get new balls for every match or play on such good courts." "Thank you for a great day. Such a find! The Cornish crew will be back!" (98% enjoyable event to attend)

Technology is used to the full. Regular Facebook posts before and during the tournament to promote entries and see what you are missing out on during the week! 3 weeks before media coverage will ensure the tournament is featured in the appropriate local papers and local businesses are all asked to sponsor the tournament .

Junior girls' events – no set days! We work round the girls! It is very hard to get girls to enter so they state days available and matches are fitted around that – works well for this tournament. Careful planning avoids girls' days

at Newquay (Grade 3 at same time) For the first time there were girls in 8 different junior events plus some adult ones.

There is a tournament committee of 15 people including 2 coaches and a team of 3 experienced and committed referees who happily swap their day jobs to spend 15 hours a day doing something they love, unpaid, for the success of the club and the enjoyment of all the children and adults who enter. Trophies are always something special and ordered 6 months ahead. All minis receive a certificate and trophies. There are perpetual trophies for all events and local businesses are used to create trophies. Harry Juniper pottery has been an attraction for many years and now Dartington Crystal is also incorporated. The Tournament is the club's main fundraising event of the year and it made £3000+.

It is known as the highlight of the year in North Devon! The atmosphere is second to none and parents are forced to bring children there even on days they are not playing in order to meet the new friends they have made. The tournament has run for 30 years and is a place where both local players and those on holiday have a great time both on and off court and want to return year after year. Adults now well into their twenties still return to partner and play against the friends they made at under 10 level!

Catering is the biggest crowd puller! All members make home – made main meals and desserts and cakes. On mini tennis days there is always a selection of kid type cakes and the bar is stocked with Haribot! Club members who work often spend their lunchtime with us in tournament week!!

There are always activities for the children to do off court. At present in our temporary arrangements we have a marquee with table tennis tables in but in the future there will be opportunities for cricket, football, pool etc

This tournament fully encompasses growth in British tennis in all ways.

## **2. Aegon Pro Series Barnstaple**

Tarka has been running an International Event for the past 13 years setting the standard for futures events around the country. We started from \$10,000 event Men's event back in 2005 & progressed this through to a Women's \$75,000.

Through this period we have seen Grand Slam champions compete at Tarka, Jeremy Chardy, Angelina Kerber, Roberta Vinci, Heather Watson, Laura Watson as well as many players who have gone on to become top 20 in the ATP & WTA rankings.

The event was always about promoting tennis in Devon but also allowing young players to be able to watch & ball kid at an International level.

Over the years we have had TV, radio, Sky & many interviews based around the event.

Thousands of local & Devon people have come to watch the tennis & it is a firm favourite of many local tennis fans. Currently we are back to running a Men's \$15,000 in September with our own plans to increase the prize money & get the event on the International landscape.

The event has long been known as the new standard for LTA events with our website design, brand design, tickets & overall professional approach to use this to promote tennis to old & new audiences.

We have many local players & volunteers who give their time to assist us in putting on this event as well as local schools who bring their school to watch what is, probably, their only opportunity to see International tennis.

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## **Disability Programme Award nominations**

### **1. Atlantic Racquet Centre**

The programme involves a coach visiting Pathfield School weekly (a special school for students aged 3-19 with physical and learning difficulties) and the clients from Northam Lodge (an adult based activity centre for those with learning and physical disabilities) attending ARC weekly.

Pre - 2017 there was no disability programme at ARC. Now numbers are increasing at a steady rate. 30 students now access the coaching at Pathfields (10 different ones per term) and 10 adults from Northam Lodge. Clients state that Fridays is their favourite day of the week and that they love the female coaches because they make the sessions

such fun for them. Open days are held 3 times a year and always have a disability sessions within them. This helps to grow our programme.

All of the coaching sessions are inclusive and the coaches are trained in disability tennis. 2 of the coaches are a former Teaching Assistant and Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator from a primary school. Children and adults with ADHD, autism and those for whom their social background makes accessing tennis difficult are well catered for and talks are in progress with local forums to have autism only sessions soon. The disability tennis bag is always used, ramps are in place when required and 1-1 ratio can be provided for when necessary.

The Head Coaches visits all the centres regularly and following this there is use of social media to promote all activities ie Facebook, website. Atlantic Racquet Centre have achieved a Dan Maskell foundation grant to initiate some of these activities. It has taken a lot of work to get this far but the reward is on the faces of those accessing the programme.

## **2. Tarka Tennis Centre (Beth Nash)**

Beth has been running our disability programme now for the past year, organising a group of around 20 players on a Saturday morning.

Beth has a keen interest in this programme & this year was the travelling SW Tennis Coach for the GB National Special Olympic Games in Sheffield in August 2017. She shows tons of energy & encouragement to players with learning difficulties and is the corner stone of the Saturday programme. She has also run our outreach disability programme over the past 2 years encouraging local schools to bring players along to have a go & have some fun.

This has now grown to start to include wheelchair tennis from next year which Beth will be running. She also runs the tennis side of the Devon Disability Games which is held in July every year at Tarka where we have 300 players turn up for various sports.

## **3. Double Bounce**

Fiona Murphy, has set up Double Bounce and is the tennis coach. She provides fun tennis based session for young adults who are wheelchair dependent with severe impairments. She engages players who may only be able to eye track a ball. She has started several LD tennis groups, following on from successful pilot schemes. She is a Special Olympics volunteer providing guest tennis sessions. Since January 2017 she has supported a wheelchair tennis player. They play three times a week and she has accompanied him to ITF and National competitions on an entirely voluntary basis.

This is a new venture and she has registered herself as a Community Interest Company in October 2017. Her first quarter figures showed 175 contacts with disabled players. Sessions ranged from Can Do Day, SEN children's afternoon, Special Olympics sessions and working with young adults with behavioural issues. A quote from a customer satisfaction survey "Thanks Fiona, you do such amazing work, always attentive to each individual and providing lesson plans that cater for each person's needs and abilities"

In 2017 she has achieved the LTA level 2 coaching, Level 3 Disability Awareness training, Cardio Tennis training and Wheelchair Basketball level 1 training. All the qualifications assist her to provide quality, inclusive and modifiable tennis sessions. She uses Tennis Foundation kit, which is colourful and tactile and allows for sessions to be modified as appropriate. She has worked with children to older adults, and those with behavioural issues to severe physical and intellectual impairment. Her background and knowledge as a physiotherapist who worked with head injured patients, greatly assists her tennis coaching.

Twitter has been used to network and keep her informed of current funding options, disability organisations to contact and promotion of her sessions. She also has a Facebook business page under the name of Double Bounce. She is working in partnership with Improving Lives Plymouth, following on from voluntary work that she did with them. Close working with the Social Enterprise network in Plymouth has allowed her to tap into their business support and help set up Double Bounce as a CIC and shown her the importance of outcomes.

Fiona is starting a Wheelchair Tennis Club by the end of the year and she will be a volunteer coach, funding has been secured for this from the Dan Maskell Trust. In January 2018 she will start working for the Tennis Foundation as the Disability Coordinator for Devon as she has proved she can get disability groups up and running and provide quality, adaptive and fun tennis sessions. A quote from a survey from one of her groups, "You are also incredibly professional and organised and your passion really is shown by your positive energy and attitude in each session".

## **Community Venue Award nominations**

### **1. Devonport Park Tennis Courts, Plymouth**

Devonport Park tennis courts are vibrant, attractive, free courts used by many recreational players. In addition to the 'turn up and play' players who use the courts Plymouth City Council (PCC) in partnership with Tennis for Free and Tennis Plymouth have developed a seasonal outdoor programme of activity. The programme incorporates Mini Tennis, Junior Tennis, Adult coaching and family tennis. April – Sept 17 we recorded over 300 people playing at structured sessions at the park with each person on average attending 5 sessions compared to only 3 last year. We put this down to the fantastic positive experience they receive from coaches who deliver the sessions. Events such as GBTW's, Davis Cup courses and school taster session have also taken place.

PCC's Sports Development Unit manages the activity programme at Devonport Park in partnership with Tennis Plymouth and Tennis for Free. The activity programme heavily relies on the coaches and volunteers at Tennis Plymouth along with PCC delivery staff to deliver sessions. Parents are encouraged to take part, either working with their child or taking part in beginner sessions themselves. PCC has responsibility to maintain the park and courts which enables sessions to take place for free or at a subsidised cost providing equipment for beginners, helping to remove barriers to the game. Devonport Park Tennis Courts are located within Devonport which falls within the top 10% deprived area in the UK. We have a very strong community engagement working with 12 primary schools within 2 miles of the park, 2 secondary schools and one college offering them all free taster sessions. In addition to this we offer all sessions for free or at low cost and provide all equipment meaning local residents are not excluded.

There are hundreds of people who using the courts annually who play socially and do not engage with structured sessions, however from the data we have indicates 43% of people live within 3 miles of the courts.

The venue use the LTA online platform called Clubspark to publicise upcoming events, regular sessions and allow bookings onto coaching programmes. The benefits of using Clubspark enables us to capture data of participants interested in events or who have previously attended our programmes. This information is crucial to us for advertising and promoting new sessions and events.

Facebook and Twitter has been used to advertise sessions and events at Devonport Park and to also increase publicity by posting images and videos during the events. We have found tagging in schools and local partners has help further our online reach.

### **2. Kingsbridge Park Community Tennis**

Kingsbridge Park Community Tennis provides professional, friendly, fun tennis with an emphasis on development for junior and adult players. The programme has grown considerably since inception in March 2017. At the moment there are 5 social sessions and 1 team in the local league. They already have over 100 'Friends', most of whom are keen to take their tennis levels further with the provided coaching and classes.

They organise fun days, camps and tournaments and are currently seeking a second coach to be able to best service the increasing demand. Members of the committee take an active role in the day to day activities so are accessible and approachable.

Kingsbridge Park Community Tennis committee is working hard to achieve Tennismark status. Members of the committee have taken time to travel to visit other clubs and organisations to observe best practice and broaden their experience. They are happy to seek advice and help from the County and regional LTA staff in their efforts to make their organisation the best it can be. Their commitment to the vision of a community tennis venue available to all ages, abilities and backgrounds is admirable.

Members of the committee have taken their Level 1 qualification and are keen to undertake the Level 2. They have also undertaken some disability tennis training so that they can be more inclusive. They have forged links with the local Community College to involve the students and offer extracurricular tennis and opportunities to gain coaching experience. They work in conjunction with the local tennis club by tapping in to a currently disengaged population with a view to growing interest in the sport and so ultimately feeding in to the club. They have links with the local council, the cafe in the park and are forging links with the primary school.

Kingsbridge Park Community Tennis have embraced and benefit from Clubspark and social media through their link with the council. Events they have run have been well publicised and supported. [www.communitytennis.info](http://www.communitytennis.info) email [play@communitytennis.info](mailto:play@communitytennis.info)

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## **Young Volunteer of the Year nominations**

### **1. Millie Agutter – Exeter Golf & Country Club**

Millie has been helping to run our Saturday morning junior coaching sessions for the last few years. This year has seen her confidence develop and she has become a crucial part of the team, encouraging younger players and acting as a fantastic role model, particularly to the girls who look up to her. Through coaching, and becoming a regular part of our ladies' A team, she provides a great example to the juniors who can see what can be achieved by girls within tennis.

Having older juniors, such as Millie, help in our sessions allows the quality to remain high, even when there is great demand. Millie has proved to be a reliable and enthusiastic assistant, particularly within the mini age groups where she has developed a great rapport with many of the kids. By helping to feed the younger groups, hitting with the intermediate groups and joining in with the more advanced groups she had had a big impact on helping the sessions become more effective.

Millie has combined with many of our other junior players to help out with club and county competitions. She has paired up with other juniors to help umpire which massively helps the experience for the younger players, their parents and the tournament organiser. This ensures that tournaments with large entries can still be efficient and enjoyable for all. Millie has also taken on the role of girls' tennis captain at the Club which has seen her liaise with the committee and coaching team to suggest initiatives for the junior tennis section.

This year Millie has pushed herself to lead warm-ups and develop her communication skills when assisting the coaching team, gaining greater confidence whilst doing so. Her ability to encourage and prompt the kids when she sees something that they could be improving has markedly improved over the last year with this increased assurance. When she turns 16 she hopes to begin taking her LTA coaching qualifications.

### **2. Beth Groves – St Budeaux**

Beth helped me grow my tennis programme and I now coach over 60 juniors. This is down to Beth being so good with the mini reds they just keep coming back every week. Beth is so nice, kind and caring towards them and makes tennis fun so they tell their friends which helps the programme grow.

Beth helps with the mini reds every Thursday and Saturday. She also helped design tournament forms for a competition in which over 50 juniors took part. Beth organised and ran the mini red tournament. She has just started to introduce tennis to her friends at school and is bringing them to the tennis club (new school only opened in September) Beth helps with social media, Facebook & Twitter. She will post on the accounts to let parents know what children have been up to and promote any upcoming events such as Great British Tennis Weekend, Benendon Tennis Festivals, half term kids clubs and many more great events that we do.

Beth is a junior committee member and helped raised funds for this year's junior presentation evening which over 50 juniors attended and we gave away more than 70 prizes. The event cost over £1000 and Beth did cake sales and raffles to raise funds as well as selling tickets. She has great organisation skills and helped set up and run the event.

Beth is also a team captain and she has to organise the team and record all the results. She plays in the junior team and even played a few senior matches.

Beth will be running a tennis programme this summer in her school, Scott Medical and Health Care College. The school only opened in September and had no tennis programme but Beth, being Beth and the love she has for the sport, convinced the school to let her run her own after school tennis club which will be starting soon. This is Beth's first year as a junior committee member, her first year as junior captain and the first year she has been involved with social media.

Beth was this year's winner of the Dave Williams Junior Services to the Club award. Every good coach needs good volunteers and I'm happy that Beth, aged 14, helps me as this year I have seen Beth grow in to a confident kind and caring young lady who I think is a great role model for young children playing tennis.

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## **Volunteer of the Year nominations**

### **1. Philip Yabsley - ARC**

Phil has made an impact on the club since he joined, 9 years ago. On his arrival he showed his willingness to step up and lend a hand whenever and in whatever capacity he could. This willingness has continued to be shown as and when any task, or challenge arises.

Phil is a regular team player, representing the Club in division of 1 the local League. He regularly attends club nights, and when on court will adapt his play to accommodate the other players, so that he does his best to make the game enjoyable, but challenging to everyone, whatever age, or standard. He always encourages the less experienced player, but without being patronizing.

Phil is not on the General Committee, but leads the working group on the maintenance of courts and surround areas. He rarely needs to be asked - he identifies a problem or a task, and gets on with it, no fanfare or fuss. One prime example recently was that our scoring devices, which aren't substantial enough to be left outside in all weathers, and which were being damaged being brought on and off court each session and left propped in a heap. Phil saw this, then designed and constructed a simple stand to store them, safely and tidily, out of the way, but easily accessible.

Although Phil's strengths are his practical skills, his contribution to the success of the club's activities is not solely limited to this area. At any social event, he will be found manning the bar, of the cake stall, or the sweetie counter, or in the kitchen with dishcloth/drying up towel in hand. All going towards our club fund-raising projects to make possible the progress towards our development of our Club.

I think, in summary, Phil is an ideal member - he does his best on and off court to make the Club an attractive venue for players of all ages and abilities, and their friends and families who come to watch and support.

### **2. Ann Louis**

As captain of the Devon ladies 65s team has been unable to play matches this year due to caring for her husband. She has however still managed the team, organising matches, accommodation and travel arrangements. Her commitment to the team has helped them gain promotion to Division 1 next year. In addition she has arranged and managed the fortnightly practices throughout the winter for the Ladies 60s, 65s & 70s squad members, booking four courts each session, emailing dates for availability, scheduling player & matches for each 2-hour session & organising payments. Recently she has also been helping with the Senior men's practices at Exmouth.

Although this year she has worked with Seniors only, over the past thirty of so years she has encouraged and helped run sessions for all age groups, including very successful short tennis sessions about 25 years ago. The parent and child short tennis doubles tournaments were great fun (and competitive!).

In 2017 a group of over 30 senior players have really benefitted from these challenging but very enjoyable sessions. New players in the age groups are encouraged and the sessions are very welcoming. Ann Louis started these practices and has built up the numbers and coordinated the sessions for at least ten years now but this year has been a particularly challenging one for Ann and the family.

### **3. Pat Browne**

Woodbury tennis club would like to nominate Patrick (Pat) Brown as volunteer of the year. In fact we could nominate Pat for volunteer of the year, decade, century and millennium as he has worked tirelessly for the club for over 30 years.

Pat is a keen and active tennis player within the club attending the majority of club sessions each week and has been a key member of both men's and mixed teams in both the Exeter and East Devon leagues since joining the club.

Pat has held a number of officer posts on the Woodbury committee but has held the post of Treasurer for many years ensuring that the club is not only viable but ensuring that all streams of funding are explored and exploited to the benefit of the club. He controls the financial strategy ensuring that all new Chairpersons are in agreement and amending as necessary for the changing local and national initiatives. We have a robust membership mainly due to the low levels of membership fees which Pat achieves

through actively exploiting local and national grants and the judicious use of LTA loans. He has over the years negotiated some excellent coaches to run our junior coaching sessions which you will appreciate is at the heart of all small clubs. Put simply he is always looking for the best value for money for the club and its membership.

In addition to his official role Pat is the cornerstone of the club. Known by everyone not only in the club but within the village he is the voice of the club, preparing articles for the local media, organising events, participating in teams, representing us on the East Devon League committee, ensuring that the basis for any club i.e. our courts are maintained and liaising with the local council to ensure the playing fields adjacent to the courts are also maintained to a safe and acceptable standard.

In short Woodbury tennis club would not be the robust vibrant club within the Devon structure without the tireless voluntary work that Pat performs.

#### **4. Andy Malcom**

Andy started the year as Chairman and non-playing team captain for the Men's A and B teams at Willand but gave these posts up to concentrate on organising a dual-county winter league, being chairman of the Exeter and District League and as County Treasurer being involved in the funding decisions of clubs in the County. He also sits on the LTA National Treasurers working group.

As chairman of a 130 team league setup keeping that on track for more than 800 player over the year is a task, As organiser of the Culm and Exe Valleys league involving teams from Devon and Somerset, he facilitates 9 clubs to get winter match play in a relaxed setting allowing youngsters to gain match practice in a friendly environment. As County Treasurer he has helped with decisions on funding for projects which improve tennis clubs in the County.

Andy has taken it upon himself to try and visit all the 73 registered clubs in Devon to help with decision making by knowledge of the clubs' set-up. He has also visited a number of clubs which held GBTW events this year (5 over the 2 weekends) to help support club events but also liaise with clubs as to how the County can help them and work together to improve tennis in Devon.

#### **5. Fiona Murphy**

Fiona has an incredible energy and passion for providing tennis to all abilities. She has worked tirelessly and continued with her positivity despite many obstacles put in her way to deliver disability tennis. She has travelled to attend courses and to attend disability tournaments with players she has met and has volunteered at several venues in and around Plymouth providing tennis for players with disabilities.

She introduces new players to tennis on a weekly basis who have difficulty with every day tasks but encourages them that tennis can be something they will love. She gives tennis to children and young adults as something they can enjoy no matter what.

Fiona is a great team member, she has worked with our assistants to show them that anything is possible when on court with a player.

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### **Club of the Year nominations**

#### **1. Plympton Tennis Club**

Plympton Tennis Club has grown both its membership and casual play:

In terms of membership, the number of adults increased by 16%.

- The Club gained 25 new members from our GBTW events and 9 new members following 2 free 35+ courses, of which 20 people attended; these sessions have also led to an additional weekly Rusty Rackets session and 2 who haven't joined as yet but are coming to coaching.
- In terms of the public use of the courts and in comparison to last year, the number of Pay and Play visits has increased by almost 20% from 17 to 88.

The committee has successfully:

- recruited three new committee members with specific roles to further the Club's development
- listened to feedback - following a meeting of Club members to discuss the Club's development, the committee considered members' responses and consequently made positive changes
- lead the GBTW weekend, involving 25 current Club members
- successfully applied for and delivered a Seniors GB small grant to provide 2 free Seniors Courses (35+)
- established a new house-style for the Club with uniform colour/styling on banners, posters, flyers etc., with a new, modernised Club logo
- organised numerous Club's social events, which are very well attended.

The Club has a positively inclusive and community-minded ethos:

- setting a very low threshold for welcoming nervous and inexperienced players
- providing opportunities for new members to play 'informally' at Rusty Rackets, alongside more experienced players to support and encourage
- developing links with Hele's School, creating an alliance which benefits both organisations including the use of the Dome in winter in the evenings and the Club's courts during the day
- linking to local primary schools to provide introductory 6 week courses for young people
- linking to local fitness organisations promoting use of the Club's tennis courts and health-related activities.

The Club has developed the use of Clubspark for booking courts, the administration of membership, collecting and collating usage data and booking coaching sessions. The Club is also investigating an improved email facility to contact members and public court users more effectively.

The Club has successfully implemented new automated gates, delivering benefits in terms of accessibility for players, increasing public casual play and providing useful data for the Club.

The Club runs a successful Facebook page informing members and their families and friends of Club events. The Club was very successful in advertising the online pay and play facility electronically.

## **2. Park Lane Lawn Tennis Club**

In recent years the club has been located on courts belonging to North Devon District Council in Rock Park, and licensed on an annual basis. This has meant that the club had no security of tenure, and was not able to make future plans to develop, expand, or improve. Over the years the surface of the courts deteriorated, the membership fell, junior coaching declined, and there was real danger that the club would fold.

The Council had ear-marked the site for residential development, and were thus unwilling to engage in further dialogue regarding the lease. Subsequently this development was found to be a non-starter because of flooding risk.

The club explored various options, and approached the Council with the following proposition: that NDDC sell the site (there was an interested buyer from an adjoining property) and use part of the income generated to refurbish the old abandoned Public courts, also sited in Rock Park; also enabling the council to fund other projects. After prolonged discussions between club and council, in May 2016 an agreement was reached for this to go ahead. Contracts were drawn up later in the year, and work was completed in April 2017. The club moved to the new site in May this year.

As a result of the laying of the new macadam, some of the club's scheduled home League matches needed to be re-arranged, but dates were amicably agreed by all concerned and the whole programme of fixtures was completed by the end of the season.

With the procurement of a 25 year lease, and two high quality courts in an attractive setting, the club is now secure of its future. It can now move on to explore a range of options for funding and development - none of which had been previously available in its former situation.

Its aims are:

To grow membership, and to consolidate its financial position.

To incorporate an area of hard standing to provide a covered shelter - an embryonic club house.



To work with Barnstaple Tarka Tennis Centre, and Rock Park Tennis Club, to develop a local British Tennis Partnership, under the umbrella of the LTA initiative, 'Transforming British Tennis Together', to begin to bring an integrated approach to the provision of tennis in the area.

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## **Outstanding Achievement Award**

### **1. Peter Wilson**

Peter is fully engaged in every aspect of the Club as...

- treasurer
- coach
- organiser of tennis competitions, numerous social events, Wimbledon ballot, Club fundraising
- manager of court improvement and maintenance
- the main link with the council and LTA
- the key player in getting electronic gates installed, notifying members and public, increasing bookings
- strategic leader of 5 year plan moving the club forward in the light of faltering council spending on court maintenance and renewal; hence, increased membership, income and established court sink-fund. Now looking ahead to produce TTBT floodlight bid
- mainstay of the Club as first port of call.
- running a men's indoor league at the local school since 2004
- helping with Junior friendly tournaments and regular Sunday Junior Club matches
- increasing the number of men's teams from 1 to 4 over the years, managing all of them every summer season
- running several regular tennis events: social tournaments indoors and out, weekly Rusty Rackets sessions, Club Evenings in the winter indoors since 2004
- working with special needs groups to access courts, e.g. 'Aspire to Live'/Longcause Community Special School
- as part of the coaching team, encouraging juniors to gain coaching qualifications, Young Leaders, Level 1 and 2 awards.

Peter is:

- a vital member of the committee, playing a key role at committee meetings
- a key instigator of involving more members to participate in Club activities, both on the committee and helping with tennis and social events
- known by everyone in the club to be approachable, helpful and a font of knowledge
- happy to play with anyone regardless of standard
- encouraging the better Juniors into Club Teams to help them progress
- working with Hele's School's new coach; he's already established a combined Plympton/Hele's Rusty Rackets session and is in discussions about forming a partnership for the TBTT bid.

While nominating Peter, I really wish there was a lifetime achievement service award for him because he has given so much of his time, energy and commitment to Plympton Lawn Tennis Club for over more than twenty years. He has been the keystone of the Club during this time, transforming the Club to one that is welcoming, open to all whatever age or ability. With his drive and expertise, the Club is more self-sufficient with increased membership and casual play, healthy finances, improved facilities and more volunteers. I believe he deserves wider recognition.

### **2. David Williams**

Dave Williams started St Budeaux Tennis Club approximately 35 years ago. It is a thriving club with a strong junior section. He has been one of the main organisers of the Plymouth and District Tennis League, including keeping the press informed re results. Mr Williams has been on the Plymouth and District Tennis League committee as chair for some time and has worked well in this capacity.

The Plymouth and District Tennis League provides a forum for tennis clubs in Devon and Cornwall to compete at a high level; St Budeaux club, set within a deprived area of Plymouth, gives juniors and adults a place to learn and play tennis.

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### **The John Barter Trophy**

John, a former Devon LTA Councillor and Men's Team Captain, contributed hugely to the County in the 1980s and 90s. Having been a Council member for some years, he was asked to take over the Men's Team in 1988. At that time Devon wallowed in the lowly regions of Division 7. John, who was working in Exeter, negotiated time off to travel each day to Minehead to manage the team. Having failed to win a match, John knew there was work to be done and put his energies into building a team. The following year, still in Division 7, Devon won and gained promotion. From that year on Devon won each year moving from division 7 to division 1 in consecutive years until in 1995 they became overall champions by winning division 1.

John, always known by the players as JB, felt he should step down but the team persuaded him otherwise and they capped their achievement by winning again in 1996.

Much is owed to John by Devon LTA and by the players he brought on to full potential during his time as captain.

We are honoured to present this trophy, donated by his widow Connie in his memory, to a male player for outstanding performance in the Inter County Cups.

**The 2017 winner of the John Barter Trophy is Oskar Wynne**