

## British Ladies Open Singles, Doubles and Handicap Doubles Tournaments 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024 held at Seacourt

Singles Winner: Claire Fahey

Doubles Winners: Claire Fahey and Sarah Vigrass



### Report for the British Ladies Open 2024

It was an action packed first day which started with two groups of the Handicap Doubles followed by the first rounds of both the Open Singles and Doubles. The standard of play from some of the Oxford and Cambridge competitors had been so good that it resulted in three 3-set matches. Several matches were rather one-sided but still enjoyable, however, the best match on the first day was between Rachel Hollington and Sophie Dannreuther which resulted in Sophie winning 2/6, 6/3, 6/4. Rachel started off strongly with Sophie taking time to get going but once she did, both played really well.

On Friday, Rachel was also involved in a 3-set doubles match which resulted in a very late finish. This was between Rachel & Alexandra Bryant and Sophie & Araminta Oldham in which, again, Sophie & Araminta started slowly losing the first set but then coming through to win 3/6, 6/2, 6/3. This was after a 3-set match between Alex Garside & Irina Dulbish and Sophia Lewis & Kureha Yamaguchi which Alex & Irina won 5/6, 6/0, 6/1. These matches were hard-fought and very good but resulted in a very late night for the organisers. Another Oxford girl was Izzy Marshall who played her first British Open tournament this year and got through to the semi-final against Claire Fahey having beaten Jess Garside 6/4, 0/6, 6/4. She is an excellent lawn tennis player with strong volleying skills – she is certainly one to watch in the future if she can continue to play now she has left Oxford.

As the entry was slightly smaller this year, several of the players who had entered all three individual tournaments, had to play a round in each tournament in one day which ended up with some very tired competitors. Praise must go to Bernie Bidouze, our most senior competitor, who played singles, doubles and handicap doubles all on the same day - well done Bernie!

Finals day once again proved a tremendous success with Sophia Lewis winning the Singles Plate against Jane Taylor 6/2, 6/0. The Doubles Plate followed and was won by Candida Nicholls & Sarah Sullivan in a lengthy match beating Jane Taylor & Bernie Bidouze 5/6, 6/4, 6/2. Claire Fahey then won the Open Singles title beating

Tara Lumley 6/1, 6/2 in a fast and furious match. The score does not reflect the close games they had, both competitors playing so well with some lengthy rallies.

Between the two Open finals, we had the final of the Handicap Doubles which proved a very close match with Sophia Lewis and Kureha Yamaguchi winning 8/7 against Abby Hayton & Mary Strevens. The final match of the day was the Open Doubles with Claire Fahey partnering her sister Sarah Vigrass (great to see you back on court Sarah) against Jess Garside and Tara Lumley. This was another hard-fought match where the score did not reflect the close games with Claire and Sarah winning 6/1, 6/1.

Once again, our thanks must go to the markers, Drew, Tim and Adam who worked very hard to get through all the matches and particularly Drew who marked all the matches on the final day. Thanks to Jon Cobon and his staff who made sure everything ran smoothly, our chef, Vince, and his team for the dinner on Saturday evening and finally to Alex, Viv and Jess for all their hard work both before and during the tournament.

It was great to see the commitment of all the competitors and to see how the ladies' game is generally getting stronger. We just hope that we see everyone back again next year at Seacourt.

*Report by Alex Garside & Viv Dawes*

