BUCS Squash Team Championships 2011

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Squash Championships

It was a hectic weekend at the Munrow Sports Centre between 25-27 February, as University of Birmingham Sport (UBSport) hosted the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Individual Squash Championships.

Over 200 students from top universities around the UK descended on campus to battle it out for the title of BUCS Individual Squash Champion. There were many rounds of competition with the men's tournament divided into five (A-E) differently graded competitions, while there are two different grades (A-B) for the ladies tournament. The grade in which the players were entered into was dependent on their standard of play.

UBSport Squash club put in a good appearance with five women and 16 men entering the tournament, however, it was a tough challenge with so many highly ranked internationals competing.

Kicking off the day for UBSport was Daniel McGinn (foundation year Metallurgy & Materials Engineering) for the men's A team, who was up against reigning BUCS Champion and world number 9 Mohamed El Shorbagy from the University of West England (UWE). El Shorbagy was dominant in the first set winning 11-0, but Daniel did well to pull it back to one set each with a hard-fought 12-10 win. However, in the end El Shorbagy showed his class by comfortably winning the final two sets.

UBSport fell foul to El Shorbagy again in the quarter final with BSc CREES 2009 graduate and Welsh international, Alistair Mutch coming up against the tournament favourite. After a successful first round against Ky Hibberd from Manchester, Alistair went on to play a fragmented game, due to a few unforeseen delays, before the game got truly under way.

The game provided great viewing for the spectators, as Alistair led an El Shorbagy onslaught taking the lead several times in magnificent fashion. However, it was not to meant to be as Alistair was defeated 11-9, 11-8 and 11-4 by the eventual tournament winner, but went on to place 8th overall.

Daniel went on to compete in the Monrad play-offs where after coming up against fellow UBSport Squash club member Oliver Dixon, who lost out to second seed Lucas Serme (UWE) in the first round, played well to claim 14th place, with Oliver taking 13th.

The women's A team had a successful tournament with both Katie Quarterman and Jennifer Tamblyn reaching the quarter finals before placing 5th and 7th respectively in the Monrad play-offs.

Fifth year Clinical Medicine student Jennifer defeated Rosie Hamilton of Bath, before coming up against favourite and eventual winner Vanessa Atkinson (Leed Met) in the quarter finals.

The first game was played at a frenetic pace with both players showing great determination and displaying skills for a variety of shots. Atkinson showed just why she is top seed in the women's tournament, taking the match 11-3, 11-4, 11-3.

UBSport squash club captain Katie defeated Claire Tamblyn from Nottingham before taking on highly rated player Julianne Cortice. Second year SPECS student Katie showed the courage of a captain, battling hard against the formidable Courtice, however the latter showed sportsmanship by reversing a decision herself which had originally been awarded in her favour.

Despite Katie's outstanding effort the final scores were 11-3, 11-3 and 11-7 in Cortices' favour.

Over in the women's B team there was success for Hannah Vaughn (second year Physics and Astrophysics), who fought courageously through all her draws to take the runner-up prize of the category.

Head coach Jonathan Tate said: 'The performances were generally as expected. It was tough for Alistair to finish 8th due to injury after having great performance in the quarter-finals, and it was great to see Jennifer playing so well. This was her highest position in her time here. Hannah was fantastic and player some of her best squash – it all bodes well for the rest of the season.'
He continued: 'I am pleased with the good performances over the weekend; despite a few areas that need to be worked on we are in a good position for the team championships in a few weeks.'

Other UBSport highlights included Nick Horby (first year Toxicology) placing 12th in the men's A, which was a great result considering the last minute call up and Georgia Jennings got a surprise promotion to the women's A team and performed excellently to place overall 13th.

Nicola Wright reaching the quarter finals in the women's B, Richard Shellam (second year Geology and Geography) reaching the quarter finals in men's B and Peter Fozard (first year SPECS) reaching the quarter final for the men's B plate.

UBSport will be hosting the BUCS Team Squash Championships at the Munrow Sports Centre from 12 - 13 March.

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