

2023 – SENIOR TENNIS REPORTS



WILTSHIRE MEN

Five teams were entered for 2023 with team captains Hans Monahan (M55) & Mike Powell (M75 non-playing) continuing in post, James Sinclair (moving from M65 to M70), and new captains Paul Williams (M60) & Andy Smith (M65).

Wilts M55 – played 4 matches in Group 2B under captain Hans Monahan, losing 0-5 to Herts (first) Berks (third) & Devon (fourth) but winning one rubber against Middx 1-4 (second). Singles were shared unsuccessfully amongst Richard Farr, Hans Monahan & Livio Pavone, whilst doubles were shared by those 3 and David Langton, Chris Allen, Tony Stredwick & James Carter. Wilts finished fifth and should be relegated for 2024.

Wilts M60 – also played 4 matches but in Group 2A under captain Paul Williams, finishing fifth to South Wales (1), Oxon (2), Somerset (3) & Herts (4). Match results were 2-3 v Herts, 1-4 v Oxon & SWales and 0-5 v Somerset. Singles were shared amongst Julian Mitchell, Paul Williams & Tony Stredwick with Mitchell & Williams winning one each. Doubles were shared by those 3 and Nick Hewens, Andy Dickinson, Gavin Gibson, Craig Wensley, Andy Smith & Steve Archer with 5 rubbers going to the third set CTB, Gavin winning two of them with Smith & Wensley.

Wilts M65 – a success story in Group 3B under captain Andy Smith, who was sidelined in 2022 by injury. Julian Mitchell & Andy each won 3 of their 4 singles and all 4 of their doubles together and were ably supported by Kim Stuckey & Colin Thomas who won 3 important doubles. Matches were won against Avon 3-2, Glos 4-1 & Somerset 4-1 but lost narrowly to Devon away 2-3. However Devon slipped up against Glos away 1-4, leaving **Wilts M65 champions** with Devon (2nd), Avon (3rd), Glos (4th) & Somerset (5th). Wilts should be promoted to Group 2 for 2024.

Wilts M70 – played 4 matches in Group 3A under new captain James Sinclair, with James & Paul Denyer at doubles first pair winning 4 of their 8 rubbers and losing the other 4 all in third set CTBs. Second pair doubles were shared by Glynn Stevens, Glen d'Mello & Robin Bennett with the two G's winning 2 of their 4 rubbers together and all three being involved in CTBs. Wilts lost 0-4 to Camb(1), lost on games only to Herts (2), lost on sets to Avon but won on sets v Somerset and finished in third place above Somerset (4) & Avon (5). A few points the other way and Wilts would have been promoted!

Wilts M75 – in only its second year, this team found itself placed in Group 1A mostly for geographical reasons along with formidable Surrey & Middlesex, also Hants/IoW & distant Cornwall. The first match produced an unexpected close-fought victory at home on games only v Hants, who had already defeated Cornwall on sets only. Wilts then lost to Middx 0-5 and Surrey 0-5 giving us the opportunity to play Cornwall away to remain in Group 1 for 2024. Unfortunately, events took an unfavourable course. Both of our first pair, Colin Gratton & Matt Holland proved unavailable to play Cornwall outdoors at the end of August, nor was John Saunbury (in France), making it impossible to field a full team to travel to Penzance. Reluctantly the match had to be conceded which left the placings at Surrey(1), Middx (2), Cornwall (3), Hants (4) & Wilts (5) and likely to be relegated. With Peter Cooper sidelined (knee replacement), the team was Gratton, Holland, Edward Lea, Robert Townsend, John Saunbury & Ian Wallace.

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