**UKAF INTERSERVICES MACH REPORT**

**Squad Training at HMS Temeraire**

The day before the UKAF competition saw all 4 squads turn out in force. Attendance saw:

* 5 x Under 25s
* 6 x Men
* 3 x Vet’s
* 3 x Women
* 1 x Head coach

The squad session was run by Army coach Paul Carter. It was a tough 2 hour session designed to get us used to the courts and get us using our brains to outwit the opponents.

There was some hard routines which pushed a lot of players in to their red zone. The session peaked at about the 1 hour mark where it slowly started to decrease in pace, you could tell the majority of the players were happy with this. But not all players were finished, Men’s Captain Sam Miller decided he wanted a 1 on 1 session with Carter, many watched in awe as Miller graced his way around the court with Carter feeding balls all over the place.

Session completed. It was time for the teams to meet up and go for dinner. Brassiere Blanc was the destination, a fantastic chain restaurant on the very plush Portsmouth Quay side. It was great to get out together, for the first time ever! Hopefully we plan on making it a yearly event and it was a great chance to bond as a full Army Squash squad.

**MEN**

**Result:**

Winner - ARMY

Runner-up – RAF

Third - NAVY

**Match Scores:**

Army bt Navy 5-0

Army bt RAF 3-2

**Match Report (Dean Boys):**

With such a dominant performance in 2018 the competition was already ours….. or was it!

With Lenny Westover moving onwards to the Masters team, the men’s team was still looking strong:

1. Sam Miller
2. Paul Jones
3. Dean Boys
4. Rich Green
5. Barry Watson
6. Arthur May

The first match of the competition saw the RAF beat off stiff competition from the NAVY.

This meant that the Army’s first hurdle was the NAVY.

First match up was the No.5 seeds – Arthur May stepped up to the plate. This was his first outing at the UKAF competition, although nervous before the match – Arthur showed composure and determination to dispatch his opponent easily in 3 quick games. Next saw Vice Captain Dean Boys at No.3, he was playing the ever tricky Owen. Although Owen played some outrageous trick shots Boys was too strong and kept the ball going to force Owen into making too many mistakes. Third match on court was the No.1 seeds, Sam Miller was looking in fine form as he is currently benefitting from the Army TASS scheme. He dispatched his opponent with relative ease, although the Navy No.1 ran his socks off, it was to no avail, 3-0 Miller. With the match being won we had 1 eye on the final. However, Barry Watson was looking forward to his match due to an extended spell out due to course. He was in fine (all be it slightly rusty) form. It was never in doubt as Watson played with confidence and was like stretch Armstrong picking up everything his opponent could throw at him. Last up was No.2 seed Paul Jones, Paul had reached every final this year…. He has just 1 obstacle in his way – Sam! We knew this match was a foregone conclusion – Paul beating a resurgent Conrad in 3 swift games.

After the match the captain and vice got together to discuss the following morning’s match vs the RAF. The RAF were looking extremely strong with a 5500 levels player at No.5 seed, a 6500 levels player at 3 and oddly had a 3500 levels player at No.2 seed. We knew we were the stronger team on paper and having Green to bring in and strengthen the team we knew we could win yet another title.

First match to go on was No.5 seed Barry Watson. He was up against a formidable opponent who was approx. 1000 points ahead of him in levels. This was always going to be a fast paced match as both players love to hit the ball hard and move around the court fast. Although up in the first Watson did not manage to convert losing the first game 11-9. The second game seemed to get away from Watson succumbing to a player who you could tell had been playing a lot. Watson recouped after the second and came out all guns blazing with a fine performance taking the 3rd game with ease 11-6. The fourth started frantically with Watson taking an early lead but the RAF player composed himself and managed to beat off Watsons advanced taking the fourth 11-6. 1-0 the RAF.

Second on was No.3 Seed Dean Boys vs Paul Warner. This fixture was played out back in October at the UKAF individual tournament with Boys just pipping Warner in a closely found 5 set match. The fixture did not disappoint with a fantastic first game, Boys had the lead at 9-7 but decided to serve out which may have cost him the first as he went down 11-9. The second game was a whirlwind. Warner came out fast and furious and took a 10-0 lead before Boys knew what was going on. Thankfully Boys managed to get a few points before Warner closed out the second in a convincing performance. Boys re-grouped with Carter and Miller in his corner, ready for a fight in the third, Boys managed to match Warner in this game for pace and accuracy managing to pull away mid-way through the game to a 11-6 win. From here it was one way traffic with Boys growing in confidence and stature to take the following games 11-7 and 11-6. This match was a crunch match as we knew it was be very close at No.4 seed. Army 1 – RAF 1.

Next up was Miller at No.1 seed. He played a much improved RAF No.1 who even entered the men’s national championships! Although did not fare so well. Miller strutted his stuff and even though the RAF player worked hard and won several long rallies it was one way traffic. Miller won 3-0. Army 2 vs RAF 1.

Rich Green was on at No.4 seed. We knew this match could go either way as the RAF player was sublime with his racket skills. Green needed to keep his opponent on court passed the 40 minute mark and his job would surely be done. However, this proved far more difficult than first thought, Greens opponent was throwing in nicks with easy and moving around the court well. Green went down 11-1, 11-3 in the first two games. He re-grouped and focused hard as he knew he could play much better. The third game consisted of hard running and hard hitting and Green came out on top with a 11-6 win. The fourth game was a close battle, both players a little nervous and afraid of going for the winner. RAF managed to edge this game 11-9, we think if Green could have pushed it to a fifth game it was his for the taking as he was looking stronger each game. Army 2 vs RAF 2.

Down to the final match…..

No.2 Seed Paul Jones. This was a foregone conclusion surely? A 7000 vs a 3500 player. Jones set off at a blistering pace than the RAF No.2 could not match. The match was done in approx. 20 minutes with Jones the far superior player. 11-2, 11-3, 11-2.

Army win the services crown 3-2 against a very competitive RAF squad.

**ARMY LADIES**

The Army Ladies team had a very successful tournament at the UKAF Inter-Services. This year saw a strengthening of skill and increase in calibre of players fielded by both RAF and RN teams, showcasing the fruits of grassroots squash introduction and increased team training, a positive outlook for the future of Servicewomen squash. Fielding a strong team comprising of Capt Rosie Hamilton, Maj Elaine Radcliffe, Lt Col Yvette Ashman, Capt Stephanie Chase and SSgt Caroline Myatt, the Army Ladies team still managed to dominate on court and defeated the RAF Ladies with a 5-0 win on the first day. Facing a determined and energised RN team on the second day, the Army Ladies increased precision and focus on court to fend off the RN challenge and were again undefeated in matches for a 5-0 win, retaining the title of UKAF Inter-Services Champions.