

Club Captain AGM Report – March 2018

Well what a year it has been for our Club! It's hard to know where to begin!

I'm going to start by giving a special mention to Ben. In my 25 years at Davenport, we have never had what I would call a full time coach - until this last eighteen months. Ben has made a huge impact with seniors - and has brought in so many new junior members with initiatives and by establishing great links with local schools. I don't think the club has ever been in a better place and the future looks very, very promising indeed.

We have had some great tournaments over the last twelve months and our eight teams have all enjoyed strong seasons in their NECTL divisions – particularly the ladies where two of three teams won a second straight promotion and the first team just missed out on making it to the premier division. Some of that first team also led Davenport to victory in the Cheshire County LTA Interclub Competition Plate which was a great achievement.

We also had a record-breaking year in the Acton Cup in 2017, reaching the semi-final for the first time in the Club's history.

The success was not confined to the seniors though with our Under-13 Boys A Team winning their division as champions - and good showings from the other junior teams too. They also had an amazing Junior Final's Day with record numbers participating and even atrocious weather couldn't spoil the day.

We had a fantastic Great British Tennis Weekend in July, organised and led by the best development coach in Cheshire, our very own Ben Bush! It was a great day with over 80 juniors down and loads of new members joining.

Club nights in the summer enjoyed awesome numbers attending and although we have seen numbers drop off in recent months with the poor weather, I have no doubt that they will be better than ever when spring eventually comes!

At the end of the season, we celebrated with an Awards Night. Unfortunately I was in Germany so missed it but I know it was a great night to round off a brilliant season for the Club.

In November, Davenport entered two categories in the 2017 Cheshire County Awards. It was a fantastic night with the Club finishing as runner-up in the 'Club of the Year' category and, as I have touched upon already, Ben winning 'Development Coach of the Year'. Amazing.

The box leagues and singles ladder have taken place over the winter again and have been enjoyed by many members – particularly the box leagues. Thanks to Tony Morse once again for sorting both of these out for players.

Many players have enjoyed winter league matches and at the time of writing, we have a very good chance of one team being promoted and the first team becoming champions of the top

division, which would be a great accomplishment - and a first for Davenport.

After just one year as Club Captain, which I have thoroughly enjoyed, I have decided to step down. There are a few reasons for my decision but it's been an honour to be Captain of Davenport and I know that Ruth, who is taking over from me, will do a really excellent job. Indeed, she has already begun looking at member feedback and what we can do to improve our great Club further still. My leaving present to her is the task of finding a men's captain for the second and fourth team! One aspect of the job I definitely won't miss!

I would like to thank everyone on the Tennis Committee and General Committee first and foremost – for their support over the last year. I thank Martin for keeping us financially strong and stable, Stuart for doing lots of odd jobs, my own dad for keeping the grounds looking so great, those that worked on the new website, Julia for the amazing monthly newsletter she produces – and for doing the minutes so brilliantly every month. A job she does so well, it would be a shame to take it off her! I would like to thank Dave Sykes for all his work in his two roles as President and Club Secretary – and for getting record numbers to opt in this year – meaning a record Wimbledon ticket allocation for Davenport! I would like to thank the bar committee, junior committee, catering committee and social committee for all the work they do too. It all makes for our club being the success story that it is. Finally, I would like to thank all the members for the support they have shown me throughout my time as Club Captain.

We have the court rejuvenation coming up in the next week or so. While I agree that the courts have worn more quickly than the previous playing surface, I also think that our courts must be some of the most used in the country! Indeed on the first Saturday in March, after some of the coldest weather for years, when most football games in England were called off, including some in the championship, Davenport players filled all four courts, with a foot of snow round the edges, as nineteen players showed up for a tournament put on by Ben!

I don't think there are many clubs that have more keen members than ours and I think it's amazing that people want to play as much tennis as possible – a feeling not shared by all clubs unfortunately as we will see ladies matches this summer being mostly played out in 12 sets rather than 18 (when time has allowed).

As I mentioned at the beginning, I don't think the club has ever been so vibrant and with such a promising future ahead, I do feel a little bit sad that Marjorie has not been around to see the club flourish like never before. She made a fantastic contribution for decades and will never be forgotten.

I will miss the Club and all the people in 2018 with having a year off tennis but I know Davenport is in excellent hands – and will likely be even stronger in 2019.

They say it's best to go out on top and that's what I'm doing, just check the box leagues and singles ladder! I hope all the members have a fantastic season in 2018.

Thanks very much everyone, Tom – Outgoing Davenport Club Captain .