



Cavehill Tennis Club

Newsletter July2020



Welcome Back

After eight weeks of lockdown, Cavehill Tennis Club opened its courts to members on 20th May. We were one of first clubs to open in Northern Ireland. The club appeared in the local press where Maurice Roberts was quoted "We are delighted to see the club re-open and it's great to see members get the chance to play and feel connected with others, albeit at a distance and with restrictions on numbers,"

We promised members after the closure on 26th March that we would extend the 2020-21 membership season by a period equivalent to the length of the closure. We are pleased to announce that the committee has decided that the membership will run in future to 31st May each year, starting with 31st May 2021.

Membership Increase

It's been a hectic time since re-opening. A rush of renewals and new members (66 up to 30th June!) has meant a busy time for our volunteer committee, which endeavours to complete the following tasks with a minimum of delay:

- Ensure full details from on-line application forms are properly recorded into our membership spreadsheet
- Add member to FastCourts booking system
- Update the MailChimp email system
- Ensure that new members are given details of COVID-19 restrictions
- Update the Club WhatsApp
- Send out access fobs
- Check payments are received

In particular, it has been a baptism of fire for our new Membership Secretary Rachel Robinson, performing this thankless task while working full-time on her day job and, we think members will agree, carrying it out very efficiently.



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New Committee Member

We welcome Feargus Wilson to membership of the committee. Feargus has agreed to become the new Match Secretary and has also agreed to head up a First Aid Volunteer group, consisting of our existing First Aider Christina McCavana, plus 5 members - Feargus, Evan Lynch, Wayne Palfreyman, John Whitmore and Anne McDaid - who recently attended a First Aid in Sport Course, for which we received 100% funding from the Department for Communities.



Our New Coach

We also welcome tennis coach Will Boyd who is now providing private lessons for members of all abilities. An accomplished player himself, Will has been coaching tennis for over five years in different clubs and also with the Ulster Tennis junior squads. He has a degree in Software and Electronic Engineering from Queens University Belfast but decided that a career as a tennis coach sounded like more fun. Will says he gets great satisfaction from seeing people improve and loves it when a beginner excitedly tells him they have won their first competitive match!

If you would like Will's help to improve your game you can contact him on his mobile **07729498976** or by e-mail at will@wbtenniscoaching.com



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New Online Forms

Thanks to our committee member Vincent Hughes for designing our new on-line membership application forms, which have been working very well. A simplified renewal form avoids the previous requirement to re-enter full details every year. In particular, the detail from Child Protection Forms is assumed to be the same as previous year, with members advising us only of any changes. Our Membership Secretary, once the current rush subsides, will be reviewing all the Child Protection Data we have on file to ensure we have all details required. We ask members to help in providing all the information requested.

Lockdown Leagues

Our new Singles and Household Doubles “Lockdown Leagues” are now in full swing. Thanks are due to our former committee member Bill Haddock for coming up with this idea and organising it. We are happy to see so many of our new members taking part and glad that they are taking this opportunity to get to know other club members.

Online Booking System

The Coronavirus restrictions and the Tennis Ireland guidelines prompted us to implement an online booking system. Our Communications Officer, John Whitmore, quickly identified FastCourts as a simple and affordable system and had all members set up on it in record time to be ready for the opening on 20th May. This system allows us to avoid congestion at the courts and also enables compliance with public health guidelines on contact tracing.

We are pleased to see that members have adapted to this so easily and we have decided that we will continue to use a booking system even when things hopefully get back to normal. This will make it easier for members to know when courts are available, league matches booked etc.

Bonus Ball

Thanks to Ruth Greenlees for coming up with the idea of a Bonus Ball competition and running it so successfully. It is a great, steady fundraiser for the club. We recently used some of the funds generated to purchase scoreboards for the 3 upper courts. Unfortunately, we no sooner had them installed than we had to close down through coronavirus. We then had to remove them from the net posts before returning to play, as they would be surfaces of frequent touching. Ruth's fundraising has also contributed to the cost of constructing the new shelter at the lower courts.



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Ruth Selected for Ireland

On 20th December 2019, Ruth received notification that she had been selected to represent Ireland in the 2020 International Tennis Federation Seniors World Championships, scheduled to be played in Florida in April. Cue great excitement in the Greenlees household over Christmas as plans were made for the whole family to go to Florida to support Ruth (and maybe have a holiday at the same time!). In total there were 24 people on the Ireland squad and Ruth was in the Women's 50+ team. One of Ruth's three team-mates was Sophia Dobbs, who together with Ruth had represented Ulster in the Veteran Interprovincial Championships in 2018 and 2019. Ruth and Sophia also went back much further, having played together for Belfast Royal Academy, winning the Schools Cup in 1983. They were looking forward to getting their photo taken in their Ireland team gear and submitting it to the school!

Then along came COVID-19 and the championships were first postponed and then cancelled. Despite having been measured up for her kit, Ruth never received it and the planned photo with Sophia didn't happen.

Ruth says "Obviously, I am hugely disappointed on a personal level, to have been selected and yet not participate in the event. But I'm disappointed also for my home club, not to get the opportunity to represent Cavehill on the bigger stage. Maybe next year."

We're keeping our collective fingers crossed for you, Ruth. Let's hope you get another shot at it in 2021!



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Club Maintenance

As usual there were a number of tasks around the club including purchase and installation of new nets and repair of the rest. Special mention to Jarek Luszcz and Wojciech Gajdemska for the deep clean on the main courts and to Michael McKnight for the management of the bottom hedge along Old Cavehill Road. Finally, we managed to complete the painting of our clubroom before we went into lockdown.

Floodlights

You will have noticed that the upper court floodlights have been adjusted, so that they shine more directly onto the courts, with less light "overflow". These adjustments were prompted by a request from the Environmental Health department of Belfast City Council. We hope you will agree that these adjustments are giving us a better spread of light on the courts and less glare.

We are still going through a long process of seeking planning permission for the lights installed on the lower courts. The major problem is that predicted light levels at adjacent properties were in excess of Environmental Health permitted limits. You may have noticed that at the same time as we adjusted the "old" lights, we installed light shields at courts 4 and 6. This installation was done at the same time to avoid having to hire a cherry picker twice. Thanks are due to a friend of the club, Declan Gallagher, for designing and manufacturing the shields, which are intended to reduce the light levels at neighbouring properties to the satisfaction of EH. Thanks also to our committee member Jarek for supplying the cherry picker at cost and funding the floodlight adjustments and the shield installation. Also, thanks to Wojciech for operating the cherry picker on a freezing cold March evening. We are now in further communications with BCC Planning and EH with a view to getting planning permission once we establish the light readings at adjacent properties with the light shields in place. This unfortunately has all been delayed by the Coronavirus lockdown.

Club Apparel

Thanks to Hannah Hewitt and Dean Lee who organised a catalogue of club clothing, which may be accessed [here](#). We have chosen generic navy/blue/white colours to complement the club logo which will be embroidered or stamped on all items, except where indicated. All items are unisex or available in men's or women's fit, again except where indicated. We hope that wearing the club logo with pride will boost league team and club players' spirits alike. Many of the items are great to wear both on and off court and hopefully there is something of appeal to all age ranges and fashion senses.

Zoom Quiz

Many thanks to Aine, Rachael and Vince for their work in hosting the lockdown online quiz. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and was good to see so many members again.

Training Grant

We successfully applied £270 of funding from Department for Communities to cover training in First Aid in Sport, Child Safeguarding and Inclusive Games (Catering for People with Disabilities). Thanks to all those that attended the courses a total of 16 course places for 10 members.