

The Amateur Championship – 2025

A couple of fixture clashes saw the Jesters again finish in late January, but the intention is to revert to back to the first Monday in February in 2026 ... The dates shuffle didn't dampen the enthusiasm to play with another large field descend on London town for the 44th version of this wonderful event. The 5th edition of the Women's championship joined the Men in Mayfair and the Lansdowne Club was added to the host club roster alongside the RAC and Oxford & Cambridge Club. Once again, a fabulous Finals night took place at the RAC on Monday, with all three match courts packed to the rafters with spectators.

It was again a strong entry list, potentially the strongest ever in terms of depth, with 135 male and 18 female players making it to the starting line (and just the one no-show – she had strangely also entered a graded event in Birmingham on the same day...!) and an incredible 200 matches being played over the weekend.

The Amateur

Holder: James Snell

Seeds:

1. James Snell
2. Jack Webster
3. Luke Bishop
4. Dave Allman

Another quality field lined up on the Friday night starting gate to embark on 6 rounds of bruising squash and discover who would be crowned champion. As promised, James Snell was back to defend his title and was brutally efficient enroute to another final, while Jack Webster had clearly learned from his debut the previous year and was equally ruthless to join Snell in the final. However, elsewhere there were classic Jesters encounters including the standard late night battles with Kiwi Michael Pittams finally being reeled in by Dave Allman in 98 minutes, before Harry Wyld finally got past a cramp-stricken Mark Radley 10/8 the fifth. Needless to say, that was the end of the road for both victors and a much-anticipated final was tee'd up.

The Final

Under the Monday night lights, Snell took on Webster to see who would walk away with the coveted trophy. Webster coped well early on with the noise and heat, edging the first 9/7 as Snell couldn't quite find the accuracy that had served him so well over the weekend. The second continued at a ferocious pace and an incredible rally at 5/4 tipped the tie in the favour of Snell, but Webster didn't go down without a fight, entertaining the crowd with some rapid retrieving and shot making. In the end it wasn't enough, and it was Snell who finally got across the line. He 'may' be back next year, but ... definitely will in the future!

Score:

James Snell bt Jack Webster 7/9 9/4 9/3 9/4



The Women's Amateur

Holder: Emily Peach

Seeds:

1.Emily Peach

2.Anya Shah

This year's Women's Championship boasted a record entry and several players who would have fancied their chances. Last year's finalists, Emily Peach & Catherin Ruffle, lost out at the Semi Final stage in a couple of high-quality matches to set up a mouthwatering final between two Jesters debutants.

The Final

Emmeline Gale came out firing and jumped to a one game lead over Nottingham student Anya Shah but was heard in the intermission commenting how loud the atmosphere was – welcome to Monday night finals! The second was nip and tuck, Gale saved a game ball at 5/8, eased to one of her own at 9/8 but couldn't capitalise and Shah tied it up at one apiece before jumping to a two-one lead. Gale wasn't done and again set up game balls to level things up but after a pulsating encounter it was Shah that came out on top by the narrowest of margins.

Score:

Anya Shah bt Emmelin Gale 3/9 9/10 9/5 10/8



The Over 35's Amateur

Holder: Chirag Shah

Seeds:

1.Jamie Douglas

2.Gordon Harpur

A high calibre Veterans field lined up, with 2023 Champion & top seed Jamie Douglas the book-makers favourite, but Shahab Raza worked him hard enough to cause a retirement from a shoulder injury before Raza ran into 2024 runner-up Andrew Fenby and bounced out of the tournament. Dulwich members Gordon Harpur & Jim Bristow played out a very tough semi final of their own, before Irishman Harpur edged through to his maiden final.

The Final

The final was a titanic encounter epitomised by the 35-minute third game that proved pivotal both physically and mentally as Harpur took advantage of taking the lead to get home in four and lift his first Jesters title.

Score:

Gordon Harpur bt Andrew Fenby 7/9 9/5 10/9 9/1



The Veteran's Amateur

Holder: Rob Staunton

Seeds:

1.Tim Garner

2.Matt Holland

Having been dumped out at the Quarter-Final stage last year, Tim Garner clearly had unfinished business and having disposed of Antonio Petronzio, was clearly delighted to see Charlie McCall come through a tight encounter with Nick Freer to set up a re-match. Garner gave McCall quite the work out before taking up a spot in the final and awaiting the outcome of Paul Boyle & Matt Holland. The second seed Holland is getting ready to defend his British Nationals Over 45 title and was in excellent form from the off and gave Boyle little

chance to get into proceedings. Setting up a much-anticipated final between Garner & Holland.

The Final

Having seen the form Holland was in the day before, Garner was quick out of the blocks and kept the man from Colets chasing down the ball down and offering little in cheap points. Holland tried to mix up the pace & the angles but couldn't break through the Lansdowne man's armour and Garner regained the trophy he won in 2023 in straight games.

Score:

Tim Garner bt Matt Holland 9/4 9/0 9/1



The Vintage Amateur

Holder: Richard Winter

Seeds:

1. Richard Winter

2. Jason Fletcher

Last year Richard Winter was star of the show, with the RAC member carving his way through the draw to lift the title. Sport has a habit of taking away as quickly as it gives and having changed his skiing flight to defend his title, Winter was knocked out at the first hurdle by Manoj Nair who atleast paid him the respect of then making the final! In the other half of the draw, Jason Fletcher took advantage of his relative 'youth' in the category and joined Nair.

The Final

Having waited for the best part of 80 minutes for Fenby & Harpur to finish up, Fletcher clearly had his eye on a beer & the Long Bar buffet as he wrapped up the first in double quick time. Nair managed to slow him up a tad in the second and third but could do little to stop the Jason juggernaut!

Score:

Jason Fletcher bt Manoj Nair 9/2 9/4 9/4



The Venerable's Amateur

Holder: Eamonn Price

Seeds:

1. Eamonn Price
2. Alex Betts

As is often the case, the 60s draw was all about quality rather than quantity as old adversaries Eamonn Price & Alex Betts once again carved their way through the draw to meet in a Jesters final for the 5th time

The Final

Although three-one down in results, Betts had come out on top on the last occasion in 2023. However, Price had clearly decided to put that to bed with a highly accomplished performance him that saw him come out on top (just) in all three games.

Score:

Eamonn Price bt Alex Betts 9/6 9/6 9/7



The Vulnerable's Amateur

Holder: Allen Barwise

Seeds:

1. Allen Barwise
2. Nick Gollaglee

Yet again a big draw entered the Vulnerables, with several in their 70s (and no, there are still no plans for an Over 70s event!) There were plenty of quality matches, but it was the top seeds that eased through to the final.

The Final

Allen Barwise was favourite going into the encounter, but 'new boy' Nick Gollaglee by all accounts plays classic Masters squash with the lob & drop at the business end of his artillery. This helped to get to a two-game lead before Barwise, leant into his speciality 'stubborn competitiveness' and reeled Gollaglee in point by point to retain the title in 5 games.

Score:

Allen Barwise bt Gollaglee 2/9 4/9 9/6 9/6 9/0



The Amateur Plate

Holder: Ben Mann

40 players took part in the Plate event, which was drawn from the Over 45s and younger. It's mental & physical challenge to succeed in the Plate, often encountering opponents that were fresher and having to deal with the curve all of 3 matches in one day, so a place in the final is well earned.

The Final

Chris Abel & Jonathan Andvig were worthy finalists and served up a classic plate battle. With both players feeling the effects of a weekend of squash, the rallies went on longer than they (and the marker) would have liked. After over 75 minutes, it was Abel who slowed ultramarathon runner Andvig to a standstill to lift the Plate trophy.

Score:

Chris Abel bt Jonathan Andvig 2/9 9/5 9/5 9/7



The Women's Amateur Plate

Holder: Georgina Brown

The Final

Whilst the women's plate didn't have the volume of squash, the road to the final had drama a plenty! Georgina Brown edged past Olha Zadorozhna, but as Brown only wins the plate in even years Rina Einy got past her to set up a Queens final with Sabrina Didizian. The first was tight, as was the second before Einy cantered home in three.

Score:

Rina Einy by Sabrina Didizian 9/7 9/5 9/0



The Championship team of Peter Chalk, Janet Raffety, Sean Hayden & Tim Garner helped deliver another fantastic weekend of squash. Thanks to Harry Parkes for his help over the weekend & as finals night chief photographer. Thank you to everyone who helped mark the finals – special mention to Nigel Belle who once again oversaw all three finals on court 3.

The prizes were handed out by Robert Dolman (President of The Jesters Club) with over 150 guests attending the evening. It was a fantastic atmosphere & enjoyed by all who attended.

The RAC, Oxford & Cambridge Club & the Lansdowne Club once again proved wonderful hosts of the event and everyone looked forward to returning in 2026. Mic drop.

