

The 131st Varsity Tennis Match

26th and 27th June 2021



Cambridge Blues, proudly wearing  PlayBrave.

Players

Cambridge Women's Blues

Brown, Aisha*
Chesca, Anna* (*Captain*)
Dando, Katie
Ganendra, Juliana
Hurst, Leah*
Kiely, Hannah
Wong, Katherine
Yamaguchi, Kureha*

College

Trinity
Murray Edwards
Churchill
Downing
Clare
Trinity Hall
Murray Edwards
Clare

Subject

Medicine
Natural Sciences
History
Law
Natural Sciences
Chemistry
Medicine
Engineering

Cambridge Men's Blues

Gehlert, Pascal*
Hayat, Esah
Kaminski, Michal*
Navapurkar, Salil* (*Captain*)
Pilger, Domenic*
Smart, Patrick
Williamson, Theo
Wilson-Smith, Jack*

Magdalene
Homerton
Fitzwilliam
Robinson
Sidney Sussex
Churchill
Fitzwilliam
Homerton

Engineering
Natural Sciences
Material Sciences
MML
Biochemistry
Natural Sciences
MML
Engineering

* denotes previous Tennis Blues status

Results

Women's overall score: 17-4

Men's overall score: 10-11

<i>Saturday (26th June)</i>	<i>Women's</i>	<i>Men's</i>	<i>Sunday (27th June)</i>	<i>Women's</i>	<i>Men's</i>
Round 1- Singles			Round 5- Singles		
Cambridge 1 vs Oxford 2	6-0 6-1	6-2 6-2	Cambridge 2 vs Oxford 2	6-3 6-1	6-0 6-1
Cambridge 3 vs Oxford 4	4-6 6-4 6-0	6-2 6-4	Cambridge 4 vs Oxford 4	6-2 6-1	6-7 4-6
Cambridge 5 vs Oxford 6	3-6 7-6(6) 6-1	6-4 3-6 3-6	Cambridge 6 vs Oxford 6	4-6 3-6	6-7 4-6
Round 2- Singles			Round 6- Singles		
Cambridge 2 vs Oxford 1	6-3 6-3	7-5 6-3	Cambridge 1 vs Oxford 1	6-0 6-0	6-4 6-2
Cambridge 4 vs Oxford 3	7-6(5) 7-5	3-6 0-6	Cambridge 3 vs Oxford 3	3-6 6-3 6-1	3-6 7-5 4-6
Cambridge 6 vs Oxford 5	6-2 6-2	0-6 3-6	Cambridge 5 vs Oxford 5	7-5 7-6(5)	6-2 6-3
Round 3- Doubles			Round 7- Doubles		
Cambridge 1 vs Oxford 2	6-2 6-2	2-6 4-6	Cambridge 1 vs Oxford 1	6-2 6-3	6-4 6-4
Cambridge 2 vs Oxford 3	6-4 4-6 5-7	6-3 6-3	Cambridge 2 vs Oxford 2	5-7 3-6	1-6 7-5 4-6
Cambridge 3 vs Oxford 1	4-6 3-6	4-6 4-6	Cambridge 3 vs Oxford 3	1-6 6-4 8-6	6-2 6-3
Round 4- Doubles					
Cambridge 1 vs Oxford 3	6-2 6-1	4-6 6-3 6-2			
Cambridge 2 vs Oxford 1	6-2 6-2	4-6 6-7(2)			
Cambridge 3 vs Oxford 2	1-6 6-4 6-2	3-6 2-6			

Match Reports

Women's Blues Match Report, written by Juliana Ganendra (Downing College)

The Women's Varsity Match began with a quick and convincing 6-0 6-1 win from the Captain, Anna Chesca (#1). Tensions ran high when Leah Hurst (#3) and Juliana Ganendra (#5) lost their first sets. However, they showed their grit by making a strong come back to win their matches 4-6 6-4 6-0, and 3-6 7-6(6) 6-1 respectively, with Ganendra saving 3 match points in the tiebreak. The clutch performance would have made Jimmy van Alen, a CULTC alumnus and the inventor of the tie break, proud. Talented and tactical play in the second round of singles delivered straight set wins from Kureha Yamaguchi (#2), Aisha Brown (#4) and Katie Dando (#6) at 6-3 6-3, 7-6(5) 7-5, and 6-2 6-2, respectively. The strong performance throughout the singles gave Cambridge a 6 point lead.

The Cambridge #1 pair, Chesca/Yamaguchi took apart Oxford's 2nd pair 6-2 6-2, using their volleying and tactical mastery. Unfortunately, at #3, Ganendra/Kiely went down in a spirited performance against Oxford's 1st pair, 4-6 3-6. The Hurst/Wong #2 pair had a nail biting close match with beautiful rallies, but narrowly lost an absolute epic, 6-4 4-6 5-7, to Oxford's 3rd pair. The second round of doubles saw the Cambridge pairs oozing confidence on the court. Chesca/Yamaguchi continued their winning streak with a quick 6-2 6-1 win over Oxford's 3rd pair. Hurst/Wong outclassed the Oxford 1st pair with their strong serving and volleying, and convincingly won 6-2 6-2. After losing the first set, Ganendra/Kiely brought energy and ferocity to the court to secure a win of 1-6 6-4 6-2 against Oxford's 2nd pair. The day ended with a 10-2 lead to Cambridge – just one match away from Varsity triumph!

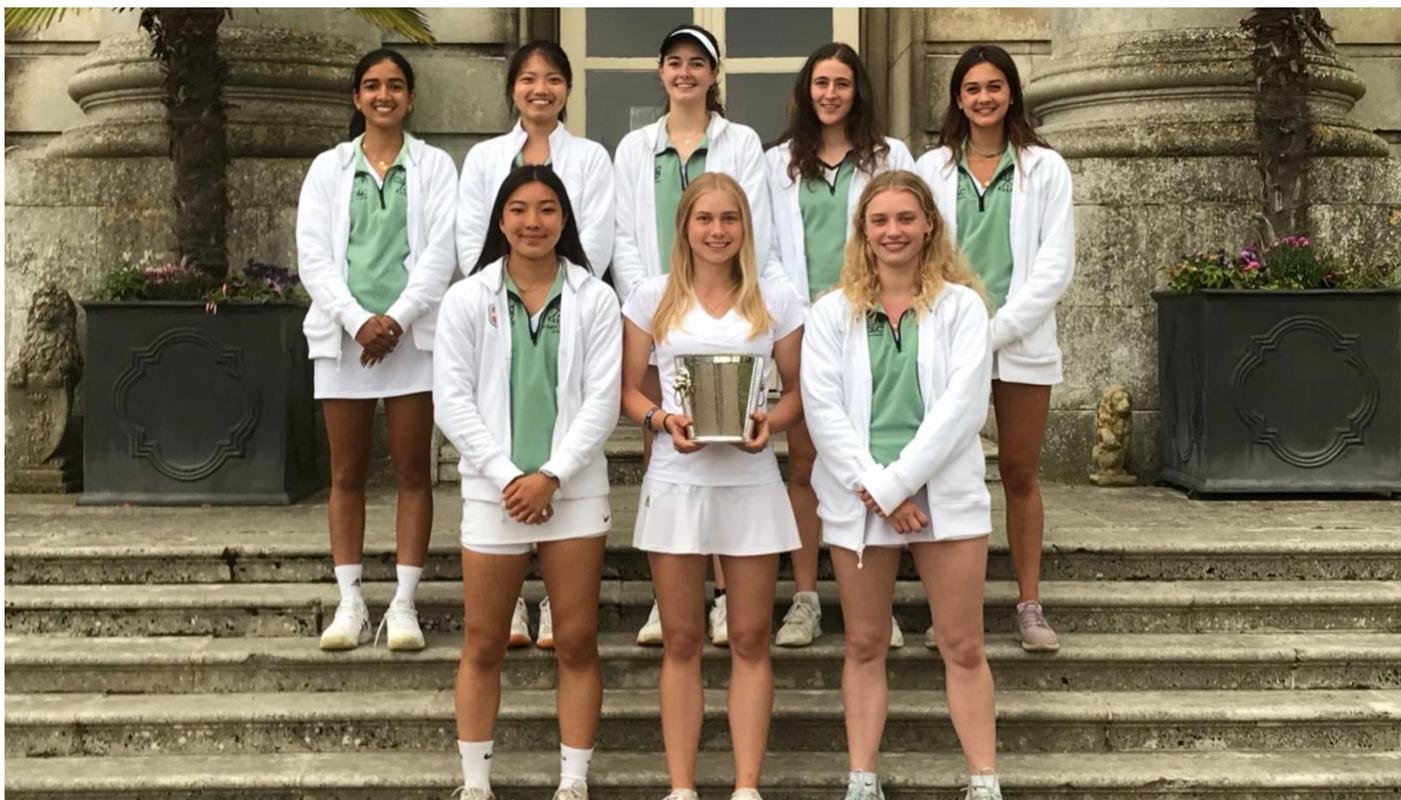
The bad weather forecast and damp courts brought uncertainty to Sunday's play. However, the collaboration and pragmatism of the captains, Moor Park and Bob Jenkins allowed play to quickly resume on the grass courts.

The Sunday began with a race to secure the 11th win. It was fitting that Captain Chesca brought home the win with a Wimbledon inspired performance, convincingly winning 6-0 6-0. Similarly talented play from Yamaguchi,

Brown and Ganendra secured Light Blue victories at 6-3 6-1, 6-2 6-1, and 7-5 7-6(5) respectively. Unfortunately, the slippery conditions allowed Oxford to edge a win against Dando, 4-6 3-6. To end the singles on a high note, Hurst demonstrated her relentless fitness and clutch in her third three-set match of the weekend, winning 3-6 6-3 6-1.

The final round of doubles saw the Light Blues endeavour to extend their margin of victory. Chesca/Yamaguchi ended Varsity in the same way that they started it, with a straight set win, 6-2 6-3. Wong/Hurst fought hard, but Oxford's clinical performance caused a Dark Blue win, 5-7 3-6. Ganendra/Kiely's final match consisted of their classic energy and love for a three-setter, winning 1-6 6-4 8-6.

The Cambridge team lifted the trophy with an incredible 17-4 victory. We are extremely grateful to Moor Park, Bob Jenkins, the Alumni Committee and our President, Kureha Yamaguchi, who made the event possible. We are thankful for the kind hospitality of the Navapurkar family for fuelling us before and after Varsity. Finally, a massive thank you to Anna who guided the team through an unusual year and inspired with her sensational tennis.



Men's Blues Match Report, written by Jack Wilson-Smith (Homerton College)

It was a tough loss for the Cambridge Men's team as they were just edged out by the Oxford dark blues 11-10 in an ending similar to last year's Varsity. Despite numerous golf balls landing on court narrowly missing both Cambridge and Oxford players, Cambridge made a strong start with a convincing 6-2 6-2 win from Cambridge's #1 player Michal Kaminski. On the next court, newcomer Esah Hayat put in a great performance with his first varsity match, calmly beating the Oxford captain 6-2 6-4. Coming back for his second year, Jack Wilson-Smith played the Oxford number 6 and lost in 3 tough sets, 6-4 3-6 3-6.

Moving into the second round of singles Captain Salil Navapurkar playing at # 2 played a brilliant match of tennis against the Oxford #1 beating him 7-5 6-3. Two other newcomers Patrick Smart and Theo Williamson played on the courts next door with Theo subbing in for Pascal Gehlert who sadly had to miss his final varsity due to covid, but who was supporting proudly from isolation. Patrick and Theo played well but suffered tough losses 3-6 0-6 and 0-6 3-6 respectively against fellow new oxford recruits. This put the overall scores at 3-3 before starting the first round of doubles.

Cambridge first pair Kaminski/Smart were beaten 6-2 6-4 by the Oxford second pair, arguably their best pair as they went on to remain undefeated throughout the weekend. The Cambridge second pair Navapurkar/Hayat won a convincing match of doubles in straight sets against the Oxford threes with Hayat again preventing the Oxford

Captain from clinching his first ever Varsity win. Domenic Pilger played with Jack Wilson-Smith as Cambridge's third pair, narrowly losing 4-6 4-6. Starting the last round of matches as the first day of Varsity was coming to an end, the Cambridge #1 pair lost the first set of their match 6-4, however in a thrilling comeback including an outstanding performance from fresher Patrick Smart, Michal and Patrick serve and volleyed their way to a Light Blue win 4-6 6-3 6-2. The Cambridge #2 and #3 pair unfortunately lost both their matches with Navapurkar/Hayat losing their second set in a nail-biting tiebreak with action-packed rallies keeping the audience on the edge of their seats. The scores were 4-6 6-7(2) and 3-6 2-6 respectively. With Cambridge having again only managed to clinch one of the three doubles in the final round, this made it 7-5 to Oxford by the end of the first day, leaving it all to play for on the final day.

Feeling well rested with the worry of rain delays on everyone's mind (as well as the dreaded Astro) it was the #2 #4 and #6 Cambridge players to start the day with a round of singles. The Cambridge Captain Salil led the charge with one of the quickest victories of the weekend beating the Oxford #1 6-0 6-1. Both Cambridge #4 and #6 narrowly lost with first sets tiebreaks in matching scores 6-7 4-6. Kaminski and Wilson-Smith followed this with comfortable 6-4 6-4 and 6-2 6-3 wins respectively to keep Cambridge in the running. Hayat played Oxford's #3 who appeared their strongest player that weekend and lost in a gruelling 3 setter 3-6 7-5 4-6 with both Oxfords and Cambridge's men's and women's team supporting.

With Oxford leading 10-8 the Light Blues knew they needed to win all 3 of the final doubles matches to secure the victory. The Kaminski/Smart pair quickly put away their opponents 6-4 6-4 with 2 of the CULTC's biggest serves. Similarly, Wilson-Smith and Pilger defeated the Oxford Captain and his partner once again 6-2 6-3 in a solid performance from both. This left the Cambridge second pair facing the Oxford second pair, fresher Hayat partnered with Captain Navapurkar, one set down, playing for the Varsity, the same scenario as the previous year. Producing some of the highest quality tennis ever seen by the pair they managed to take the second set 7-5 with Hayat still managing to maintain his energy despite playing in his second three-set match that day. In classic Varsity fashion, with every supporter gathered next to the #2 pairs to cheer on ever point, the Cambridge boys gave it all they had but just missed out on the deciding set to lose 1-6 7-5 4-6 giving Oxford the final victory of 11-10 overall.

Despite just missing out on taking the Varsity trophy home to Hawks Club in Cambridge, the Light Blues produced an incredible weekend of tennis, a performance they should all be proud of. A special thanks to our president Kureha Yamaguchi for all her hard work this year and of course to the captain Salil Navapurkar who, despite an interrupted year of tennis, led the team excellently throughout. The Cambridge men's team would also like to thank the Navapurkar family for having everyone over pre-Varsity and fuelling us for the weekend ahead and of course to John Taylor for having us to stay over the weekend.



A few words from the captains

Special congratulations to Anna Chesca and Kureha Yamaguchi for winning 5/5 rubbers. We would like to mention a few people in particular for their hard work and support throughout the year: is our coach, Nick Brown, whose spirit and drive has been of immense benefit for both the Men's and Women's teams; John Taylor who, apart from hosting the Men's team again during the Varsity Match, has been a constant source of guidance in the face of Covid-related complications; and Kureha Yamaguchi who worked tirelessly in her role as CULTC President this year.

We were thrilled to have been hosted by Moor Park Golf Club again and we thank them for their hard work and generosity. Despite the difficult circumstances, the weekend ran incredibly smoothly, and it was fantastic to see a number of alumni cheering on the teams. Their encouragement continues to motivate the Cambridge teams to build on this year and improve for next year. We would also like to thank our sponsors, [OC&C](#) and [PlayBrave](#) for their continued support this year. Finally, the club must say farewell to Pascal Gehlert, Domenic Pilger and Salil Navapurkar who have recently joined the ranks of the 'Old Blues'. We wish them all the best for their future endeavours.

From your 2020/21 Blues Captains,
Anna Chesca & Salil Navapurkar