

DURHAM SPORT WEEKLY DIGEST

SOFTBALL SURPRISE: DURHAM STORM TO NATIONAL FINAL

After a steady league season, Durham hit form at the BUCS finals — stunning Loughborough en route to a silver medal finish.

ROWING RESULTS IMPRESS ACROSS CITY AND MET REGATTAS

University crews shine at the Met while college rowers deliver standout wins at Durham City Regatta — including another dominant outing from Collingwood.

ST MARY'S CELEBRATE BREAKOUT SPORTING YEAR

From unbeaten hockey teams to record fresher sign-ups, Mary's makes its mark on and off the pitch in an inspiring 2024–25 season.

JUDO AND WATER POLO ROUND OFF STRONG SEASONS

National medals, European qualifiers, and a BUCS title cap off successful campaigns for Durham's combat and aquatic squads.

PLUS

PLAQUE WALL: OLIVER GILL

READER FEEDBACK

WATER POLO ROUND-UP

GREETINGS FROM ZAMBIA

DURHAM SPORT WEEKLY DIGEST

Durham Softball Puts On A Show

Some years ago it would seem a little strange to add baseball and softball to the BUCS programme, but given our results from this year, now we're all converts. Durham had a solid league season, qualifying in second place for the national play-offs despite being some way behind UCLan.

The group stages, at the finals, proved to be a happy hunting ground for the Palatinates. Durham had an 18-2 win over Kent and a 15-10 win over Oxford Brookes. Added to this was an extremely close game against Bournemouth which ended in a 12-12 draw. Our only defeat coming in an 11-14 loss to the old enemy Loughborough.

These results qualified Durham for the Gold Group. A win over UCLan, 15-11, was a great result as we had suffered heavy losses to them in the league programme. This was followed by a win over Reading, in a desperately close game 8-7. The only loss was to Nottingham 11-13 but we had done enough to get to the semi-finals where we were to meet top seeds Loughborough who we had already lost to.



The Palatinates clearly learnt a great deal

from the first game as they inflicted a surprise defeat on Loughborough, ending up comfortable semi-final winners 8-4. In the final against Nottingham Durham might have hoped for better things after their very close Gold Group match. It was not to be, however, as Nottingham took us apart, winning 17-0. There were few indications that we would make the national final after the league programme but great to have yet another side in the final two in the country. Well done all!

Women's Cricket

Durham took on the MCC in a T20 match and came away with a comfortable win. The MCC scored 105 for 8 with **Lottie James** (Collingwood) taking 3 for 8. Durham knocked off the total with relative ease,

scoring 106 for 3. Congratulations to captain **Frances Lonsdale** (Van Mildert), who again led from the front scoring an unbeaten 68.

Durham managed to get a great deal closer to Loughborough in their home tie, evidence that on their day they could beat this impressive outfit. Durham were bowled out for 118 with **Charlotte Stubbs** (Van Mildert) top scoring on 38. They made Loughborough work hard for the win as they scored 119 for 7, with **Amelia Lee** (Collingwood) taking 3 for 40. A recent weather cancellation means that Durham will definitely play Exeter away in the semi-final of BUCS – we wish them well.

Durham women's second team had the unenviable task of taking on top of the table Edinburgh first team. Totally undaunted the Palatinates bowled the Scottish University out for 129 before knocking off their target for the loss of three wickets moving them up to second in this predominantly first team league.

Durham Women's Rowers Shine at the Met Regatta

Some might argue our women's rowers have not had the rub of the green so far this year as they have always looked as though they have the talent to challenge the best.

Nowhere better to do this than at the Metropolitan women's eights. Durham came in seventh in the time trial, less than eight seconds behind first place Molesey who finished in a time of 5.56 minutes. Thames A were second



in 5.57, Thames B third in 5.59. Fourth place, Oxford Brookes in 6.00, fifth Cambridge 6.01, sixth Leander 6.02 and then Durham in 6.03.

Our women's second eight recorded a time of 6.20, finishing 22nd, beating a number of other university first eights.

Met Regatta - Great Results For Men and Women

Saturday: WChamp8+ A final - eighth, WAcademic 8+ C final - fifth (second in Academic), MAcademic 4+ D final - third, MChamp 8+ B final - first, MAcademic 8+ C final - eighth, MAcademic 8+ K final - first.

Sunday: WChamp 8+ A final - fifth, MChamp 4+ A final - first, MAcademic 4+ D final - first, WLwtx D final - seventh, MCahmp 8+ F final - eighth, MAcademic 8+ B final - fourth (Academic final - fourth).



College Rowing – Durham City Regatta

It was a big day for college rowing at the Durham City regatta as colleges went head-to-head across numerous boat categories. Some of the selected results are outlined below.

The top category, B1, saw a number of strong performances: In the men's eight Collingwood beat Grey by four lengths. One has to go back to June 2021 to find the last time Collingwood men's eight lost to another Durham College. Impressive! The men's coxed four was dominated by Trevelyan College, as Trevelyan beat Trevelyan by half a length – a great day for both of them. In the women's coxed four, Collingwood were at it again as their women beat Butler by a distance. On Sunday over the short course, South coxed four beat Hatfield by two lengths.

However, Butler took the women's single scull, beating Mildert by a length and in the men's coxless pair Trevelyan were

victorious again, beating John's by three and a half lengths. On the Sunday, over the short course, John Snow's double beat Chester-Le-Street by a distance.



In the B2 category the results were as follows: St Cuthbert's men's eight beat Hild/ Bede by 4.5 lengths, Grey women's eight beat St John's by 2.25 lengths, in the men's coxed four St John's beat Trevelyan by a length and in the women's coxed four St Johns beat South by one length. On Sunday, in the women's coxed four category, Grey beat South by 1.25 lengths.

In the mixed events, over the short course, Collingwood coxed four beat Trevelyan by 1.5 lengths and in the quad Butler beat Durham/Durham School by half a length.

Durham University Judo Report

The new academic year has once again brought the club some strong results. DUJC judoka have fought across the country in numerous competitions (North-East Development, SKK Open, Nottingham Open, English Open) bringing back with them 6 golds, 3 silvers and 2 bronzes.

The club put together a strong team to fight in the University of Sheffield International Student Teams (USIST) event earlier this year, placing fifth, only narrowly missing out in the bronze medal matches. We proudly hosted our first ever varsity match against Newcastle University Judo Club, securing a 10-7 win. Additionally, the club had the honour of hosting an Olympic masterclass with Paris Olympian and GB athlete Lele Nairne. The event was truly inspiring and unforgettable, offering members the opportunity to learn from someone at the top of their game.

Last term ended with some huge success at the judo BUCS Championships. The club saw our largest turnout and won 2 silver and 3 bronze medals. As a result

of these accomplishments, we are proud to report that three of our judokas successfully qualified for the upcoming European University Games held in Poland, a notable judo achievement. Members of the club continue to train throughout the third term in preparation for upcoming competitions later on in the year.

Medals for the year: Northeast Development: 1 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze. SKK Open: 4 gold and 1 bronze, Nottingham Senior Open: 1 silver and 1 bronze and finally BUCS: 2 silver and 3 bronze.

Mary's College Sport Report

I'm Henry and I've had the massive privilege of being the Sports and Societies Officer for Mary's College over the past year – an opportunity I leaped at when I first saw it advertised. I've seen first-hand the impact all of our clubs make to college life and wanted to make it my mission to make sure everyone has the same positive experience and spread the same bleed-purple mentality. Writing this report off the back of an extremely successful Sports and Societies Formal, with the whole college community involved, goes to show that it's worked!

Looking very broadly at sport, Mary's is slowly but surely making a name for itself. So far this year we've climbed 4 spots from our 10th place finish in 2024, and this is no doubt down to the energy, enthusiasm and dedication that is shown by everyone day in and day out. It's not just the overall points tally that's impressive though – the college has won 2 floodlit tournaments, topped 8 league tables, and 4 teams have been selected for college vsitories against York and Loughborough.



Out of these, some clubs have really excelled and deserve special mention. Firstly **frisbee**, who have been undefeated for the past FOUR years, added to their impressive hypothetical trophy cabinet with a floodlit win and another premier league title, while also securing the victory against York.

Secondly, **rugby**, who with a limited squad, secured back-to-back promotions over the last two years and have won Division 1! They also took on a very strong York side towards the end of last term, just missing out on the extra accolade. Next, **lacrosse**, whose A and B teams have propelled themselves to league titles (or almost, as the former have one game still to play). The As defeated Grey a couple of months ago to claim their long-awaited floodlit trophy. Finally, and perhaps the biggest success story of the year comes from the **hockey** club, who as of now still have all three of their teams undefeated and winning their respective leagues (with men's

and women's B securing promotion in the process). It's an even more impressive feat when you find out that the women's B team were only formed at the start of this year and is made up primarily of players who are completely new to the game.

Elsewhere across the college, engagement has never been higher, with some clubs seeing record fresher signups (**badminton** had over 70!) and clubs that were left with one or two members at the end of last year, such as **volleyball** and **squash**, have bounced back and continue getting more and more wins in their leagues. **Women's football** have also had an extremely inspiring campaign, with the largest squad ever, managing to win the inter-collegiate round robin tournament before the leagues commenced! They've come so far this year, and I know that they'll maintain this upwards trajectory into the next year.



The story behind this week's plaque is fascinating. In 2006 Oliver Gill was playing in the under eighteens at Manchester United. He had a very successful first few years there and in 2009 turned fully professional. Playing in the reserves, he turned in some outstanding performances and was selected to sit on the bench in Manchester United's final Champions League game in the same year.

A lone spell at Bradford City followed and in 2011 he was awarded the Denzil Haroun Trophy as Player of the Year of the reserve side at Manchester United.

Six months later he arrived at St Cuthbert's College, Durham University to study Economics. It's no coincidence that around this time Durham University first team football began to improve dramatically. Oliver was an imposing centre half and an excellent leader who went on to become first team captain. It was nice, on occasions, to see his father, David Gill (then Manchester United Chief Executive), watching the occasional game at Maiden Castle – a bit of a contrast to Old Trafford. Oliver has gone on to have a very successful career in the corporate world of finance.

However, of course, success hasn't just been confined to the pitch, court, river or track. This year has seen the launch of a new volunteering initiative within the college in which the community has accumulated almost 780 combined hours – which for reference, is 10x the now seemingly miniscule amount that we achieved last year. A large contribution to this tally is the time spent by some of our clubs: namely rugby, netball, hockey and football, who have held weekly reading and games sessions with students from Silver Tree Primary School in Ushaw Moor, an experience which both the school and participants have found extremely rewarding.

Volunteering aside, Charity has also been at the forefront of college sport activities as always. Rugby and football raised a collective £1600 for Movember in Michaelmas, taking them into the top ten contributing clubs around Durham! The latter has also been collecting for RSACC (Rape and Sexual Assault Counselling Centre) based in Darlington – achieved through an enjoyable charity match against the Newcastle University Historians. Netball have raised £200 for their charity FREE (Female Recovery through Experience and Empowerment) in a joint effort with Rugby in their annual dress-and-shirt-swap match. Rowing also held an erg-athon to raise funds for a new boat, reaching £1400 which is a massive step towards achieving their long-standing goal.

There isn't much left of the year, but Mary's still has plenty of opportunity to prove itself, with the Festival of Sport up first, followed by our annual college varsity with Trevis which can hopefully match the intensity of last year's battle. The league campaigns also begin for **cricket** (who've already won the indoor league this year and now start their first season in the Premiership) and **rounders** – who only recently lost their infamous four and a half year unbeaten streak.

This year has been immense for so many different reasons, and as I end the year as Sports Officer I am so happy that there's been so much positivity to reflect on (and boast about). It's obviously impossible to sum up everything that every club has done this year in a short article, but it's even more difficult to express how much pride I have in saying **Up The Mares!**

Inclusivity At The Heart Of Our Outreach

Inclusivity is at the heart of the volunteering and outreach programme for both our volunteers and participants. Our community outreach activities are designed to be accessible for all abilities and ages, with student volunteers adapting sessions to ensure that attendees enjoy themselves and have a positive experience.

Outside of our ongoing inclusive football and low vis rowing sessions, hosted at the sports centre, we also go out and about supporting our community partners. For example, a group of Hatfield Rugby Club student volunteers have worked

in partnership with the team and staff from Durham Trinity School and Sport College to deliver sporting activities and drills to children from Oxclose Primary School, Washington. The emphasis was on fun and movement, with a carousel of activities designed to improve agility and skills while getting pupils moving. The school provides additionally resourced provision and supports numerous children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, so it was important for volunteers and staff to be flexible and adapt sessions accordingly. Supported by expert advice from our partners at Durham Trinity School, the afternoon was a great success with pupils and volunteers all excitedly getting involved.

A long-standing relationship with Durham Area Disability and Leisure Group (DADLG) has been reignited recently with student volunteers from several colleges supporting the group's activities. DADLG, a registered charity, provides activities for children and adults in the local community including a youth club with regular games and activities. Recognising that their 18+ aged participants can struggle to socialise and engage in activities, the group hold regular social activity sessions which include activities such as darts and pool. Supported by student volunteers, these sessions help to develop participants' confidence and social interaction, through fun sports and activities. The students gain valuable experience, develop their skills, and have fun at these inclusive sessions, whilst giving back to the local community.

Greetings From Zambia

"My name is Deogracious Kabambaya, I am among the people who have benefited from school support from Sport In Action and its partners. Thank you for the support that you have given me, I am now a trained teacher. This help will go a long way in my life. Thank you and may God richly bless you."



Responses To Our Last Report

"Great digest - really showcasing all that is going on at Durham. The breadth of sports covered is quite staggering! One of the greatest strengths of Durham sport is, without question, our alumni. Throughout my involvement with the University, they have been a wonderful support for our students. This was clearly in evidence at the Barbarian dinner and game and the wonderful support our rowers got, earlier this year, at the Head of the River in London and will, I am sure, get at Henley in a few weeks' time."

"Below is a fantastic photo taken on the balcony at Durham City Rugby Club. These former students, great supporters of Durham, cover the period 1969-75 and whilst one played first team hockey the rest of the group played in the first or second team for DURFC which included a win in the second team UAU Championship during these years."



I was at Durham from 1971 to 1975 and even today I remember some of these names as legends of their time. From back left, Howard Veary, Ray Illingworth, Mike Stirling, Lawrence Swarbrick, Geoff Simpson, Nigel Halfpenny, John Bligh. Front row from the left: Andy Bulmer, George Makulski, David Cowell and Bob Bishop."

If you have any feedback, positive or otherwise, alumni news or suggestions for future additions to our plaque wall, please **get in touch**.

How Did They Do? An All-Sport Review

This week we will focus on water polo. If you are striving to be the best in the Country in this sport, then not having a swimming pool isn't the greatest of starts. The fact that Durham City's pool cannot be used for water polo anymore is also a drawback and as such, not for the first time, our home pool for training and competitions has been Northumbria University's pool. Huge thanks to them for allowing us access. Results would suggest that whilst not ideal, it did not appear to hamper the Durham athletes.



Women's Water Polo

This was a wonderful year for women's water polo. In the league the women won seven and lost one securing the Northern Premier League title by winning their head-to-head with Nottingham. In eight games this outstanding side scored 180 and conceded only 35. Not to be outdone the second team won North One scoring 167 goals and conceding 76. They won nine and lost one game, again playing only first team opposition. The thirds finished a very creditable fourth given that they again played virtually all first teams.

Like the men the women stormed to the championship final coasting through the knockout rounds. For some reason the final simply didn't go our way as we started slowly and the five goal early deficit proved never to be recoverable as the Palatinates lost 15-8. Definitely a surprise but this should not detract from a great season for our women. The second team made it to the quarter final of the trophy before going down 9-6 to Loughborough first team.

Men's Water Polo

Abundantly clear from the early results that this was going to be a very strong year for the first team. In fact, they won all their league games in the Northern Premiership, often by a distance, although there were three close away games with a 12-11 win at Nottingham being the closest. The second team played in the league immediately below, in North One, and had a solid season finishing 5th with three wins and seven defeats. Given their opposition were all first teams this was actually no mean achievement. The third team also faced nearly all first teams in their league and secured fourth in North Two with five wins and five defeats.

In the cup competitions it was the 1st team that brought home the spoils. They swept all aside on their route to the Championship final but found Nottingham a very tough opponent. The game ebbed and flowed and whilst Durham kept pulling away Nottingham seemed to have the ability to pull us back. In the end, the Palatinates were able to hold on to the ball long enough to secure a fantastic 12-11 victory to secure the national title.