

PLUS

PODCAST LAUNCH!

MOST SUCCESSFUL SPORT OF THE SEASON?

PLAQUE MEMORIES: WILL CARLING

COLLEGE REPORT: ST JOHN'S SPIRIT

READER FEEDBACK

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

WILF'S DOUBLE CENTURY LIGHTS UP COUNTY CLASH

Wilf La Fontaine-Jackson scores a remarkable 226 against Durham County 2nd XI — one of the highest ever for the University.

DURHAM ROWERS DOMINATE ON ALL FRONTS

From GB Trials to Boat Race glory, Durham athletes and alumni shine across the board in an unforgettable few weeks on the water.

FENCERS HISTORIC SEASON

Durham's fencing club caps off a year of medals and milestones with both first teams reaching the BUCS Championship finals.

ZAMBIA AT TWENTY

Celebrating two decades of Durham's work in Zambia.



DURHAM SPORT WEEKLY DIGEST

Back in Action - Women's Cricket

Durham began the season with back-to-back T20 games against a mixed Park View Academy team from Chester-le-Street. In the first match Durham scored 80 for the loss of seven wickets. Only **Daisy Greenwall** (Van Mildert) 27, and **Lottie Pettigrew** (Hatfield) 25 off 24 balls made it to double figures. Park View Academy knocked off the runs in 15.3 overs, for the loss of five wickets.

In the second match Park View Academy batted first and scored a very competitive 123 for 7. The outstanding bowling performance came from Lottie Taylor (Hatfield) who took 3 for 11. Durham fell short in their reply but posted a solid 103 with Daisy Greenwall again top scoring with 46 and there was a solid 21 from Emily Thomas (Hatfield). Two excellent games as we build up to our first BUCS Northern Premiership fixture.

Durham's Men Take On County Seconds

After two good performances against Durham County and Northamptonshire County the University took on a very strong Durham County second eleven. Durham, whose batting had been strong through the first two games, struggled in the first innings, bowled out for 123. In reply the County declared on 368 for 7. The Durham bowlers stuck to their task throughout with **Brij Sheopuri** (Van Mildert) securing figures of 4 for 31 and **George Kempers** (St Cuthberts) 3 for 54. Well done to them.

The second innings was a very different affair as the University scored 387 with the absolute stand-out performance coming from **Wilf La Fontaine-Jackson** (Collingwood) who scored 226. This is certainly one of the highest scores (maybe the highest) by a Durham player in the history of the University. This quite outstanding tally did not stave off defeat, but it did take the game to the final hour

of day three as Wilf protected the tail with some impressive batting. The County knocked off the required 142 for the loss of 4 wickets.

Two Out of Three for Durham as BUCS Returns

Durham men's first team took on Oxford and came away with a very solid win. The Palatines scored 293 for 7 with **Yash Vagadia** (St Cuthbert's) top scoring with 96. In reply, Oxford struggled to 169 for seven in their allotted overs.

Our women's first team took on Leeds/Bradford in a high scoring game. Leeds/Bradford batted first and knocked off a very respectable 248 for 8. The best bowling figures for Durham came from **Amelia Lee** (Collingwood) who took 3 for 27. In reply, Durham scored freely and made light work of the target, scoring 250 for the loss of two wickets. There were good batting performances all round from **Petra Tweedy** (Hatfield) 121, **Ella Clinton** (Collingwood) 53 and **F Lonsdale** (Van Mildert) 52 not out. An excellent start to our BUCS year for women's cricket.

Men's seconds were the only team to lose out on this first Wednesday, playing against Leeds I. Durham bowled Leeds out for 268 with the wickets shared fairly evenly. In reply Durham found the going tough and were bowled out for 202. **Joseph Lewis** (Collingwood) top scored with a well-worked 79.

Rowing Past and Present Out In Force

Present: Our present students had some excellent results at the GB Trials just before Easter. In the men's coxless pair **Will Morgan-Jones** (Grey) & **Charlie Warren** (Van Mildert) finished first in the U23 category and an excellent second in the B final, placing them seventh in the open category overall. Outstanding!

In the women's coxless pair **Zoe McCutcheon** (St Hild & St Bede) & **Holly Youd** (NUBC) were first in the FISU category and an excellent third in the B final, placing them eighth overall.

Also in the women's coxless pair **Daisy Jackson** (Collingwood

College) & **Izzie Kennedy** (Collingwood College) were the fourth U23 boat and finished second in the D final.

Past: Durham alumni performed right at the top of their game in both the trials and the Boat Race!

In the men's coxless double **James Vogel** and his partner won the A Final and in the women's coxless double **Lauren Irwin** and her partner won the A final.

Elsewhere, to add to Lauren's success, **Philippa Emery** and her partner were second in the A final. **Issy Sellers** and her partner were second home in the under 23's and fourth in the C Final. **Levin Graf** and his partner were third in the B final.

Cambridge had a remarkable set of results in this year's Boat Race, winning everything. You might well ask why we would report on this event but the answer is simple. Congratulations to Durham Alumni **Tash Morris**, who rowed in the Cambridge W8+ and **George Bourne** who rowed in the Cambridge M8+, while **Caroline Rijske** rowed in Blondie W8+ and **Felix Crabtree** rowed in the Isis M8+. A quite brilliant few days of rowing for Durham past and present. Great performances all.

Rugby Triumph

On the morning of their final game away at Redcar the Palatinate rugby side were presented with the League trophy at Maiden Castle. A much deserved honour, as this ever-changing team never failed to turn up and give of their best.

The presentation ceremony was celebrated in style as they dominated Redcar away from home, winning 5-54. Onwards and upwards! If they are able to secure another league promotion next year they will then play in the same league as Durham City which will ensure two great games at Hollow Drift in years to come.

Podcast Launched!

In our last issue we dropped a little hint about our upcoming series of podcasts - and now they're here!

In Season 1, as they say, there are six interviews in all, the first of which is with our recently appointed Head of Sport, **Dave Coldwell**. In a fifteen minute conversation with student media guru, **Sydney Davies**, he describes how he views his role at Durham University and his ambitions for the progression of sport at Durham over the coming years.

Well worth a listen - just press the podcast logo above.



An Historical Note

This was a statement reported by Quora in April of 2018 (not all that long ago) in response to the question 'Which is the best university for sports in the UK?'

Their response:

"For team sports (rugby, cricket, football etc.), the best for the last decade has been Durham, which is also top (thanks to its colleges) for participation in sports. For most of the past decade Durham has been second to Loughborough for sport overall, but last year was pushed into third by Nottingham."

Seven years on, Durham still retains its third-place status, making it a total of twelve years in the top three of the BUCS rankings.

St John's College Sport Report

Hello, I am Lucas, the Sports and Societies Officer for St John's College, 2024/25. Although we are the second smallest college, we hold our own in college sport with some top of the table results! However, in St John's, league points are not the only reason people keep turning up to training sessions and matches. Within Team John's there is a huge sense of community- keeping us all in high spirits even after a disastrous loss to Collingwood! Compared to other colleges that have previously featured, at John's we are proud that all sports are free for SJCR members.

To start this year off, we had an exciting and successful Michaelmas term where we finished with 33 wins, putting us as the best college for sport on the Bailey.

With the 'Johnnians' in high spirits, we began Epiphany term, where we celebrated college sports with a Formal! Each team captain was invited to have their hard work and commitment recognised. After a delicious meal from John's catering team, featuring a Burns Night twist, we heard speeches from Jolyon, our principal, and Dave Coldwell, the newly appointed Head



of Sport at Durham. The Sports and Societies Formal proved to be an excellent way to celebrate the success of Team John's, the dedication of its members, and how sport enriches the John's community.

With the start of a new term, an old John's sport was revived. Although there is no current college swimming league in Durham, St John's swimming has been enjoying the water in a non-competitive sense.

On the 2nd of March, Team John's represented Durham in the York Varsity, with our men's basketball, badminton, and ultimate frisbee teams. We helped secure the Durham victory with a win in men's basketball B, beating York's Derwent College 39-27.

One of the most successful sports at John's is ultimate frisbee - a sport I had never heard of before coming to Durham! Our A team has had an excellent season with multiple victories, ensuring us a place in the Premiership final against St Mary's. Unfortunately, we could not beat the two-time reigning champions, but Mary's need to watch out next year.

As we approach the final term, we have lots to look forward to: the annual John's-Chad's Day, Team John's awards, and our summer sports. John's-Chad's Day promises to be a day full of friendly competition and fun, this year we are determined to win after two losing years! The Team John's awards will close the year off with a sport being crowned 'sport of the year', alongside colours being given out to our most committed finalists. As for the summer sports, we have teams entered for rounders, cricket, and tennis, and we cannot wait to see them in action.

Thank you for taking time to read about Team Johns. If you would like to stay updated, please follow our [Instagram](#). Alternatively, get in touch with me by [email](#).



Plaque Wall Memories: Will Carling OBE

With the Barbarian game just around the corner, it seems only right to reflect on the magnificent career of one of England's greatest ever England captains across all sports.

Former student, Will Carling, was England's youngest rugby union captain at twenty-two years of age. He went on to captain England 59 times winning a total of 72 caps between 1988 and 1996. He won five Nation Grand Slams and captained England to a World Cup semi-final. He was described at the time as England's most successful and longest serving captain.

He was awarded his OBE in 1992 for services to the sport of rugby and in 2021 he was inducted into World Rugby's Hall of Fame.

Responses To Our Last Report

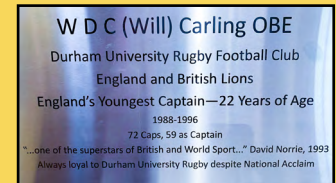
Our last report offered a thank you to our Physio Team from North Tees and below is their heartfelt response.

"This ten-year partnership has provided our physiotherapists with an incredible experience in both treating and preventing sports injuries. Working with the elite athletes at Durham University not only gives our colleagues a unique experience but also expands their understanding of teamwork and practice within a very different clinical setting compared to a hospital.

The stakes are high for this group of world-class sportspeople, whether they play rugby, hockey, basketball, or football or compete in the water as rowers, and our physiotherapists are proud to support them.

Most physios love sport—it comes with the job—so gaining this first-hand experience with our partners is a great opportunity. Our colleagues are part of the Durham team, doing their bit to bring about success on the field of competition while also expanding their own skills. It's been a big win for us all."

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



Fencing - Another Wonderful Year

A captain's report: It's been a very good year for the fencing club. Durham sits in second place in the BUCS points table for fencing overall, with 304 points, far above third placed Edinburgh on 221 points.

Our league campaigns have seen some solid performances and some excellent results along the way: the women's first team scored important wins over Newcastle, St Andrews, and Nottingham to place third in the Northern Premier League, while the men's first team recorded victories over Edinburgh, St Andrews, Glasgow, and Warwick, to secure second place. The women's seconds fought hard in a very competitive North One to place sixth overall, defeating York, Leeds, and Lancaster's first teams, as well as our very own women's thirds, while our men's seconds beat York, Leeds, and Sheffield's first teams to place fifth.

The women's thirds, playing in the same division as our seconds, placed seventh, beating the Lancaster second team 129 points to 123 in a close-fought and memorable match, while the men's thirds and fourths faced tough opposition in North Two.

The thirds dispatched Sunderland's first team and York's seconds, as well as our fourths to place third overall, and our fourths winning two consecutive walkovers against Sunderland placed fourth.

Particular highlights were in the cup runs, and from the individual competitions: at BUCS Nationals, **Lexie Craze** (University College) won gold in women's sabre, defeating our very own **Ellen Robbins Wilkinson** (Van Mildert) 15-11 in the final, while **Sophia Pushpakumar** (University College) took silver in the women's sabre plate. **Will Attig** (University College) won bronze in mixed sabre, losing 14 points to 15 in a nerve-racking semifinal, while **Reuben Montgomery** (St

Chads) won gold in the mixed sabre plate, this time ending up on the right side of yet another 15-14 bout. Finally, **Sophie Peat** (St Mary's) narrowly missed out on the podium in women's epee, losing in the quarter-finals in a terrific fight.

The teams' cup-runs, too, were something to behold: the men's fourth team reached the round of 16 in the Northern Conference Cup, with the thirds reaching the semi-finals; the women's seconds, meanwhile, made the quarter-finals of the National Trophy, and the men's seconds made the round of 16 of their equivalent cup.

The season's highest of highlights however, came from the first teams: the women's firsts breezed past Kent, and beat Oxford away from home, before triumphing over Edinburgh, the reigning champions – and a team which had made the finals for as long as I can remember! In quite possibly the tensest match I have ever had the pleasure of watching they won 107 points to 106 in the semi-finals, earning a spot in the finals of the National Championship in Loughborough. The men's first team, for their part, started their cup campaign with a convincing 108-89 win over King's College London – a team featuring the current #2 GB senior men's foilist – before

beating Imperial College London away from home in the semi-finals, to make their way to the finals of the National Championship.

Both teams, along with a significant cohort of supporters, made their way down to Loughborough for the finals on BUCS Big Wednesday, a memorable event that saw some spectacular fencing. Although both matches ended in defeat, they put up a strong fight, the women in particular only losing by 99 points to 101 – they should be proud of what they have achieved this year.

Elsewhere, our novices continue to develop shockingly quickly – I watched in awe only a few weeks ago as one of them scored two back-flicks in a single bout – and I look forward to the upcoming Novice Cup. Outside of BUCS, we have seen some wonderful individual performances, as Sophie Peat (St Mary's) became the U23 British Champion in women's epee, and Lexie Craze (University College) matched that feat in women's sabre, also winning bronze in the U21 Team Euros.

It's been a year filled with joy, and our fair share of heartache. I, for one, am incredibly proud of all that the club has achieved, both on-piste and off. I am certain that every single member of the club, from the first-teams to the novices, will look back on this season fondly. Next term, there's plenty more to look forward to: I am particularly excited for the summer ball and the exhibition matches, as well as the return of the novice cup, and, indeed, to simply seeing everybody again.

Josh Waddell (images courtesy of British Fencing)



How Did They Do? An All-Sport Review

This week we turn our thoughts to hockey, who for all sorts of reasons can look back on a hugely successful year. With the changeover of players at the start of this academic year, particularly on the men's side, it was always going to be a battle for us to compete with the best. At the end of the day their total BUCS points for their sport for the year came out at 461, making hockey Durham's most successful sport for 2024/25 - well done all!

Women's Hockey

League: Promoted to the Premier League

Cup: Semi-finalists in BUCS Championship

Our women had a particularly successful year with our women's I the standout team in the club and one of the most successful sides across all sports. Their promotion to the Premier League of England hockey, for the first time, a semi-final BUCS championship and a fifth place in the National League of BUCS speaks volumes for this squad. Alongside this success Durham III finished fourth in North One, won the National Trophy down at Loughborough, and finished an excellent second in their weekend league in the Premiership of YNE.

Durham II will have been pleased to make the quarter final of the Vase and hold on to sixth in the Premiership of BUCS Hockey. The only casualty of the year came with our women's IV who finished seventh in North One and were relegated. That said huge credit to them for competing at North One level coming up against so many first and second teams. They will take huge comfort in finishing second in YNE Division One and gaining promotion to the YNE Premiership at the weekend. Well done to them.

Women's V finished third in YNE Northeast One and second in North Three in BUCS. The sixth finished third in YNE Northeast Division Two and third in BUCS North Four. These squads can look back with pride on what has been a strong year for both.

Men's Hockey

League: Sixth in BUCS National League

Cup: Quarter-finalists in BUCS Championship

A battle all year for Durham men's I. In the end they will have been delighted with their sixth place in the BUCS National League, a quarter final in the BUCS Championship and eighth place at the weekend in North Division One. Durham II held on to their place in the Northern Premiership of BUCS finishing eighth, also finishing eighth and safe in Conference North at the weekends.

Durham III will have been pleased with their second place in North One in BUCS, a semi-final in the National Trophy and sixth in the Premiership of YNE. Durham IV did exceptionally well to hold on to their North One League status in fourth and Durham V finished third in their weekend league and fourth in North Two of BUCS.



Zambia - A Twentieth Anniversary Celebration

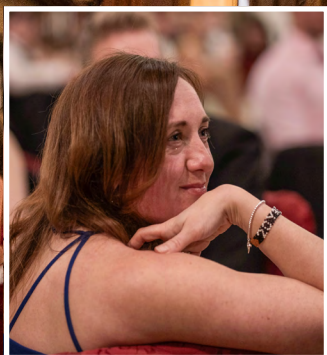
A thank you to Durham staff, students and alumni for making such a difference!

In 2004 Durham University formed a partnership with Sport in Action, Zambia to support their work with young children from very deprived backgrounds. Sport in Action is an NGO (Non-Government Organisation) that uses sport as a vehicle to help educate young children around HIV/Aids prevention, child and alcohol abuse as well as numerous other relevant life skills. Over the years they have also developed sporting pathways in the sports of netball, basketball and women's football to allow children to move from grassroots sport through to high performance sport.

In 2006 Durham established a partnership with a number of other UK Universities which was named the Wallace Group. These Universities today consist of Durham, Loughborough, Bath, Cardiff Met, Stirling, St Andrews, Northumbria and Edinburgh. 2025 marks twenty years of the project and as such Durham, the original founders, hosted a fundraising Ball in Durham to raise money for the Wallace Group Charity, the Volunteer Zambia Foundation.

Where better to hold a celebration ball than in the Castle at Durham University? Our thanks to the Principal at Castle for allowing us to use this wonderful venue.

We were joined at the ball by Steven Siame. Readers may recall his article, in a previous Durham Digest, that outlined his life in Zambia. For much of his early life Steven lived on the streets of Lusaka and then at the Fountain of Hope Orphanage. There was absolute silence as he spoke about his experiences and the huge impact that Durham and the Wallace Group had made on both his life and the lives of many hundreds of children he has worked with on the compounds in Lusaka and beyond.



Team Durham has bought into this project in a big way over the years, with University staff and students raising in excess of £400,000 for Sport in Action. Two stalwarts behind TD have been Stacey Porter and Katie Binks, both of whom have been to Zambia several times. Stacey led the admin side of the Wallace Group for a number of years early in the project and was health and safety officer for the night, hence the water. Katie Binks now leads Durham in the partnership with the Wallace Group, overseeing all finance and building projects in Zambia.

Two of the night's speakers were former Durham students. Laura Saunders was in the first group of students that ever went to Zambia. She helped establish the charity back in 2006 and has been its chair for most of the twenty years since. Mollie Pearse, who went in groups one and two, has been to Zambia many times since, to help raise funds for the charity. She was heavily involved in supporting the fundraising trips, alongside Mel Marshall (swimmer and former head swim coach for GB, based at Loughborough), together with Rebecca Adlington and Adam Peaty. Mel and Adam were both sporting ambassadors for Sport in Action.



The ball was organised by our students, with some help from the Team Durham staff. Lead for the event was Sydney Davies (left). She did an amazing job promoting the sale of tickets - 159 attended, from all over the UK, as well as organising every detail of the event itself. She is pictured alongside Lou and Emma, who have also been to Zambia. Alongside Oli (not pictured here), they have led for our student fundraising team this year and been major players in making this ball happen.



Amelia and Toni are two of our students travelling to Zambia this year, joined by two of our third year students, Adam and Sam. They have all done a great job in raising the money to allow them to travel and have also helped Team Durham, as part of our wider fundraising team for Sport in Action. We wish them well on their travels.

