

## THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

### DOUBLE GLORY: WOMEN'S FUTSAL WIN TWO NATIONAL TITLES

Durham's first and second teams both lift national futsal trophies on the same day - a stunning achievement for DUWAFc.

### LACROSSE ENDS ON A HIGH WITH NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SUCCESS

BUCS medals, record sign-ups, and players starring on the international stage cap a standout year for women's lacrosse.

### DURHAM HOLD THIRD IN BUCS RANKINGS

With over 5,000 points and Exeter kept at bay, Durham strengthens its grip on third nationally.

### ZAMBIA SPOTLIGHT: SUPPORTING CHARITY THROUGH SPORT

Meet Charity Nkhoma, whose education is now supported thanks to Durham URFC and the ongoing Sport in Action partnership.

PLUS

PODCAST: HOCKEY INSIGHTS

PLAQUE WALL: JAMES KENNEDY

COLLEGE FOCUS: VAN MILDERT

READER FEEDBACK

LACROSSE ROUND-UP

BUCS CRICKET RETURNS





# DURHAM SPORT WEEKLY DIGEST

## BUCS Standings as Durham Hold Onto Third

Good news! Halfway through our final term, we remain in third place and indeed have increased our lead over Exeter in recent weeks, breaking through the 5,000 point mark for only the fourth time. The top five university placings read as follows: Loughborough 8,692, Nottingham 8,181, Durham 5,035, Exeter 4,737 and Edinburgh 4,300. It is interesting that the top two are now dominating more than ever before. If one went back over the last fifteen years, we were always able to keep Loughborough within 2,000 points but sadly no longer.

### Women's Futsal: Two National Titles In One Day!

In a year when national titles have proved very difficult to come by, we suddenly won two within three hours of each other and this week our cover page is dedicated to women's futsal. Their success in recent years is simply amazing!

For the past four years Durham University Women's Football Club has dominated the Northern Premier Futsal League, crowned BUCS National Champions four years in a row. The most recent title was won on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, after dominating a strong Derby side 8-2. Notably promoted to the Northern Premier League last year, Derby were the national trophy winners the previous season, finishing third in the league. A well drilled, hard to beat side, they beat Nottingham (winners of the league) 6-5 in their semi-final. Durham earned their spot in the final after beating Cardiff University, winners of the Southern Premier, 5-3.

As the captain of the women's team, it has been a huge privilege to lead this group of ladies throughout the year.



Something about the small squad we carried this year made winning my second national futsal championship even more meaningful. Throughout the year we carried squads as small as 6 players often playing sides with squads of 12-15. While this may seem like a mismatch the only slip up of the season occurred in our Newcastle round robin when we played 4 matches in a day with 3 being back-to-back. We dropped points to Nottingham (who went on to win the league) and Newcastle (who have now been relegated).

Travelling to Wolverhampton last week we carried a squad of 8, myself **Erin Brown** (Collingwood College), **Faye Dale** (St. Aidan's), **Erin Nicholson** (Stephenson), **Alexandra Gatt** (St. Aidan's), **Niamph Doody** (St. Mary's) **Leah Monk** (Collingwood), **Beth McLaughlin** (St. Hild and Bede), and **Grace Beyers** (Ustinov). While there were definitely some pre match jitters from the group, we showed our experience early in the match. The experience of the squad contributed massively to our dominance over Derby.

The Durham side led at half time 3-0, with two goals from **Niamph Doody** and one from **Faye Dale**. Derby challenged our goal twice with Grace Beyers making two fantastic saves with the Derby goalkeeper also making several excellent saves. Overall, it was an extremely comfortable half for the Durham side.

In the second half, we were focused on maintaining our dominance and being clinical in front of goal. The group really showed how coachable we are by implementing everything our head coach Chris instructed us to do at half time, being up 6-0 with 10 minutes to go and feeling extremely comfortable, compact, and together defensively. Chris has been called, around the BUCS Futsal community, the best futsal coach in England. A huge factor in our four national championships as well as the reason we have brought home not just the national

championship but the national trophy this year as well.

Overall, the national final ended 8-2 with two late goals from Derby conceded due to the tiring legs of our small squad, however every one of our eight women contributed massively and I do not have enough kind words to say about each of their performances. Final stats included Faye Dale (3 goals), Niamph Doody (3 goals), and Erin Brown (2 goals).

**Erin Brown** *first team captain*

### Women's Seconds Dominate Nottingham!

The futsal final was a landmark achievement for both our teams and a proud moment for the entire club. For the first team, lifting the championship trophy again is a testament to their consistency and leadership, and it serves as a real inspiration for everyone at DUW AFC to get behind futsal. After reaching the semi-finals last year, the second team came back stronger this season, battling through a tough knockout stage, including a memorable match against our own third team, to earn a spot in the final. Our goal this year was simple: get both teams into the final and lift both trophies. Mission accomplished. Huge credit goes to Chris Sewell for his tireless work with both squads, his dedication has been instrumental in this success.

In the final against Nottingham, we conceded first to a well-taken goal, but responded with resilience, quickly gaining control of the game. Though Nottingham continued to threaten, their chances were confidently dealt with by our goalkeeper. I also have to give JB Limon (Ustinov College) a huge shout-out; her solid defending was key throughout. Going undefeated in the league and finishing as National Champions reflects not just the talent, but the hard work put in by the entire squad. Durham University Women AFC might need to add another 'F' — for futsal — because we are national champions!

### Durham Back In BUCS Cricketing Action

Plenty of runs off Durham bats and well worth noting the centuries! **Durham's women** took on Leeds/Bradford knowing, even at this stage of the season, a win would almost certainly ensure a semi-final, away at Exeter further down the line. Leeds/Bradford recovered from 70 for 3 to a respectable 211 all out. Durham certainly didn't make it easy for themselves as they regularly lost wickets but a magnificent 104 from captain **Frances Lonsdale** (Van Mildert) ensured they reached the target with three wickets and eight overs in hand.

The men's first team were not so lucky. They bowled out Leeds/Bradford for 222 with **Arthur Mills** taking 5 for 27.

However, they were unable to get to grips with the required score as the Palatinates slipped to 148 all out with **Freddie Farley** top scoring on 45.

The second team also lost out to Manchester first team as the opposition passed our score of 166 with three wickets in hand.

**Drew Sylvester** (John Snow) scored the bulk of the Durham reply with a magnificent 109, **Joe Beagles** (Hatfield) 3 for 38.

There were wins further down the programme. Our third team scored 197 before bowling out Newcastle I for 155. **Rishabh Ramish** (Collingwood) 77, **Charlie Dow** (South) 35, **Jamie Beattie** (Collingwood) 3 for 31.

Fourths scored 308 for 6 and bowled Huddersfield I out for 102. **Ollie Parton** (Trevelyan) 58, **Will Gardner** (Mary's) 57.

The fifth team scored 341 for 6 before bowling out York II for 162. **Jack Mercer** (St Cuthebrt's) 103. Finally, men's VI faced a daunting 294, posted by Northumbria for the loss of seven wickets. The Palatinates reached 250 in reply with **Daniel Craig** (Stephenson) scoring 129 and **Cameron Brookes** (South) taking 3 for 47.

### Rugby Play-off

After a magnificent year, our rugby thirds lost out in their play-off game 30-22 to Glasgow first team and will remain in the same league next year.

### Women's Lacrosse: A Year In Review

Hello, we are Eloise and Sophia, the Club Captains of Durham Women's Lacrosse for 24/25. With our season ending in March on BUCS Big Wednesday, we reflect on another successful year for the club on and off the pitch!

**BUCS Competition:** We ended the year second in BUCS points for lacrosse, thanks to strong performances from all 6 of our teams. The 1s ended the season with a tight loss in the semi-finals against Exeter, having beaten eventual champions Nottingham in a come-from-behind win at home earlier in

the year. The 2s took home two silver medals this year, making the finals of the Sixes Trophy and National Trophy competitions as a young squad: a solid foundation to build on next year.

The 3s, 4s, 5s and 6s all battled at the tops of their respective leagues. After a big comeback win against Leeds, the 3s finished second in their league, achieving the largest team goal difference



across Northern Tier 1. Promoted to the Women's Northern Tier 1 at the start of the season, the 4s demonstrated their ability to hold their own against first teams from across the region, finishing safely in mid-table, affirming their place at this higher level of competition.

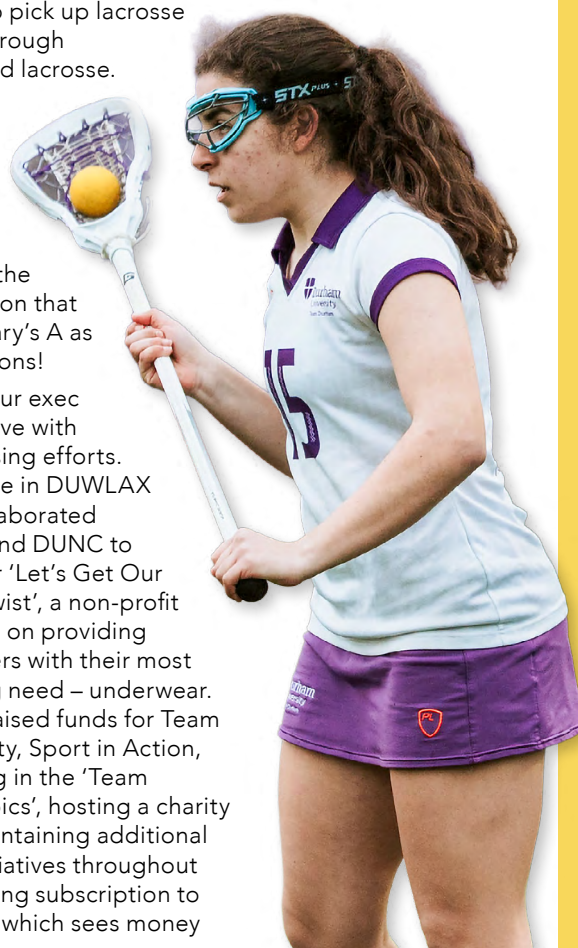
After a challenging start to their season, the 5s grit and determination saw them climb to 4th place in their league with standout wins over Leeds 2s. Meanwhile, the 6s went from strength to strength throughout the season, with highlights including a huge 21-2 win against Northumbria 2's, seeing them finish 3rd in their league.

**Club Activities:** This year the club reached its highest ever membership total of 110 competing players, reflecting lacrosse's growing popularity at university level. Subs were also reduced from previous years through the Team Durham Membership scheme, helping to make lacrosse more accessible to all.

The best way to pick up lacrosse at Durham is through collegiate mixed lacrosse.

This year we managed three leagues with 23 competing teams, and a knockout tournament at the end of the season that crowned St. Mary's A as floodlit champions!

Off the pitch, our exec team got creative with charity fundraising efforts. For the first time in DUWLAX history, we collaborated with DUWHC and DUNC to raise money for 'Let's Get Our Knickers in a Twist', a non-profit charity focused on providing women's shelters with their most urgent clothing need – underwear. We have also raised funds for Team Durham's charity, Sport in Action, by participating in the 'Team Durham Olympics', hosting a charity match, and maintaining additional fundraising initiatives throughout the year including subscription to the Origo app, which sees money



### Plaque Wall Memories: James Kennedy

Two reasons for choosing this plaque this week, the first being because it provides a reminder of the strength in

depth of Durham University sport. This was back when BUSA had third team finals. We consistently remark how many of our lower teams play against university first and second teams, often coming out on the right side of results. An example would be our rugby third team this year, winning a league containing three first teams and two second teams. With that in mind, not much has changed since 1995 when the thirds won their BUSA title.

The second reason is because the side's captain in 1995 was **James Kennedy**. James who was not only club captain for the rugby club but was also the president of what was then DUAAU and is now Team Durham. James has played so many roles supporting Team Durham since leaving Durham, not least the wonderful job he has done in maintaining communications with our rugby alumni, ensuring news goes out on a regular basis. His contribution, in recent months, to the organisation of the Barbarian game was huge and his company 'Sweet Chariot' has helped innumerable students over the years to undertake overseas tours. We are absolutely thrilled that team Durham will recognise his contribution to all things Durham, with the award of an Honorary Palatinate at this year's Palatinate dinner.

Few can ever have been more deserving.

### Responses To Our Last Report

*"I had a great weekend in Durham, returning for the Barbarian game. Very memorable! I thought Friday evening was brilliantly raucous but still managed to get the points over!"*

*"I was unable to be at the dinner or the match but watched the latter on PAL TV. It was good to see Ted Wood on the pitch with Diane & the teams. Great photos in your report."*

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

BUSA 3 <sup>rd</sup> XV Final									
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 1995 v West London Institute									
14 - 8									
J. Kennedy (C)									
D. Barnes	G. Blundell	S. Collard	N. Dunham	M. Gunn					
T. Harris	A. Hart	T. Howland	H. Kingma-Moore	G. Knight					
A. Macdonald	P. Maguire	S. Moxley	G. Mitchell	J. Prole					



donated to charity for every DUWLAX members Strava input. Alongside cross-club collaboration through charity initiatives, we have continued to prioritise both inter- and intra-club integration. From inclusive mixed socials with DU Cricket to team coffee mornings and weekly pre-match dinners, our focus has remained on strengthening team spirit and fostering a sense of community both on and off the pitch. We look forwards to our annual Lacrosse Ball at the end of the summer term to celebrate all our achievements together as a club.

**International Representation:** There was plenty of opportunity to watch our players compete on the global stage, and we are incredibly proud of all who were selected to represent their country. The summer began with **Lizzie Rutherford** (Collingwood) and England winning gold at the European Championship. Durham was well represented by its alumni across the England, Scotland and Wales teams, finishing 1st, 3rd and 4th respectively, and all qualifying for the World Championships in 2026.

Six Durham players competed at the U20 World Championship in August. **Millie Cant** (Collingwood) and **Molly Light** (Van Mildert) came sixth with England, **Florrie Taylor** (Collingwood) and **Gabby Roberts** (Van Mildert) came seventh with Wales, and **Eloise Bolitho** (South) and **Aurora Bolitho** (Collingwood) came 16<sup>th</sup> with Hong Kong. Special mention must go to Millie and Florrie who captained their respective teams.

We had players representing a variety of squads at the Home Internationals Series. **Lizzie Rutherford** is competing with England, **Florrie Taylor** with Wales, **Molly Light** and **Ailsa Scott** (Trevelyan) with England Development, **Elinor Bellis** (Hatfield) with Wales Development, and **Gabby Roberts** with Wales U20.

With the 'sixes' format of lacrosse becoming an Olympic sport in 2028, we are excited that **Molly Light** and **Florrie Taylor** have been selected to the Team GB development squad! Both these players, alongside **Millie Cant** and **Lizzie Rutherford** have been drafted into 'The Fly' sixes league and will compete against the best of British lacrosse over two weekends in May.

We are immensely proud of all that has been achieved this year, from those representing their country at world championship to those who picked up a stick for the first time at collegiate mixed lacrosse. We can't wait to see what next year brings under the leadership of the newly elected Club Captains, **Ailsa Scott** and **Harriet Boucher** (Trevelyan)!

### College Report: Van Mildert

Van Mildert's 2023/24 season set a very high bar, bringing home both the men's rugby and men's football floodlit cup titles. I'm proud to say that the 2024/25 season has been just as successful, if not more! Fresher engagement is at an all-

time high and college sport culture at Mildert is thriving.

We defended the men's rugby floodlit cup title for a consecutive year with a heart-stopping 22-21 win over Hatfield. Our B team also had an impressive season reaching the floodlit plate final. Our women's rugby team, combined with St Aidan's, are growing stronger every year, with a great deal of fresher talent helping them climb the league.

Our netball club has made history with their most successful season as far as records go. The A's went undefeated in the prem division after only being promoted this year, and won the netball cup for the first time ever! The Bs have also been hugely successful since their promotion to division one this year.

Similarly, it's been a record-breaking year for our badminton club who also had their most successful season ever. The undefeated men's and mixed As won the premiership, women's As and men's Bs coming second, women's Bs third. The mixed Bs earned promotion to the prem and the men's As represented us in the York Varsity- winning 4-0 without dropping a set!

While our men's football team missed out on defending their floodlit cup title, their league performance has been phenomenal. The B and C teams secured the Division 1 and 2 titles respectively, and it's looking promising for another prem win for the As, sitting four points clear of Collingwood with only a few games left to be played next term. As for our women's team, they had an impressive run in the Floodlit Cup, reaching the semi-finals.

Van Mildert Boat Club has had a very strong year, competing in races all over the country, from the Women's Eights Head of the River Race and Head of the River Race in London, to York Head and Wansbeck Head. They continue to send as many crews as possible to each and every race, including both novices and more experienced senior rowers. Notably, our



women's first 4+ retained their title of fastest college women's 4+ at Rutherford head, and our men's first 4+ won their band at Tyne New Year Head.

Our smaller and developing clubs have also thrived this year. Mixed lacrosse has fostered a really strong community and playing culture, with record fresher engagement! Cheer has doubled in size since re-starting last year, earning two bronze awards in the most competitive divisions of the intercollegiate cheer competition.

Beyond the pitch, we collected over £6,300 for Movember, with our hockey club raising over £2200 through various challenges, from buzz cuts to hair dyes, to thousands of keepy-uppies by **Joseph Saunders** who alone raised £1,038 for the cause! The hockey club has also had a great deal of success in the league with the As remaining unbeaten until their final game against a strong Collingwood side who scored in the final moments of the game.

We're excited to see even more success for our hockey club in the cup next term, as well for other sports like tennis, rounders, and outdoor cricket which commence in third term.

We have also been working on setting up two new sports clubs this year: golf and padel which I look forward to seeing grow in the summer months. We will be ending the year with our annual college varsity with Aidan's, as well as our sports and societies formal where we will celebrate all of these incredible achievements!

**Jess Fung** Van Mildert Sports & Societies Officer 2024/25



In the latest of our podcasts, Sydney Davies speaks with Durham University head hockey coach Poppy Martin, talking all things Durham Hockey, including their recent historic promotion.

To listen, press the podcast logo.



## Supporting Charity Nkhoma Through Her Education In Zambia



Thirteen years old, **Charity** is enrolled in grade 6 at Chipata Open Community School. She plays football there and her dream is to become a professional footballer and support an academy and orphanage in future.

Charity lives with her mother and younger sister in Chipata Overspill. Her parents divorced when she was 2 years old and she has grown up without her father. Her mother works as a house help to provide for the

family as well as supporting Charity at school.

Sometimes Charity will miss class due to lack of basic needs such as books, shoes and uniform, which her mother is unable to provide. Due to her commitment and hard-work at Chipata hub site and her home situation, *Sport in Action* has selected her to be amongst those who can greatly benefit from school support. Our sincere thanks to **Durham University Rugby Football Club**.