

The U21 & U24 British Open Report

The U21 & U24 British Open was held once again at Middlesex University Real Tennis Club from Thursday 12th - Sunday 15th December 2024. It was an excellent tournament with many fine performances from some of the best young players in the world.

In the U21s Final we had one of the matches of the tournament between first seed Bertie Vallat and third seed Henry Henman. Both players got off to a confident start but it was Bertie who managed to slowly develop a lead to firstly go 4/0 up and then seal the first set 6/3. Henry elevated his game in the second set and started playing with more accuracy, for the first time in the match Bertie seemed to lose concentration and he started making errors. Henry took advantage of this and closed out the second set 6/2. The decider was a passionate affair with both players playing some of their best tennis as they battled for every point. It was here that Bertie managed to regain control of the match by making better decisions and hitting targets more accurately. He now had the momentum and took the final set 6/3 and the championship.

The final score was Bertie Vallat bt Henry Henman 6/3 2/6 6/3.

The Under 24 Doubles was another tight match. Henry Henman and his partner Archie Campbell were unbeaten in the group stage, having caused an upset in an 8/6 win vs Bertie Vallat & James Medlow whilst Freddie Bristowe & Faustas Vilimas qualified having won one of their two matches on games difference. Bristowe came out of the blocks quickly, and with the help of a couple of steady blocks at the galleries from Vilimas were able to take a 3/0 lead. Within minutes, it was 3/3 with Henman & Campbell conceding only a point in the 3 games that followed. Bristowe & Vilimas went on to take the set 6/4, looking stronger by the point. In the second set, it looked to be more of the same with Bristowe & Vilimas taking the first game, but they soon found themselves 4/1 down with Henman & Campbell finding their feet and playing some extraordinary points. Despite pulling one back, Bristowe & Vilimas were unable to stop the set from being conceded 6/2. All three of the first 3 games in the 3rd set were won in deuces, with Bristowe & Vilimas finding themselves 2/1 up. They won the next 3 games without conceding a point from either end of the court to go 5/1 up. Henman & Campbell found a second wind, pulling it back to 5/3, but after a very tight deuce it was Bristowe & Vilimas that prevailed, taking the final set and the championship 6/3.

The final score was Bristowe & Vilimas bt Henman & Campbell 6/4 2/6 6/3.

The final match of the tournament was the U24 singles. It was a repeat of the U21 singles final which had happened hours before. It again pitted Bertie Vallat against Henry Henman in their fabled rivalry. Henry Henman went into the match with a win in the semi finals against Freddie Bristowe under his belt from the day before, in which he won 6/5 6/3. However, this was Henman's 19th match of the week having played a rackets competition at Queens simultaneously. It had all finally taken its toll as his energy reserves were finally diminishing. Bertie sensed this and put together a very solid display absorbing some good pace from Henman and being patient during rallies to develop openings and hit targets when required. Although Henman showed some great heart and never gave up, it was a step too far as Vallat sealed a 6/0 6/1 victory. This meant that for only the fourth time in the history of these

competitions Bertie Vallat walked away with both the U21s and U24s singles championships. A fine achievement.

We thank the Dedanists Foundation for again generously sponsoring the event as well as helping players with their nourishment and accommodation throughout.

Will Burns & Jack Carter

All match results:

Thursday 12th December:

U21 Singles - Group A:

10am: Bertie Vallat bt Max Warner 8/0

10:45am: Max Warner bt Willem Sweet 8/6

11:30am: Bertie Vallat bt Willem Sweet 8/2

Top 2 Qualify for Semi Finals - Vallat & Warner go through as 1st & 2nd.

U21 Singles - Group B:

12:30pm: Henry Henman bt Archie Campbell 6/3

1pm: James Medlow bt Algernon Nottingham 6/1

1:30pm: Henry Henman bt Algernon Nottingham 6/0

2pm: James Medlow bt Archie Campbell 6/1

2:30pm: Archie Campbell bt Algernon Nottingham 6/2

3pm: Henry Henman bt James Medlow 6/4

Top 2 Qualify for Semi Finals - Henman & Medlow go through as 1st & 2nd.

U24 Doubles - Group A:

3:30pm: F. Bristowe & F. Vilimas bt B. Swallow & O. Vidana 8/1

4:15pm: B. Swallow & O. Vidana bt J. Ludekens & A. Backhouse 8/4

5pm: J. Ludekens & A. Backhouse bt F. Bristowe & F. Vilimas 8/6

The top pair from each group qualify for the Final - Bristowe & Vilimas go through on games difference (games won minus games lost).

U24 Doubles - Group B:

5:45pm: B. Vallat & J. Medlow bt A. Nottingham & W. Sweet 8/2

6:30pm: H. Henman & A. Campbell bt A. Nottingham & W. Sweet 8/1

7:15pm: H. Henman & A. Campbell bt B. Vallat & J. Medlow 8/6

The top pair from each group qualify for the Final - Henman & Campbell go through.

Friday 13th December:

U24 Singles - Group D:

9:15am: Henry Henman bt Oliver Vidana 8/0
10am: Henry Henman bt Jim Ludekens 8/4
10:45am: Jim Ludekens bt Oliver Vidana 8/0

The top player from each group qualifies for the Semi Finals - Henry Henman advances.

U24 Singles - Group C:

12:30pm: James Medlow bt Archie Campbell 8/3
1:15pm: Alfred Backhouse bt Archie Campbell 8/5
2pm: James Medlow bt Alfred Backhouse 8/0

The top player from each group qualifies for the Semi Finals - James Medlow advances.

U24 Singles - Group B:

3pm: Bertie Vallat bt Beau Swallow 8/1
3:45pm: Beau Swallow bt Willem Sweet 8/6
4:30pm: Bertie Vallat bt Willem Sweet 8/4

The top player from each group qualifies for the Semi Finals - Bertie Vallat advances.

U24 Singles - Group A:

5:30pm: Freddie Bristowe bt Faustas Vilimas 8/1
6:15pm: Faustas Vilimas bt Algernon Nottingham w/o
7pm: Freddie Bristowe bt Algernon Nottingham w/o

The top player from each group qualifies for the Semi Finals - Freddie Bristowe advances.

Saturday 14th December:

10am Under 24 Singles Semi Final 1:

Henry Henman bt Freddie Bristowe 6/5 6/3

12pm: Under 24 Singles Semi Final 2:

Bertie Vallat bt James Medlow 6/3 ret.

2pm: Under 21 Singles Semi Final 1:

Bertie Vallat bt James Medlow w/o

4pm: Under 21 Singles Semi Final 2:

Henry Henman vs Max Warner 6/3 6/3

Sunday 15th December - Order of Play:

10:30am: Under 21 Singles Final:

Bertie Vallat bt Henry Henman 6/3 2/6 6/3

12:30pm: Under 24 Doubles Final:

Freddie Bristowe & Faustas Vilimas bt Henry Henman & Archie Campbell 6/4 2/6 6/3

2:30pm: Under 24 Singles Final:

Bertie Vallat bt Henry Henman 6/0 6/1