

ESC No World #1 visitors to ESC through the years

Edinburgh Sports Club has played host to many important figures throughout its history, (including the Duke of Edinburgh and the Sultan of Brunei - and Leonard Rossiter and Spike Milligan according to Ray Stevenson), also many Ladies and Men's World number one players. This article describes these players and the occasion of their visits.

Ladies

Year(s) of visit	Name	Years at #1	Event
1965 / 1966	Heather Blundell/Mackay	1962-1979	Scottish Open
1980	Vicky Hoffman / Cardwell	1983/1984	Scottish Open
1984	Sue Devoy	1984-1993	Scottish Open
2001	Rachel Grinham	2004-2005	ESC Open
2003	Cassie Jackman	2000 and 2004	ESC Open
2010	Vanessa Atkinson	2005 and 2006	ESC Artemis + Lisa's Charity event
2024	Laura Massaro	2016	Guest promotion and matches



1965 and 1966 - Heather Blundell / Heather Mackay wins the Scottish Opens (Held at ESC)



1980 and 1981 - Vicky Hoffman (Cardwell) wins two Scottish Opens (Held at ESC)



1984 Scottish Open - Sue Devoy with the trophy (Held at ESC). She was hosted by Jim McLauchlan



1965 - Heather Mackay (centre) and Sylvia McClure (right)



2010 – Vanessa Atkinson wins the Artemis, and returns for Lisa's charity event



2024 October 26th Simon, Laura Massaro and Elaine Inglis at ESC

Gentlemen

Year(s) of visit	Name	Years at #1	Event
1937	Don Butcher and Jim Dear	1930/ 1938	Opening of courts 4, 5 and the doubles
1950's	Hashim Khan	1950/1958	His visit(s) advised by Mike Oddy
1950's	Azam Khan	1959/1962	His visit(s) advised by Mike Oddy
1964	Geoff Hunt	1976-1982	Won the 1964 Scottish Open final v Ollie Balfour
1986	Jonah Barrington	1967-1973	1986 50 th Anniversary celebrations
1989	Jansher Khan	1988-1998	1989 Telesquash
1989	Chris Dittmar	1993	1989 Telesquash
1999	Peter Nicol	1998-2004	Guest promotion and matches
2003/2004	John White	2004	ESC Open
2005	Nick Matthew	2010-2014	ESC Open
2010	James Willstrop	2012	Lisa's Charity event
2016	Gregory Gaultier	2009	Guest promotion and matches, Junior coaching
2018	Mahamed El Shorbagy	2014	Was to be brother Marwan
2019/2020	Paul Coll	2022	ESC Open – won in 2019
2020 / 2024	Karim Abdel Gawad	2017	ESC Open #1 seed both years, won in 2020

The 1930's and 1940's

Don Butcher and Jim Dear

Don Butcher and Jim Dear (extreme right and second right in the photo below) were very much in the World #1 mix in the 1930's and early 1940's.

James Patrick St. George Dear MBE (1910–1981) was an English rackets, real tennis, and squash player who effectively won world titles in three different sports during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.

Below are the 1937 Club photo and the Men's Championship results.



1937 - Don Butcher and Jim Dear pictured with Club professional Jerry Barnes at the opening of courts 4, 5 and the doubles. This image is displayed opposite the entrance to court 5.

Men's championship [edit]

Year	Champion	Runner-up	Score
1929	+ Charles Read	Appointed champion	
1930	+ Don Butcher	+ Charles Read	9-6, 9-5, 9-5 and 9-3, 9-5, 9-3
1931	+ Don Butcher	+ Charles Arnold	9-0, 9-0, 9-0 and 9-3, 9-0, 9-5
1932	+ F.D. Amr Bey	+ Don Butcher	9-0, 9-7, 9-1 and 5-9, 5-9, 9-2, 9-1, 9-0
1933	+ F.D. Amr Bey	No challenger entered	
1934	+ F.D. Amr Bey	+ Don Butcher	9-4, 8-10, 10-8, 9-0 and 9-6, 6-9, 9-2, 0-9, 9-5
1935	+ F.D. Amr Bey	+ Jim Dear	9-3, 6-9, 8-10, 9-2, 9-4 and 9-4, 9-7, 3-9, 9-7
1936	+ F.D. Amr Bey	+ Jim Dear	9-7, 7-9, 9-7, 5-9, 9-6 and 9-7, 8-10, 9-1, 9-6
1937	+ F.D. Amr Bey	+ Jim Dear	10-8, 10-8, 4-9, 1-9, 9-4 and 9-7, 8-10, 9-6, 9-5
1938	+ Jim Dear	+ Bert Biddle	5-9, 9-6, 5-9, 9-6, 9-5 and 6-9, 9-1, 9-2, 9-6
1947	+ Mahmoud Karim	+ Jim Dear	9-4, 9-1, 9-3 and 5-9, 7-9, 9-8, 9-7, 9-4
1948	+ Mahmoud Karim	+ Jim Dear	9-5, 9-3, 5-9, 1-9, 10-8

The above table (courtesy of Wiki) shows Don Butcher as World #1 in 1930 and 1931, before Amr Bey's run of six years before Jim Dear took over in 1938. Butcher and Dear were Bey's main opponents in the intervening years



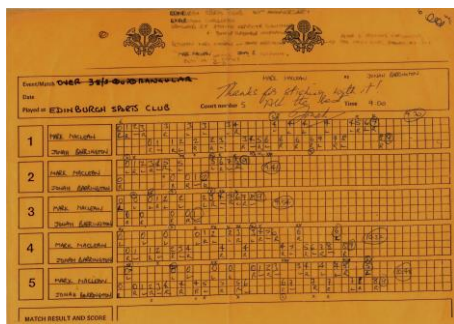
2020 – Karim Abdel Gawad



2020 – Paul Coll with Jordan Amaral



2016 – Gregory Gaultier master classes



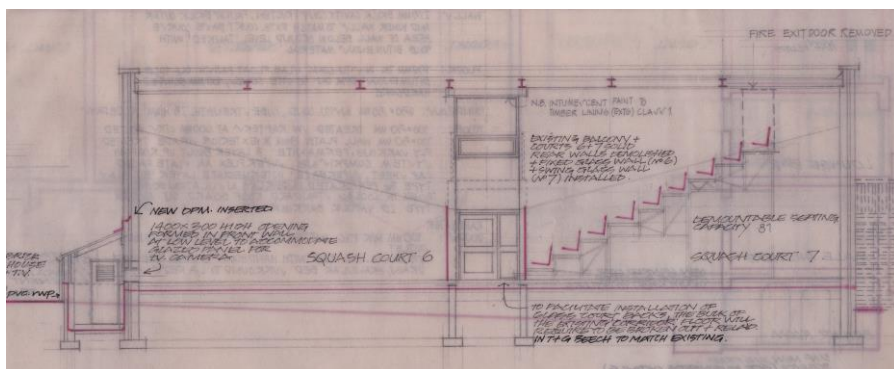
1986 50th anniversary ESC Jonah Barrington - Dave Ferguson marking an exhibition match with Mark McLean



1989 Telesquash semi-finals - Chris Robertson V Jansher Khan and Chris Dittmar versus Mark Maclean (BBC TV clip)



1989 Telesquash Final, Chris Dittmar V Jansher Khan. Dittmar wins 16/14, 16/11, 16/13. Court 7 fitted with 80 tiered seats and hinged glass back walls folded back (BBC TV clip)



1989 April - Court 6-7 glass back wall replacements, temporary seating in court 7 shown. TV camera position in front wall shown on left, with cameras in the 'Cottage' building.



2018 Aug - Mohamed El Shorbagy at ESC – demonstration matches

The [Squash Australia website has a page](#) showing their teams at the Women's World championships from 1960 to 2022. Several of the players listed have played at ESC, including Heather Mackay, Vicky Cardwell, Donna Lobban, Rachel Grinham and Tamika Saxby. Tamika was a member of staff, and won our club championship in 2015.

Other very highly ranked players who have visited the club

Mike Oddy (World #2) – Club member, one of the ‘famous five’ who beat England in 1964

In his report for the 2011 75th anniversary dinner, Mike advised that both Hashim and Azam Khan had ‘graced’ the ESC courts

Angela Smith (runner up in the 1984 Scottish Open to Sue Devoy), was ranked World #2 in 1979

Danielle Drady, Australian World #2 in 1990, played in the 1988 Scottish Open.

Hania el Hammamy - #2 in Sep 2022 – 2019 ESC Open winner

Ross Norman - #2 in December 1985, may have played in the 1989 Telesquash tournament. One report says there were 8 players, and the semi final shown in this document features four, not including Norman. Chris Robertson – World #2 also played

In 2016, Dean Williams was on holiday in Scotland and he met a sports club member Ed Murray at a dinner. Dean was keen to come to the club to see the Scottish squash honours board with his name on it for winning the Scottish Open in 1982, and also check out Padel. He was keen to point out he reached world no2. He was introduced to me by Ed as former world number 2, to which my response was “nice to meet you, well done on getting to number 2. As a club we attract world class players both former and present, can I introduce to Gregory Gaultier (current world number 1) - took me a while to pick him up off the floor!” Greg was having a coffee in the bar after having done an exhibition at the club the night before, and enjoyed just hanging out at the club. Williams best ranking was World #3 in 1984, and he lost to Jahangir in the 1982 World open final (taking off him the only game he lost!)

JJ tells us that In 2018, we had booked Marwan El Shorbagy (at that time World 6 or 7) for an exhibition and sold quite a few tickets. However, the weekend before he pulled out of Canary Wharf Classic due to an injury. He phoned Kev Moran who organised the event to apologise profusely for having to pull out, and rather than ruining the event he suggested he could send his brother if that was ok, none other than current world number 1 Mohd El Shorbagy. We ummed and ahhed and in the end said that would be fine!

In a report in the Scotsman around the time of our 75th Anniversary in 2011, Steve Sproule, said: "At the height of squash's popularity leading players such as Geoff Hunt, Ahmed Safwat, Hiddy Jahan and Jonah Barrington were part of a group of eight who toured the country staging the Yellow Dot Classic and the Sports Club was one venue." [evidence required]

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following for their input to this article.

Jamie Maddox/Andrew Shelley for the Telesquash video

Jim McLaughlan

Raymond Stevenson

Steven Sproule

JJ Tait

Derek Bathgate – recollected Geoff Hunt beating Ollie Balfour at the club (it was in 1964)

An assortment of websites - no copyright infringement is intended.

And others who the Club historian has met/seen/played/knocked up against

Hunt and Barrington (marked 1984)

Qamar Zaman (practised with 1984)

Lisa Opie and Martine Le Moignan – Played MLM 1983