

History of Duffield Lawn Tennis Club

Key moments in Duffield LTC history as recorded in minute books, articles and other sources

1. 1882 -1957

1882 - Duffield Lawn Tennis Club is founded

It was one of the first tennis clubs in the country. The original site was at the Derby end of the village, near Yates' farm. Only courts were provided - there was no pavilion or dressing rooms. Subscription was 5 shillings (25p) per year. Racquets were provided by the club and cost 28 shillings for 4, an average 7 shillings (35p) per racquet. Only 4 were needed as there was only 1 court. No lady members were allowed on the Committee. A new net cost 15 shillings (75p).

1884 - Duffield LTC moves to a new ground

The new ground was on Derby side of Ecclesbourne Avenue. Balls were 75p for two dozen & lasted a season. Two new rules were introduced:

- (a) Any member losing a ball was to pay for half its cost,
- (b) It became 'desirable that players should wear tennis shoes'.

1903 - The Club affiliates to the Lawn Tennis Association.

The British Lawn Tennis Association formed in 1888, eleven years after the first Wimbledon championship. It was tasked with maintaining the new rules and standards of the emerging sport of tennis in the United Kingdom.

In the same year Duffield LTC adopted club colours - navy blue & white was the order of the day..

1914 - WW1 begins - no matches to be played until peace declared

In August 1914, war was declared. While members played on the first Saturday of the war, long trains laden with heavy guns moved slowly past the courts. No matches were to be played until peace was declared. Many Duffield players were in the Armed Forces. In 1916, soldiers from the Duffield Hospital were allowed to play on the courts.

1915 - Derby & District Lawn Tennis Association is formed

Duffield LTC was heavily involved with the formation of Derby & District Lawn Tennis Association. All future county matches were played at Duffield, which became 'The County Ground'.

1925 - New pavilion opens

A letter to members in 1924 proposed that everyone should lend the club £2, without interest, to fund the new pavilion, which would 'comprise a tea room and dressing rooms with lavatory accommodation, water being laid on'. Two new courts would also be laid. The loans were to be repaid within five years. No shower was built in the ladies' dressing room as this was deemed 'unseemly'.

1933 - Derby and County Lawn Tennis Club opens at Duffield

Duffield becomes headquarters of Derby and County Lawn Tennis Club and base for county matches.

1937 - Squash court opens

The Court is built to SRA standards at a cost of £1000, with a boiler room downstairs and a large balcony overlooking the court. Most of the money was raised from members 'by way of an issue of £5 interest-free promissary notes'. An 'elaborate garden party' was also held at The Hermitage on Hazelwood Road. The original officers of the Squash Club were those of the tennis club: L. Loolley (President), W. Brooks (Chairman), K. Thomson (Secretary) and P. Opie (Treasurer).

1943 - Present club site is purchased

A group of local business men buy the present site. Work is completed in 1945 and the club moves to its new site.

1951 - Club member Peter Cross wins RAF Singles Championship.

1957 - Duffield player wins junior Wimbledon titles

[J. I. Tattersall](#), Duffield 1st team player, wins both Wimbledon Junior Singles and Mixed Doubles titles. In the Singles final he beats I. Ribero of Brazil 6-2 6-1. In the Mixed Doubles final he partnered Honor Durose, also from Duffield LTC. They beat Ann Haydon and Roger Faulkner, Roger was from Duffield LTC. Therefore, in the Junior Mixed Doubles final in 1957, 3 out of the 4 players were from Duffield LTC.

1959 - Record financial season for Duffield

The membership reached 200 and the balance in hand was over £200. Funds had also been raised to build a practice wall. The Ladies 1st team won Division 1 and the mixed team had reached the Lawson-Wood Cup final, being beaten by Ripley.

2. 1960 - 2000

1960 - Freehold of Club Premises purchased

Squash and tennis sections combine to purchase the freehold of the property from Paragon Investment Ltd. for £3,500. Some members loan the club £100 in return for free membership until the loans were repaid.

1968 - Flood defences built along the Ecclesbourne river bank

The River Ecclesbourne had regularly flooded the courts leaving thick layers of black sludge which had to be cleared. Derek Povah, Bruce Sephton & others built the present wall on the river bank which involved 3 ft long steel pipes being driven through Stanley blocks, then cemented. Since then (touch wood) there was no more flooding problems from the river until 2023.

1971 - Ladies teams unbeaten

Ladies' teams went through the season unbeaten. Ladies' 1st team won Div. 1 and Ladies' 2nd. team were 2nd (also) in Div. 1, Ladies' 3rd team won Div. 4

1972 - Present clubhouse erected, together with squash courts.

During the building phase, the old pavilion burned down. Fireman from Belper and Derby attended the 'ferocious blaze'.

1979 - Duffield share the Men's Division 1 title with Littleover

Duffield share the Men's Division 1 title with Littleover, the last time they will win Div.1 in the 20 century.

1982 - Centenary of Duffield LTC is celebrated

Club centenary celebrations saw Duffield players dressed up in attire reminiscent of that worn 100 years previously. The event was shown by the BBC on Midlands Today.

1983 - New floodlights switched on

New floodlights switched on with Nick Fullwood, Nick Brown, Jeremy Bates and Steven Shaw playing an exhibition match. Umpire was Ray Bailey.

1985 - Artificial grass courts laid

Regular aeration problems eventually led to three lawn tennis courts being dug up and replaced by carpet. A working party had visited a number of other clubs which had different surfaces, including one club in North London which had recently laid artificial grass courts. This experience, together with Wimbledon's recommendation, led to the present courts being laid.

1998 - Playing facilities enhanced

Further improvements made to the playing facilities with the top two courts being resurfaced with the latest artificial grass and new floodlights installed on courts 1, 2 & 7. The design of the new lights imported from Miami was intended to prevent overspill of light thereby reducing the glare into neighbouring houses

3. 2000 - 2022

2004 - Duffield win Lawson-Wood Cup.

The team of Mark Elks & Caroline Wood, Shona & Mark McAnulty, James Russell & Carol Winfield beat Ockbrook in the Lawson-Wood Cup final.

2006 - Men's 1st team wins Derby Area League Division 1

Men's 1st team wins the Division 1 title for the first time since 1979. The Men's 2nd team wins Division 2 and the Men's 3rd team wins Division 3.

2008 - Men's 1st Team win Div 1 title again. New pavilion built near bottom courts.

More success for the Men's 1st team and a new pavilion is built near the bottom courts for storage and to provide shelter in inclement weather.

2009 - Men's 1st team win Division 1 title for second consecutive year.

2010 - Men's 1st team win Div. 1 title for third consecutive year.

2016 - Bonanza year for ladies' teams

A bonanza year for the ladies' summer league teams, with the 1st team winning Division 1 for the first time in 18 years. The Ladies' 3rd team won Div. 2 and the 4th team won Div. 3, with the second team maintaining their place in the 1st Division and the fifth team coming a close second in Div. 4.

2016 - Duffield wins Derbyshire Tennis Club of the Year

As well as winning Club of the Year, Courts 1 and 2 are resurfaced, with courts 3,4 and 5 following in 2017.

2017 - Duffield wins Derbyshire Tennis Club of the Year

2018 - Mixed team wins the Lawson-Wood Cup

2019 - Duffield wins Derbyshire Tennis Club of the Year for the third time in four years

Duffield Tennis Club had a triumphant night at the Derbyshire Tennis Association awards evening. The Club received the Club of the Year accolade for the third time in four years, after a fantastic summer season for its ladies' teams, as well as winning the county knock out mixed competition for the Lawson Wood Cup. Ladies' team members collected a host of trophies at the event at Pride Park, with Ladies' 1 topping Division 1, Ladies' 3 winning Division 2, and Ladies' 4 winning Division 3. Ladies' 2 finished mid table in Division 1 and Ladies' 5 were runners up in Division 4. In the Mixed league, Duffield 2 also won Division 2. The Men's 1st team were 3rd in Division 1 with most other men's teams finishing mid table. Along with the adult success the junior teams also won 4 summer League divisions and 2 winter divisions plus the club has 20 juniors accessing County training and 8 juniors representing Derbyshire in County Cup competitions. But it wasn't just about the success of the teams. Oli Storr was voted Coaching Assistant of the Year, while 14-year-old Issy Knighton was Young Volunteer of the Year. ([Extract from Duffield Scene, April 2019](#))

2022 - Duffield celebrates Queen's Jubilee

Around 70 members of Duffield Tennis and Squash Clubs gathered to celebrate the jubilee with a barbecue on Saturday 11th June - the Queen's birthday. This was the first outdoor event of this type to be held at the club. The barbecues were set up in the picnic area near court 5 and a pop-up bar delivered cold beer, wine and soft drinks. Tennis and squash tournaments took place earlier in the day organised by tennis coach, James Grindell, and squash captain, Dean Gregory. The evening event was launched by the Ukrainian dance ensemble, Hoveria.

4. 2023 - 2024

2023 - Storm Babet flood

The Tennis and Squash clubs were both inundated due to Storm Babet on 20-21 October. The river Ecclesbourne burst its banks rucking the carpet playing surface of all courts while water seeped into the clubhouse through air bricks and doors destroying the wooden floors of all five squash courts and the rest of the ground floor area. The devastation was such that the insurance company ultimately paid out £75,000.

2023/24 - Flood recovery process

Week commencing 30 October - Rucked playing surfaces on tennis courts 1 & 2 on lifted before the tarmac underneath was professionally power washed and some court lines sprayed to mark out the courts.

W/C 6 November - Wooden floor structure of all five squash courts lifted.

W/C 15 Jan – Squash court walls dried out and renovation work begins.

W/C 22 Jan - Squash court 3 replastered, with courts 4 and 5 close behind. Informed that club no longer has flood insurance.

W/C 29 Jan - The tennis carpets for courts 3, 4 and 5 delivered and ready for play on 2nd Feb. Gym space emptied with equipment either safely removed, stored, and cleaned, or disposed of to be replaced.

W/C 12 Feb - Squash courts 3, 4 & 5 plastered with new floors to go down over the next two weeks including underfloor heating to court 3. Tennis courts 1, 2 & 7 being worked on ready for carpets.

W/C 19 Feb – Project 23 Town Street begins to look at future of the club.

W/C 26 Feb – Three squash courts reopen for play. Work commences on gym floor and walls. Carpets laid courts 1, 2 & 7.

W/C 18 March – Three more tennis courts available for play. Pickleball opens at Duffield.

Friday 3 May – New gym reopens with state-of-the-art equipment cardio equipment and an improved weights area.

Tuesday 11 September – New series of fitness classes launched with external trainers.

Wednesday 6 November – EGM held to elect new council members. Tony King elected as Chair, Sally Hargreaves as Finance lead and Glynnis Wigram as Secretary.

2024 - Duffield tennis and squash clubs agree to unite

Members of both clubs attended an EGM on 15 February 2024 to vote on a new constitution to unite the squash and tennis clubs. This was passed with an overwhelming majority. A record attendance of 71 members voted at the meeting, in addition to 50 proxy votes from those who could not attend.

The new constitution provided for a council of around 10 members, including leads for squash, tennis, gym and fitness and bar and social as well as a chair, secretary finance lead and marketing lead. Outgoing tennis chair (Grenville Holt) and Squash chair (Vic Malysz) welcomed the change. As from 1st April 2024, the Clubs will be a single Club known as Duffield Squash and Tennis Club.

2024 Council elections and officers

Tuesday 26 March – New unified club Council elected with Rob Gossling as Club Chair, Andy Page as Finance lead and Ralph Cooper as Secretary.

Tuesday 16 April – First meeting of new club Council held.

Wednesday 15 May - Mark Benson takes over as Council chair. Town Hall meetings launched to discuss the future of the club.

Thursday 6 June – EGM requested by squash members takes place regarding the reinstatement of all five squash courts.

Wednesday 6 November – EGM held to elect new council members. Tony King elected as Chair, Sally Hargreaves as Finance lead and Glynnis Wigram as Secretary.