

Lionel Cox 2024 - May 4th & 5th

The Lionel Cox is a unique team tennis event that has included counties from the East Region for nearly 50 years (next year is its 50th birthday). This year, a big decision was made to change the format to doubles from its old format of 3 singles matches, to include more players and create more of a team feel to the event. U10 and 12 teams competed at Queenswood School in Hertfordshire, whilst U9's competed at Hills Road, Cambridgeshire. 10 counties currently compete for a position in each category, which when combined, adds up to a total team score.

U10's and U12's were captained by Chris Stocker and Jaya Mace, U9's by Josh Weeds.

Teams -

U9's - Freddie, Dexter, Henry, Barnaby/ Alsie, Abigail, Esmee, Bethany

U10's - Lucas, David, Matthew, Micah/ Riya, Sofia, Sophia, Bea

U12's - Noah, Saam, Joshua, Sam, Nathaniel/Amelija, Imogen, Charlotte, Isla

U10's & 12's report:

Day 1 saw the U10's boys and girls put in a couple of very promising opening performances, the girls team falling just short in crucial tie breaks against Oxfordshire and Herts. However, what was encouraging was the marked improvement from both boys and girls. The girls getting the afternoon off to a great start with a 2-0 win over Berkshire, Riya, Sofia, Sophia & Bea bouncing all the way back to basecamp.

The U12's had a tough Saturday, with opening matches against some of the top teams in Essex, Cambridgeshire & Hertfordshire. A few glimpses of excellence were quickly snuffed out by some very well drilled opponents. A few long chats post match drew upon the positive elements and improvements made by our pairings throughout the day. Team spirit and support was excellent from players and parents throughout.

Day 2 was the culmination of the group stages, with the playoffs for position to follow. We were fortunate that in day 1, we had competed against the majority of the stronger teams, so today was our chance to get more wins & better results in. However, a scare early in the boys U12's doubles match against Suffolk resulted in Noah having to retire at 2-1 and take no further part in the event, we are glad to report he is ok. Fortunately, Nathaniel was present to support his sister, and stepped in after a quick trip to the car for appropriate clothing!

The U12 boys competed well in their last group match, but it was another group defeat, despite a 3rd set loss for Josh and Saam at #1. The boys ended the day with a very good 2-0 win against Bedfordshire, with straight set wins for Josh, Saam, Sam and Nathaniel, finishing 9th overall. In the 12's girls, an opening match against Oxfordshire showed that the pairs were still improving, both pairs losing out in a 3rd set tie break, a revised pairing of Amelija and Isla nearly pulling off a shock at #1. The final match against Bedfordshire also involved a couple of tie breaks, with #2 pair Imogen and Charlotte pulling through to win theirs. A couple of smiles as the jinx of tie breaks was over! A playoff against Berkshire did not go our way and the girls finished 8th.

The U10 boys began Sunday with a win against Northamptonshire, 2-0, with straight set victories from David, Lucas, Matthew and Micah. A loss to Cambridge in the afternoon then saw the boys playoff against Suffolk, with a draw of 1-1 after Matthew and Micah won at #2 (Suffolk winning on games won overall) to finish 8th. Norfolk's U10 girls started the day with a loss to Cambridgeshire, but ended with a 1-1 draw, but overall win on sets won, against Buckinghamshire. A good 0 and 2 win for Bea and Sophia, while Riya and Sophia just lost out in another 3rd set! The girls finished 7th overall.

A lot for our teams to improve upon when at the business end of sets/matches, but ending with a number of wins on day two always allows for more positive reflection. A number of players in teams have another year within their age group which is also good news for next years event. Thank you to all players and parents who supported each other all weekend.

Later on, we had heard about the 9's boys & girls results and with all totals added up, we had finished 8th for 2024.

Report: Chris Stocker, Norfolk Performance Officer