

England Lacrosse National Schools' Championships 2024

Stowe sent five teams to the England Lacrosse National Schools' Championships 2024, at Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre on Saturday 9 to Tuesday 12 March, an open competition falling in early March each year. This has been a banner year for the program, with excellent finishes from a number of sides.

1st X

The premier squad led by Captains Emily Watson (Upper Sixth, West) and Maddie Baker (Lower Sixth, Queen's) has had the best finish for a number of years. On day one, the team recorded a win against Uppingham 7-0, with losses to Berkhamsted, Westonbirt, St Pauls and a close run thing against Haileybury at the end of the day. This put Stowe into Division 2 for the second day of competition.

Fortunes were reversed on the Sunday, winning two out of the three games in the divisional box in the morning (6-0 against Harrogate Ladies' College, 7-0 against local competition Tudor Hall and a 4-1 loss against St Bartholomew's). On to the knockouts, the last 16 was against King's Canterbury which ended in a 5-2 win, followed by Heathfield where the team played an incredible game, possessing the ball for three minutes at the end of play finishing with the final goal. In the Semi-Finals, Stowe 1st X put in a commanding performance over Queen Margaret's School 6-2 to get them into the Final. The last opponent was Fettes College from Scotland. The score was 2-2 at half time, but a strong draw possession unit from Fettes kept the ball out of our sticks for the first four minutes of half time, scoring four times. Two from Stowe brought the scoreline closer, but in the end was too little, too late.

The team played their best lacrosse of the year and should be extremely proud of their podium finish. There were some excellent performances across the board, in particular Emelia Brett (Lower Sixth, Queen's) as the top points scorer and centre, Maddie Baker, Jessie Frost (Upper Sixth, Nugent) and Alice Bryant (Upper Sixth, Queen's) in attack, while the defensive unit of Milly Davis (Lower Sixth, West), Erin Perez Quane (Lower Sixth, Nugent), Lucy Willmott (Upper Sixth, Nugent) and Emily Watson, supporting Martha Bond (Lower Sixth, West) in goal were outstanding. Midfielders Mimi Price (Upper Sixth, Cheshire), Tati Riviere (Fifth Form, Nugent), Ally ter Haar (Lower Sixth, Lyttelton) and Ruadh McCarthy-Wyper (Fifth Form, Cheshire) all took care of the ball between the lines and worked hard throughout the tournament. Additionally Gwen Grovit (Lower Sixth, Nugent) in midfield put enormous pressure on top opposing players, faceguarding a few out of the game. The player of the tournament was captain Emily Watson, who did not leave the field all weekend, didn't put a foot (or a stick) wrong, and led the defence masterfully every game.

Rob Ingham Clark, Head of Lacrosse

2nd X

The 2nd X squad led by Tilly Sherwin (Lower Sixth, West) gave an outstanding performance last weekend. With just two subs on the Saturday, and one on the Sunday, every player contributed massively to the success of the squad at Nationals this year. Special mention to Izzy Blount (Lower Sixth, Cheshire) with 19 saves and only 24 opposition goals over the weekend, and Bella Timmis (Fifth Form, Stanhope) with an incredible 20 wins on the centre draw.

On the Saturday, Stowe began with a close loss to St Albans (2-1), followed by an impressive 7-0 win against Cheltenham Ladies College. We recorded another unfortunate loss against St George's Harpenden (5-1), but followed this with one of my favourite wins of the weekend against Haberdashers' Girls School (2-1 win). We finished the day with a 2-4 loss against St Helen and St

Katharine, with goals from Izzy Harris (Fifth Form, Nugent), but still making it through to the Final 16 in Division 1 of the U19B tournament. An excellent day of lacrosse with stand out performances from the entire team, in particular Tilly Sherwin (Lower Sixth, West), Bella Timmis and Gina Longsdon (Fifth Form, Queen's).

The Sunday brought us into a very tough pool of opposition. Matches against St Paul's Girls School, Berkhamsted and Godolphin School set us up for a competitive three games. The girls started with an incredible 2-2 draw against St Paul's, with some of the best defensive play I have seen all season. Hannah Campbell (Fifth Form, Nugent) and Izzy Russell (Fifth Form, Cheshire) were standout in the midfield alongside Bella Timmis on the draw. The second game was Berkhamsted, where we had a lot of shots on target in what was a very close game overall. The second half was particularly nail-biting! Final score was a 4-2 loss. Our final pool game was against Godolphin, another very well-played game by the squad. The highlight was Millie Colebrook's (Fifth Form, Queen's) incredible shot from outside the fan, and her first stint in defence. (4-2).

Our knockout game came at the end of the day, setting us up against St Albans for the second time over the weekend. The girls played like they had nothing to lose, with one substitution against a team who had beaten us the day before. First goal came from Bella Timmis, a great run through the midfield and dodge through the defence. Our defence set up (Gina Longsdon, Hannah Campbell and Tilly Sherwin) were incredible, they turned the possession over countless times and really decided the result of the game. In the final two minutes it was 1-1, but a free position from Tati Riviere got us the winning goal, putting us through to the final eight in the country.

An amazing end to a great season, with only two losses in this season's Saturday Fixtures. The players of the tournament were Izzy Blount and Bella Timmis. Thank you to Tilly Sherwin for stepping up and playing straight defence the entire Sunday, as a straight attacker you really stepped up to the job and made a massive difference to the results.

Joni Randall, Lacrosse Coach

3rd X

The 3rd team had their biggest fixture of the season on Monday, taking on a number of tough opponents in the National Schools Tournament.

The day started off with a strong performance against Putney Hugh School. Putney had a strong defensive team, but Martha Robertson (Upper Sixth, Stanhope) and Charlotte Hall (Fifth Form, Cheshire) managed to break through their defensive line. The score at the end of the 16 minutes was 4-2 to Putney.

Next up was St Pauls Girls School. After some tactic talks with our defence, defensive captain Jemima Dare (Upper Sixth, Queen's) led Dom Dubsy (Lower Sixth, Nugent), Théa Gross (Fifth Form, Cheshire), Rose Dubsy (Fifth Form, Nugent) and Poppy Bailey (Lower Sixth, Queen's) to put in a great defensive performance, only conceding one goal. The defensive team were helped by goalie Pia Glynn-Smith (Upper Sixth, Lyttelton) who made some amazing saves. Final score was 0-1 to St Pauls.

The girls began to find their rhythm after the second match and went into their next game against Benenden School with very determined mindsets. The girls in midfield had to work hard this game. Captain Martha Robertson dominated the draws, allowing Grace Noble (Upper Sixth, Stanhope), Hebe Hanson (Fifth Form, Nugent), Izzy Cox (Lower Sixth, Cheshire), Alba Sunderland (Fifth Form,

Stanhope) and Charlotte Hall lots of opportunities to run the ball down to the attacking end. This match saw victory for Stowe, with goals from Sienna Wilson (Fifth Form, Nugent) and Izzy Cox, leaving the score at 2-1 to Stowe.

By the final match, the girls were beginning to tire due to the intensity that they had been maintain in every match so far. We faced our toughest opponent, St Georges School, who really tested our defence. The girls held up well, with Scarlett Wates (Upper Sixth, Queen's) scoring an amazing goal and some great assists from Chloe Paterson-Brown (Fifth Form, Queen's).

Despite the fact that the girls did not make the Quarter Finals, they should all be proud of their performances and sportsmanship throughout the day.

Emily Pickering, Lacrosse Coach

U15A

Stowe were drawn a tough group with perennial power houses Berkhamsted and Caterham along with Lady Eleanor Holles and the unknown quantity of St James' Senior Girls School.

The focus of the day for the U15s was hard work and making sure they do they little things well in the games and if they all managed to do this, they will have a positive impact on the game.

First up was the tough fixture of Berkhamsted. From the outset Berkhamsted really tested our defence with constant pressure and excellent re-defending. The game finished 7-0.

St James' Senior Girls School was the next opponent which was a must win game for Stowe. The girls knew exactly what was on the line and performed excellently. At no point was the game in doubt. Anabelle Robbins (Fourth Form, Nugent) opened the scoring with a fantastic well-placed shot. The other three goal scorers were Mary Jones (Fourth Form, Cheshire), Penny-Belle White (Fourth form, Nugent) and Eva Muirhead (Fourth Form, Queen's). The game finished with a convincing 4-0 win.

Next up was Caterham which proved to be an extremely hard test for the U15s. Once again, their was no doubt in the work rate, and effort from the team. However, this was not enough and the game finished 7-0.

The final game of pool play was against Lady Eleanor Holles. This game was by far the best game of the day for Stowe. The girls played better each game and grew in confidence. The game itself was tied 1-1 for most of the time. However, LEH managed to break down the Stowe defences near the end: the game finished 3-1.

Stowe U15s progressed to Division 1 and had an extremely tough draw against a well drilled Marlborough side. The game finished 7-1 and Marlborough progressed all the way to the final.

Overall, the U15s had a successful day and managed to play knockout lacrosse. The big theme of the day was hard work and making sure everyone plays for each other and does the little things well. I have no doubt that this team managed to do that and look forward to seeing them play in Senior lacrosse next year.

Peter Shepherd, Lacrosse Coach

U14A

The U14A team played a great morning of lacrosse at the National Schools' Championships, improving every single game.

First up were Benenden who were a tough side. Despite winning a few draws and putting a lot of pressure on their attack, the game finished 7-0. Next were Caterham, who were similarly as strong, however a goal was scored, bringing the total to 7-1. On to St Swithun's, the U14As got a real piece of the action in a feisty game. Bea Pinner (Stanhope) and Liv Eaton (Third Form, Nugent) put a goal away each. Finally was Abbott's Hill, who had tied with both St Swithun's and Caterham. The game was evenly matched for much of it, with yellow cards handed out to both sides. Bea Pinner put the goal away for Stowe, however a second goal in the closing minutes for Abbott's Hill gave them the win.

The team from top to bottom worked hard and improved, with notable mentions going to Betty McDougall (Nugent) and Frankie Mackenzie (Nugent) in midfield, Lottie Rose (Queen's) in goal and Ruby Sturgis (Stanhope) in attack. The team is deeply looking forward to next season!

Rob Ingham Clark, Head of Lacrosse