

Halford Hewitt 2024

We had been drawn at Royal St. George's for the 2nd year running, with a mid-morning tee time and Framlingham won their first round match with Clifton College in a dramatic final hole climax.

Most of the squad came down to practise on the Tuesday and Wednesday at RSG, with Graves and Finbow even practising at Deal on the Monday. That is a testament to the team we are building, showing the enthusiasm and spirit that has been built up recently.

At last, we had a squad of 11 to choose from and Hewitt stalwart and ex captain Richard Graves, after 35 odd years playing at the Hewitt, took a breather to let the youngsters play. It was great to introduce Callum Pearce, Fraser Johnson and Henry Moore to the fold. All three left Framlingham after GCSE's in 2021 to go to the Golf College in Surrey. Since graduating last summer all three have continued to play golf and have low handicaps, including Callum at +1.

It was great to see how they fitted in and it was obvious they enjoyed everything St. George's had to offer, including the immaculate practice facilities, the clubhouse, and legendary lunches. They were somewhat surprised, though, that jacket and tie is required after 11am in the clubhouse; very much old school!

Match day on Thursday, 11 April was breezy and gloomy with a 2 to 3 club south westerly wind. Our opponents Clifton are placed 30th, while we lie 60th on the Anderson Scale of rankings devised in the 1970's. However, our last 5 year average is better, which is more important.

We had 5 strong pairs; Harry Bush and Harvey Finbow were unlucky to lose the opening match after being 2 up with 4 to play. The debutantes, Johnson and Moore went out second and won a belter of a game 3/2. What a start to their Hewitt campaign. John Wybar and Matt Pennock, a very strong pair, romped home 6/5 and gave us the early point on the board. With Rob Atton and Pearce losing out on 15, it was left to Jonny Newton and Archie Winter to close out the match.

It was reminiscent of last year's victory down 18 with the same pair. It was a tough start to their match, but they came back from 3 down at 12 to level on 16. Winter's putter was on fire and, after winning 17, they were 1 up going down the last. Winter drove well and was safe in the semi-rough down the left of 18, while Clifton found a fairway bunker and could only advance the ball 30 yards. Advantage Framlingham, but Newton found the greenside bunker to the dismay of supporters and players. This was when you needed a calm and steady player to find the green and Winter did just that, landing on the top tier. With Clifton on the green, Newton had a 40ft downhill slider to navigate. Among the supporters watching were Hewitt old timers, Hugh Curle, Peter Watts, Andrew Towler, Gavin Cowell and of course Richard Graves who have all played in the last 5 years and for many years before. Their hearts were probably in their mouths as Newton set the putt towards the hole but they were jumping for joy when it rolled in. There were jubilant scenes from Framlingham around the green and this was such a team effort to get through.

Friday's draw was against Oundle, placed 23rd on the Anderson Scale, and we lost 4-1. Only Atton and Pearce won and, although it was very close in the other 4 matches, Framlingham must learn how to win a second-round match. This is the 5th consecutive year we have got through the 1st round and we will learn from this and aim for the third-round next year.

What was impressive was that all three debutantes won a competitive match in their first Hewitt. They also enjoyed it, and the average age of the team has just plummeted. However, the standout performance was from Ian Marsh. Ian is an OF who lives in Deal and came to support the team on both days. He wore our colours, looked the part, and is a young 89! He looked fitter than some of the above-mentioned supporters! The future is now here with the youngest team we have fielded for years. Combined with the experience of the senior pros, Newton, Atton, Wybar and Bush, this team, if it can stay together, will get through to the later stages of this competition sooner rather than later.

If you can, come and watch us next year starting on the 10 April 2025.

Jonny Newton

FC flag at Deal



On the fairway - Callum Pearce



Selfie, L- R, Old Framlingham Hewitt players; Richard Graves, Hugh Curle, Peter Watts, Andy Towler and Gavin Cowell.



Around table, L-R, Curle, Graves, Towler, Cowell and Watts



Near 1st tee - Ian Marsh (left) and captain Jonny Newton



By Starting Hut - Jonny Newton (left) and Archie Winter



Three debutantes on the practice ground - L-R, Fraser Johnson, Callum Pearce and Henry Moore

