

annual report.

20

23

northern
aces

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message from the Chair

Social sessions have continued to grow from strength to strength with many new faces now attending social tennis sessions, and great to see so many of you getting back into tennis!

Lots has happened over the last year, with fully booked social tennis, the 'Kiss My Ace' GLTA tournament, Christmas socials and the Gayvis Cup. The performance team as well, competing in the South Manchester Lawn Tennis League with closely fought matches and strengthening our relationship with Urmston Tennis Club.

Thank you to all our members for your ongoing time and support to Northern Aces as our LGBTQI+ tennis club over the past 12 months.

A lot of effort goes into running our club, and this year both the Treasurer and Secretary have been instrumental in driving change and devoted countless hours to build a better club for *everyone* - old members and new.

With a re-vamp of the website, and modern branding, new club t-shirts and visibility at pride events, we hope to establish a strong identify within the local community. Many thanks to Andy and William for all their efforts.

It is so reassuring to know there is still a strong demand for social tennis in the LGBTQI+ community, and we will proudly provide that service so long as there is an appetite for it. Here's to many more successful years of proud and enjoyable tennis!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ramzi Cherad'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ramzi Cherad

Chair

15 May 2023

our mission

community

To create a playful world through tennis for *everybody*, especially those in minority groups who are looking for a community of like-minded individuals who share a *passion* for tennis

purpose

We believe playing makes life better. Whether on-court at social tennis, or off-court nurturing friendships, we are there to provide that support network and break down the barriers to entry

values

All out. All season.

We strive to put our members first and offer opportunities for all to participate, compete and love tennis. We build trust through mutual respect, and never stop striving to be the benchmark for inclusive tennis in the North West

membership

We continue to build our membership base following historical Covid-19 restrictions on indoor activities which saw a portion of our membership favour outdoor clubs which gave them the ability to continue to play tennis, and unfortunately the majority of those members have not returned.

As a result of continued efforts to drive recruitment and retention of our existing loyal members, Northern Aces has managed to retain an average of 44 members over the FY23 period (44 in FY22).

Unfortunately, Northern Aces has seen a significant departure of female members over the last two years, with only 8% of current active membership as at March 2023 being female. We have, however, hosted our first wheelchair tennis user as we continue to strive to provide an inclusive and supportive environment for *everyone*.

Despite price increases, discussed later in this Report, the Committee has confirmed that membership will remain at £35 per year for 2023-24.

*No data recorded due to Covid-19 club closure

44
FY23
members

44
FY22
members

—
FY21*
members

65
FY20
members



social tennis



What is social tennis

The heart of Northern Aces has always been its weekly social tennis sessions which we are currently hosting at the Manchester Tennis and Football Centre. These social sessions are at the very core of what we do, offering *everyone* the opportunity to pick up a racquet and give tennis a try. For our more experienced members, this is an opportunity to socialise and feel part of a community in the North West.

Capacity and availability

Social tennis has been well attended throughout the year, consistently selling out in the colder months when indoor tennis becomes a welcome respite from the British weather. Following a strong appetite, we have extended social tennis to be three hours over three courts each weekend (up from two hours previously). Additionally, following the closure of the temporary vaccination centre at Sports City in October 2022, we have increased capacity of social tennis to 18 players (up from 12). This has allowed us to return to our pre-Covid format and reintroduce more of a 'social' aspect to the sessions, where players have regular breaks and can spend time off-court getting to know each other.



Northern Pride Sport Swap Series

As part of an initiative across Manchester to encourage people to engage in new sports, Northern Aces hosted the Manchester Village Spartans RUFC in November 2022. By offering up taster sessions to encourage new members to join or at least give tennis a go, we are working towards eliminating any and all barriers to entry to tennis.

Hosted by our own Andy Aldridge, 10 of our members were joined by 10 Spartans for a mix of competitive social tennis and drills led by our stand in coach Matt Edwards. The session was a great success with many Spartans vowing to return to the tennis court.

This ongoing initiative sees different LGBTQI+ sports club across Manchester hosting other sports clubs, giving *everyone* the opportunity to try something new. In the same month, the Spartans hosted the next sports swap event, inviting people to join them for an introduction to Rugby. In February 2023, Manchester Sharks Water Polo hosted a similar session, allowing LGBTQI+ sports clubs to meet and grow, supporting each other in every way that they can.

For further information about Northern Pride Sport Swaps, visit [@northernpridesport](#) on Instagram.



KISS MY ACE **GLTA** WORLD TOUR



Our stop on the GLTA world tour

2022 marked the 12th annual GLTA tournament held in Manchester, which was renamed 'Kiss My Ace' in 2018. Once again, the tournament was hosted at the Northern Tennis Club, in affiliation with Pride in Tennis.

In total, we had 19 members from Northern Aces participate in the tournament, with the following notable mentions:

Ramzi Cherad (Singles Open winner, Doubles Open runner up)

Dan White (Singles A winner, Doubles B winner)

Adam Wolstanholme (Singles A runner up)

Gurj Singh-Raud (Singles B consolation winner)

Jandro Alcaide Corredera (Singles C winner)

Helen Spandler (Singles D runner up)

John Miller (Singles D consolation winner)

A special thank you to Gurj Singh-Raud, Ramzi Cherad, Sofia Milone and Michael Hua, the event organisers. Additional thanks to Dan White, William Chadwick, Martyn Worsdale and Robby Gee for support on the day.



tournaments

Wimblehun 2022

From July to September 2022, Northern Aces hosted a summer box league to encourage members to get out and play competitive tennis.

Group 1 winner – **Dan White**

Group 2 winner – **David Bond**

WTGAYS Open 2022

Northern Aces held a second box league from October to December 2022, giving members another chance to stretch their competitive muscles ahead of Christmas.

Group 1 winner – **Gurj Singh-Raud**

Group 2 winner – **Michael Hua**

Christmas tournament 2022

In a change of format, this year we adopted a Laver Cup style approach, with individuals competing in teams playing a mix of singles and doubles to score points.

Congratulations to **Blue Team**, captained by Andy Aldridge



tennis team



Southwest Manchester Lawn Tennis League

Martyn Worsdale, team captain of the Northern Aces B team, did a great job taking up the responsibility in fielding a team each week throughout the season. Sadly, despite the efforts of all those who took part, we were relegated to the second division for the next season.

Unfortunately, due to limited capacity, Northern Aces were only able to field one competitive team this year, with the Northern Aces A team being withdrawn from the league.

Whilst we were unable to retain our position in division one, a number of our members who otherwise had not been able to participate in much competitive tennis were given the opportunity to participate.

It has become increasingly difficult to field a team to participate in the league, with many members who joined other clubs during Covid-19 committing to those respective teams. Whilst we hope to continue to provide an opportunity for Northern Aces members to play competitive tennis, this can only be done whilst it makes commercial sense and subject to an appetite by our members.

Northern Aces has entered the league for the summer of 2023 and hopes to build a strong team and we wish them every success in the coming season.

corporate governance

Northern Aces – Governance structure

Northern Aces Tennis Club is a not-for-profit social sports club based in Manchester, UK. The club's purpose is to grow, manage, promote and showcase the game of tennis in the North West region and represent the interests of any LGBTQI+ persons. The club has no physical fixed home of operations, however, currently operates out of Manchester Tennis and Football Centre ('Sports City'). The club is LTA affiliated and operates in partnership with 'Pride in Tennis' and the Gay and Lesbian Tennis Alliance ('GLTA').

Committee changes

At the Annual General Meeting ('AGM') on 19 May 2022, Ramzi Cherad was re-elected to the committee as Chair for another one-year term. Gurj Singh-Raud stepped down as Treasurer, and Andy Aldridge was appointed in his place. Sofia Milone stepped down in her role as Secretary, and William Chadwick was appointed to the position.

Activities of the Committee

The Committee is responsible for guiding and monitoring the club, its strategic direction, setting goals for management and monitoring performance of the club against these goals. The Committee met a number of times during the year, and the minutes of these meetings are available to all members on request.

Safeguarding the Northern Aces community

Northern Aces is committed to prioritising the well-being of all children and adults at risk, promoting safeguarding in our club at all times, including all programmes and events we run. The safeguarding policy, available on the website, outlines the measures in place to minimise risk and deliver a positive tennis experience for *everyone*. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all participants; however, the Committee has overall accountability for the policy and its implementation. Ramzi Cherad is our nominated and trained welfare officer.

the committee



Ramzi Cherad **Chair**

Ramzi has played tennis since he was 7 and loves the sport. He managed Leeds University Tennis during his post grad studies and enjoys promoting the sport to new members. Taking Leeds University Tennis from 40 members to the largest student run tennis club in the country with 420 members, Ramzi is using his experience to take Northern Aces to the next level.



Andy Aldridge **Treasurer**

Andy has played tennis most of his life, give or take a few breaks for study. Picking up the sport again, joining Manchester University Tennis, Andy then went onto join Northern Aces in 2021 and quickly got involved helping to organise tournaments and weekly sessions. Andy's career as a qualified accountant, and a background in art and design lends well to a focussed approach to delivering strong results and elevating Northern Aces to the next level.



William Chadwick **Secretary**

William has played tennis on and off since he was a child with his brothers. Rather than being at tennis camp, William is just camp! After moving to Manchester, William discovered Northern Aces and the rest is herstory. Joining in 2021, William loves playing tennis every week and making amazing friends on and off court. William is obsessed with WTA and loves a bit of on-court drama.

all out. all season.

