

<https://www.lta.org.uk/major-tennis-events/british-major-events/battle-of-the-brits/news-and-media/2020/the-final-outcome-of-the-battle-of-the-brits..is-that-the-brits-are-ready/>

The final outcome of the Battle of the Brits.. is that the Brits are ready

-  02/08/2020
-  Major Events



When the word came down that Indian Wells had been cancelled on the strength of one confirmed case of COVID-19, there was disbelief in some quarters, which rapidly turned to inevitability as the scale of the global pandemic became clear, and issues far larger than thumping a fluffy tennis ball over a net took over everyone's lives.

As restrictions were lifted, all around the world domestic competitions, tournaments and exhibitions started to spring up, and book-ending that first period of the LTA's own return to elite competition was the Battle of the Brits. Starting with the men-only competition, and finishing with a team event, British tennis fans could, for a small time, throw themselves into the sport they had been denied for four months.

Fast forward to August, and the tours are slowly awakening as best they can, and certainly the top British players can say they have been given every opportunity to get match-time and to experience something like competition albeit with raucous encouragement,

More than that, though – some of Britain’s up-coming players have not only had the opportunity to play throughout the restart, but to be around more established players and coaches has been invaluable.

Talk to any of the lower tier players about the experience, and they beam at the banter, smile at the support of their coaches and they feel just as ready and motivated to strike on as soon as their respective tours start.

Players like Ryan Peniston and Emma Raducanu have punched well above their weight and we would hope to see some significant rankings rise. The coaches have often told the lower-ranked players how great it is for them to face the more established players to see where they game is at, and what they need to do to get to that level.

Talk to the more established players and this was a chance to shake off the rust and get some match-tightness, where no amount of practice will prepare you for that.

Players like Dan Evans, Kyle Edmund, Heather Watson, Andy Murray and Jo Konta plan to travel to the US and trust in the protocols that the tours are promising. The LTA will run more British Tour events through August to the beginning of September while the lower tiers take their time to restart, ensuring lower-tier players are able to earn money until that time.

But make no mistake, these seven days bring to a close over a month of competition – wherever the players go from here – ATP, WTA, ITF, LTA British Tour... the Brits are ready.

<https://www.lta.org.uk/major-tennis-events/british-major-events/battle-of-the-brits/news-and-media/2020/super-sunday-beckons-and-there-could-not-have-been-a-better-script/>

Super Sunday beckons and there could not have been a better script

-  01/08/2020
-  Major Events



The scene is set for Super Sunday as the Union Jacks pulled off an epic comeback to level at 45-45.

It is almost as if it was scripted – Union Jacks take a lead on the first day and gradually get overhauled by the British Bulldogs. The horror story element comes with the match tie-breaks going the Bulldogs way. Then there was Moving Day, as the Jacks fought gallantly back but the Bulldogs just kept things out of their reach.

Leading up to the final act, one of the Dream Teams this week, the combination of Andy Murray and Heather Watson looked as though they were running away with things, but Liam Broady and Harriet Dart rallied to, of course, bring us a dramatic ... yes you've guessed it... match tie-break.

So what can we expect in Act 3?

There are 29 points on offer, and the first team to snaffle 15 points will be crowned the winners of the Battle of the Brits Team Tennis.

But there has been so much more to this tournament than team banter and sledging. What started as the LTA formulating a plan of domestic competition with some high-profile competitions thrown in for good measure has become a valuable training ground for all British players to prepare for the tour restart.

Judy Murray said: "We've got good momentum, we've got incredible team spirit, it's been absolutely brilliant. The cheerleading, and the banter and the sledging has been phenomenal on both sides, and I think that the lower ranked players in the teams are getting a massive amount out of the camaraderie and learning from the experience of the older players around them, or the higher ranked players around them and that can only be a good thing for British tennis."

Leon Smith agreed: "Look this is what it's all about. That last match was so much fun for everybody. Day Six in, everybody's played so much tennis, and just something like that gets the energy going. It's exactly what Jamie's vision would have been for something like this, having different people involved in it, everyone at the side of the court. As much as it stings like hell to lose that last one, it's brilliant."

It might be cliched, but it really is all to play for, and as WTA Palermo's release of the main draw does indeed signify the next stage of tennis' international return, all Britain's players should get the Super Sunday tour-return send-off they deserve.

<https://www.lta.org.uk/major-tennis-events/british-major-events/battle-of-the-brits/news-and-media/2020/jacks-fall-back-on-points-but-make-up-for-it-in-team-spirit/>

Jacks fall back on points but make up for it in team spirit

-  31/07/2020
-  Major Events



With the points on offer raking up, the stage was set for last night's resurgent Union Jacks to keep flying proud – and they started off famously snapping up five of the first seven points on offer, on a day where the brutally hot conditions dulled the enthusiastic support of the teams.

However, the Bulldogs just started to creep back into it, with handy wins in particular for Cam Norrie, Liam Broady and Harriet Dart for a three-point mixed doubles boost and perhaps more importantly some revenge served up from Kyle Edmund to Dan Evans.

"I played him last couple of days and also of the final [of the first Battle of the Brits] and both times lost.

"Today was a good example because I lost, and then used the information from losing to him to put it right today."

Yesterday's star player Heather Watson opted for safety first. As keen as she is to get in as many matches before heading to Lexington to start her season proper – after two very physical matches yesterday, Watson wasted no time in despatching Maia Lumsden for the loss of just one game.

She said: “Before lockdown I was playing this type of tennis and super aggressive and coming to the net, just really good tennis basically and I think I just needed to get past those first two matches get the belief back, because I've never spent that long away from playing tennis and from the match court. It was a new experience and I'm glad that I've sort of picked up where I left off.

“I've played every day. I want to play as many matches as possible but I'm being smart about it as well. I'm pretty tough like that. I can play day in, day out. I'm quite used to it. Playing long through the week and these are the only matches I've had going into Lexington so I want to make the most of it.”

Although the Jacks have hauled back what looked like an Everest-like deficit, in Watson's mind the Jacks' are already winners.

She continued: “You know what? The Jacks have the best team spirit. We've got some great characters on our team and if you're not looking at points, as far as team spirit goes, we've already won the competition (laughs).

There will be more points up for grabs as the weekend action intensifies.

<https://www.lta.org.uk/major-tennis-events/british-major-events/battle-of-the-brits/news-and-media/2020/moving-day-for-the-union-jacks-as-watson-shines-to-close-the-gap-on-the-bulldogs/>

Moving Day for the Union Jacks as Watson shines to close the gap on the Bulldogs

-  30/07/2020
-  Major Events

Moving Day for the Union Jacks as Watson shines to close the gap on the Bulldogs



Things looked bleak for the forlornly fluttering Union Jacks at the end of Day 3, trailing the British Bulldogs by 12 points, and even started badly with the first score of the day going the Bulldogs' way with a win from Maia Lumsden over Naomi Broady.

But from there, the points evaded the Bulldogs consistently with win after win for the Union Jacks.

It had been a tough start for the team what looked on paper to be the strongest. Prior to the tournament starting, Bulldog captains Leon Smith and Anne Keothavong laughingly referred to themselves as the underdogs – well let's face it, any team going up against all three Murrays would feel the same.

Andy Murray, in just his second match this tournament, formed a formidable partnership with Lloyd Glasspool. Heather Watson produced her best performance so far in her restart to halt the progress of Emma Raducanu – both two-point matches.

Although late in the day, Kyle Edmund regained another point for the Bulldogs, it was Watson's day to shine as she was key to a great win along with Jamie Murray, to nab the final three points on offer and closing the gap to just 6 points of the British Bulldogs.

There was plenty of praise for Watson. Jamie Murray called her the player of the day but perhaps the most glowing praise came from Bulldogs captain, and Watson's Fed Cup captain, Anne Keothavong.

She said, at the end of the day: "I still think we're the underdogs despite maintaining our lead. The Jacks were incredibly good. A few tight matches which could have gone either way today. But for me the stand-out performances have been from Heather Watson today. She was awesome in her singles against Emma and again very good in the mixed tonight."

Union Jacks captain Judy Murray is under no illusions as to what the effect of the team banter has been.

She said: "We're having a lot of fun and I think that the team camaraderie is actually really helping as well. Everybody is getting behind everybody else and I'm absolutely loving it."

17 points will be on offer on Friday, and if the Union Jacks continue their resurgence, it could make for a thrilling finish at the weekend.

<https://www.lta.org.uk/major-tennis-events/british-major-events/battle-of-the-brits/news-and-media/2020/raducanu-driving-forward-with-bulldog-spirit-looks-to-model-herself-on-halep-li-na/>

Raducanu driving forward with Bulldog spirit, looks to model herself on Halep & Li Na



29/07/2020



Major Events



Epitomising that Bulldog spirit, 17-year-old Emma Raducanu seems to be taking everything this event is throwing at her and playing tug-of-war with it right back!

From beating the more experienced Katie Boulter, going toe-to-toe with her in heavy ground-strokes and aggression, to whipping down a win over former World No. 1 Andy Murray, partnering Jodie Burrage in the mixed doubles, she kept on rolling with a win over Burrage – her second in three meetings.

From the youthful joy of managing to get her driving licence just before lockdown to working hard on her punchy forehand, the results have been impressive in the British Tour winning the first final and is currently on a 6-match winning streak in singles.

Watching her handling the matches with maturity it is difficult to remember we are looking at the youngest player on the board – she has been playing catching on her Maths and Economic A-levels and just managed to sneak in getting her driving licence before the world shut down.

Citing Simona Halep and Li Na as her influences, Raducanu knows where she wants to be and more importantly how to get there.

“I've got quite a few years ahead of me and I want to start playing how I want to picture myself in a couple of years.

“I want to be athletic like Halep. I feel like I've got quite a good base right now but a lot to improve on and also Li Na - I'm a massive fan of her game. She's got such powerful strokes. She went for everything and also she was very athletic in a more aggressive way. I loved her mentality, she never complained. That's something I aspire to be like.”

After a slow start, the Bulldogs have been running rampant, so was all the talk of being underdogs just mind-games on the part of team-captains Leon Smith and Anne Keothavong?

Laughing, she said: "We definitely are the underdogs on paper especially but I back us, every single player. The closeness that we have with each other and the support that we're giving each other, just clutching those tie-breaks especially so I'm really pleased and hopefully the bulldogs can keep going."

Another 15 points will be up for grabs tomorrow, but the Bulldogs do not look like letting up with their vice-like grip.

<https://www.lta.org.uk/major-tennis-events/british-major-events/battle-of-the-brits/news-and-media/2020/day-2-reaction/>

Every Bulldog has its day as the self-styled underdogs take control with wins from Konta and Norrie

-  28/07/2020
-  News



Pre-tournament, Leon Smith and Anne Keothavong joked about how they might be the underdogs to the might of all three members of the Murray family, but on Day 2, they made their 5-point overnight margin count as they snapped up seven of the 13 points on offer in the first five matches.

Gradually the tide turned for the Union Jacks – first with Jamie Murray atoning for yesterday’s loss by getting their first point of the day, ably backed up by British men’s No. 1 Dan Evans who won a feisty three-point battle with Kyle Edmund with a back to back Battle of the Brits victory, after beating him in the first final a few weeks ago.

Dan Evans’ three points helped the Union Jacks chase the 16-point target and the team’s loudest cheerleader is in his element urging his team-mates on.

He said, after the match: “We've been taking a hammering so far, so try and get everybody to get through, make it a little easier. It's going to be a long week and as you said the energy levels will drop. You know when we support it's to get everyone through the match.”

Johanna Konta did her bit for the Bulldogs earlier in the day in picking off the rust and beating a match-fitter Katie Boulter in a three set battle.

She said: “These are my first competitive matches since the beginning of March. It's going to take time and I think more than anything like yesterday, I think just gave myself the chance to start playing better.

“In both matches I was in a good mind-set but especially today I thought I just kept staying in every point, giving myself the best chance for my level to get better.”

In the end, all hope to try and least get into double-figures rested with Andy Murray and Jodie Burrage but it was another formidable opposition with Joe Salisbury this time partnering Emma Raducanu.

To begin with Murray and Burrage looked every bit the dream team, but Salisbury and Raducanu worked their way back into the match, taking the second set and turning the tide in the match tie-break, and dashing the hopes of the Union Jacks of closing the gap – for one day at least. 16 points will be up for grabs on Wednesday.

<https://www.lta.org.uk/major-tennis-events/british-major-events/battle-of-the-brits/news-and-media/2020/day-1-reaction/>

Day 1 Reaction: Tough restart for Konta, British Bulldogs finish strongly

-  27/07/2020
-  News



It was a tough day for the British No. 1s at the Battle of the Brits Team Tennis. First, Progress Tour Women's Championship runner-up Jodie Burrage handed Johanna Konta a restart defeat. Konta knew she was going to be up against someone who has been on an impressive streak of matches, winning 15 out of 18 matches since the domestic restart.

Burrage, who wisely took a week off after three straight weeks of play said: "I definitely think there was an element in there of me playing a lot of matches and Jo not playing any. I think that was her first match, which is always difficult. I remember my first match back after lockdown, which I actually used to my advantage. I spoke to my coaches about that before and they said 'remember how you felt in your first match, that's how she's going to be feeling so get on top of her, have good energy with her at the start of the match.'"

Konta, who withdraw from WTA Palermo now has eyes on as much match-time before hopefully heading to the US to start her season ahead of the US Open.

She said: "The whole point of this week is to reintroduce the stresses of competing in a tournament environment. The knee as well and the body in general, it's a very different kind of load on the body. An hour and a half match is a lot more stressful on the body than an hour and half practice session so it's just getting back into this sort of space which will hopefully help me to hit the ground running as much as possible when I get to Lexington and then all the US tournaments."

Cameron Norrie downed the men's No. 1 Dan Evans giving the British Bulldogs a lead, that just moments later was cancelled out with a Union Jacks' two-point win in the mixed doubles thanks to Lloyd Glasspool and Naomi Broady.

With a surge of points from two Bulldog wins thanks to Emma Raducanu beating Katie Boulter, and a doubles win for Dom Inglot and Alex Grey, it all came down to the final match of the day.

Fast-paced with plenty of enthusiastic support from both teams, it was a winner-takes-all for first day honours, with Jamie Murray and Heather Watson overcoming a confident Joe Salisbury and Harriet Dart.

It was a great turnaround by Murray and Watson to take the second set and they looked in control in the match tie-break but Salisbury and Dart won eight points in a row to give the Bulldogs a 5-point lead over the Union Jacks at the end of the first day.