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Dramatic Qualifiers set stage for Varsity

This year's College Varsity tournament got underway with an entertaining weekend of Qualifiers, as attention now turns to the tournament proper in under three weeks' time

By [Tom Harle](#) and [Matt Kirkum](#)

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Image: James Hostford



Image: Fiona Hill



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Image: James Hostford

Upwards of 30 matches were played out at York Sport Centre and on 22 Acres, as a result of which the identity of the college teams that will represent York in Durham on Sunday 1st March have been determined.

The top four teams in autumn term leagues in 11 college sports were eligible to qualify. The winners of each semi-final automatically qualified for College Varsity, while the finals pitted them against each other to determine the top and second-rated teams for the tournament.

The mixed lacrosse games were postponed until further notice, due to the mislaying of the key for the lacrosse kit cupboard. *Nouse* later learned that an absent-minded individual had mistakenly taken the key up to Edinburgh with the Mountaineering Club!

All fixtures that went ahead were played in a friendly and competitive spirit and many drew in the crowds.

College Sport Officer Dave Washington said of the weekend's events: "It's been fantastic to see so many people playing and supporting Qualifiers Weekend, and we had some brilliant fixtures, which really showcased what our College Sport system is all about.

"We certainly really enjoyed the weekend, and we hope that everyone else did too. We can't wait for the actual event in Durham in less than three weeks, and keep your eyes peeled for tickets for the event going on sale soon."

Eight of York's nine colleges will be represented at Varsity, with youngest college Constantine the only exception. Here, we take a look at how each college fared in Varsity Qualifiers Weekend.

Alcuin



Statistically speaking, Alcuin had a disappointing weekend. They progressed to seven semi-finals but could only translate this into one team being sent to Varsity in their name. The Owls will be pleased to send their squash team to Durham, who sneak through on individual games won at the expense of Vanbrugh.



Image: Fiona Hill

They were comprehensively defeated in the volleyball by Wentworth and lost heavily in the the women's football and netball against James, as well as the [men's football against Derwent](#). It must be said that they competed honourably throughout and never let up in any of these games, and their hockey semi-final with Goodricke ended in a cruel loss on penalties.

Derwent



Derwent were ultimately the most successful college at this year's Varsity qualifiers, winning six of their eight semi-finals. Men's football transferred their Revolution Premier League form into the qualifiers, beating Alcuin in the semi-final (below left) before thrashing Vanbrugh in the final. The men's rugby team also dominated in their qualifier against Halifax, winning 57-3 to set up what promises to be an intriguing final against James next weekend. It was a triumphant weekend for both Derwent's women's netball and rugby teams as they qualified as first seeds.



Image: James Hostford

The basketball team also qualified despite a narrow loss in what was a [scintillating final against Vanbrugh](#), while victory in the Darts final crowned a wonderful weekend for Derwent. Considering there was only one representative team for Derwent last year, this has marked a significant improvement with only the badminton and [hockey](#) teams failing to progress this time round.

Goodricke



Goodricke provided a good account of themselves in this weekend's qualifiers as they were another college who avoided a single semi-final loss. The first victory came courtesy of a close fought badminton semi-final against Derwent before they enjoyed a convincing 8-1 victory in the final against Langwith.



This preceded a [thrilling hockey semi-final match against Alcuin](#) which finished 2-2 at the final whistle. Therefore, penalties were needed and it was ultimately Goodricke who prevailed to set up a final with Vanbrugh (right). However, they were edged out by Vanbrugh following an entertaining yet disappointing 3-2 defeat. Despite this, with two varsity places booked, it was a fruitful weekend for the Heslington East college.

Halifax



On the face of it, Qualifiers were not unduly successful for Fax, but they did enjoy a couple of notable triumphs. Their women's rugby side topped their pool in the one-day tournament on 22 Acres and, despite eventually perishing to Derwent in the final, go to Durham as York Seconds. In volleyball, they narrowly beat James 3-2 to qualify, although once again they had no luck in the final against Wentworth.

On the flipside, they will be pleased to see the back of Derwent, who seemed to be their nemesis all weekend. Their netball girls, who went to Varsity last year, [lost to Derwent in their semi-final](#) and the Men in Blue gave the Lions a good 57-3 hiding in the men's rugby. They will have high hopes for the mixed lacrosse, though, having strolled to victory in the one-day tournament last term.

James

It was a mixed weekend for James, the current leaders of the overall inter-college sport standings. Their women's football and netball teams led the charge. In a five-a-side format, their footballers beat [Alcuin](#) and [Langwith](#), scoring 20 goals in the process.



Image: James Hostford

Their highly successful netball outfit delivered once again (right), with a convincing victory against Derwent in the final in a raucous atmosphere in the Tent.

Conversely, they lost five semi-finals on Saturday. Particularly underwhelming were their defeats in the men's football- when they disappointingly fielded a third-string team and [lost to Vanbrugh 3-1](#)- and mixed basketball. Their men's rugby team, who crushed Heslington East 78-0 in their semi-final, face a final against Derwent on Sunday.

Langwith



Langwith were successful in all three of the semi-finals they competed in. It was Langwith, in fact, that got proceedings underway with [victory in the women's football](#) in what was the first qualifier of the weekend. After dispatching Alcuin, the team suffered a defeat in the final as they went down 9-2 to James. It was an emergent theme with Langwith teams, as all three progressed from their respective semi-final, only to suffer defeat in the final.

The badminton team overcame James in the semi-final thanks to a 5-4 victory before ultimately struggling to defeat against Goodricke in the final. Likewise, the darts team trounced Halifax 3-0 but they were unable to replicate this form into the final as they lost to Derwent. Notably, Langwith were the best supported college and the Black and Yellow Army were out in force at every fixture their teams took part in.

Vanbrugh



Vanbrugh put in a number of exceptional displays in crunch games over Qualifiers Weekend. Their mixed hockey team beat Derwent on penalties in their semi-final and two goals from Seb Harwood saw them [triumph over Goodricke in the final](#).



Image: James Hostford

The sterling efforts of Francis Sobowale sends them to Varsity as York Firsts in the mixed basketball (right), with seminal wins over established sporting superpowers [James](#) and [Derwent](#).

Their men’s football team shocked James once more, beating them 3-1 with goals from Liam Sides, Tom Siddle and Joe Lund.

Although they have trebled their presence at Varsity from last year, it could have been even more after narrow defeats in squash and darts semi-finals.

Wentworth



Wentworth must be applauded for their efforts as they qualified in both the semi-finals they competed in. An impressive 3-0 victory over Alcuin in their volleyball qualifier was soon followed up by a triumph in their squash semi-final against James. Wentworth’s volleyball team were in ominous form as they quashed Halifax in the final, again running out 3-0 victors.

Meanwhile, the squash team ensured they will be the number one seeded team following their win against Alcuin in the final. It was generally a great show of efficiency from the postgrads who, despite only having two teams involved, ensured they will be well represented in both sports in this year’s Varsity.



- Lacrosse - Mixed 1sts**
10:00, Crumb 2
Durham +5 St John's 12-0 Halifax
- Rugby - Women's 2nds**
10:00, Crumb 1
York +3 St Cuthbert's 20-35 Halifax
- Badminton - Mixed 1sts**
10:00, Sports Hall A

York +5 Trevelyan 4-5 Goodricke

Badminton - Mixed 2nds

10:00, Sports Hall B

Durham +3 St Cuthbert's 9-0 Langwith

Lacrosse - Mixed 2nds

11:00, Crumb 2

York +3 John Snow 6-7 James

Rugby - Men's 2nds

11:00, Crumb 1

Durham +3 Castle 19-17 Derwent

Football - Women's 2nds

12:00, Crumb 2

Durham +3 Van Mildert 4-0 Langwith

Squash - Mixed 1sts

12:00, Squash Court 1

Durham +5 St Hild & St Bede 3-2 Wentworth

Squash - Mixed 2nds

12:00, Squash Court 2

Durham +1.5 **York +1.5** Grey 4-4 Alcuin

Football - Women's 1sts

12:45, Crumb 2

Durham +5 Stephenson 1-0 James

Rugby - Men's 1sts

13:00, Crumb 1

Durham +5 Collingwood 69-5 James

Darts - Mixed 2nds

13:30, MC Cafe

Durham +3 Josephine Butler 6-1 Langwith

Football - Men's 2nds

13:30, Crumb 2

Durham +3 St Hild & St Bede 2-1 Vanbrugh

Hockey - Mixed 2nds

14:00, Waterbased

Durham +3 Hatfield 3-2 Goodricke

Basketball - Mixed 2nds

14:00, Sports Hall A

York +3 St Chad's 39-44 Derwent

Volleyball - Mixed 2nds

14:00, Sports Hall B

Durham +3 Queens 3-0 Halifax

Netball - 2nds

14:00, Tarmac

York +3 Hatfield 15-21 Derwent

Darts - Mixed 1sts

15:00, MC Cafe

Durham +5 Castle 4-3 Derwent

Football - Men's 1sts

15:30, Crumb 2

York +5 Collingwood 0-1 Derwent

Basketball - Mixed 1sts

15:30, Sports Hall A

Durham +5 Ustinov 66-47 Vanbrugh

Volleyball - Mixed 1sts

15:30, Sports Hall B

York +5 St Mary's 0-3 Wentworth

Netball - 1sts

15:30, Tarmac

Durham +2.5 **York +2.5** St Hild & St Bede 28-28 James

Rugby - Women's 1sts

16:00, Crumb 1

York +5 Mildert/Butler 2-6 Derwent

Hockey - Mixed 1sts

16:00, Waterbased

Durham +5 Castle 4-3 Vanbrugh

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