

From the Archives – 20th August 2026

The Duke of York at Roehampton Club in 1929



In 1929 His Royal Highness the Duke of York – Prince Albert Frederick Arthur George (1895-1952), second son of King George V and Queen Mary, who would accede as King George VI in December 1936 – was appointed Golf Captain at Roehampton Club. He succeeded Admiral of the Fleet Earl Jellicoe, the Jutland commander, who had held the position for the previous two years. *The Daily Mirror* captured a photograph of Lord Jellicoe playing golf at Roehampton in 1925. Photographs of the Duke of York playing golf at Roehampton Club also appeared in the newspapers in 1923 and in the same year he was appointed as Captain.

The Duke of York is clearly shown in the list of golf captains by the stairs in the Clubhouse, and the contemporary newspapers of the day reported the appointment as another example of the growing Royal patronage at Roehampton Club. The Centenary Book by Elizabeth Hennessy featuring the history of the Club also highlights other examples of its royal patronage. By the late 1920s the Club had become one of London's leading sporting clubs. It's golf course regularly attracted leading amateurs and professionals, while it's membership included aristocrats, politicians, military officers and prominent figures in London society. The appointment took place at almost exactly the high point of his golfing life. Within approximately a year, he was Captain of the R&A at St Andrews. This placed him within the long tradition of royal association with St Andrews and is credited as being the first R&A Captain to perform the traditional drive-in using a steel-shafted club. Steel shafts had only recently been approved for use by the R&A in 1929, making his 1930 drive symbolically significant in the transition from hickory to steel.

His elder brother, the Prince of Wales – later Edward VIII – was already closely involved with golf and had himself served as Captain of the R&A in 1922. The London Daily Chronicle in December 1928 included a report highlighting the golfing careers of the two royal brothers and their respective captaincies at Roehampton Club and Royal Wimbledon Golf Club. The two municipal golf courses at nearby Richmond Park also bear testimony to the heritage of these two royal golfing brothers. The second municipal course at Richmond Park was inaugurated by the Duke of York in 1925. It subsequently became known as the Duke's Course while the earlier course opened by his brother became known as the Prince's Course. The brothers also feature in the history of Camberley Heath Golf Club in 1929 when they took part in a match between teams representing the Admirals and Generals playing alternately for both sides.

Away from golf, the Duke of York was also an accomplished tennis player at Roehampton Club where he played doubles with his friend, mentor and former equerry, Wing Commander Louis Greg. They appear together in a photograph in the *Daily Mirror* at Roehampton Club in 1923. In 1926, they entered the Men's Doubles in the Wimbledon Tennis Championships. In the first round, they met two extremely experienced British players – Herbert Roper Barrett and Arthur Gore – both former Wimbledon Champions. The Duke of York and Louis Greig lost in straight sets 6-1, 6-3, 6-2. The match was notable for the veteran partnership of Gore and Barrett and their respective ages of 58 and 52. The match was also significant for the Duke of York who became the first member of the British Royal Family to compete at Wimbledon and he remains the only British royal known to have competed in the Championships proper.



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