

## **North East Restricted U13, U15 & U17 – Saturday 16 February & Sunday 17 February 2008**

The North East hosted its' first restricted badminton tournament of 2008 last weekend and attracted more than 60 entrants in total over the three age groups, U13, U15 and U17. The event was staged at Harlaw Academy over two days with the U13 age group taking to the courts first. In the singles event both girls and boys showed a good standard of play with many long, hard fought rallies making for great entertainment for all during the pool stages. Experience however won through in the end with 8 Aberdeenshire Development Squad players making up the 4 semi-finals. Girls – Emma Buchanan, Fiona Craigen, Kirsty Thomson, all Stonehaven and Lindsay Howie, Mintlaw and boys – Kieran Johnson, Scott Duncan, Sean Leith, Stonehaven and Sean Dalton, Cults. Fiona and Kirsty won through their matches showing great strength and composure in two sets and in the boys section the spectators were treated to two nail biting three set matches with both Sean's' victorious in the end.

The finals continued to entertain the audience with some great displays of skill, strength and stamina from all four finalists. The titles were finally won by Fiona Craigen, 21-14, 21-16 and Sean Leith 21-12, 21-8. The doubles tournament continued in the same highly entertaining vane with all competitors playing with great passion. Pool stages in the boys section were once again highly competitive with Anthony Thornton and Sean Dalton, Cults, and Kieran Johnson and Sean Leith, Stonehaven, winning all their matches to secure their place in the final. Kieran and Sean proved too strong on the day winning the match 21-15, 21-14. With only three pairs in the girls' event, Lindsay Howie and Nicola Findlay, Mintlaw, Emma Buchanan and Fiona Craigen, Stonehaven, and Kirsty Thomson and Shona Paterson, Stonehaven and Cults, all matches were keenly fought with the decider between Emma & Fiona and Kirsty & Shona, being no exception. Both pairs showed great courage and it was a most entertaining three set match with Emma and Fiona taking the honours 21-19, 20-21, and 21-16.

The U15 and U17 events were both played on day 2 with the U15's taking court first. Given the high standard of entrants in the boys section this was always going to be a keenly contested event. The initial stages saw 6 pools with the winners going through to the play offs, Craig Buchanan, Jamie Duncan, Scott Murray, Douglas Adamson, Danny Malcolm, all Stonehaven and Steven Nicol, Newtonhill, all secured their places. No-one could have predicted the finalists from this group and the playoffs proved this with some very close 3 set matches. Craig Buchanan had a mountain to climb in his semi-final against Scott Murray, after losing the first set 21-18, he managed to compose himself and clinch victory winning the next 2 sets, 21-17 and 21-12. The other semi-final between Danny Malcolm and Steven Nicol, although won in 2 sets, was still fiercely contested, Steven the victor winning 21-10, 22-20. The final was a repeat of the recent secondary schools championship, Buchanan versus Nicol, which once again entertained the spectators with some

fantastic displays of skill and determination, Craig winning in the end, 21-17, 21-17. The girls' event only attracted 4 entries, Alice Carmichael, Nicola Howarth, Rachael McLeod, all Stonehaven and Sharon Ngu, Aberdeen. This event was played in a round robin with Rachael and Sharon playing off for the title. Experience once again won the day with Rachael winning in 2 sets, 21-9, and 21-15. The doubles event for the girls unfortunately consisted of only one match involving the 4 girls from the singles event. Relative new comers to the sport, Alice and Nicola, made a good effort but were outplayed by the combined experience and confidence of Rachael and Sharon who won in 2 straight sets.

The boys section was more competitive with Jamie Duncan and Douglas Adamson, and Steven Nicol and Scott Murray winning through their respective pools to meet in the final. This again was a 3 set epic with Jamie and Douglas securing victory in the third set 21-19. Finally the U17 event kicked off with the singles event. Ryan Clunie, Harry Burness, Michael Westcott and Kevin Adamson all won their pools and met respectively in the semi-finals. Ryan and Kevin won through to meet in the final, Ryan the eventual winner, 21-6, 21-15. The doubles saw the four finalists' team up for the final showdown Ryan and Harry victors over Michael and Kevin in 2 sets. This event showed great skill, passion, determination and stamina at all levels and was a fantastic advert for the sport of badminton in the North East.