

North East Primary Schools Boys Badminton Championships

The boys section of the Aberdeenshire Primary Schools Championship was held at Banchory Academy and Sports Centre on Saturday 1st March 2008. This event attracted a fantastic number of entrants with over 100 boys, from 20 schools within the area taking part. Albyn, Alehousewells, Arduthie, Banchory, Catterline, Crimond, Cults, Dunnottar, Finzean, Laurencekirk, Kellands, Lumphanan, Marketplace, Inverurie, Mill O'Forest, Milltimber, Mintlaw, Newtonhill, Oyne and Peterculter all had representation. The day began with the doubles competition comprising 10 pools of 4 pairs competing for a place in the quarter finals. There was certainly no lack of determination and effort as all the boys gave 100%. The pools were keenly fought but unfortunately the tremendous effort was no match for experience. J. Reynolds & M. Leith (MoF), R. Pavel & J. Donnachie (Milltimber), J. Coutts & A. Fisher (Peterculter), C. Fraser & D. Ritchie (Mintlaw), E. Johnson & L. Robertson (MoF), A. Williamson & C. Ellis (Alehousewells), H. Burr & S. Mair (Mintlaw) and R. Borland & H. Malcolm (MoF) all won through their pools to secure their quarter final place. Reynolds & Leith progressed to meet Coutts & Fisher in the top half of the draw while Johnson & Robertson encountered Burr & Mair in the other semi final. Both matches were entertaining for the many spectators who had stayed to support the boys and encouragement was never lacking. The final saw a showdown between Reynolds & Leith (MoF) and Burr & Mair (Mintlaw), all four boys familiar with each others strengths from previous encounters. The match was once again a pleasure to watch with Jacob Reynolds and Mark Leith eventual winners, taking the title with a 21 – 7 victory. The singles competition was to prove equally as exciting as the doubles with a record 24 pools. All boys were guaranteed at least three games in the singles event and none were disappointed with this. They were all keen to play and were superb ambassadors for their schools. Even those who were unfortunate not to progress through to the second round showed great composure and entertained the spectators to a fantastic display of heart felt determination and passion for the game. Some familiar faces from the morning progressed to the quarter final stage, Jacob Reynolds, Mark Leith, Liam Robertson, Elliot Johnson, all Mill O' Forest, Calum Carmichael (Arduthie), R. Ellis (Alehousewells) and Hamish Burr and Stuart Mair both Mintlaw filling the 8 available spaces. Doubles victors Reynolds & Leith came head to head at this stage with Reynolds taking the honours this time 11 – 7, Carmichael beat Mair 11 – 2, Robertson beat Ellis 11 – 4 and the remaining semi final place was taken by Johnson with an 11 – 6 victory over Burr. Reynolds faced Carmichael in the first semi final, Reynolds winning the tie 11 – 6. The other semi final saw schoolmates Robertson and Johnson on opposing sides, Robertson the victor winning 11 – 3. Both matches displayed great skill, talent and determination and emphasised the quality of coaching being made available to the children on the shire. Best friends Jacob Reynolds and Liam Robertson, both Mill O' Forest would battle it out for the title and a battle it certainly was. With many long, hard fought rallies the scoreline did not truly reflect the effort expended by Liam with Jacob emerging a worthy winner, 21 – 8, picking up his second trophy of the day. The popularity of this event shows how the profile of badminton in the shire has been raised to record heights and the number children taking part is superb. All the quarter finalists have now earned their place in the National Primary Schools Championships to be held at Bells Sports Centre in Perth on Saturday 26th April 2008. Good luck to all. The girls' event will be held at Kemnay Academy on Saturday 15th March 2008 and will undoubtedly be well supported and equally as entertaining as the boys.