

Warwickshire U14 Rising Stars  
Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2010  
Warwick Junior School and St. Nicholas Park Leisure Centre

Three Stonehaven athletes made a much longer trip than usual to compete in the prestigious and well supported Warwickshire Schools' Badminton association's U14 Rising Stars tournament last weekend. Jacob Reynolds and brother's Sean and Mark Leith, all Mackie Academy, made the 900 mile round trip to take part in the event which comprised both singles and doubles events. Since there were over 100 entrants in the boys singles the event was split into 2 categories an A and a B with all 3 local boys competing in the A event while the doubles event attracted over 40 pairs. The singles matches were first and Jacob was most unfortunate to draw 2nd seed, Sean Vandy, in his qualifying group. Vandy however did not live up to his seeding losing his first match to Essex's Reece Higgins. Jacob capitalised on this winning his first match against Dorset's Michael Higbee. Mark shared similar fortunes in his first match with a victory over Kent's Mathew Tobbit. Sean was unlucky to lose his opening game 15 – 12 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> set to Henley's Mathew Widdecombe, victory in his remaining 2 matches however secured him 2<sup>nd</sup> place in his group. Jacobs' remaining 2 matches were both extremely hard games and though he put up a good performance was unable to claim victory in either game. Mark won one and lost his final game to U13 England no.2, Ditlev Holme. All three boys played very well but were unfortunate not to progress from the group stages. After a very long wait the doubles event finally got going, Jacob teamed up with regular partner Robert Clark, Glasgow School of Sport, and Sean and Mark hoped to continue their recent run of success. The group stages proved quite comfortable for both pairs, Jacob and Robert causing upset by disposing of 4<sup>th</sup> seeds, Harrison and Summers in fantastic style, with an incredible 15 – 0 score line in the third set. Disappointingly the group successes for both pairs meant they would come head to head, once again, in the quarter finals. As always an exciting and very entertaining match ensued with impressive badminton from both pairs. Long rallies, deception, cross-court drops and full power smashes were in evidence throughout the match from all four players. The Leith brothers took the first set, Jacob and Robert fought back to win the second so both pairs had it all to play for. The third set didn't fail to entertain, though Sean and Mark took an early lead Jacob and Robert stood firm and fought back. In the end Sean and Mark held out to win the match 15 -12. This then set them up for a shot at 2<sup>nd</sup> seeds, Buckinghamshire's Vandy and Simcock. Sean and Mark showed great composure and stuck to their game plan, Vandy and Simcock however found their stride and pulled away latterly to win the first 15 – 8. Unphased the Leith boys came out fighting in the second game, taking an early lead. They gave a spirited performance but ultimately lost out 15 – 12. These were superb performances from all three boys and continue to raise the profile of the sport of badminton in the area. Badminton development officer, Joan Prieur commented, "These are strong performances against top players earned by hard work. This type of experience forms an important part in the development of our local top players who although competing with the best in Scotland, also seek out the best in Britain to further hone their skills. The support they receive from coaches and families is superb and provides fantastic experiences for all involved."



*Sean and Mark Leith*



*Jacob Reynolds*