

U13, U17 & U23 NATIONALS SATURDAY 12 APRIL 2008

Meadowbank sports stadium was the venue for the U13, U17 and U23 national badminton event on Saturday 12 April, 2008. This is the setting for the countries best to prove themselves and once again the north east have shown that they deserve to be part of it. In the U13 age groups the north east represented almost 20% of the entry with 14 children making the journey south. A further 5 players competed in the U17 age group. The day started with the singles events with eleven out of seventeen making it comfortably through the first round, and 3 of the other six, Kirsty Thomson, Lindsay Howie and Michael Westcott going to the third set. Mark Leith, playing 2 years out of his age group, gave his first round opponent a scare taking 17 and 14 points off of him. Kevin Adamson and Harry Burness had tough first round games and although both put up a good performance they failed to progress. The second round saw the exit of a further 8 players, two of whom, Calum Carmichael and Josh Halliday unfortunately came up against team mates Jacob Reynolds and Sean Leith respectively. Calum Hay, Jacob Reynolds and Sean Leith were still in contention in the third round. Sean and Calum were unlucky to meet the 1st and 2nd seeds at this point but gave a good account of themselves in both matches. Jacob progressed to the quarter finals to meet Jordan Gilvear, 2nd seed whose experience won over a good performance from Jacob. The doubles followed with 11 pairs entered over the two age groups. The U13 event proved were competitive and although all seven pairs played very well none of them progressed further than their first tie. The U17 event was a different story however with two pairs, Danielle Nicoll & Seona Stalker (Edinburgh) and Ryan Clunie & Stuart Sineath (Shetland) causing upset by making it to the quarter finals. Danielle & Seona came up against 4th seeds Fiona Archibald & Emma Gallacher, putting on a brave performance but losing out 21-10, 21-10. Ryan & Stuart met 2nd seeds Michael Campbell & Andrew Gilliland, a match which was a great pleasure for all to watch. Ryan & Stuart won the first set 23-21, putting the seeds under immense pressure. The seeds took the honours in the second set leaving a semi-final place up for grabs to the victors in the third. Regular partners Campbell & Gilliland proved too strong in the end but Ryan and Stuart did not go out without a tremendous effort. The early evening saw the start of the mixed events, the north east entering 3 partnerships in each age group. The U13 event saw two experienced partnerships, Fiona Craigen & Jacob Reynolds and Kirsty Thomson & Sean Leith and one new combination of Lindsay Howie and Scott Duncan. An unfortunate draw saw Fiona & Jacob meet Lindsay & Scott in the first round which again proved to be a spectator's delight. Two very close games 22-20 and 21-19 saw Lindsay and Scott progress to the second round where they met 3rd seeds James Milton & Hannah Morrison who put an end to their run of fortune. Kirsty & Sean were fortunate to receive a bye in the first round and progressed comfortably through the second round with a 21-8, 21-12 victory. This took them through to the quarter finals where they met 4th seeds Lucy Nevin, daughter of Pat Nevin, and Jordan Gilvear. A valiant effort but unfortunately defeated 21-12, 21-12. In the U17 event Ryan Clunie and Kevin Adamson teamed up with Seona Stalker and Victoria Fraser (Kirkliston) respectively, Danielle Nicoll and Harry Burness being the only north east pair. All three pairs were unfortunate with the draw, 2 of them meeting seeded pairs in the first round. The matches were all keenly fought but none of the results favoured the north east. This was a tremendous event and the north east contingent is certainly making a marked impression on the sport at this high level. Thanks and praise must go to the coaches and parents who teach and support the children through squads and entry into such events. The players were as follows, **U13 girls – Emma Buchanan, Fiona Craigen, Kirsty Thomson all Stonehaven and Lindsay Howie – Mintlaw. U13 boys – Mark Leith, Calum Carmichael, Jacob Reynolds, Sean Leith, Calum Hay, Jake McKay, Josh Halliday, Kieran Johnson, Scott Duncan all Stonehaven, and Sean Dalton – Cults. U17 girls – Danielle Nicoll, Newtonhill. U17 boys – Kevin Adamson, Stonehaven, Michael Westcott, Aberdeen and Harry Burness and Ryan Clunie both Westhill.**