

NEWSLETTER

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June 2000

Herts County Squad Trials

Trials for U13 County Squad and Development Training Programme

2000/2001 Season

Players with year of birth **1988 or 1989 or later**

Wednesday, 13 September 2000 at Parmiters Sports Centre, Garston (near the Crematorium).

The trials will start at **6 pm**. Please be there by 5.45 pm to register.
Preliminary selection will be made by 7.15 pm so some players will leave then. Final decisions on the rest of the players will be announced at 8.15 pm on the Balcony.

Anyone hoping to get into this County Squad or the Development Training programme MUST attend these trials.

Any problems - contact Duncan or Marion Conway 01707 652061

Trials for U14/U15 (years of birth 1987/1986) and U16/U17 (years of birth 1985/1984)

These trials will take place on **Sunday, 17th September** at **Gosling Sports Park, Welwyn Garden City.**

Time: 2.00 pm - 6.00 pm (Registration from 1.45 pm)

Any queries for U14/U15 to John Smith - Tel: 01442 240974

Any queries for U16/U17 to Tony Clarke - Tel: 01992 586727

Affiliation

To all schools and clubs - its time to affiliate again so enclosed with this newsletter is a form for affiliation to HSBA for the 2000/2001 season.

ESBA Wimbledon Invitation U16 Tournament

Pat Walker

The ESBA Wimbledon Invitation U16 International team event and tournament was held on Friday 5th May to Sunday 7th at Wimbledon Squash and Badminton Club with Hertfordshire well represented this year.

In the International Team Event on the Friday, Nikki Walker was one of 4 girls and 4 boys selected by ESBA to play teams from Denmark, Finland, Belgium and the Netherlands. When the Russian team confirmed they were taking part, the 'Wimbledon Select' team was then invited to complete the tournament. This team included Sam Alexander, Rachel Howard, Richard Comras and Phil Hammond.

The final result for this event was:

1. Denmark
2. Netherlands (Amsterdam)
3. Russia
4. England
5. Netherlands (Rotterdam)
6. Belgium
7. Wimbledon Select
8. Finland

The individual tournament on the Saturday also included Kath Mulligan. With such strong opposition from abroad, the best results for Herts were Nikki and Laura Gooding (Sussex) winning one round of the girls doubles, while Nikki with Stephen Mumby (Lincs) and Rachel and Phil managed to win one round each in the mixed. It was left to Simon Hardcastle (Essex) to represent England in 2 finals - the singles and the doubles with Andy Smith (Hants). Stephen Mumby reached 2 semi-finals - the singles and the doubles partnering Tom Dudley (Dorset).

It was a well organised and thoroughly enjoyable event and an excellent opportunity to see the young players from other countries in action so close to home.

End of Season U12 Open Tournament

Marion Conway

These events are always interesting as they give a taster for the season to come. It was good to see that all the players who have already had at least one season in the Squad took part and acquitted themselves well. In addition Gregg Roantree, Chris Reynolds and Kate Lester made a promising start with some good performances.

In the Tournament at Bracknell a number of our players entered and produced some good results against tough opposition, but only Katie Comras, who is still a year young, really excelled, reaching the Quarter Finals in the Singles. Well done, Katie!

The Rising Stars Tournament at Warwick is supported by players from all over the country. It also attracted a number of our players and again there were some good results against tough opposition. Congratulations to Ben de la Fuente and Frankie Edelman who both won their boxes in the Singles. Also to Katie Wilson who only lost her box by one point! However the best result went to Frankie Edelman who went on to get a Bronze medal in the Singles. In the Girls Doubles Herts did even better as Frankie, playing with Laura Cousins, and the partnership of Jess and Katie Wilson all got Bronze medals for reaching the semi-finals. Very well done all of you. A very good start for the Herts girls.

The final Team Event was the Essex U12 County Event in which only 5 counties took part due to the last minute withdrawal of Yorkshire! As Herts had a late start a lively impromptu rounders match was organised (many thanks to the parents). Unfortunately Victoria Stokes was too enthusiastic and injured her arm so we were one player down before we even started the badminton! However, in general, everyone played well and some played extra well so we beat Essex 9-1, Middlesex 7-3 and only lost to Surrey 4-6. All the players worked well as a team so we hope for good results in the year to come.

From the A.G.M.

U17 Squad - Tony Clarke, Manager

The U17 Squad has enjoyed another successful year. We have played seven County matches, including two 'B' fixtures against Middlesex and Suffolk, matches against Bucks and Warwicks and three very successful quadrangular matches in preparation for the Inter-Counties tournament. At U17 Nikki Walker, Kath Mulligan, Richard Comras and Phil Hammond have all won events whilst still U16. It was pleasing to see Gary England playing tournaments after his injury last year, reaching the semi-final of the U16 Rising Stars doubles with Gareth John. Congratulations to Nikki Walker for her International selection. My thanks to all the players who have made it a very enjoyable season and to all the parents who have helped during the season.

U15 Squad - John Smith, Manager

This year's squad consisted of 30 players. There was a huge range in standard from international to almost beginner level. (It is worth pointing out to teachers and coaches that we really want to see your players at County Trials. Please don't be put off by the high standard of our stars. There is room for lesser mortals too). The season was a mixed success, the highlight was reaching the National Finals of the U15 Team Challenge for the third year in succession, where we were edged out of the medals by a small but significant points difference. There were 34 encounters with teams from other counties, some these were in team tournaments, some in straight matches. The outcome was 19 wins, 15 losses. Congratulations to Sam Alexander and Rachel Howard on their selection to play for England. Thank you to everyone who has supported the U15 squad this year, and special thanks to Ken Winchester for his enthusiastic assistance on squad nights.

U13 Squad - Duncan Conway, Manager

The U13 Squad nearly achieved a 50/50 balance between boys and girls. The season has been very successful in many ways, indeed our results this year have been much better than the last couple of seasons, starting with Emma Stokes and Nicola Farr winning the Leicester Invitation Doubles, our best result since the days of Peter Gooden and Kieran Gilbert (for those of you with long memories!) During the season we played 23 county matches and won 19 of them. It was possible to offer every player in the squad at least two matches during the season and eight members had the opportunity to play in the Leinster Open in Dublin.

Development Training Squad - Hazel Levins

We have 23 players on our register with excellent attendance records. Each player shows great potential and enthusiasm for the game. Are the Junior Badminton Clubs in Herts aware of the Development Squad so that they can send their best players to be assessed? We hope to be able to hire the courts and continue after the U13 trials in September.

Treasurer's Report - Malcolm Lumb

In spite of some increases in the cost of courts, a modest surplus has been achieved. The Open Tournament, now run as an ESBA event, gave us a net gain of £820 removing any concerns we might have had about incurring a loss. At the request of HBA we provided a subsidy of £400 to the Herts Development Officer for Badminton, Vicky Read. Affiliations by schools was down slightly on last year. A discount for those affiliating before 1st August will be continued.

Andrew Cracknell has resigned as Chairman and from the committee due to pressure of work. Ken Winchester was appointed Chairman and Chris Culshaw and Malcolm Lumb remain as Secretary and Treasurer. A vote of thanks was given to Andrew, in his absence, for all the work he has done for HSBA.

There was no representation from the schools and very few parents turned up for the AGM, therefore the committee assumes that the majority of parents are happy with the way junior badminton is being run in the county.

I.C.T. 2000

Tony Clarke (U17 Team Manager)

On Monday, 17th April, the Herts U17 team of Richard Comras, Gary England, Phil Hammond, Jack Lipyeat, Chris Scott, Sam Alexander, Rachel Howard, Kath Mulligan, Jenny Tye and Nikki Walker, together with the manager and Pat Walker, left Birchwood Sports Centre at 8.45 am to compete in the Inter Counties Tournament at Nottingham University over four days before Easter.

The draw for the tournament was tough. We were seeded 7th which, after our performance at R.I.O. where we finished 3rd, seemed a bit harsh. We were one of only two seeds in groups of five, which meant we had to play Lincolnshire, Cheshire, Norfolk and Gloucestershire all on the first day, starting at 1.00 pm and finishing at 10.30 pm. A very demanding programme. After a break at Leicester Forest on the M1, we arrived in plenty of time for the first match.

We beat Lincs, Cheshire and Norfolk 8-1, 9-1, 9-1 respectively before playing Glos very late on Monday night. If we win, we play No.2 seeds Essex - if we lose we play No.3 seeds Surrey. We just lost 4-6 in a close match, which meant we were in a group with Surrey, Nottinghamshire (who had unexpectedly beaten the No.6 seeds Leinster) and Warwickshire. Next morning was our most important match of the tournament against Surrey at Chilwell. We had to take the mini-bus for the match at 10.45 am. We left the Hall of Residence in good spirits as we had beaten Surrey only three weeks ago in a quadrangular match, only to find the mini-bus had a flat battery. We eventually found some transport and arrived, hot and flustered, just in time to play - not the best preparation.

We lost the match 4-6, and with it any chance of a medal. The team would have played better, and so with hindsight could the manager's selection have been better, and all on top of the mini-bus problems, it just wasn't our day! We now had to play Notts immediately after the Surrey match, no time to think or motivate the team. Notts played well on their home ground beating us 7-3 and gaining revenge for their defeat at R.I.O. - definitely, positively not our day!! The best we could do now was finish 9th, which meant winning all the remaining matches. We won our final match in the group 8-2 against Warwicks to play off for 9th - 12th place against Hampshire, Middlesex and Glos (again!!)

We beat Hampshire and Middlesex both 9-1 with some superb performances in all disciplines - singles, doubles and mixed - before all the team put on their glad rags for the disco. Our final match on the last day was a repeat of our first round match against Glos. This time we will show them who's the best! We won, but only just on points in a 5-5 draw to finish 9th out of the 34 competing counties. We finished with a win which was great, but I think everyone, team and manager alike, realised we could have finished higher. To put it into perspective though, we still finished in the top 10 for the seventh year in a row, a feat only equalled by Yorkshire, the eventual winners, who beat Essex in the final with Surrey 3rd and Leicestershire 4th.

Essex U14 Tournament

Michael Comras

Boys 'B' Singles - Two boxes, initially of six players each, meant that the qualifying round was a test of stamina as well as playing skills. Box A was down to five after a withdrawal but was dominated by Herts players Oliver Brown and Joe Webb. Joe smashed his way through the opposition and won the box with only Oliver getting more than two points against him. Oliver put up an equally determined performance keeping the opposition scores low and going through as runner-up. The Herts double left players from Essex and Yorkshire out of the tournament.

There were strong contenders in box B from Essex and Yorkshire but the first game pitched Chris Armstrong and Matthew Comras against each other. In an even and well contested game, Matthew eventually won 15-13. Chris had a very close game with Richard Simpson (Yorks) but was pipped 15-14. After trailing badly against David Hardman (Essex), Matthew fought back to 11-11 but could not maintain the momentum and lost 12-15. In the final game he had to beat Richard Simpson to see which of them went through as runner-up to David Hardman. With concentration and sensible play Matthew powered through 15-3.

With Herts players filling three of the four semi-final slots, we were guaranteed at least one player in the final. David Hardman turned in an impressive display to beat Oliver 15-4. In the other semi-final Joe and Matthew had a desperately close game. Each had match points before Matthew won 17-16.

In the final Matthew got off to a good start. His consistent serving and length on his clears gave him an initial advantage. However, David fought back putting Matthew under pressure forcing errors. This gave him a 13-10 lead before Matthew took the initiative, regained his consistency and with determination won 15-13 for his first tournament victory.

Final positions for Herts - three out of the top four!!

Boys doubles - no great victories or medals here but an astonishing performance by the boys against players including under 15 intermediate and premier players. Chris Armstrong/Joe Webb had a very tough box. They won a game but had to meet Matthew Bates (Berks)/Chris Wright (Bucks) who were the eventual winners.

In a larger box of five, Oliver Brown/Matthew Comras stood an outside chance of going through as runners-up. They played well to beat pairs from Essex and Yorkshire (all main event singles players - one a quarter finalist) and allowed a Norfolk pairing only 4 points. Having qualified as runners-up they played good doubles to rattle the pairing of Robert Adcock/Edward Foster but the premier pair won the game. Oliver/Matthew met Box B winners Sam Butcher (Norfolk)/Joss Cole (Yorks) in the quarter final. In an astonishing display of doubles, the Herts pair defended brilliantly and took their chances to change ends ahead at 11-8. Their serving and movement was excellent as well. The game then see-sawed at an even quicker pace - there was a real game of boys doubles with good smashing from both sides and more great defence from Oliver/ Matthew. Eventually the greater experience of the Norfolk/Yorkshire pairing had them edging ahead and winning 21-15. A great game enjoyed by all spectators and also by the players.

The final was between Robert Adcock/Edward Foster and Matthew Bate/Chris Wright with Bate/Wright winning 21-18.

Tournament Results

Essex U14

<u>Boys 'B' Singles:</u>	Semi-final:	Matthew Comras beat Joe Webb 17-16
	Final:	Oliver Brown lost to David Hardman (Essex) 4-15
		Matthew Comras beat David Hardman 15-13
<u>Boys Doubles:</u>	Quarter final:	Oliver Brown/Matthew Comras lost to Sam Butcher (Norfolk)/Joss Cole (Yorks) 15-21

Berkshire U12

Girls Singles: Quarter final: **Katie Comras** lost to Michelle Cheung (Bu) 4-15

Warwickshire (Rising Stars) U12

Girls Singles: Semi-final: **Frankie Edelmann** lost to Vicki Ingram (Staffs)

Girls Doubles: Semi- final: **Jessica Wilson/Katie Wilson** lost to Becky Laffan/
Kirsten Read (Sx)
Laura Cousins/Frankie Edelmann lost to Mariana
Agathangelou/Elena Palasmith (Jy)

From the Editor: Thanks to all those who wrote during the year, particularly the players who do sometimes get press-ganged into writing articles. Thanks too to the faithful few who sent in results during the season. I hope you all have a good summer holiday and that you will be ready to start playing badminton again in September. Closing date for items for the next newsletter is **Thursday, 24th August.**

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