

June 2009

FURTHER H.S.B.A. COUNTY TRIALS for U11 / U13 Squads

U11 - players born in **1999 and later** - **Wednesday, September 9**

Time: **5.30 - 7.30 pm** at the Herts Sports Village.

U13 - players born in **1997/1998** - **Wednesday, September 23**

Time: **6 - 8 pm** at the Herts Sports Village.

Please be there to sign in 15 minutes beforehand.

U11 Contact: Sangeeta Dhall 01462 684804

e-mail: sangeeta.d@ntlworld.com

U13 Contact: Graham Hall 07939 105478 (outside office hours only)

e-mail: graham.hall@talk21.com

OR Marion Conway 01707 652061

e-mail: mconway2@sky.com

From the AGM

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2008/9

Ken Winchester

It is again an enormous pleasure to report that your Association has performed to its usual high standard.

The credit for these achievements rests once more with skilled Squad Managers and Assistants, along with the invaluable help and support of Committee members and other volunteers. We are also indebted to many others who work tirelessly around the county to promote and encourage junior badminton.

In his inaugural year, our financial assets have been expertly looked after by Ash Kejriwal and, on your behalf, I would like to express our great appreciation for his care and attention. I would also like to thank Doug Stokoe for kindly agreeing to perform an audit of the accounts for the current season.

This year we were delighted and relieved to witness the recovery of Joan Walters from a life threatening illness. In the period of her enforced hospitalisation, we remain extremely grateful to Angela Blowers and Russell Walters, who successfully ran the Open Tournament upon which so much of our finance depends. Angela also continues to perform many praiseworthy duties in the background which greatly bolster our organisation.

The essential secretarial work upon which your Association also depends has again been admirably performed by Mary Wikner and Kevin Maughan, who deserve grateful recognition for their invaluable care, time and attention to detail. Kevin also inhabits cyberspace as our Webmaster lending wider breadth to our many activities.

In a similar vein, Megan Lumb continues to beaver away for us over a hot Apple Mac to produce a comprehensive gazette that chronicles the stories behind the results. I would also like to offer my personal thanks for the many roles she so selflessly enacts for the Association behind the scenes.

The Association is also indebted to Roz Hodgkinson who has now relinquished her strategic role in arranging our closed tournaments. Thanks are also in order to Graham Hall for taking over this important duty at short notice with vital help from Barbara Lewczynska. Barbara also continues to fulfil an important role as our Child Welfare Officer.

In a capacity which could be compared to the difficulty of landing a jumbo jet on thin ice, Phil Westwood is fully deserving of great praise for his unstinting work as Fixtures Secretary.

I would also like to pay tribute to the trinity of Malcolm Jellows, Dave Bartlett and Malcolm Fraser, who each make so many valuable contributions to this Association.

As a County Schools Association, I also wish to thank the many members of the teaching profession who, in spite of their own pressurized environment, continue to support our activities.

Having been closely associated with county badminton for over a quarter of a century, we are now sadly losing the services of Duncan Conway. It is extremely difficult to adequately sum up the extent of Duncan's considerable contribution to Hertfordshire which has resulted in so many notable successes at national level. On behalf of very many people around the county and beyond, may I convey to him your very best wishes for the future.

Following in Duncan's footsteps, we now warmly welcome Graham Hall as U13 Squad Manager, who will continue to be adroitly abetted by Marion Conway.

This is also the right time and place to point out that your Association can only exist through the enormous good will and support of parents/carers. Any decisions taken by the Committee will only be enacted in the best interests of all players and are tied to the future well being of the Association. Each member of the Committee is ever mindful of the trust that you place in us as unremunerated volunteers. Should we ever fail to live up to the high standards which we set ourselves, we are only too aware that this Association would be jeopardizing the successful future that we have all worked so hard to obtain. In conclusion, may I simply add that your ongoing assistance and support during the coming season will continue to be enormously appreciated and, in return, reciprocated through the hard work of everybody associated with junior badminton in the county.

Under 13 Squad

Duncan Conway (Manager)

The trials were held on the first Wednesday of the summer term and the squad had 28 players. The practices were taken for the season by recently retired England international, Natalie Munt. The players appreciated her coaching and her mobility and speed set them an excellent example. The team worked well throughout the season, prioritising county matches and planning tournament entries and other commitments around these. Our thanks to the parents for their cooperation.

In the Team Challenge competition Regional Round we dominated the Region, beating every other county comfortably to take us through to the finals which were moved to HSV from Luton. We went through the day unbeaten to reach the top group. Unfortunately Ulster had to withdraw early which set up a Herts v Yorkshire final in which Yorkshire proved too strong and we were runners-up.

We also reached the Shires League final unbeaten. Having won the first game, we drew with Derbyshire in the semi-final, winning on points only to lose to Yorkshire yet again in the final.

Congratulations to all the players for excellent results and for all their hard work.

Unfortunately, my health does not allow me to continue, so I am standing down as U13 Manager.

U15 Squad

Hitesh Shah (Manager)

At the trials in June, 31 players were selected, 4 of which came on alternate weeks. A few top players were given the opportunity to train with the U17 squad. John Stobo was instrumental for the squad as he motivated the players to perform at their best. He also took some players to a Junior Tournament in Biarritz.

Many players participated in BE tournaments and did very well within their own grading.

In the Team Challenge competition, we beat all the counties in our group and came 8th overall in the final. We came fourth in the region in the Shires League, and I would like to thank all those who played in the Shires League matches.

I would like to thank Phil Westwood for arranging some friendly matches. We lost one, won one and the third was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.

We won the Eastern Region U14 tournament. In the Eastern Regions Single Sex tournament, the boys team came 5th, the girls 'A' team took silver and the girls 'B' team was 8th.

Conor Bamford was named 'Most improved player of the year' and presented with a shield.

I would like to thank all the parents who supported their children chauffeuring them to training, matches and tournaments; and also our Parent Rep Mandy English, who with Nicky Bambrick, arranged a ten pin bowling session at Christmas for all the squads - enjoyed by all.

Thanks to all the players and squad members who have worked very hard to learn and achieve good results and especially to Dan Hatt, Howard Stobo, Mark Sadler, Dale Maddox, Conor Bambrick, Nick Barnett, Gareth Lumb, Alex English, Georgia Pittson, Hannah McLaren, Kirsty Southey, Jessie Northen, Kate Sellars and Pui Yi Tam for their tremendous support for HSBA.

The season went very quickly, we achieved very good results but we can still do better. I thoroughly enjoyed teaching and mentoring and I would like to thank John Stobo and Ken Winchester for all their help on squad nights.

U17 Squad

Pat Walker (Assistant Manager)

The trials for the 2008/2009 season were held in May 2008. The squad nights were well attended all season, with the usual fluctuations around school exam time.

In the Eastern Region Single Sex tournament the girls finished 6th, the boys 'A' team came 4th and the boys 'B' team were 8th.

We played 4 friendly matches, winning one and losing 3.

In the Shires League we won all games but the one against Bucks and finished as group winner. Due to an injury to one of the girls in the first game of the final, Herts had to concede some games and finished in 8th place.

In the RIO tournament in York the team finished in 3rd place and in the ICT in April we finished 5th out of 40 teams - an excellent result.

HSBA Closed Tournaments

Barbara Lewczynska

Twenty nine events during the season have shown an increase in numbers on previous years, particularly in the 'B' tournaments.

The Primary Schools Tournament still relies on a few of our 'old faithful' schools to provide teams and more work needs to be done on encouraging others.

A huge thank you to Roz Hodgkinson who has done a fantastic job in the last couple of years in organising the events and left a very smooth running procedure for Graham Hall to inherit. Also we have a fantastic band of helpers and support who we simply could not do without - Sangeeta Dhall, Alison Widdicombe, Nicky and Neil Bambrick (plus Conor and Cayleigh), Liz Hatt, Sanjay Shah, Ash Kejriwal, Megan and Malcolm Lumb and loads of other people who I apologise to now for not mentioning.

Inter Counties Tournament 2009

Pat Walker (U17 Assistant Team Manager)

The Year of the Drum

Thursday, April 16 until Sunday, April 19 at Nottingham University. Another 4 days of intense badminton for the U17 ICT team and another run of sleepless nights for Tony deciding how to counteract the opposition's strengths in the matches ahead.

Our captains were Scott Williams and Laura Bygrave and every member of the team had a role to play to help in the smooth running of the whole adventure.

'Clothing' was given to Elliott Miles who got off to a good start with the team turned out in almost matching shirts for the first few matches. But when the rest of the team could not co-ordinate with Elliott's individual taste in colours the captains had to complete the task. As for ensuring each player started and left with a tracksuit, that went sadly wrong as Helena went home with 2 and Ryan with none.

The much appreciated 'water bottles' task was carried out by Ying Yi Tee and Alex English who made sure that each player had a drink during their time on court. I'm sure the other team members didn't really mean to take advantage!

Helena Lewczynska was 'cheerleader' which gave her the opportunity to make lots of noise in support of any Herts player on court. She was assisted by all the Herts players, management and parents and, of course, the drum.

Our 'reporter' was Ryan McCarthy who, after a shaky start on the first day, warmed to the task and kept us entertained at supertime with a report on the days activities including the gossip.

'Time keeper' was always going to be a challenging task for Andrei Donko. He tried hard and almost succeeded in getting the players to be in the right place at the right time. However, things seemed to flow better when Scott and Laura were there to give Andrei a helping hand.

Matt McCloskey and Emily Westwood were our 'scorers' who ensured a player was always available to score each game. This was a job well done, particularly by Emily who displayed her great skills at delegating.

At supertime captains Scott and Laura announced their Player of the Day. On Thursday this title went to Alex; on Friday it was Ryan; on Saturday Andrei and on Sunday the title went to Helena. Their Player of the Tournament went to Emily, who was awarded the Burger King Crown. Our thanks go to Scott for organising the hoodies. We must also congratulate Scott for being the only male member of the team not to pay a visit to Tracy the Physio during the 4 days.

Our thanks go to Hitesh for his coaching, his drumbeat for the team warm up and his vocal support. We all hope your voice has made a full recovery! And many, many thanks to Bob the Driver (can he drive it? Yes he can) and the Habs minibus. We enjoyed our tour of Nottingham on the way there, until Hitesh got control of the sat-nav. And there's a roundabout just outside the university entrance that we got to know quite well!

And Tony the Tiger? He's a pussy cat really.

There were 40 counties taking part in this year's ICT and Herts were seeded 6th. On the first day we played 3 matches beating Devon 10-0, Durham 9-1 and Sussex 9-1. This meant we were now playing for a place in the top 20. On Friday the team had a good start beating Glos 8-2. Then a very exciting match against Ulster ending in a 5-5 draw, with Herts winning on games 13-11. Our 3rd match that day was a win over Warwicks 6-4. On Saturday morning came our first defeat of the tournament losing 4-6 to Notts. We were now in a group playing for final positions 5 to 8. On Saturday afternoon Herts beat Avon 6-4 and Essex 6-4 and then it was time for the disco.

So it was now the last day, Sunday morning, and with the excitement of Saturday evening's disco, which somehow included Ryan and a table, now all in the past, the team were ready bright and early for their last match. It was decision time and I have to thank Phil Westwood for the following description of that final morning.

Going into the final match Avon, Cheshire and Herts would occupy 5th, 6th and 7th places, but the order was wide open. Herts were in the driving seat having beaten both Avon and Essex, but defeat by Cheshire would see us 7th. And it was a bad start. Cheshire out-guessed us, not fielding the team as we had thought. They had also taken a liberty with the seeding in their boys pairs, but as Tony had done something similar on several occasions we couldn't really complain. Helena and Emily duly picked-up both girls singles and - with Laura (another gamble) and Ying respectively - both doubles. Four bankers; but where was the fifth win to come from?

Ryan and Alex at 2nd Mixed had been the aim, and they had so nearly got it, losing by just 3 points in the third end. No shame on them. So 2 down - then 2-all with the girls singles, then 2-4 after the boys singles; Ryan had faced Matt Nottingham which wasn't in the plan. Another chance gone.

The girls doubles pulled it back to 4-4, but two pretty strong boys pairs now stood in the way of 'our' fifth place. And we had already played our 'Joker'; Ryan was now a spectator. Matt and Scott did their best but

George Li and Adam Dolman at No 2 were too strong, probably stronger than the first pair. But was this an outside chance for Andrei and Elliott at No.1? It didn't look like it, when they lost the first end, and their previous games together had not inspired confidence. Herts were 4-5 down, 1 game down, and on the edge.

But from somewhere Andrei and Elliott raised their game and took the second, only to fall behind in the third, and once again all seemed lost. Yet the cauldron of pressure that is the final day at ICT finally told. In sight of the post, Cheshire's less experienced player went to pieces and conceded five points in a row, and victory and fifth place overall to Herts ... just! At 5-matches all, 11-games all, and 271 points to 256, Herts had stolen it by just 15 points. And that was the thing with this team. Over the four days everyone had at least one 'unlikely' win that contributed to a victory for the team.

I have been there when stronger teams have done better, but they were expected to do better. In this one everyone raised their game and bearing in mind the uncertainty and near chaos in the preceding weeks (at one point we had only three girls committed to go) the team surpassed expectations and made it one of the most enjoyable I've been to.

A week earlier the team had faced unexpected calamity at the Shires League Final, dashing their hopes. But there had been no moans, no self-pity, they had risen to the challenge, and taken more games than their opponents in all three matches, losing only by walk-overs conceded due to injury. They came last but still did not dwell on it. They went home happy in the knowledge that they were much better. And at ICT they were rewarded, twice coming back from the dead to claim a well-deserved 5th place. Truly treating 'those two imposters just the same.'

Thanks to Phil for his input. And well done to each and every member of the Herts team who worked so hard.

You well deserved the 5th place medals and the ESBA trophy, even though the organisers forgot to present it to us at the ceremony! The top 4 places in the whole ICT event went to: 1 - Surrey, 2 - Yorks, 3 - Hants, 4 - Notts, with Yorkshire finally knocked from the top position which they have occupied for the last 10 years.

U17 News Round-up

Team Results

Herts lost to Northants 3-17. Team was Alex English, Heather Myers, Bethan Griffith, Pui Yi Tam, Sahil Shah, Andrew Maughan, Chris Belfield and Joe Tam

Eastern Region Single Sex Tournament

Girls team -Alex English / Kate Sellars - 6th out of 7 Boys A team - Tom Dion-Fehily / Iain Robinson - 4th out of 12 Boys B team - Chris Belfield / Alex Lee / Joe Tam - 8th out of 12

Shires League Final - Herts finished 8th. Team was Ryan McCarthy, Andrei Donko, Elliott Miles, Scott Williams, Emily Westwood, Isabelle Sadler, Laura Bygrave and Ying Yi Tee

ICT - Herts came 5th out of 40

Individual Results

Congratulations to Helena Lewczynska who was awarded the HBA Player of the Year

Hants U16 - Tom Dion-Fehily and Dale Maddox reached the doubles quarter finals

Leinster U17 - Tom Dion-Fehily reached the finals in both the singles and the mixed doubles

Notts Challenger - Helena Lewczynska reached the quarter finals of the singles and mixed doubles

U17 Six Nations (International in Denmark) - Emily Westwood and Helena Lewczynska played in the England team which won the team bronze. In the individual event Helena reached the quarter final of the mixed doubles

U17 Nationals - Emily Westwood reached the semi finals in the singles and the doubles, and the quarter finals in the mixed

U18 Wycombe - Emily Westwood reached the finals in the singles and the doubles

Center Parks National Schools Championships

Chancellor's Year 9 girls - Georgia Pittson, Olivia van der Maat, Chloe Bungey and Jessie Northen - having reached the finals of the Center Parks National School Championships, had a certain amount of bad luck on the day. During the first match, Georgia managed to sprain her ankle and could not play any more singles. As a result of this, things did not go according to plan and the team finished in 6th position.

Herts Youth Games Badminton Tournament

Barbara Lewczynska

Once again this superb event went off without a hitch. Squashed in between the noisy basketballers in Hall 2 (although the Welwyn/Hatfield contingent made a very good attempt to complete with them in the 'noisiest supporters' stakes) and the very quiet Boccia in the Cricket Hall, the competition ran from 9.30 to 4.30, with 8 district teams playing each other, in timed matches. Each district played boys and girls singles and doubles and one mixed doubles, with the 'big brother' computer giving instructions.

Each of the district team managers had done a superb job of preparing their teams, and all of the children behaved impeccably. It was a real joy to be involved.

The final results were:

1st	-	North Herts
2nd	-	Hertsmere
3rd	-	Three Rivers
4th	-	Watford
5th	-	Welwyn Hatfield
6th	-	East Herts
7th	-	St Albans
8th	-	Dacorum

The results for each district for each of the sports (and there were loads!!!!) are added together from the weekend and the overall winner announced. This year Dacorum won the combined competition, and also the fair play award.

Well done to all the team managers who were Carol Gahan (Dacorum), Doug Clarke and Dick Large (East Herts), Diane Rogers (Hertsmere), Robert Tucker (North Herts), Liz Bateman (St Albans), Frances Morrison (Three Rivers), Jay Marshall (Watford) and last but not least mother and daughter combo Angela and Rhian Blowers (Welwyn Hatfield).

My thanks also to the following who helped so much during the day - Gill Bartlett on the 'Big Brother' computer, Dave Bartlett for scoring and setting up, Bob Green for giving us the computer programme, Pui Yi Tam, Doug Furze, Caroline Jennings, Brian Jackson, Tom Burton and all the other people who stepped in and were happy to score. It was a great day!!!!

U13 Shires League Finals

Graham Hall

Hertfordshire U13's second finals of the year - and more medals were won ...

The U13 Shires League Finals were again held in Leicester this year. Hertfordshire had qualified unbeaten in Group D, with 20-0 victories against 4 of the 7 opponents. The top 2 teams from each group qualify for finals day, so the competitors were: Lancashire, Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Essex, Sussex, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire.

Having looked into the three possible first round opponents beforehand, I knew there would be no easy matches, but there were two counties I'd prefer to avoid ...

The organiser randomly chose a player to make the draw - our very own Philippa English - who promptly picked exactly the right letter out of the bag. Herts would play Lancashire in the first match, which was the draw I had hoped for.

Whilst the Lancashire match started with some highly controversial line calls in the first game for our top mixed pair, Matthew Widdicombe/Isabel Hatt, the match was played in good spirits and Herts were quickly in the driving seat - eventually running out winners 17 games to 3 - settling everyone very nicely and dispelling some of the nerves of those who were playing at this level for the first time.

In the next round, Herts drew Derbyshire. This was a re-match from the Team Challenge finals a couple of weeks previously, where Herts had won with little difficulty. However, with a completely different format, this match was much closer. Herts were leading 3-1 after the mixed doubles, but failed to extend the lead in the singles, winning 4 and losing 4. Derbyshire then won 5 of the 8 level doubles to put the final score at 10-10. However, as Herts had competed to the death and reached double figures even in the games they lost, a significant points advantage gave the team a place in their second final of the season.

As in the Team Challenge, the opponents were Yorkshire who, like Hertfordshire, had won every match on their way to the final.

The first round of mixed games were intense, but Yorkshire took 3 of the 4 in the end - Lyall Daniels/Anna Collis grabbed Hertfordshire's only win with some style.

In the singles the matches were again close - notably in the girls, with Anna Collis's hard fought 15-21 defeat to England's No 1 Natalie Chan-Lam, very narrow defeats for both Isabel Hatt and Philippa English and a 21-20 victory for the impressively determined Cayleigh Bambrick.

Yorkshire boys were proving too strong for us however, although there was a highlight when David Maughan/Matthew Widdicombe ground out a 21-20 win in their last match of the season. In the girls doubles there was a win for each pairing - Anna Collis/Renu Dhall-Chopra and Isabel Hatt/ Cayleigh Bambrick.

Eventually, however, Yorkshire had again won deservedly by a scoreline of 15-5.

Hertfordshire U13 team can be proud of giving Yorkshire their toughest match of the season, and taking more games off them than any other county. More importantly they can be proud of developing their skills throughout the season, playing sportingly and consistently well, fighting hard all day, and working as a real team, supporting their team-mates both on and off court. As long as these attitudes continue, the team will continue to achieve great results in the future.

The Hertfordshire 2009 Shires League U13 Silver Medallists are: Cayleigh Bambrick, Anna Collis Renu Dhall-Chopra, Philippa English, Isabel Hatt, Lyall Daniels, David Maughan, William Pickworth and Matthew Widdicombe.

A special mention for James Sweetnam who, having improved rapidly through the season, missed out on playing in the final after breaking his leg on holiday the previous week. The team missed him. William Pickworth (like Isabel and Renu), still only U12, stepped in as an excellent substitute, winning a number of important games on the day and gaining valuable experience for next season.

Fantastic support, as usual. from airhorns, whistles, bugles, shuttle tubes, Mums, Dads and others - many thanks from the team and the coaches.

Tournament Results

U13 Oxfordshire Open

Girls Singles Final **Anna Collis** beat Lydia Powell (Sx) 25-7

Girls Doubles Final **Anna Collis**/Lydia Powell beat Melissa Stride (Ha)/
Kathryn Saywell (So) 25-16

U13 Tunbridge Wells Open

Girls Singles Final **Anna Collis** beat Stephanie Tillman (Ke) 15-10, 15-9

Girls Doubles Final **Anna Collis**/Lydia Powell (Sx) beat Stephanie Tillman /
Paige Butler (Ke) 21-8

U13 National Championships

Girls Doubles Quarter final **Anna Collis**/Lydia Powell (Sx) lost to Kelly Miller (Yo)/
Emily Witts (Nm) 21-23, 21-15, 16-21

U14 Essex

Girls 'A' Singles Final **Anna Collis** lost to Victoria Williams (Ha) 10-15, 15-11,
11-15

U14 Kent

Girls Singles Final **Anna Collis** beat Jessica Bennett (Sx) 15-11, 18-16

Girl Doubles Final **Anna Collis**/Lydia Powell (Sx) lost to Rebecca Terry
(Ex)/ Sarah Stannett (Ha) 15-17, 15-12, 3-15

U13 Mazovia Wilson Junior Cup - Poland

Girls Singles Final **Anna Collis** beat Magda Koniezzna (Pol) 21-15, 22-24,
21-18

In the Girls Doubles **Anna Collis**, playing with Anna Debska (Pol) beat a pair from Lithuania in two games

From the Editor: Thanks to Graham Hall, Pat Walker and Barbara Lewczynska for their contributions. A big thank you too to Christine Collis for sending in Anna's tournament results. Maybe next time???!!!

I hope everyone has a good summer break and you will all be back fresh and ready to play again in September.

Closing date for items for the next newsletter is Monday, August 31.

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