

Blackler Edges To Title, Johnson Clean Sweep

August 4 saw the final night of competition for the school grade players with the girls and boys singles championships decided.

The boy's title race was opened up with the absence of several of the top seeded players and this created some very competitive pool play. The winners of each pool were Josh Rooney, Andrew Coyle, Tom McCann, Hayden Blackler, Henry Race and Brooke Draper. As the top two remaining seeds Rooney and Coyle went straight through to the semi-finals while the other players battled it out in the quarter-finals, Blackler defeating McCann 11-8, 11-8 and Race defeating Draper 11-5, 12-10.

In one semi-final the second seed Coyle was no match for Race going down 6-11, 4-11 while the other semi-final went right to the wire. A shot off the edge of the table on match point was enough to send Blackler to the final against Race, winning 11-9, 6-11, 11-9.

In the final Race was always in catch up mode and it was only when he was down one game and 0-7 in the second that he started to find some rhythm. With some excellent attacking strokes and some nervous shots from Blackler it was soon 8-8 and then 9-9 before a mistake from Race gave Blackler championship point, which he converted with another edge off the table to win 11-7, 11-9.

Despite a lack of form going into the girl's championship Vanessa Johnson, winner in 2006 and 2007 and beaten finalist in 2008, progressed to the semi-finals with ease, winning all pool play matches comfortably. Other pool play winners to make it to the semi-finals were Kelsie Ellis, Anna Maxwell and Katie Dixon.

In the first semi-final Johnson was up against Kelsie Ellis, a repeat of last years final won by Ellis, but it was not to be a repeat performance with Johnson winning easily 11-5, 11-3 to move into her fourth successive final. Battling it out in the other semi-final both Maxwell and Dixon had their chances with match points but it was Dixon winning this classic contest 11-9, 10-12, 12-10 to make her first final.

Despite Dixon applying pressure at stages during the final it was Johnson who regained the title lost last year triumphing 11-7, 11-6.

The singles win completed the treble for Johnson having won both the girl's doubles and mixed doubles titles over recent weeks. In the girl's doubles she teamed up with Sarah Turpie to grab a come from behind win in the final against Taylar Stewart and Anna Maxwell 9-11, 11-4, 11-6. The mixed doubles was also a come from behind victory pairing up with Noel Green to edge out last years two singles winners Dylan Hunt and Kelsie Ellis 8-11, 11-6, 11-5. Other semi-finalists in the mixed doubles were Marcus Wills and Katie Dixon plus Jessi Drake and Sarah Turpie.

The boy's doubles title was won by Dylan Hunt and Jesse Kempf beating Josh Rooney and Andrew Coyle in the final 11-3, 12-14, 11-7.