

TENNIS GEELONG WRITE-UP ON SATURDAYS MATCHES 2ND JULY

By Neil Lamond filling in for Les Mc Inerney

In tennis like most other team sports a team low on success can occasionally bring down a more fancied opponent. In Tennis Geelong's Senior Competition last Saturday this did not happen in either Sections 1 or 2.

In section 1 top of the ladder Newcomb easily brushed aside St Albans. There was an encouraging start by the Saints who took the game right up to Newcomb in the first two mixed doubles sets. As good teams do, Newcomb dug deep to take both sets six games to four. That disappointment completely snuffed out the challenge as St Albans could only manage five games in the other four sets.

The depth of players in the Newcomb club is quite remarkable in that they have played eight women and four men in their matches this season. As a contrast St Albans have fielded three men and three women which is normal for most teams. Result 6 sets 36 games to zero sets 13 games.

The other match in Section 1 saw St. Marys march into second place with a four sets to two victory over bottom team Grovedale Yellow. The St Marys team has been led by the experienced pair of Peppe Scorpo and Peter Ficca since the summer of 1991-92 when they burst into the top grade of local tennis. Over this period Peter has played every season with St Mary's while Peppe has only missed the 1995 season. In these days when players swap between clubs this is a great example of old fashioned club loyalty. And these guys are good. For example our records show that in the 330 matches played by Peppe he has won 671 sets for his club losing only 336 sets - quite an achievement. In last Saturday's match sisters Carly and Melanie Mc Clelland playing their debut season with St Marys had a great womens doubles set with Jayde Glascott and Jill Menzel who were also playing their first season with a new club Lara. Honours went to the Grovedale girls six games to four. In the men's doubles Grovedale's Matthew Squire and Andrew Veenstra were in top form but found Scorpo and Ficca too tough going down 4-6. Overall Grovedale were not disgraced by St Mary's 4-31 to 2-20 victory.

In Section 2 Grovedale (fifth) defeated Torquay (sixth) in an interesting match which kept their final four chances alive. Grovedale are to be congratulated on their junior development program as four of their players in Saturday's winning team are the result of this encouragement to young talent. There is a bright future for Jessica Christy, Will Grose, Ben Hardy, James Headlam and the Grovedale club. An added bonus for this team is the experience provided by Linda from the well known tennis Muratori family and from the maturity of Donna Schoenmaekers. Torquay brought into their team two new faces to Tennis Geelong namely Vicki Withington from Hoppers Crossing and social player Adam Kennedy. In addition Mark Mensch with consistent play during the season was given the opportunity in this higher grade. Although Grovedale won six sets to three there were only eight games the difference.

Top team Waurin Ponds were host to third placed Ocean Grove who needed to make a stand here to provide some sort of platform for the finals in six weeks time. This would be a difficult task with teenage young girls Emily Rankin and Nicole Mullen along with mother Joanne Mullen in great form every week for Waurin Ponds. And into the mix comes young Jessie Brunt, Ben Rankin and Nick Zyppel plus the Mullen boys. Although two of the stars were missing from the Waurin Ponds line-up their replacements of youngsters Rachel Lolait (ex Grovedale) and Jasper Milton contributed to the victory of 6 sets 50 games to Ocean Grove 3 sets 35 games.

Geelong East Uniting (seventh) travelled to Bannockburn (4th) without two of their regular men and with Bannockburn including their top gun emergency Martin Round, East was always going to be in trouble. And it turned out this way with Bannockburn winning 7-52 to 2-35. A feature of Bannockburn's team is the strong play of their ladies normally Sarah Round, Ida Durran and Carol Dodds. Carol did not play this match but her absence was ably filled by Kim Humphrey.

The result of the fourth match in section 2 between the second placed team Lara and bottom team Western Heights Uniting went the way of their ladder positions with Lara winning all nine sets with the loss of only 19 games. With the season two thirds through it seems that the grand final will be between Waurin Ponds and Lara with perhaps Ocean Grove being the smokey.