

TENNIS ACTION HEATS UP

Local players win key matches

TENNIS

BY BRAD ROWE

CAPE BRETON POST

Brett Gardiner and Andrew MacDougall have both advanced to the quarter-finals in the under-16 division at the Aliant Atlantic junior outdoor tennis championship being played at the Cromarty and Sydney River tennis clubs.

Gardiner and MacDougall both won their second-round matches on a rainy Tuesday to advance to the final eight today.

Gardiner, a 14-year-old Sydney resident, defeated fellow Cromarty Club member Justin LaFosse of Sydney 7-6 (7-4), 7-5 in a tough two-set match.

"It was a pretty close match," said Gardiner, the son of former UCCB Capers hockey standout Darren Gardiner. "I just tried to keep my composure and keep the ball in play because I knew he's not very consistent. He's from Cape Breton, too, so we've played before and I knew what to expect."

LaFosse was able to stay alive by beating Brett MacDonald of Sydney 6-0, 6-0 in their under-16 consolation round match. MacDonald was eliminated.

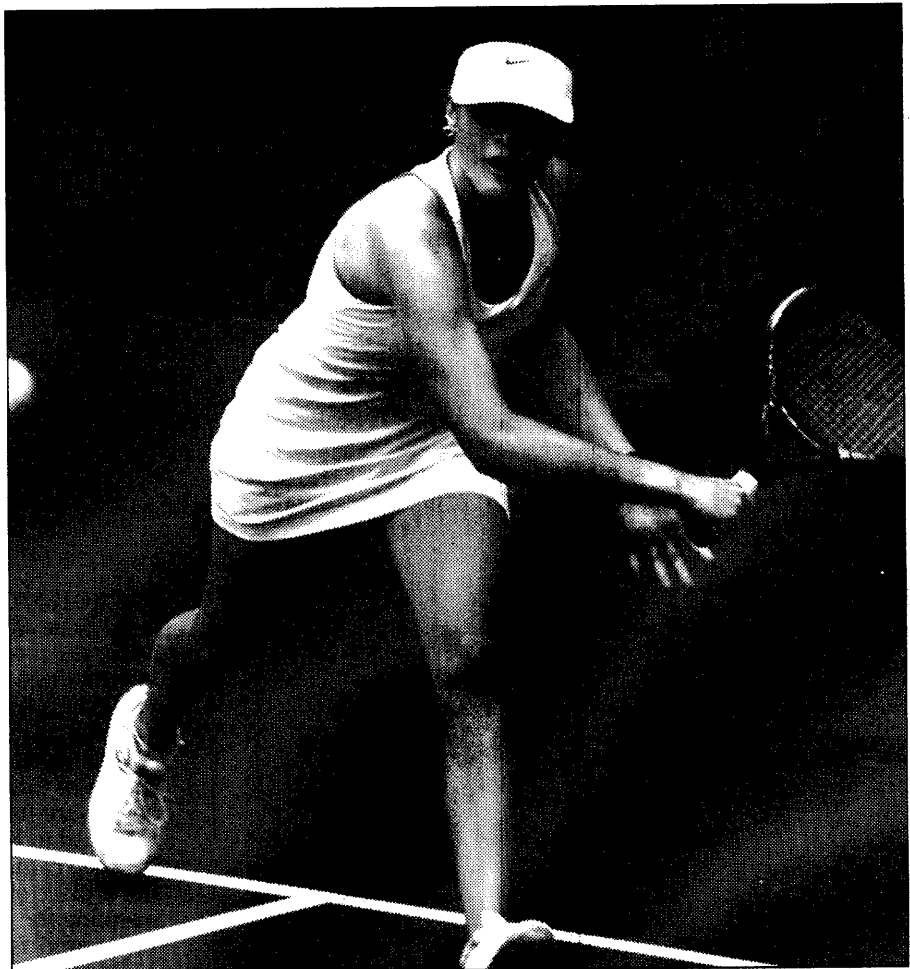
Gardiner's victory earns him a date with No. 1 seed Phillip Anderson of Halifax in today's quarter-final. Anderson made quick work of Michael Waddell of P.E.I. in his first match of the tournament, winning 6-1, 6-1.

"I play the No. 1 seed (Wednesday) and the last three times I played him we went to three sets," said Gardiner, the No. 8 seed. "I'm looking forward to the match. I like playing the style of game he plays. We've played many times before and they've always been tough matches."

MacDougall's trip to the quarter-final came at the expense of Jean-Francois Cormier of New Brunswick, who, ironically, upset MacDougall's 13-year-old brother, Matthew, in under-14 play earlier in the day. MacDougall cruised through the match, winning 6-0, 6-1. The loss of a game in the second set was just his first of the tournament in under-16 play.

"It felt good today," said MacDougall. MacDougall, the No. 4 seed, will play No. 5 seed John Caufield of New Brunswick in quarter-final play today.

"I think I have a pretty good chance against him."



RAY FAHEY - CAPE BRETON POST

Veronique Lorquet, of Edmunston, N.B., returns a shot Tuesday in Aliant Atlantic tennis championship play at the Cromarty Street Tennis Club in Sydney. Lorquet was playing a morning under-14 girls' singles match against Sarah Tremaine, of Halifax. Lorquet beat Tremaine in the main draw match, 7-5, 6-2. Play continues in the tournament today.

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Neither Gardiner nor MacDougall were as fortunate in their under-18 matches. Gardiner lost 6-0, 6-1 to Caufield while MacDougall lost 1-6, 6-0, 6-1 against Will Johnston of New Brunswick.

"That was disgusting," Gardiner said of his loss to Caufield. "I played him last week and I was up 5-1 with double-set point but then I choked and lost five (6-5) and five (6-5). And I just played terrible (Tuesday). There wasn't much I could do."

MacDougall won the opening set against Johnston 6-1 but the New Brunswick resident bounced back to steal the match by winning the final two sets 6-0, 6-1.

"I think I just slacked off," said MacDougall.

MacDougall was eliminated from under-18 play as a result of losing his consolation round match 7-6, 6-0 to Matthew Hill of P.E.I.

Also Tuesday, Natalie MacDougall of Sydney River lost her second-round match to No. 1 seed Lauren Foote of Halifax, 6-2, 6-2, in under-14 play.

Her brother, Matthew MacDougall, the No. 6 seed, was upset in straight sets by Jean-Francois Cormier of New Brunswick, 6-3, 6-4, in under-14 play as well. He was able to stay in the running for a berth in the Canadian championship by defeating fellow Cromarty Club member Brett MacDonald 6-0, 6-1 in consolation round play.

However, he wasn't as fortunate in under-16 play. He lost his main draw match to Caufield, 6-1, 6-1, which relegated him to the consolation round. He was swept, 6-0, 6-0 by Michael Stewart of P.E.I., eliminating him from under-16 play.

Quarter-finals in the boys categories will all be played today. The girls have the day off. Their semifinals are scheduled for Thursday.

browe@cbpost.com