

Cromarty's Gardiner advances to Atlantic final

Sydney youth on winning roll, knocks off another higher seed

TENNIS

BY BRAD ROWE
CAPE BRETON POST

SYDNEY – Brett Gardiner pulled off his second upset in as many days and is now one victory away from being crowned an Atlantic champion.

One day after knocking off No. 1 seed Phillip Anderson of Halifax in straight sets, Gardiner, the No. 8 seed, pulled off another upset, prevailing over No. 5 seed John Caufield of Dieppe, N.B. in a tough under-16 semifinal match that went three sets, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, in Day 4 action at the Aliant Atlantic junior outdoor tennis championship being played at the Cromarty and Sydney River

tennis clubs.

"I played really well," said Gardiner, a Cromarty Club member who lives a forehand shot away from his home courts. "He beat me pretty good the other day so I knew it was going to be a tough match. I lost the first set but managed to turn things around after that.

"I was a little nervous after losing the first set. But people here helped motivate me to fight back," Gardiner said from Cromarty's clubhouse.

Caufield made quick work of Gardiner in the main draw of the under-18 division Tuesday, sweeping the match in straight sets, 6-0, 6-1.

"It was a little bit about revenge today," said Gardiner, 14. "But this (under-16) is my

regular age group so I expected more from myself. Plus, when I played Caufield the first time it was in Sydney River."

Gardiner admits he's more comfortable playing at Cromarty.

"Home court has really helped a lot because I've played here a lot so I really know the courts," he said.

Gardiner will need to pull off another upset if he hopes to win the Atlantic title and improve his chances of qualifying for the Atlantic team that will compete at the Canadian championship, Aug. 7-12 at the Hollyburn Country Club in West Vancouver, B.C.

He will face No. 2 seed Kendrick Au of St. John's, Nfld. in the final today at 1:30 p.m. at Cromarty. Au defeated Jamie Seviour of Newfoundland 6-2, 4-6, 6-4 in the other semifinal Thursday.

"I played him once. He beat

me, but it was at his home court," said Gardiner.

Gardiner didn't envision being around for the title match when the tournament started.

"I definitely didn't think I would do as good as I have so far," he said. "But I've been playing really good this week."

In other action Thursday, Andrew MacDougall of Sydney River was eliminated in the under-16 division. The No. 4 seed lost to No. 1 seed Phillip Anderson of Halifax 6-2, 6-2 in consolation round play.

Natalie MacDougall of Sydney River won her under-12 round-robin match against Lindsay Bryden of Nova Scotia, 6-3, 6-2, but lost her under-14 girls consolation round match to Hilary Hassen of Prince Edward Island, 6-1, 6-3. The loss eliminated MacDougall.

browe@cbpost.com