

Otago V Southland Match held Saturday 3rd September 2011 at KVC College.

Otago won 9 of the 17 events on the day; however the total overall score was tied at 77 matches each. The announcement was met with roars of joy, despair and possibly relief from the crowd. There were 72 players competing and when added to the spectator crowd of approximately 100 people enjoying the action, this created a terrific atmosphere in the new gymnasium at Kaikorai Valley College.

In the Open A Grade event which recently adapted the format to allow the top female player from each province to play, Southland raced to a 3-0 lead. **Debbie Garrett** upset **Christian Kasper**, **Richard Cavanagh** beat **Jennifer Jin** and **Michael Zhang** once again claimed the scalp of **Andrew Marr**. Zhang took a set of Otago's Ben Duffy, but in the end was comfortably beaten with Duffy taking 4 wins from 4. Otago slowly turned the tide and eventually won 10-8. Each player played 4 singles and one doubles.

Otago's Women's player **Nicky Wallace** saved the day and tied this very interesting contest up at 6 each winning all her three singles, upsetting **Debra King** and **Ngaire Garrett** along the way. Wallace was in great form hitting hard off both sides and playing with real confidence and determination. **Gemma Buzzard** and **Emma Paton** both picked up a singles each and combined to win the crunch final doubles.

The Men's B grade also had a 6 all draw, but Otago won the count back on games. Southland's **Willie Brocks** showed good form beating Otago's **Colin Tipper**, **Ian Muir** and caused an upset victory over **Peter Chai**.

The Vets team had a 7-5 win. **Ian Day** and **Stephen Burgess** solid with 2 singles wins each, 2 doubles wins and **Ruth Foster** winning both her doubles and a singles.

The Under 18 boys romped home destroying Southland a spirited Southland side 12 - 0. **Jamie Parkinson-Wisely**, **Benjamin Leask** and **Ryan van Heezik** hardly troubled.

Similarly the Under 16 A match was a one-sided affair, despite most thinking it would be a lot closer.

Josh Tonkin and **Matthew Palmay** winning all 3 singles and both doubles and **Paden Kennedy** winning 2 singles and both his doubles.

The Under 16 B team of **Aaron Anderson**, **Akshay Sood** and **Lucy Paton** were on the receiving end of a very strong Southland B squad. Sood managed 1 single, but they were really up against this team which probably could have been the Southland A side.

The Under 15 A team of **Christian Brooks** and **Tupou Dean-Harris** played two best of 5 matches winning one of them 3-2 and losing the other 2-3. Both boys on their debut played out of their skin, with Dean-Harris winning 2 from 4 singles and Brooks really impressed with 3 from 4 and unlucky not to be 4 from 4 narrowly losing to Southland's **Kent Verbert** in 5.

The Under 15 B team of **Blake Porteous** and **Kyle Sharp** gave a credible performance on debut, but found the rep table tennis challenging. They picked up a doubles in a 1-4 loss to Southland B and Porteous an encouraging singles win against Southland A's **Matthew Shields**.

The Under 14 team had a comfortable win with **Abhishek Sood** and **Louis Gray** both winning 3 matches. Sood was impressive after a nervous start, but came right to deliver the goods. Gray battled hard with two of his matches going to 5 games and the other in 4. **Michael Ellison** did not manage a win, but played a good match and will develop quickly with experience.

The Junior Girls A team performed well. **Annabel Joiner** impressed with 4 convincing wins from 4, a great achievement in her first year. She played with **Hayley Tonkin** in a two person team who also played well finishing with 3 from 4. They beat Southland B 5-0 and Southland A 4-1.

The Junior Girls B team of **Stephanie Devereux** and **Kama Warburton** put in a pleasing performance. Both new to the sport they both improved even during the event and Warburton picked up one game. Neither girl won a match.

The Under 11 team of **Josh Marr**, **Jiacong** and **James Huang** had a tough match. They were thumped 12-0. Huang managed to take a game. This is a young under 11 side and no doubt they will have learnt from this baptism into rep table tennis.

With 72 players, including 46 juniors, and the encouraging number of spectators, this tournament was a success and closes the curtain on the major 2011 competitive events with only the Otago Closed event left on the local

tournament calendar, scheduled for October 2nd. The local interclub competition is nearing completion also with semi finals beginning Monday 5th of September at the Edgar Centre.

Some action photos from the day taken Peter Chai.

<https://www.dropbox.com/photos//Otago%20vs%20Southland%202011?p=3>