

Sam Baines on winning NK high school tennis squad

By Adrienne Downing

The North Kingstown boys' tennis team would like to repeat the state championship seasons they have had for the past two years, but a division change is going to make the competition a little stiffer for the Skippers this year.

The team moved from Division II up to Division I and they will now have to upset power houses South Kingstown and Bishop Hendricken if they hope to stay on top, but coach Lisa Vinacco said she feels her team is up to the challenge.

"We were 15-0 last year, but that does not mean that we didn't

face any competition. The south division is the strongest of Div. II and that is the division we were in," Vinacco explained.

"East Greenwich and Westerly both have very strong teams and we had to beat them three times each to win the championship," she continued.

Vinacco describes her team as relatively young, but over half of the players are returning members of last year's varsity team.

Sam Baines is the sole freshman representative on the varsity team and he is also the only Jamestown resident. He is the younger brother of Leah Baines, a singles player on the girls' tennis team.

Baines immediately caught Vinacco's attention, and has earned a spot as one of four singles players.

"Very early in tryouts I knew that he was going to be a singles player, so I put him in a workout with the singles and he did great," the coach said. "He has very sound technique and picture perfect shots."

He played in an exhibition match against the Prout School on Friday and won easily, which put him in contention for the number three singles spot.

"I think that it is really cool being the only freshman on the varsity team and to play at such a high seed," Baines said.

The competition in the higher division does not have him worried, but he is realistic about the level of play he will see.

"I know quite a few of the incoming freshman from the other schools and they are pretty tough, plus those schools are already in Div. I so they know how to play at that level," he explained. "It should be interesting."

His mother is also a tennis player and she started him playing when he was 5-years-old. He plays on Sundays with Tennis RI in Warwick and believes the clinic has helped his game.

Baines has the confidence that Vinacco says is going to be one of

her team's strengths this year.

"There is definitely a lot of confidence up and down the whole team. They are not worried about the move to a higher division and that will help them tremendously," she said.

Choosing the team was a hard decision for the coach. She said 33 players tried out for the team and the team makeup was not set until after the conclusion of the tryouts.

"It is a pretty tight team, they just click. They choose to be with each other even when they aren't at practice," Vinacco concluded. "Win or lose, it is going to be a good, fun season to watch."

The first regular season home match is today against South Kingstown at 3:30 p.m.



Sam Baines, the only Jamestown resident on the North Kingstown High School boys' tennis team, warms up before a scrimmage match against Prout School.

Photo by Adrienne Downing

Soap Box Derby event scheduled

The 12th Annual All-American Newport Lions Soap Box Derby will take place on Saturday, May 12, at Easton's Beach, Newport. The rain date is Sunday, May 13. The race begins promptly at 9 a.m.

The derby is sponsored by the Newport Lions Club, with generous help and support from the Viking Riders and Rockwell Amusements. This year's Derby will be covered live by WKTK Radio. The Cardi Brothers and Cabot Cheese will also be a part of this great event.

The deadline for applications to drive in this year's derby is Friday, April 20.

This year the derby has added a fourth division, "Super Kids". This new division is reserved exclusively for kids ages 8 to 17 with special needs. Special cars will be supplied that hold two people. A driver will also be supplied to assist with the handling so that the child can experience the thrill of competing without injury.

There are three additional divisions of race cars; Stock Division, car and driver total 200 pounds; Super Stock Division, car and driver total 230 pounds and the new Masters Division, car and driver total 255 pounds.

Boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 16 years old are invited to participate.

Call and sign up for the clinic and learn how to build and race a car in the derby. The only clinic date this year is Saturday, April 21, at 10 a.m. The clinic will be held at the home of Johnny Gomes, 7 Farnum Terr., Middletown.

For further information and to sign up for the upcoming clinic, contact Dave Dittmann, at 848-5884 or by email at ddittmann@cox.net.

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With love, Mom, Dad and Caroline

Sarah J. Smyth - RN



Sarah J. Smyth of 26 Friendship Street graduated on the Dean's List last fall 2006 from U.R.J.'s College of Nursing and has recently passed the National Council Liscensing Exam.

Sarah is working at Newport Hospital's Emergency Room and is the daughter of Frederick Smyth of Jamestown and Diane Wharton of Boca Raton, Fla.

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