Squash report U15

The Under 15 team consisting of Marcus Connor, Danial Choudhury, Usman Ali, Harry Hewitt and Josh Mayhead won the group stages of the National School competition before Christmas, with 5-0 and 4-1 wins over Beaconsfield school and John Hampden respectively. These two comfortable victories provided the team with a positive mental attitude going into the knock out rounds of the competition. The next round saw AGS face Comberton School a little known opponent from Cambs. Unexpectedly, one of AGS’s players was ill on the day of the vital game. Luckily for the team, Alex Rice stepped in at late notice to cover for this absence. AGS came away from this vital match, 4-1 winners with good 3-0 wins from Marcus, Usman, Josh and Alex and a strong performance from Danial. This result meant AGS had to face a strong Eton team in the last knock out round to get to play in the National school finals in Manchester. AGS started strongly with Josh and Usman both 1-0 up in their matches, however, the lead was short lived as Eton’s players quickly responded levelling both matches at 1-1. Some words of encouragement from Mr Withey saw a positive change in the play of both AGS’s competitors, with both players winning 3-1. This meant only one more win was needed from the AGS team to ensure qualification for Manchester. Marcus and Harry both stepped on court knowing what was needed to be done. Harry won the first two games very quickly showing off his talent, however Marcus was 1-0 down to a strong Eton number one. He responded in the right manner taking the next game to level the match. With the game poised at 1-1 it was the Eton number one who took the close game leaving the score line at 2-1 to Eton. However during the break in games Harry had won meaning AGS were through to the National finals. The message took the pressure of Marcus’ shoulders and he won the next two games convincingly meaning he won the match 3-2. Dan was the last to play against very stiff opposition. He lost the first game narrowly, but played extremely well. He was unlucky to lose the next two games but showed true AGS spirit in never giving up. The team were delighted that they had beaten Eton to qualify for the National finals in Manchester in March. This success is a great achievement and an experience the whole team is looking forward to. The entire team would like to thank Mr Withey for his continued commitment, coaching and effort that have developed us all to be strong individual players and an even stronger team.

AGS arrived at Manchester after a long 3 hour drive. Good news came as the top 3 seeds of the team got to play on the all glass court. This was a great experience for the boys and got to compete against the top juniors in the country. The boys started off against a strong Harrow side, with Josh and Usman performing well, both coming out with 2-0 victories. Harry and Marcus were up next both playing well. Harry ensured the victory for AGS with a 2-0 win. Marcus narrowly lost out to the Harrow number 1, 13-11 in the last game. Dan was last to go on court and put in a Stirling performance however lost out 2-0 to a strong Harrow player. The semi final was up next for an excited AGS team. Josh and Usman once again stepped up first both losing out 2-0. Harry stepped up and fought extremely hard but unfortunately lost 2-0. Marcus was up next levelling a tight match at 1-1. The game was poised at 6-6, but unfortunately Marcus was pipped to the finish and just lost out. Dan was last on court and put up a real fight, making his team mates proud. He lost 2-0 but AGS quickly put the loss behind them and focused on finishing 3rd. AGS, with high hopes, came up against lancing College. Harry and josh once again put in great individual performances both winning 2-0. Usman was 1-0 down however showed the true AGS determination and came back to win 2-1. Marcus and Dan were up last, Marcus started strongly, and quickly beat his opponent 2-0. Dan was putting everything he had into the last game reaching game ball but unfortunately losing 2-0. This had ensured AGS third position in the national schools competition. The team was delighted and so was Mr Withey. The team collected their well-deserved medals and it finally sank in that they were the third best team in England. The team would like to thank Mr Withey for his continued support and Intrepid for their support and sponsorship.