

## ERT PLACES FOURTH IN THE ALICIA MOLIK CUP 2018

ERT was one of 16 Regions and Associations from around Victoria to field a team in the **Alicia Molik Cup**, conducted by Tennis Victoria on the red porous courts at Kooyong on the weekend of 8 and 9 December, 2018. The ERT team was chosen from players participating on behalf of ERT in the Associations Junior League, with some final selections coming down to trials held in the preceding weeks. The ERT team of 2 boys and 2 girls aged 12 or under as at 31 December, 2018, comprised:

- Jaimin Mandi from Montrose Tennis Club
- Felicity Wei from Box Hill
- Michael Korobitsin from Wonga Park
- Paddy Meagher from East Camberwell



*1 Jaimin, Felicity, Michael and Paddy with joint Team Manager Chris Thomson*

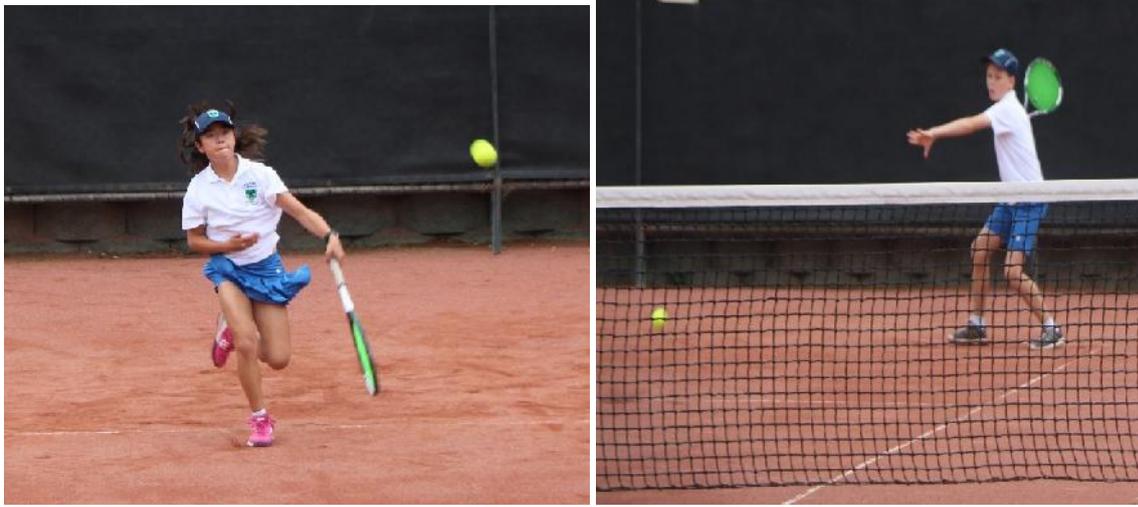
Michael and Felicity had featured earlier in the year in the successful ERT team that carried off the **Frank Sedgman Trophy** for 11 and unders at Bairnsdale. Jaimin had represented ERT previously in the **Pat Cash Cup** (12, 14, 16 & 18 years), while it was Paddy's first taste of Inter-regional competition. Team managers conjointly were Nat Allsop and Chris Thomson from the ERT's Tournament & Development Committee.

The format comprised 4 pools of 4 teams playing off against each other for positions in the finals. Our team performed brilliantly in the pool matches, only dropping one set.

However our fortunes changed in the finals. In the semi final we were downed by Bayside, who won last year and went on to win again this year in the ultimate final against Waverley, playing and winning in a deciding set, as the two teams in the final finished in a draw.

Against Bayside, we did only win one set, however the others were extremely close. Michael and Felicity lost their doubles in a tie break. Paddy won his singles. Jaimin was outclassed by a strong opponent, and she and Paddy lost the doubles. Felicity was beaten by a brilliant young Japanese girl, apparently only about 9 years old. Michael was way out in front, leading 5/1, then losing the next 6

games as he developed pain in his left forearm, which he uses in his double handed backhand. The trainer strapped his arm, but it did not relieve the pain. He played on, but was no longer a match for his opponent.



After a further assessment by the trainer, who warned that playing the next round could lead to him being out of action for many weeks, whereas she felt if he rested and iced it that day he should recover in a couple of days, the decision was made to withdraw him. We rang Jet Walles-Capasso, a fellow member of the ERT 12A AJL team, who had been narrowly defeated in the play-offs for team selection, and he agreed to come and play. After some negotiation with Tennis Victoria and North Suburban, our opponents in the final play-off for positions 3 & 4, as he was a fully qualified ERT player we received permission to substitute him for Michael. It was a tough ask for him to come in cold to the final of such an event, and we were extremely grateful to him for doing so.



In the final play-off against North Suburban for positions 3 & 4, we got off to a flying start with Paddy winning his No. 2 boy's singles comfortably, and he and Jaimin also winning their doubles

comfortably. Felicity won her singles well, and jaimin raced out to a 5/2 lead, seemingly having all the answers. However, it all went pear-shaped from there. Her opponent staged a remarkable comeback to snatch victory. That left it 3 sets to 1. Jet played well but could not match the consistency and determination of his opponent. Both the doubles with Felicity and his singles were lost. Thus, the final score line was 3 sets all, but North Suburban won by a couple of games.

The youngsters all enjoyed their experience on the weekend. They met many other strong young players from around the State, and relished playing in a team environment where every game counted. They experienced play at a higher level than their customary matches, and learnt the necessity to develop mental toughness in order to cope with losses and come bouncing straight back. Paddy was excellent in his introduction to Inter Regional Challenge matches, and is likely to play an important role in future events. All the players gave their utmost during the weekend and did ERT proud. We are especially grateful to Jet for filling in at late notice and enabling the team to play out their final match, which they came so close to winning.

