

GAME SET & MATCH

PRO TENNIS

British No.4 bags singles and doubles titles in Sunderland. Lee Goodall reports

Bloomfield hits form

Norfolk's Richard Bloomfield wasted no time claiming his first trophies of 2008 when he won the singles and doubles at the Sunderland Futures event in January.

The 24-year-old beat Frenchman Adrian Mannarino in straight sets in the singles final before he and training partner Ken Skupski, from Liverpool, took the doubles event.

Bloomfield, who is coached by Peter Russell and trains at the East Gloucestershire club in Cheltenham and at the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton, backed up his Sunderland success by making the singles semi-finals of another \$10,000 event in Sheffield a week later.

Russell, who also coaches Skupski, said Bloomfield had been playing some good tennis going into the fortnight but had been low in confidence after a run of close defeats. "He had two weeks in the States



On target:
Richard
Bloomfield

towards the end of last year when he didn't lose his serve for two weeks," Russell said. "He lost 7-6 in the third to [world No.101] John Isner and then 7-6, 7-6 in his third match the next week. He lost 6-4 in the third to [world No.92] Robin Haase just before that as well. So building confidence was one of the reasons he played Sunderland.

"It's funny how tennis is. On the Monday he wasn't feeling well and wasn't going to play, but changed his mind and came through his first couple of

matches and then hit some good form towards the end of the week."

Other young Britons to do well were Miles Kasiri and David Brewer, who both made the quarter-finals in Sunderland. Skupski built on his growing reputation as a top class doubles player by winning his fifth title in six months when he teamed up with Bloomfield in Sunderland.

The 24-year-old, who turned professional in June 2007 after graduating from American university, also made the final in Sheffield with Surrey's Chris Eaton.

RESULTS

Men's \$10K, Sheffield, 22-26 Jan

Singles Final: A. Mannarino (Fra) bt T. Nieminen (Fin) 3-6, 7-6, 6-2

Doubles Final: J. Krkoska (Cze) & P. Raja (Ind) bt C. Eaton & K. Skupski 7-6, 7-6

Men's \$10K, Sunderland, 14-20 Jan

Singles Final: R. Bloomfield bt Mannarino 6-4, 6-3

Doubles Final: Bloomfield & Skupski bt R. Grambow (Ger) & T. Rushby 6-1, 6-4