



Area tennis teams rally show support to Zack Hunter's family

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE/ALTON - Sometimes there is a time for athletes to put down the tennis rackets, baseball gloves and hockey sticks and rally around a cause other than the game or match.

For multiple days at the end of the season, the tennis community throughout the area did just that for **Marquette Catholic's Zack Hunter**, who lost his life after a tragic car accident. Hunter died on April 17, but before that there were prayer services led by the tennis and hockey players and on Friday, the tennis players wore the No. 77 jerseys, his number.

A special moment honoring Zack occurred on Friday prior to the start of the Edwardsville Tennis Sectional.

"Sometimes there are things that are more important than playing tennis, and this was certainly one of them," **Edwardsville Coach Dave Lipe** said.

"Our tennis community has come together specifically in wake of this terrible tragedy," Lipe said. "Zack's mom and dad attended Friday and Saturday's play and I met his mom and dad and grandma, and little sisters. They appreciated knowing people are still thinking about them and Zack's memory."

Lipe continued by saying, "I think our tennis community is pretty small. We all know each other. It's not like there are thousands and thousands of us in the area. We are a lot for the sport and know the kids who play and when something like this happens, it is a ripple effect we all feel. I think the family appreciates knowing other people respect Zack's memory and are thinking of them."

The tennis group raised money to help support Zack's family through heavy medical bills and funeral costs.

Mike Walters, the Marquette Catholic coach, said he was extremely moved by what the schools did through the entire process.

"Zack's family was there the entire sectional tournament," Walters said. "It was great them being there. The coach were very touched by what happened."

Alton tennis coach Robert Logan was one of the leaders in making the T-shirts and fund-raising a possibility along with Coach Lipe. A fund was set up for the family and contributions were made.

Coach Lipe said back in the Vietnam, Korea and World War II era it was more common for teenagers to lose their life, but now usually it is because of an illness or accident.

"This makes you wonder how other generations dealt with it more when it happened more extensively," he said.

