

Tigers tennis team rolls out to solid start at state

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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O'FALLON – There was significant excitement brewing Wednesday morning when Edwardsville High School hosted a big send-off for the four state tennis qualifiers at the tennis courts.

Edwardsville sent the doubles combination of Alex Gray/Zach Trimpe to Arlington Heights, Ill., along with Erik Weiler and Seth Lipe in singles. Gray/Trimpe are the top seed in the state in doubles. Last year, the pair finished fourth.

The Tigers started in strong fashion on Thursday, notching eight points for 10th place to start the tournament.

This was how the top 10 ranked for the IHSA Class 2A State Boys Tennis Tournament after Thursday play ended:

1	Naperville (Central)	15
1	Northbrook (Glenbrook North)	15
3	Lincolnshire (Stevenson)	14
3	Winnetka (New Trier)	14
5	Hinsdale (Central)	12
6	Glenview (Glenbrook South)	11
6	Lake Forest (H.S.)	11
8	Frankfort (Lincoln-Way East)	9
8	Rockford (Auburn)	9
10	Edwardsville (H.S.)	8

Gray and Trimpe started the day on fire, blanking Quincy Sr.'s Ben Oakley and Andrew Vonderheide 6-0, 6-0. Gray/Trimpe won the second-round match 6-1, 6-0 over Matthew Kastitis and Winston Yau of Alonquin (Jacobs).

In singles in the Championship Bracket, Lipe defeated Summit (Argo's) Maciej Brzyski 6-1, 6-1. Erik Weiler fell 6-3, 6-3 to Lincolnshire (Stevenson's) Sam Komis.

In the second round, Seth Lipe fell to Quinten Nevenhoven 6-2, 6-2 in the Championship Bracket. In the Consolation Bracket, Weiler came back with a decisive 6-3, 6-2 win over Eddie Neuman of Naperville (Neuqua Valley).

Seth Lipe then defeated Alex Veltkamp of Streamwood 6-4, 6-4 in the second round of the consolation bracket. Will Zordani of Lake Forest defeated Weiler 6-2, 6-3 in another second-round consolation bracket match. The loss eliminated Weiler from the competition. The Tigers' Gray/Trimpe and Seth Lipe remain alive for Friday second-day action.

Tigers' head boys' tennis coach Dave Lipe said he expects the competition to be tough throughout the state tournament this year. "I expect it to be a lot of fun. I expect every match to be a battle."

Coach Lipe downplayed the No. 1 doubles seed of Gray and Trimpe and said it is a way they organize the tournament and doesn't give you an extra serve or lead or anything like that.

"I think any focus on that (the top doubles ranking) is dangerous and not healthy," Lipe said. "I have seen kids get distracted by feeling slighted by their seed and seen kids feel

pressure about their seed. Any kind of thinking or pressure about your draws is just not going to help you. These guys are playing at a very high level and they are playing as well as anybody in the state right now. We are proud of their accomplishments and where they are. The seed is not something to focus on. I don't think getting excited about wrong things will help."

All four Edwardsville boys have played at state before.

"The boys also have a lot of experience at playing in Chicago in tournaments," Coach Lipe said. "There is not going to be somebody there who is a stranger to us."

The Tigers won the O'Fallon Sectional team title with 21 points, with Belleville East trailing with 16 points. In singles play in the sectional, Seth Lipe dropped his semifinal match to the Lancers' Max Skaer 7-6 (7-4), 6-0, while Weiler reached the final with a 6-3, 6-2 win over O'Fallon's Drake Schreiber; Weiler fell to Skaer 7-6, 6-2 in the final, while Lipe won the third-place playoff 6-3, 6-3 over Schreiber.

In doubles competition, the team of Gray/Trimpe won their semifinal match over Belleville West's Drew Boyles/Derek Henke, then won the title with a 6-0, 6-2 win over the Senators' Ray Sinha/Shaul Latif.

The state tournament runs through May 27. Due to pending weather, all matches will begin at 8 a.m. on Friday, May 26.