

Callahan/Hansson win Edwardsville Futures doubles crown; both also advance to today's singles semifinals

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Hunter Callahan of Philadelphia, who played for Ohio State, and Gustav Hansson of Sweden, who plays for Mississippi, both had very good days at the \$25,000 USTA Pro Circuit Edwardsville Futures tennis tournament presented by the EGHM Foundation at the Edwardsville High School Tennis Center Friday.

Both Callahan and Hansson won their way into today's singles semifinals - where they could potentially wind up facing one another in Sunday morning's final – then capped off their day by building a lead in the first set and going on to win the doubles championship Friday evening with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Rob Galloway and Alex Lawson.

For a doubles team that only played together for the first time just four weeks ago, Callahan and Hansson both came together pretty quickly.

“I asked him in the hotel room, 'hey, do you want to play doubles together?,'” Callahan said following the win, “and he's like, 'I guess.' We each didn't have a partner and that's how it worked. We both played college, so I knew we would both and an idea of how to play doubles; he was going to carry me on the returns – it felt like we were playing together for awhile,”

That the duo were able to get the win meant a lot for Hansson. “It's my first doubles win, so it meant a lot,” Hansson said.

“The guys we played today – they were the No. 1 seeds,” Callahan said of Galloway, who plays at Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C., and Lawson, who played at Notre Dame. “They're both very, very good doubles players; we didn't have easy matches the whole tournament, and even in singles, it's a high level – everyone's really good here.”

When asked what the difference in the match was, Lawson said “serve percentage – they served very high first-serve percentage; we did not, and second-serve return points won – they crushed us in the two most important stats in doubles, and it kind of showed in the scoreline. Coming into this tournament, this was our fourth tournament together and we were 0-3 all-time; we lost the first round every tournament and won three in a row to get to the finals.”

“We played really well in the matches leading up (to the final),” Galloway said. “We didn't drop a set to get the finals and we were feeling really good about our win yesterday (over twin brothers Hunter and Yates Johnson in Thursday's semifinal) – that was a good team – to get to the finals.”

Callahan/Hanson won two of the first three games in the opening set to take an early lead before winning the next two games to take control of the set at 4-1; the teams then split the final four games to give Callahan/Hansson the opening set, thanks to some timely shots and good serving. Lawson/Galloway took a 2-1 lead in the second set, before Callahan/Hansson won the next two games to move ahead 3-2. The teams split the following two games before the teams split Games 8 and 9 of the set, winning them both at love before Callahan/Hanson took over to win the final game of the set and the match at service.

Prior to the doubles final, Callahan moved into the singles final with a 3-6, 6-1, 6-4 win over Alfredo Perez in a Friday morning quarterfinal that was pushed back 45 minutes because of early Friday morning showers while Hansson advanced with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 win over American Kevin King; in the morning's other two quarterfinals, Or Ram-Harel of Israel, who played at Tulsa, defeated Australia's Harry Bourchier 6-3, 6-3, while Genaro Alberto Olivieri of Argentina advanced with a 5-7, 7-5, 6-2 win over Croatia's Borna Gojo, who plays at Wake Forest.

“I was able to come back after being up in the first set and then losing it,” Callahan said of his singles win. “I had to stay tough and ended up winning a tough three-set match – start to finish, it was a very tough match. I'm pretty good at staying focused; delays happen – it's nothing new, it happens everywhere, even in the top level. You just have to deal with it and try to stay focused.”

The key to Callahan's singles win was simply staying focused he said. “Just staying focused, not getting let down after I lost that first set,” Callahan said. “It's keeping one

point ahead of me and not thinking, 'oh no – I lost that first set; now what?' and just doing it one point at a time. This game's all mental; if you start panicking, it's over.”

“It was tough,” Ram-Harel, of Haifa, Israel, said of his win over Bouchier. “I wasn't focusing on my opponent; I've been playing the last week – something like 12-13 matches, so I'm trying to stay positive and recover from game to game and focus on my game.

“I'm excited (to reach the semifinals); it's probably been five years since I've been in the position of being in a semifinal. I'm very happy.”

The final attracted a very good crowd to the EHS center, which made tournament director and Tiger tennis coach Dave Lipe very happy. “The crowd was absolutely electric,” Lipe said. “It was totally fun to be here; we wanted a Davis Cup or college-match atmosphere here and we were there in terms of enthusiasm; the fans had a great time and it was a perfect time to have a tennis match.”

Today's semifinals pit Ram-Harel against Callahan at 9:30 a.m. and Hansson against Olivieri no earlier than 11 a.m., with both matches set for Court 2; the final is scheduled for 11 a.m. Sunday. More information can be found at www.edwardsvillefutures.com.



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FRIDAY'S RESULTS

SINGLES – QUARTERFINALS

Or Ram-Harel (Israel) def. Harry Bouchier (Australia) 6-3, 6-3; Hunter Callahan (USA) def. Alfredo Perez (USA) 3-6, 6-1, 6-4; Gustav Hansson (Sweden) def. Kevin King (USA) 6-4, 3-6, 6-3; Genaro Alberto Olivieri (Argentina) def. Borna Gojo (Croatia) 5-7, 7-5, 6-2

DOUBLES FINAL

Hunter Callahan/Gustav Hansson (Sweden) def. Rob Galloway/Alex Lawson (USA) 6-3, 6-4

SATURDAY'S ORDER OF PLAY

SINGLES SEMIFINALS – BOTH ON EHS COURT 2

9:30 a.m.: Or-Ram Harel (Israel) vs. Hunter Callahan (USA)

NOT BEFORE 11 a.m.: Gustav Hansson (Sweden) vs. Genaro Alberto Olivieri