

Edwardsville Futures hopes to build on momentum generated by 2017 tourney

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
August 18 2017 5:58 AM





EDWARDSVILLE – The Edwardsville Futures tennis tournament, including a pair of qualifying tournaments, was a near-perfect two weeks of tennis, tournament director and Edwardsville High tennis coach Dave Lipe felt.

“It was a perfect ending to a seemingly perfect fortnight here,” Lipe said of the USTA Pro Circuit Edwardsville Futures presented by the EGHM Foundation following Sunday's final, which saw Gustav Hansson of Sweden defeat Or Ram-Harel of Israel in straight sets before a large and appreciative crowd. “It was two weeks of tennis starting with the Pro Wildcard Challenge (tournament), presented by THEBANK of Edwardsville (which saw Chris Haworth defeat Sam Shropshire in the final for an automatic wild card spot into the main draw), coming all the way through today – just every single day, it seemed like the best day of the tournament thus far; it just kept kind of building up, and today was just the perfect way – a perfect crescendo – to this event.

"The tennis was outstanding and the crowd was huge; we think over 300 people were here today (on the last day of the tournament). So, the event with the Boy Scouts presenting the colors and the Maginnis sisters singing the anthem, the play of the players, the officials, the energy of the audience, the new marketing tools of the scoreboard and the draw boards that folks were able to see – we had people who bought into the event early and kept coming back.”

The event's sponsors gave Lipe plenty of positive feedback during the tournament, and Lipe feels that moving forward, the tournament will just keep getting better and better. “We had several positive comments from sponsors who are enthusiastic about the event moving forward,” Lipe said. “We feel like we have a tremendous amount of energy and momentum with the event, including the community involvement events, starting with Mitch 'n Friends, Kids Night, the outstanding player party on Wednesday night, we had a great high-performance adult clinic on Thursday night and Fan Appreciation Day on Friday, Family Day (on Saturday) and the final today.

“We had great community support, great fan support, outstanding business support – in particular, all the restaurants who helped us out providing lunch – the best restaurants in Edwardsville participate in that program, and we're thankful for that energy. The ball kids were great, the interns were a huge part of what we did this week; the interns are a very big part of what we do.”

Lipe is already excited about the prospects for the 2018 tournament. “We get a little better every year, and we're thinking already about 2018,” Lipe said. “We're already excited about 2018 – we know we're going to improve; we're going to get started working hard on it pretty soon. We'll take about a month and a half off and start talking about next year.”

Hansson scored a double championship win on the weekend, taking not only the singles title but teaming with Hunter Callahan to win the doubles crown on Friday evening, the duo defeating Rob Galloway and Alex Lawson in the final. “Neat kid, great guy, great player,” Lipe said of Hansson, who plays for Ole Miss. “His coach (Toby Hansson) came from Ole Miss this morning, drove up this morning and surprised him – that was a nice touch to have one of the top coaches in the country make the trip and be up here.

“He said he was very impressed with the event and commented on the organization and the enthusiastic crowd; I'll put this crowd up, in terms of numbers and enthusiasm, up against any Futures in the country – probably in the world, to be honest with you. There may be Futures who has a bigger attendance than this, but nobody's told me about it. Our crowd was great and I know the players loved it; they loved the walkup music; Jack (Desse) and Kirk (Schuleter) kind of choreographed it together.

“We couldn't do it without the EGHM Foundation and the City of Edwardsville, which are both key figures; we're hosted by EGHM and School District 7 – Dr. (Lynda) Andre (the Edwardsville school superintendent) and Dr. (Dennis) Cramsey (the EHS principal) and our school district does a fantastic job of getting behind this event.”

Tournament events were sponsored by Scott Credit Union, the Bob Emig Foundation, Creason, Edwards and Cimarolli, First Mid-Illinois Bank and Trust, Edwardsville Township and the Edwardsville Children's Museum.





[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)