



Tigers' freshman tennis player Ben Blake is up-and-coming player in Edwardsville program

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville freshman tennis player Ben Blake is one an up-and-coming player for the Tiger program; he's played mostly on the junior varsity team this season, but has seen time at the varsity level. However, over the weekend, he was with the Tigers in the Tiger Duals tournament, going 1-1 in singles competition while teaming with Nick Hobin in a pair of doubles matches for the tournament, the two being on the losing end of both matches.

Joining the Tiger program this year has been a big thing for Blake.

“It feels great” being on the team, Blake said. “All the guys are just amazing people; I've definitely learned a lot about myself and the other guys every day out here and it feels great playing varsity matches and just improving my game overall.”

Blake took up the game in fifth grade and it has given him some experience going into his freshman year.

“My family all plays tennis and my sister (Madison Blake) was a varsity player in Kansas City (Mo.); she's a med student in Kansas City and unfortunately, doesn't play tennis anymore, but she got me into the game.”

Blake doesn't model his game after any particular professional player, preferring to play his own game.

“I try to see what's best for me and what works best; just play my own game. My forehand is the best part of my game; it's my most powerful shot and my serve has definitely developed this year.

“Coach (Dave) Lipe is a great coach and Kirk Schlueter is a great coach; I've definitely gotten the most experience playing this year and the most practice time; we work hard and it's definitely a great time playing with these guys.”

As far as what Blake hopes to accomplish as a member of the Tigers, “I just hope to improve,” he said. “I think I've improved a lot this year and I hope to improve a lot over the following years. After high school, I'd like to play in college if my game improves a lot; otherwise, maybe a business student.”