



Tigers sweep way to SWC tennis crown; Redbirds take sixth

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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BELLEVILLE – Edwardsville's boys' tennis team won their 18th straight Southwestern Conference championship Saturday in style.

The Tigers swept all six singles flights to go with the sweep of all three doubles flights Friday to finish with a perfect score of 72 points (eight points per flight); Belleville East took second at 60 points for the weekend, followed by O'Fallon (56), Collinsville (36), host Belleville West (35), Alton (32), Granite City (24) and East St. Louis (nine).

The sweep didn't come easily, however; Zach Trimpe, who was playing at No. 1 singles for EHS, had to come off the deck in his final against Max Skaer of Belleville East to win that championship; the two split the first two sets, Trimpe taking the opening set 6-2 but dropping the second set 6-3 to send the match to a 10-point-by-two third set.

Trimpe fell behind 7-4 to Skaer and seemed on the verge of elimination, but battled back to win the deciding set 10-7, winning the final six points of the set.

“Give Max a lot of credit for being a great player,” said Tiger coach Dave Lipe. “He's really a tough opponent; you saw the sacrifices Zach made – he's over there practically in full body cramps. His style is a very physical, pounding, long-point style, and that takes a lot of toll on your body. He was starting to get some muscle spasms and a couple of times, he started to cramp up.

“He's a real competitor with a gigantic heart and was able to grind out that third set; Zach was up 5-3 against another very good player at the Pitchford Tournament (in suburban Chicago earlier in the season) and tightened up a little bit, so maybe he drew on some of that experience to get himself to relax and fight, but that was a really epic high school singles match that was for the championship at No. 1 singles makes it more dramatic.

“I'm really proud of Zach and the way he competed today.”

Lipe was also pleased with Alex Gray, who took the title at No. 2 singles, who defeated East's Christian Cowulich 6-0, 6-0 for the championship. “Alex was a different kind of amazing,” Lipe said. “His dominant performance – 0 and 0 in the final and (in) No. 3 singles, 0 and 0 for Seth (Lipe, who blanked East's Carter Baldus 6-0, 6-0 in that final) and Drake Schreiber won a third-set tiebreak (at No. 5 singles, defeating the Lancers' Cory Erickson 2-6, 6-2, 10-7); he came back and reversed his score against a kid he played earlier, so that's always a great thing that feels good as an athlete to go back and reverse his score, so give Drake a lot of credit for what he was able to accomplish today and I'm very proud of Drake.”

No matter how many consecutive times EHS wins a league title, it doesn't come easy in the SWC. “A Southwestern Conference championship is very difficult to win and we feel very happy,” Lipe said.

“We had a pretty good day today,” said Alton coach Bob Lowe. “Our No. 2 man (Ben Simansky) got fifth place (over Belleville West's Dylan Firestone 6-0, 6-4) and our No. 1 man (Walker Moan) was 1-1 but had to drop out with a shoulder injury – we're hoping he'll be ready by (next week's IHSA Class 2A Belleville East Sectional); overall, we had a pretty good day.

“I'm really happy; we competed great and we had a really good tournament, so I'm happy; it was a really good day for the kids and I'm proud of the kids – they did well.”

The other winners for the Tigers on the day were Logan Pursell at No. 4 doubles, a 6-2, 7-5 winner over O'Fallon's Evan Porter and Jason Pan at No. 6 singles, a 6-3, 6-4 winner over Eric Lipson of the Panthers. Alton's finishes on the day included Moan, who took sixth at No. 1 singles after having to withdraw from his fifth-place match with West's Andrew McCullough; Ben Simansky at No. 2 singles, who took fifth over West's Dylan Firestone 6-0, 6-4; Carson Freeman at No. 3 singles, who finished fourth after falling to O'Fallon's Quincy Dollison 6-0, 6-1; Sam Kane at No. 4 singles, finishing fifth over West's Alex Rosenkranz 6-4, 7-5; Alex Bierman at No. 5 singles, taking seventh; and Jared Engleman at No. 6 singles, who finished seventh.



2018 SOUTHWESTERN CONFERENCE

BOYS TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP

FINAL TEAM STANDINGS

Edwardsville, 72; Belleville East, 60; O'Fallon, 56; Collinsville, 36; Belleville West, 35; Alton, 32; Granite City, 24; East St. Louis, 9

SINGLES – FLIGHT NO. 1

Final: Zach Trimpe, Edwardsville, def. Max Skaer, Belleville East, 6-2, 3-6, 10-7

Third Place: Dominic Macaluso, O'Fallon, def. Will Henze, Collinsville, 6-0, 6-1

Fifth Place: Andrew McCullough, Belleville West, def. Walker Moan, Alton, withdrew

FLIGHT NO. 2

Final: Alex Gray, Edwardsville, def. Christian Cowulich, Belleville East, 6-0, 6-0

Third Place: Niko Papachrisanthou, O'Fallon, def. Ben Hunsinger, Collinsville, 6-0, 6-0

Fifth Place: Ben Simansky, Alton, def. Dylan Firestone, Belleville West, 6-0, 6-4

FLIGHT NO. 3

Final: Seth Lipe, Edwardsville, def. Carter Baldus, Belleville East, 6-0, 6-0

Third Place: Quincy Dollison, O'Fallon, def. Carson Freeman, Alton, 6-0, 6-1

Fifth Place: Tony Scatturo, Collinsville, def. Joey Calhoun, Belleville West, 6-4, 6-0

FLIGHT NO. 4

Final: Logan Pursell, Edwardsville, def. Evan Potter, O'Fallon, 6-2, 7-5

Third Place: Cameron Cagas, Belleville East, def. Ricky Coca, Collinsville, 6-2, 6-4

Fifth Place: Sam Kane, Alton, def. Alex Rosenkranz, Belleville West, 6-4, 7-5

FLIGHT NO. 5

Final: Drake Schreiber, Edwardsville, def. Cory Erickson, Belleville East, 2-6, 6-2, 10-7

Third Place: Noah Kellerman, O'Fallon, def. Brayden Easton, Belleville West, 6-1, 6-0

Fifth Place: Isaiah Mizell, Granite City, def. Cain Bridges, Collinsville, default

FLIGHT NO. 6

Final: Jason Pan, Edwardsville, def. Eric Lipson, O'Fallon, 6-3, 6-4

Third Place: Chase Boushard, Granite City, def. Cole Sowders, Belleville East, 6-2, 6-3

Fifth Place: Jake Buettner, Belleville West, def. Carsten Olsson, Collinsville, 6-0, 6-0