



# Lancers edge Tigers for IHSA 2A East sectional championship

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
May 22 2018 6:05 AM





BELLEVILLE – Edwardsville's boys tennis team got a bad break Saturday night.

Literally.

Tiger senior Alex Gray, who had reached the doubles semifinals along with Seth Lipe earlier in the day Saturday, slipped going to his car and broke a bone in his right elbow, forcing him out of the IHSA Class 2A Belleville East Sectional tournament and denying him a chance to defend his state doubles title that he had won last year with Zach Trimpe.

Lipe and Gray, who had advanced to this weekend's IHSA Class 2A state tennis tournament in the Chicago suburbs, were forced to forfeit their semifinal match to Niko Papachrisanthou/Quincy Dollison and their third-place match to Carter Baldus/Cam Cagas of the host Lancers.

Under IHSA rules, the Tigers were able to sub Gray for the state tournament with a player who did not take part in the sectional; freshman Ben Blake will be taking Gray's place in Arlington Heights when the state tournament begins Thursday.

Trimpe, playing singles this year, also advanced to the state tournament by reaching the semifinals of the rain-delayed event Saturday, got to the singles final by defeating East's Christian Cowulich 6-1, 6-2, and faced the Lancers' Max Skaer in the final.

In a repeat of the battle the two had in the Southwestern Conference tournament singles final, Skaer this time defeated Trimpe 2-6, 7-5, 6-2 to claim the title and give the Lancers the points they needed to edge the Tigers for the team title.

East had 23 points to Edwardsville's 22 to take the team crown, with Springfield third at 18 points and O'Fallon 17 points; the rest of the field included Quincy (10), Belleville West (8), Danville (6), Alton (4), Collinsville (2) and Granite City (0).

“A lot of tough blows since Friday,” said Tiger coach Dave Lipe of the weekend's events. “Belleville East played very well tonight; tip your hat to Max, he did a great thing by beating Dominic (Macaluso of O'Fallon in the semifinal) and Zach.”

Trimpe had to battle through cramps in the final set against Skaer but pressed on to finish the match. “He had one muscle cramp and thankfully, he was able to control it and Max was very good tonight and was very durable,” Lipe said. “He was able to win six sets (in the tournament) and you have to tip your hat to that; you have to congratulate him.

“Congratulations to Belleville East on winning the sectional and congratulations to Max and all the kids who qualified

Lipe had praise for both Skaer and Trimpe; the two players battled throughout their final. “They played well and this is a tough sport,” Lipe said. “You can see it's a tough sport; not everyone realizes the grind that it takes to win a tennis match.”

“It was just kind of hard; I felt like I was in control of the match throughout the whole match,” Trimpe said when a cramp suddenly struck him early in the final set against Skaer. “Suddenly it just kind of hits you; it was so sudden and it's really unfortunate. I was playing really well, he was playing well – it was a battle.

“We're always battling each other, no matter where we are, no matter if it's high school or USTA events; I had fun, it was a fun fight and I can't do anything about it.”

Trimpe was happy with how he played over the weekend. “Even when I was cramping, I felt I still played well and I don't think I lost any of my focus; I just have to recuperate and just get back and be ready for state.”