

# Edwardsville's Gray signs letter with Wisconsin-Whitewater

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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## SEE ALEX GRAY VIDEO BELOW:

EDWARDSVILLE – Alex Gray had one of the greatest boys tennis careers in the history of Edwardsville High School's athletic program.

Gray won 169 matches in his four years with the Tigers, winning the 2017 IHSA Class 2A doubles championship with Zach Trimpe; he played doubles with Seth Lipe in the season just completed, but a broken elbow suffered in an accident during the IHSA Class 2A Belleville East Sectional tournament forced him out of the tournament and brought an end to his season and high school career.

Gray will continue his tennis career next fall as he signed a letter of intent to attend NCAA Division III school Wisconsin-Whitewater, a member of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference with schools like Wisconsin-Stout, Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Wisconsin-Eau Claire and Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

“The environment there is definitely really inviting and the coaches and players made me feel welcome there; as soon as I got there, it felt like home,” Gray said. “I knew this is where I wanted to be, studying and playing tennis. I want to play tennis, but in the grand scheme, I want to get a good degree and playing Division III tennis will give me a lot of time to study and focus on my schoolwork so I can get that good degree and find a job quickly.

“If I was playing a lot of tennis and it felt like a job for me, the grades might slack and that’s what I didn’t want to do; that’s another reason why I went to Whitewater.”

Gray plans on majoring in biochemistry at UW-Whitewater. “I just want to get a job in the biochemistry field,” Gray said. “It’s going to be a lot of school and a lot of work, but the payoff will definitely be worth it.”

“The credit goes to Alex and his family; he’s going to a great school with a terrific program, one of the top Division III programs in the country,” said Tiger coach Dave Lipe. “I know the coach there (Frank Barnes); coach Barnes is really looking forward to having him. I spoke to him personally at the Naper Valley Tournament; he’s really excited to have Alex there and he expects Alex to make an immediate impact on his lineup and I do too.

“Alex is obviously a great doubles player; he’s way ahead of the curve in terms of his doubles skills for most skills due to the amount of doubles that he’s played the past three years, or really throughout his career. But he’s obviously a prolific singles player – he’s one of the pre-eminent players in the history of our program with 169 wins, No. 3 all-time. Without his injury (the broken elbow at the sectional tournament), he could have had a chance to be No. 1, but he had some bad luck there at the end and that was a bummer for all of us.”

“It was the worst timing I could have had, for sure,” Gray said of his elbow injury that forced him from the sectional tournament; his place on the state doubles team was taken by freshman Ben Blake. “It was heartbreaking for me and the team, but I would say Seth and Ben adapted to it well and went up to state, competed and got a match, which I was proud of them for; Ben had never played a match even close to that scale in importance, so I think it shows how good a player he’s going to be and how much of an impact he’s going to make for this team for sure.

“I was really proud of watching; it was a bummer, but I look back on my career and think about the state championship and the friends that I made – I can’t complain about my career here at EHS. I’m very proud to have been a Tiger for sure.”