

Edwardsville/LCCC tennis player Anna Holland signs with Ottawa University in Kansas

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Anna Holland, a 2016 Edwardsville High graduate, has been an outstanding representative for the EHS girls tennis program since she parlayed an outstanding senior year into a spot on Lewis and Clark Community College's women's tennis year.

Holland signed with Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kan., in a Sunday morning ceremony at the EHS Tennis Center; Holland reached last season's NJCAA Women's Tennis Championship, going 1-1 in singles play at the tournament. Ottawa is an NAIA-affiliated school and a member of the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference.

Holland found out about the Braves' program while she was playing for the Trailblazers at last spring's NJCAA tournament in Waco, Texas. "I found out Ottawa after meeting (Enge), actually," Holland said. "I looked into the school and I thought it was great that they had a radio program; I'd been trying to find something out of state for both tennis and radio – it's hard to find both."

Holland will be majoring in radio production at Ottawa and is currently serving a summer internship at St. Louis-based community radio station KDHX-FM. "I'm interested in any kind of audio production at the moment," Holland said. "I'm specializing in radio; I like music production, but I really like radio production."

"I met Anna at the junior college national tournament this May," said Braves coach Scott Enge about how he found out about Holland. "I liked her backhand, I liked her competitiveness on the court, liked her serve and I really liked how she smiled all the way through the competition; she's always got a smile on her face when she plays."

"That tells me she's got a good attitude and she enjoys the competition; I thought that would be a good fit for our program."

Enge has known Tiger coach Dave Lipe for several years. "I've known coach Lipe for over 12-13 years," Enge said. "My son would come here and play tournaments when he was in the (USTA) Missouri Valley ranks – I know this is a great program here and anybody who comes out of here is going to be a good player."

Holland became interested in tennis through her father Gardner as a youngster. "She was around a lot whenever I was teaching lessons 20-some years ago; Dave and I were working at the same racquet club and after Anna was born, she was just around it a lot," Gardner Holland said.

"I really love competition, but I really like about how tennis is a full-body sport," Anna Holland said. "I like how mental it is too; you're really fighting for yourself out there, but also on a team, they're cheering you on and you're cheering them on."

"I model my game in part on the Williams sisters; watching Venus' serve really influenced me and I love Serena."

Holland also credited the just-retired LCCC women's tennis coach Johnna Kinney for helping improve her game in her time with the Trailblazers. "I think my coach (Kinney) helped me most; she has a lot of experience in sports other than tennis and she helped me through a lot of mental blocks I had on the court," Anna Holland said. "The people at Lewis and Clark are really supportive and it was great hitting with the team; I felt like I was really a part of the team."

Being part of the Tiger program helped open doors for her, Anna Holland felt. "It was a huge deal," she said. "Being from Edwardsville opened a lot of doors for me; coach Lipe's reputation is very well known in this area and across the country, apparently."

"His guidance does carry over to other parts of my life – the lessons he would teach us on the court carry over to other parts of life regarding sportsmanship, tenacity – Edwardsville's just a fantastic program and it's opened a lot of doors for me."

"I'm very happy for Anna," Lipe said. "I'm grateful for the opportunity she had at Lewis and Clark; I know she developed there and had a good experience there. Scott Enge is a coach with a national reputation – a lifelong tennis guy from a great tennis family; I know Scott is passionate about tennis – he's won national coach of the year a couple of times at least."

"Scott is doing great things at Ottawa University and has recruited this area hard – he's been very enthusiastic about players from this area and I'm delighted Anna's going there; Scott will give Anna a chance to continue to develop. I'm very grateful for her opportunity and I'm enthusiastic for the work Scott's going to do with Anna and the experience Anna's going to get at Ottawa University."