



# Uncle sparks Karibian's interest in tennis with Tigers

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
September 13 2018 10:46 AM



EDWARDSVILLE – Natalie Karibian’s interest in tennis goes back a long way.

It came thanks to her uncle Raffi, who has coached high school tennis in Granite City for many years. Karibian, a senior, is now the No. 1 player for Edwardsville’s girls' team.

“In early and middle school, he started hitting the ball with me,” Natalie Karibian recalled. “I tried a lot of other sports, but tennis just kind of clicked with me once I started playing with him and I started playing more regularly; it just went from there.”

Karibian did set some goals for herself at the start of the season, “I really don’t have wins I’m trying to accomplish,” she said, “but I’m trying to play my most aggressive, best season so far; so far, I’m proud of what I’ve accomplished and these last couple of weekend trips we’ve taken I think I’ve had a really aggressive game so far – I’m really happy with that.

“Of course, I want to get to state and as a team, I hope we can do really well in (the Southwestern) conference and (the IHSA Class 2A) sectionals as well.”

Hitting with her uncle was a big factor in bringing Karibian to tennis. “He’s definitely a big factor in it,” Karibian said. “I tried softball, swimming, golf – a lot of stuff. It’s fun, that’s another thing that drew me to (tennis).

“I’ve not decided (if she will play at the collegiate level) yet; we’ll see how the season goes and I’ll be prepared to make a decision at the end of the season.”

Karibian hopes to go to a four-year school and major in biology after her graduation from Edwardsville next spring. “I want to be pre-dental and I want to go to dental school after college,” Karibian said. “I’m just happy to be here with my team.”