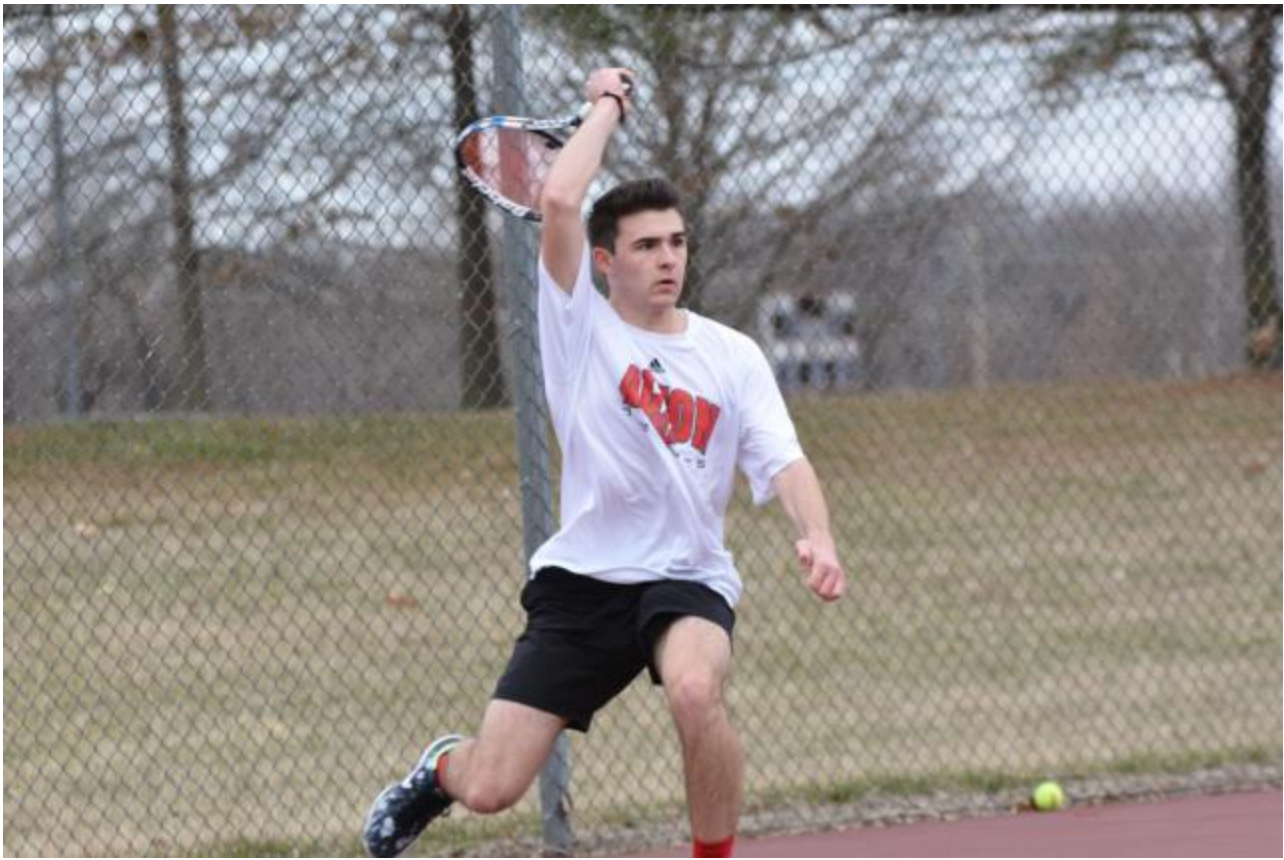




Tigers blank Redbirds in SWC Opener for Both Teams, Coach Lipe Also Notches Win No. 800

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
March 20 2019 6:30 AM







SEE VIDEO:

EDWARDSVILLE – The big news of the day from the Edwardsville Tennis Complex was that Edwardsville head tennis coach Dave Lipe reached a milestone that few will ever match - his 800th career win.

The other strongest point of Tuesday was his Tigers looked like they would be dominant once again in boys tennis with a 9-0 win over Alton in the Southwestern Conference opener for both teams.

As for the day, Lipe felt it was very good for the team to get its first win of the season and was also extremely proud of the 800th career win, focusing most of the attention on his players for their success.

“It feels good to get the first win of the season,” Lipe said. “That actually is more of a focus for me right now than any accumulated total of wins. So it feels good to hopefully begin to gain some confidence. We lost three matches over the weekend; two were especially tough to lose. And so, it just feels really great to start off 1-0 in the conference.

“This match was more significant for our lesser experienced players,” Lipe continued. “You know, we’ve got guys like Zach (Trimpe) and Seth (Lipe) and Drake (Schreiber) that have played a lot of matches. And for them, this match, it’s not as important for them as it was to four, five and six. Sam Motley got his first varsity win today, so I’m very happy for him. And I thought Nick (Hobin) and Ben (Blake) played well. And that our top three kids played like I thought they would, so overall, it was a good day for us. And I know that Alton graduated some good players last year.”

Alton head coach Bob Lowe felt that his team played very well against a very strong Edwardsville side.

“I thought we did pretty good against a really strong team,” Lowe said. “So, the kids competed well, and I thought it was a good day.”

Lowe is hoping that the Redbirds can finish in the upper half of the SWC this season, and to send one of his players to the IHSA state tournament in suburban Chicago this spring.

“Well, I hope we can finish in the top half of the conference,” Lowe said, “and hopefully, we can maybe send somebody to state, who knows? But we’ll find out.”

Alton’s top player will be senior Carson Freeman, and he’s joined by a very experienced supporting cast.

“Carson’s our number one, Sam Kane’s number two, really strong player,” Lowe said, “and Jared Engleman’s number three. So we’ve got three strong kids at one, two and three.”

Among the underclassmen, Lowe named Nolan Graves and Will Johnson as players to watch.

“I think Nolan Graves is playing well, and so is Will Johnson,” Lowe said. “I think they’re going to do good.” Johnson is a junior, while Graves is a freshman.

In the singles matches, Trimpe got the Tigers off to a good start with a 6-0, 6-0 win over Freeman, Lipe defeated Kane 6-0, 6-0, and Schreiber defeated Engleman 6-0, 6-0. In the lower half, Blake defeated Ethan King 6-2, 6-1, while Motley defeated Johnson 6-0, 6-0 and Hobin won over Alex Bierman 6-0, 6-0.

In the doubles matches, Trimpe and Lipe won over Freeman and King 6-0, 6-0, Schreiber and Hobin defeated Engleman and King 6-2, 6-1 and Blake and Motley won over Bierman and Johnson 6-0, 6-0 to complete the sweep.

The Redbirds next have a dual meet against O'Fallon at home on March 26, starting at 3:30 p.m. and both teams will compete in Edwardsville March 29-30, with the first big tournament of the season. Lowe's overall goal for his team will be to win as much as possible and have fun doing it as well.

"That's it. Hopefully, we'll do the best we can, and have fun doing it," Lowe said. "That's our main goal."

Lowe doesn't have many big expectations for his team, but for his players to compete as well as they can.

"No, not really," Lowe said. "Just to get out there and compete well in every match, and win as many as we can."

For Lipe, he's hoping that his team will improve as the season goes on.

"I expect us to improve a lot," Lipe said. "I expect us to improve up and down our lineup significantly. I expect us to become a team together, I expect us to grow a lot as a team, I expect us to develop. We've really got a nice group of kids out for tennis this year, nice big freshman class. So, I expect us to improve dramatically, and I expect us to hopefully motivate some kids to get to work in this offseason."



[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)