



Pro Wildcard Challenge, Presented By TheBANK of Edwardsville, Begins Today, Trimpe, Lipe Participate

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EDWARDSVILLE – The Pro Wildcard Challenge, presented by TheBANK Of Edwardsville, is set to begin on Thursday at the Edwardsville Tennis Center, and this year, the stakes are certainly much higher.

The 32-player draw will include many local tennis players, and all will be competing for only one wildcard entry into the main draw of the Edwardsville Futures, presented by THE EGHM Foundation, which begins Aug. 5.

Registration for the Pro Wildcard Challenge ended on Tuesday, and while the players' list and draw weren't yet available, it's expected that many local players will be taking part in the tournament.

That includes recent Edwardsville High School graduates Zach Trimpe and Seth Lipe, who played in last year's event, with Lipe going through to the second round after taking a forfeit win over his opponent.

The field will include some players from Europe and South Africa as well as from around the country and is expected to also include some of the top collegiate players and others who are looking to improve their Universal Tennis Rating score in order to possibly play on the ATP tour.

There will be also a consolation bracket, and although the consolation winner won't be able to advance to the Futures tournament, the bracket will still help provide the players with gaining valuable experience.

In addition to the Wildcard Challenge, a new event added this year will be the Sunday Doubles Shootout presented by Jeb and Ginger Blasingame of Keller Williams Marquee Realty and is a one-day doubles tournament that will qualify the winner for the main draw of the doubles event.

The winner of the Wildcard Challenge is hoping to join the many of the past champions of the tournament, such as Tennys Sandgren, the 2016 Futures champion who recently made it to the Round of 16 at Wimbledon, and was also a quarterfinalist at the Kia Australian Open in 2018. Another former champion in doubles is John Peers, who was a doubles finalist at the Australian and U.S. Opens in 2015 and has also played for Australia in the Davis Cup tournament.

Also, the first-ever champion, Blake Strode in 2011, was an NCAA semifinalist in 2009 while playing for Arkansas, winning the Intercollegiate Tennis Association's Arthur Ashe Award for sportsmanship and leadership. Strode went on to graduate from Harvard

Law School, and today is the executive director of Arch City Defenders, a non-profit law firm located in St. Louis.

For further information on the tournament and its progress, please log onto the tournament's web site, www.edwardsvillefutures.com.