



Former Edwardsville Star Erik Weiler Captures First-Round Pro Wildcard Challenge Match

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Former Edwardsville High tennis player Erik Weiler won his first-round match at the Pro Wildcard Challenge presented by TheBANK Of Edwardsville /Busey Bank, defeating Caseyville’s Nico Papachrisanthou 6-1, 6-1 as he seeks to win the tournament and gain the wild card spot in next week’s Edwardsville Futures tournament.

“I felt really good,” Weiler said in a post-match interview. “I took a couple of days off last weekend because of my foot, but I wanted to come back really fresh. I was serving really well, I was volleying really well, and when I do that, I can pretty much do anything.”

The Wildcard Challenge means a lot to Weiler, both as a way of qualifying for the main draw as well as playing at home.

“It’s a huge thing,” Weiler said. “Whenever tournament directors have wildcards for this, like, people like me, who have no points, and it’s really, really hard to get into bigger tournaments, it’s like a great opportunity. And it’s also at home, so it’s real nice, too. I love playing here. It’s always been fun,” he said with a smile.

Outside of qualifying for the main draw, Weiler is more focused on his overall play rather than winning or losing the tournament.

“I’m not really worried about, like, winning or losing this tournament,” Weiler said, “I’m more just focusing about how I’m playing, really. Mainly with my serve and my balance, that kind of thing. I’m just trying to focus and get ready for the college season coming up, but if I qualify, I qualify. It’s always number one,” he said, again with a smile and laugh.

Weiler feels he’s been having an up-and-down summer season as he prepares for his upcoming college season at Quincy University.

“It’s been up and down,” Weiler said. “I’ve had some lows, but I’ve also really got highs. I think I’ve really improved a lot, mentally, I think, definitely physically. I think I’m a lot stronger than I came in at the end of summer.”

But Weiler is looking forward to competing in the Wildcard Challenge and hopefully move on to the Futures tournament.

“As always, always trying to beat the best,” Weiler said. “And do my best as well.”

Weiler does feel that he’s gotten stronger physically, and has improved his overall game as well.

“I think overall, just physically,” Weiler said. “I’ve gained, I think, five, 10 pounds of muscle over the summer. I’ve been lifting heavy, I’ve been running harder. Overall, just physicality. I’ve just been working really hard to just try to make myself stronger. I think it’s shown overall how I’ve been playing.”