



Huge Success: Edwardsville Junior Team Tennis Qualifies Six Of Seven Teams For USTA District Tournament This Week

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville Summer Junior Team Tennis program has enjoyed a very successful 2021 season and has qualified six of its seven teams for the United States Tennis Association Junior Team Tennis district tournament, which will take place Monday through Thursday at the Dwight Davis Tennis Center in Forest Park in St. Louis.

The seven teams had a total of 55 players competing in different age group levels and according to playing ability, and in those numbers were 20 new players being introduced to JTT.

"We have seven teams competing this summer," said Emily Cimarolli, one of the team's coaches and also an assistant coach for the girls' tennis team at Edwardsville High School. "Last time, we only had four, so we were able to add a bunch of extra players. We now have 55 kids playing on our seven teams."

The main idea is to give players a chance to gain match play experience in both singles and doubles, gain confidence in their skills on the court, and in the case of the older players, prepare for their high school seasons.

The teams each played a six-week regular season in local leagues, with the top four teams advancing to this week's district tournament.

The matches were one set in boys and girls singles, boys and girls doubles and two mixed doubles matches. Each game won counted as a point towards the team score. Every game counted, and players had to remain competitive to win every game in order to help his or her team.

Another unique feature is that coaches are allowed to be on-court with players during their matches to offer feedback, advice, encouragement, strategy, and tips during play.

"Because so many are new to match play, it's great that we can give them that feedback right there," Cimarolli said.

Over 90 percent of the players this year also are involved in the Edwardsville Tennis Academy during the year, which also provided additional coaching opportunities for the players.

"I think that makes a big difference," Cimarolli said, "in that we can integrate what the kids practice in their matches, and vice versa. Anything that they struggle within a match, we can go back and practice it."

The JTT program also provides players with the chance to develop their games further, showing commitment to the sport and the chance to use the program to play in USTA tournaments at the next level of competition. Cimarolli is very proud of her players and their commitment to improving as players.

"Absolutely," Cimarolli said. "We commend their dedication to the sport and the willingness to keep improving."

The highest level team was the 18 Gold Plus team, which went 5-0 in their league and was coached by Cimarolli and Kirk Schuleter. The players were Chloe Koons, Chloe Trimpe, Katie Woods, Morgan Marshall, Hannah Colbert, Colton Hulme, Jade Dynamic, Michael Karibian and Jesse Hatstrup.

The 18 Gold team went 2-2 for the season and also qualified for the district tournament. Morgan Colbert coached the team, which consisted of Zoe Byron, Ella Reed, Alyssa Wise, Brooklyn Earnhart, Jesse Earnhart, Jensen Weedman, Harrison Feco, Chris Karateew and Sean Armstrong.

The 14 Gold Plus team went 4-2 for the season, which qualified them for the sectional meet in Tulsa, Okla. on July 20-22. Cimarolli coached the team, and the players were

Sophie Byron, Gabriella Hill, Dia Kannan, Joe Cass, Issac Chieboun, Brandon Wong and Schaefer Bates.

The 14 Gold team had a record of 3-2, which put them through to the district meet this week. The players were Natalie Beck, Madeline Beck, Lillian Schuler, Milo Kathriner, Michael McNamara, Timmy Curran and William Nativi and were coached by Mike Kathriner.

The 14 Silver 1 team was an introductory level team, with a match format of two gender neutral singles matches and two gender neutral doubles matches. The team went 4-2 on the season, qualifying them for the districts, and were coached by Maria Mezo. The players on the team were Amelia Hill, Reagan Wetzell, Maddie Bash, Veda Kommineni, Derek Guetterman, Andrew Wang and Daniel Wang.

The 14 Silver 2 team followed the same format as the Silver 1 team, and finished 2-4 for the year. The team's players were Kaitlyn Lemanski, Sophia Carruthers, Katelyn Ludwig, Julia Harriss, John Almos, Juan Manuel Callis and Lucas Rudd, and the team was coached by Emma Lipe.

The 12 Green team used a green ball that had lower pressure, and were coached by Morgan Marshall. The team went 2-2, putting them through to the district meet, and the players were Grace Knabe, Leah Brune, Hannah Stahlheber, Emmie Robberson, Johnny Curran, Eliot Riechmann, Nolan Sturycz, Blake Manley and Jack Menendez.

The two Gold Plus teams also have a chance to qualify for the sectional meet in Tulsa, but the national meet won't be played this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was also responsible for last year's competition to be cancelled, and Cimarolli, along with the other coaches and players, are very happy to have the chance to play this year.

"At least we're getting to play," Cimarolli said, "because everything was cancelled last year due to COVID. We trained very minimally, and it drastically limited our opportunities."

The biggest thing that Cimarolli hopes for her players is that they enjoy their chance to play, and hopes that JTT becomes a launching pad for the players to go on to play in USTA-sanctioned tournaments at the next level.

"I hope they enjoy the experience of match play," Cimarolli said, "and this is a stepping stone towards higher levels of competition, which would be USTA tournaments on the weekends."

18 Gold Plus - Gold Plus - highest ability level in that age group - format includes : girls singles, boys singles, girls doubles, boys doubles, 2 mixed doubles

- Coach - Emily Cimarolli & Kirk Schlueter
- Players - Chloe Koons, Chloe Trimpe, Katie Woods, Morgan Marshall, Hannah Colbert, Colton Hulme, Jade Dynamic, Michael Karibian, Jesse Hattrup
- 5-0 for season, qualified for Districts

18 Gold - Gold - middle ability group in that age group - format includes : girls singles, boys singles, girls doubles, boys doubles, 2 mixed doubles

- Coach - Morgan Colbert
- Players - Zoe Byron, Ella Reed, Alyssa Wise, Brooklyn Earnhart, Jessa Earnhart, Jensen Weedman, Harrison Feco, Chris Karateew, Sean Armstrong
- 2-2 for season, qualified for Districts

14 Gold Plus - Gold Plus - highest ability level in that age group - format includes : girls singles, boys singles, girls doubles, boys doubles, 2 mixed doubles

- Coach - Emily Cimarolli
- Players - Sophie Byron, Gabriella Hill, Dia Kannan, Joe Cass, Isaac Chleboun, Brandon Wong, Schaefer Bates
- 4-2 for season, 1st place team, qualified for Sectionals in Tulsa, OK

14 Gold - Gold - middle ability group in that age group - format includes : girls singles, boys singles, girls doubles, boys doubles, 2 mixed doubles

- Coach - Mike Kathriner
- Players - Natalie Beck, Madeline Beck, Lillian Schuler, Milo Kathriner, Michael McNamara, Timmy Curran, William Nativi
- 3-2 for season, qualified for Districts

14 Silver 1 - Silver - introductory ability level in that age group - format includes : 4 gender neutral singles, 2 gender neutral doubles

- Coach - Maria Mezo
- Players - Amelia Hill, Reagan Wetzel, Maddie Bash, Veda Kommineni, Derek Guetterman, Andrew Wang, Daniel Wang
- 4-2 for season, qualified for Districts

14 Silver 2 - Silver - introductory ability level in that age group - format includes : 4 gender neutral singles, 2 gender neutral doubles

- Coach - Emma Lipe
- Players - Kaitlyn Lemanski, Sophia Carruthers, Katelyn Ludwig, Julia Harriss, John Almos, Juan Manuel Callis, Lucas Rudd
- 2-4 for season

12 Green - Green - green ball for 12 & under players - format includes : 4 gender neutral singles, 4 gender neutral doubles

- Coach - Morgan Marshall
- Players - Grace Knabe, Leah Brune, Hannah Stahlheber, Emmie Robberson, Johnny Curran, Eliot Riechmann, Nolan Sturycz, Blake Manley, Jack Menendez
- 2-2 for season, qualified for Districts





