

Ponwith Repeats As Doubles Champion, This Time With Stalder, While Kirchheimer, Hijikata Advance To Singles Final

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July 25 2021 8:00 AM





EDWARDSVILLE - Nathan Ponwith became the second player to repeat as doubles champion, this time with Reese Stalder, while third seed Strong Kirchheimer advanced to the singles final and Rinky Hijikata won a dramatic three-set semifinal to advance to the final on the sixth day of the Edwardsville Futures tennis tournament presented by The EGHM Foundation.

Ponwith joined his 2018 partner, Liam Caruana, as a repeat champion as he and Stalder took advantage of a pair of service breaks in each set to take a 6-4, 6-4 win over Christian Langmo and Bruno Kuzuhara.

In the singles semifinals, Kirchheimer defeated Langmo 6-4, 6-4 as Kirchheimer used a high-pressure game to turn back Langmo, and Hijikata won a three-set thriller over Cannon Kingsley 7-6 (7-3 in the tiebreak), 6-7 (6-8 in the tiebreak), 6-2 in a match that lasted three-plus hours in the stifling St. Louis summer heat.

Hijikata, from Australia, and Kingsley played the match of the tournament, with both players coming up with big shots before Hijikata came up with the winners in the first tiebreak to win the opening set. In the second set tiebreak, Hijikata had double match point at 6-4 before Kingsley rallied back to take the next four points to win the set and

tie the match. After a break for heat protocols, Hijikata wore down Kingsley, taking two service breaks to go ahead 5-1 in the final set, then held his serve to win the set and match 6-2 to advance to Sunday's final.

In the doubles final, Ponwith and Stalder broke Langmo and Kusuhara's serve to take 2-1 leads in both sets, with Ponwith's serve and Stalder coming up with brilliant winners from tough angles to take the second set and the title 6-4 in the second set.

In the trophy presentation after the match, all four players thanked the fans and organizers for their support and hospitality during the week.

The singles final between Kirchheimer and Hijikata will start at 10 a.m. on Sunday morning, and will be livestreamed on Riverbender.com.









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