

# **Tigers Capture SWC Girls Tennis Crown, Are Primed For Friday and Saturday Sectional**

by Brandon Harris

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O'FALLON - The 2021 High Schools Girls Tennis Southwestern Conference Tournament had some bragging rights on the line. O'Fallon beat Edwardsville, Edwardsville beat Belleville East, and Belleville East beat O'Fallon. For what could be the first time in documented history, there was a three-way tie going into the Girls Conference Tournament. 2021's Southwestern Conference tournament was a real testament to the quality of tennis in the Southern Illinois area and a chance to stake a claim at the top.



In the end, the top three teams would finish first, second, and third. The O'Fallon Panthers came in third place with 48 points, the Belleville East Lancers won second place with 53 points, and the Edwardsville Tigers won the Conference Championship by only four more points than the Lancers with a total of 57 points. Alton was fifth overall with 23 points.



"This win was historic in the sense that I have played 50 Conference tournaments, and this was the first time there has been a three-way tie for first place going into the tournament." Said Edwardsville Head Coach, Dave Lipe. "The fact that O'Fallon, Belleville East, and us (Edwardsville) were one-and-one against each other made this tournament more dramatic than normal. If this tournament wasn't so strong, the win would be as gratifying."

Match in and match out, the Tiger's head coach challenges his players to play their best tennis of the year. All eight Tiger players did just that according to Lipe. "Honestly, all eight of our entrants were awesome. The ones that stood out were matches to players that we had lost earlier in the year and won this tournament like Zoe (Byrone). It is also

special for players like Chloe (Koons) and Hannah (Colbert) to not lose a match after not losing a conference match all regular season. All eight kids were spectacular this weekend."

### **The Edwardsville results for the tournament were:**

#### **Singles**

Chloe Koons - 1st place

Hannah Colbert - 1st place

Zoe Byrone - 2nd place

Alyssa Wise - 3rd place

Sofie Byrone - 2nd place

Gabi Hill - 1st place

#### **Doubles**

Colbert/Wise - 1st place

Koons/Byrone 1st place

Jessa & Brooklyn Earnhart - 3rd place

Not only was the tournament special because of the three-way tie, but the ending was also unique as every Tiger entry finished top three in their events. There were five first-place finishes, two second-place finishes, and two third-place finishes. "We held or improved our seed at every position," said Lipe. "That means we did not underperform anywhere based on what we had done during the regular season. I think that is something to be very proud of."

According to Lipe, the players of the Tiger tennis team, his coaching staff of Kirk Schlueter, Emily Cimarolli, John Koons, the player's parents, and the community are the key to winning championships. "The players were our number one performer. But the staff of Kirk, Emily, and John were tremendous all weekend. I also want to thank the parents, the families, the kids, the assistant coaches, the athletic department, and Dr. Stuart for all they do. We get great support from our players, parents, school district, and administration."

The Conference Tournament is over and there are only two remaining competitions in the 2021 high school girls tennis season; sectionals and state for those who qualify. By design, the Tigers are playing some of their best tennis of the year. "We are peaking at the right time and feeling good about ourselves. We are looking forward to Sectionals this weekend at our place and then hopefully getting some kids through to State the following weekend," the head coach said.

The Sectional Tournament starts on Friday, October 15. To catch the final matches before the Tigers head north to Chicago for the State Tournament, be sure to visit Edwardsville High School the weekend of October 15 and 16.

### **Southwestern Conference Girls Tennis Tournament**

Edwardsville 57

Belleville East 53

O'Fallon 48

Belleville West 40

Alton 23

Collinsville 22

East St. Louis 0

#### **#1 Singles**

First Chloe Koons 11 (EHS) 6-2, 6-0

Second Kylie DelVecchio 10 (BE)

Third Megan Mueller 12 (OF) 7-5, 6-1

#### **#2 Singles**

First Hannah Colbert 12 (EHS) 6-1, 6-1

Second Kelsey Dismukes 12 (OF)

Third Mia McIsaac 12 (BE) 7-5, 6-3

#### **#3 Singles**

First Brodie Rauch 12 (BE) 6-3, 4-6, 10-6

Second Zoe Byron 11 (EHS)

Third Ava Taylor 12 (OF) 6-1, 6-1

#### **#4 Singles**

First Paisley Struewing 10 (BE) 7-5, 6-4

Second Isabel Wells 10 (OF)

Third Alyssa Wise 10 (EHS) 6-3, 6-0

#### **#5 Singles**

First Maya Hataway 11 (BE) 6-1, 6-2  
 Second Sophie Byron 9 (EHS)  
 Third Taylor Tieman 10 (BW) 2-6, 7-6 (5), 10-5

## #6 Singles

First Gabi Hill 9 (EHS) 6-2, 6-4  
Second Olivia Eiskant 10 (BW)  
Third Natalie Spihlman 9 (OF) 5-2 (ret)

## #1 Doubles

First Hannah Colbert 12/Alyssa Wise 10 (EHS) 6-0, 6-2  
 Second Megan Mueller 12/Ava Taylor 12 (OF)  
 Third Mari Pellman 12/Hailey Neal 12 (BW) 6-3, 6-3

## #2 Doubles

First Chloe Koons 11/Zoe Byron 11 (EHS) 6-3, 7-5  
Second Kylie DelVecchio 10/Paisley Struewing 10 (BE)  
Third Kelsey Dismukes 12/Analiese Reidelberger 10 (OF) 6-3, 6-2

### #3 Doubles

First Maya Hataway 11/Joanna Cullen (BE) 4-6, 6-4, 10-6  
 Second Isabel Wells 10/Natalie Spihlman 9 (OF)  
 Third Jessa Earnhart 11/Brooklyn Earnhart 11 (EHS) 6-2, 6-2

## 2021 SOUTHWESTERN CONFERENCE TOURNAMENT TEAM RESULTS

## Team

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### **Top Finishers First Runner-up Third**

#1 Singles Chloe Koons 11 (EHS) Kylie DelVecchio 10 (BE) Megan Mueller 12 (OF)  
#2 Singles Hannah Colbert 12 (EHS) Kelsey Dismukes 12 (OF) Mia McIsaac 12 (BE)  
#3 Singles Brodie Rauch 12 (BE) Zoe Byron 11 (EHS) Ava Taylor 12 (OF)  
#4 Singles Paisley Struewing 10 (BE) Isabel Wells 10 (OF) Alyssa Wise 10 (EHS)  
#5 Singles Maya Hataway 11 (BE) Sophie Byron 9 (EHS) Taylor Tieman 10 (BW)  
#6 Singles Gabi Hill 9 (EHS) Olivia Eiskant 10 (BW) Natalie Spihlman 9 (OF)  
#1 Doubles Hannah Colbert 12/Alyssa Wise 10 (EHS) Megan Mueller 12/Ava Taylor 12 (OF) Mari Pellman 12/Hailey Neal 12 (BW)  
#2 Doubles Chloe Koons 11/Zoe Byron 11 (EHS) Kylie DelVecchio 10/Paisley Struewing 10 (BE) Kelsey Dismukes 12/Analiese Reidelberger 10 (OF)  
#3 Doubles Maya Hataway 11/Joanna Cullen (BE) Isabel Wells 10/Natalie Spihlman 9 (OF) Jessa Earnhart 11/Brooklyn Earnhart 11 (EHS)