Ponwith Grinds Out 6-2, 6-4 Win, Trotter Wins Exciting Three Set Match Over Kypson To Advance To Edwardsville Futures Singles Final

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EDWARDSVILLE - Nathan Ponwith of Scottsdale, Ariz., took advantage of two early service breaks in the first set and another service break in the second set to defeat Sam Raffice of Orlando, Fla. 6-2, 6-4, while James Kent Trotter of Japan won a three-set thriller over Patrick Kypson of Durham, N.C. 7-6 (8-6 in the tiebreak), 6-7 (4-7 in the tiebreak), 7-6 (7-4 in the tiebreak) to advance to the singles finals of the Edwardsville Futures tennis tournament presented by the EGHM Foundation Saturday morning and afternoon at the Edwardsville Tennis Center.

The weather was very ideal for good tennis, with sunny skies and the temperatures hovering between the upper 70s and low 80s all day, with a very good fan turnout to see excellent tennis.

In the first semifinal, Ponwith broke Raffice's serve in the opening game to take the lead 1-0 and used a good ground game to help keep Raffice at bay, never really allowing him to gain momentum. Raffice did get some perfectly placed shots in to keep Ponwith honest, but Ponwith broke Raffice's service again to take a 4-1 lead in the set. From there Ponwith hit a good passing shot to set up set point, which Ponwith also won to take the set 6-2 and a 1-0 lead in the match.

The start of the second set saw both players get off to a good start, with Raffice taking the opening game, and Ponwith hitting a great cross-court shot to help tie the set at 1-1. Ponwith then broke Raffice's serve for the third time in the match to go ahead 2-1, with both players holding serve the rest of the set. At 5-4, Ponwith came up with a great shot

to create double match point, with Raffice hitting wide in the last point that allowed Ponwith to win the set 6-4 and the match two sets to none.

The second semifinal was three-and-a-half hours plus of great tennis by both Kypson and Trotter, who was celebrating his 23rd birthday on Saturday, where both players managed to hold serve throughout the match, with the exception of both trading service breaks in the second set. Trotter started the match off with a service ace and went on to take the 1-0 lead. Kypson then won the second game to tie the set 1-1 and from there, both players played extremely well to hold serve, eventually creating the first tiebreaker of the match, which Kypson took an early lead, only to see Trotter come back to tie at 5-5. Trotter then won three of the last four points to win the tiebreak 8-6 and the first set 7-6.

Kypson was the first to break his opponent's serve in the second game of the second set to go ahead 2-0, but Trotter returned the favor in the next game, braking Kypson's serve to cut the lead in half to 2-1. From there, both players did a great job in holding serve, which included a long deuce game at 3-3 that both players kept battling in, with Kypson eventually prevailing to go ahead 4-3. The set eventually went down to another tiebreak, where Kypson won the first three points, only to see Trotter come back to go ahead 4-3. Kypson won the next four points consecutively to win the tiebreak 7-4 and the set 7-6 to force a third and deciding set.

Once again, both players did a remarkable job of holding serve, with Kypson hitting a brilliant inside winner to tie the set 2-2. And again, the set ending up being tied 6-6 to force a tiebreak that would decide the match. Trotter went ahead in the tiebreak 4-0, and got it to 6-1 and five match points. Kypson showed remarkable resiliency in coming back to win three points in a row to cut Trotter's edge to 6-4, but Trotter hit a winner down the line to take the tiebreak 7-4, the set 7-6 and the match 2-1 to go on to his first-ever singles final.

That final between Ponwith, the only remaining seed in the field at number eight, and Trotter, who qualified for the main draw earlier in the week, takes place at the Tennis Center Sunday morning at 11 a.m.

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