



23-Year-Old Tennis Player Matt Rothe Inspires Others With His Positive Approach

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Matt Rothe, a 23-year-old player from Alton, was one of the players who was part of the return of the Mitch n Friends tennis clinic for special needs players Thursday night at the Edwardsville YMCA Meyer Center. He is also looking forward to upcoming events he'll be playing in as well.

Rothe, a long-time player at the clinic, was enjoying himself and the atmosphere at the clinic, a staple of the Edwardsville Futures Tennis Tournament, which returned after a two-year interruption and is one of the most popular events during Futures week.

"Oh, it is great to be here," Rothe said during an interview along with his mother, Jeri. "It's been a long time and I'm glad to be back."

Rothe was using this year's clinic to polish his game up for a tournament he will be playing in the Bloomington-Normal area soon. He got involved in tennis with the help of a coach who organized a team Rothe was involved in.

"Tennis coach Rich Carruthers is why I became a tennis player," Rothe said, "and he got together a tennis team. We got to practice every Saturday and it paid off."

Rothe's mother also talked about her son first got involved with the sport and the team he's now playing for.

"He first started doing tennis, that was at Parker Rec in Alton," Jeri Rothe said. "Then, he started doing Mitch n Friends; we've done that for several years. He's talking about the Mascoutah Galaxy 92. It's a new Special Olympics tennis team. The only one downstate," she said with pride.

Rothe is looking forward to the opportunity to represent the state in the Special Olympics, along with the Galaxy.

"It's my very first time doing this for tennis," Rothe said. "The state."

Rothe said he always enjoys playing in Mitch n Friends and has one very fun thing he loves about the event with a huge smile.