

# **Big Fan Favorite: Personable Tennis Star Kweisi Kenyatte Captivates Youth And Futures Audience**

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Kweisi Kenyatte, an inner-city Detroit native and a recent graduate of the University of Illinois, had a very good week in the doubles competition with his partner, Cooper Williams, reaching the final before losing to Makoto Ochi and Seita

Watanabe of Japan 7-6 (7-1 in the tiebreaker), 6-4 at the Edwardsville Futures Tennis Tournament, presented by the EGHM Foundation, late Saturday afternoon at the Edwardsville Tennis Center.

Although his team lost in the final, Kenyatte had a great week in the tournament, as he and Williams played well throughout and was able to reach the final.

The personable Kenyatte commented Saturday in a post-match interview after the doubles championship: "I have to put on a happy face right now. There are a lot of kids out there that are looking up to me, so my job is to put on a happy face and let everything out once I leave this place," he said with a laugh. "But, I mean, on a serious note, this is a great, great atmosphere, everyone cheering for us. I apologize I couldn't get the result that we all wanted, but this is great to be out here in this atmosphere and have all these people come out to support me, so I feel really great."

Kenyatte very much enjoyed the experience of the week in Edwardsville, being the guest speaker at the Diversity Day clinic on Friday at Liberty Middle School.

"I mean, the experience was amazing," Kenyatte said. "You know, I got the chance to host Diversity Day with a whole bunch of kids from many underprivileged places. And not even that, just some inner-city places. So it was great. I'm from the inner-city, so it just felt great, I felt like I was giving back to them. Like I said, it sucks that I couldn't get the job done for all the people, but I put on a show, and if they were smiling, I guess I did a pretty good job."

And having fun on the court is just as important as winning a championship, for Kenyatte.

"I think the biggest thing is just thinking positive, remembering that, as much as you want to, you can't win everything and every day isn't your day," Kenyatte said. "I definitely didn't play as well as I wanted to today, but that's OK. It happens."

As for his future in the sport, Kenyatte sees a bright future for himself.

"Well, I hope to see my name in lights, I hope," Kenyatte said with a big smile and laugh. "I really think I can make a good career in this for myself in this. I hope I can stay healthy and if it's in God's plans, then we'll see."