

Makoto Ochi, Seita Watanabe Win First-Ever Doubles Title In Edwardsville Futures, Enjoyed Their Experience

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Makoto Ochi of Akashi, Japan and his partner, Seita Watanabe of Fukushima, both won their first-ever pro doubles title at the Edwardsville Futures tennis tournament, presented by the EGHM Foundation, on July 30 at the Edwardsville Tennis Center with a 7-6 (7-1 in the tiebreaker), 6-3 win over Kweisi Kenyatte and Cooper Williams of the United States on a warm and somewhat humid afternoon that had wall-to-wall sunshine.

In a post-match interview with both Ochi and Watanabe, both expressed joy and happiness in winning the championship.

"I got a second title, for second 25K," Watanabe said during the interview, "but we played (for the) second time in the final. This is our first title, so very excited and I play next week in Decatur, so I will do my best."

Watanabe also enjoyed the atmosphere and the fan support during the week, which turned out to be his first time ever in the United States.

"I came for the first time in the U.S.," Watanabe said. "In Japan, nobody goes, because of COVID, but now, there are so many fans, and audiences coming here. I was very excited and I want to say thank you to everyone."

Watanabe also enjoyed the experience of signing autographs for the fans, especially the younger ones.

"I feel like a Roger Federer," Watanabe said with a laugh.

Ochi felt the same excitement and joy of winning the doubles championship.

"Yes, I'm happy," Ochi said. "It's my second title in doubles in my career."

Ochi also enjoyed his experiences in Edwardsville.

"Yeah, I love Edwardsville," Ochi said with a smile.

The possibility of returning in 2023 to play again and possibly defend their championship?

"Yes, for sure," Ochi said.