

Ball Kids, Volunteers, Are Unsung Heroes Of Edwardsville Futures

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Among the many unsung heroes of the Edwardsville Futures tennis tournament, presented by the EGHM Foundation, the volunteers and ball kids are perhaps the most important.



The ticket takers up front and many of the behind-the-scenes workers are important, as they toiled away in the unpredictable weather of the St. Louis area in the summer. often hot and humid, sometimes stormy, but always there when needed.

But it's the ball kids that are the most seen during the later stages of the tournament, yet, they're very important to how smoothly the matches run. At the Futures, the ball kids crews were working together like the proverbial well-oiled machine.

The kids are often seen running onto the court to retrieve loose balls that go into the net at the end of the points or when a serve goes awry. Off the court, you can see them rolling balls back down to the servers' ends, holding the balls for the players, who select which ones to use when the points begin, hitting the balls back gently to the ball kids.

The players and official greatly appreciated their efforts throughout the tournament and it could be seen in little things, like a smile by the players to them, or the chair umpires acknowledging them for their jobs done very well.

They can also be seen facing the chair umpire during changeovers, in effect, guarding the court or waiting for requests for assistance. When needed - they're there.

"The ball kids and other volunteers were phenomenal again this year," Futures Tournament Director Dave Lipe said. "The players and officials love their effort. Kirk Schlueter and Seth Lipe had them looking like Wimbledon ball boys and girls!"



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