

Diversity Day Another Great Success At Edwardsville Futures, Kweisi Kenyatte Was Main Draw For Event

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - The second annual Diversity Day clinic for underprivileged kids was held recently at Liberty Middle School in Edwardsville as a part of the Edwardsville Futures tennis tournament, presented by the EGHM Foundation.

As the inaugural event, the clinic was a huge success, as minority children who are learning to play the game got tips and were able to have a great time playing the game itself.

One of the instructors was recent University of Illinois graduate Kweisi Kenyatte of Detroit, who played in both singles and doubles alongside partner Cooper Williams. Kenyatte, who also served as this year's guest speaker, thoroughly enjoyed his experiences with the kids and felt like he was giving back to the community.

"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."

Kweisi said he feels Diversity Day is a vital part of the Futures Tournament.

"I loved working with the kids," he said. "I think it is very important. It is not often you see a 6-foot-8 guy from Detroit playing tennis. I think it is good to see that if you love the sport, anyone can be a star. I am inspired working with the kids."

Edwardsville Futures Tournament Director Dave Lipe said he believes Diversity Day is one of the most important parts of the annual tournament. Dave beams with pride about what the sponsors of the event and volunteers do each year, exposing tennis to a diverse group of youngsters.

Kimberly Hughes, a former East St. Louis and college tennis star, agrees with Dave that Diversity Day is an essential cog of the Futures event each year. "This is huge just to get the kids out and encourage them to play tennis. This means a lot to me."

Kimberly was undefeated in doubles at East St Louis her senior year and became a college champion in tennis.



Sophia Turnell, a player at Francis Howell High School and a college tennis player, came out to assist with Diversity Day.

"This is so great for the kids to have the Diversity Day," she said. "It is good for the kids."

Aidan Delgado of McConnell and Associates was one of the key sponsors of Diversity Day and he said it was great to see the kids having such a good time. Aidan is an Edwardsville High School graduate.

"Our community service work is an important part of what we do," he said. "I am very grateful to be able to do this. It is a great event."

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