

EHS tennis program, facility attract state, national attention

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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The Edwardsville's tennis program has attracted not only state, but national attention because of its top-notch high school facilities and exceptional performances on both the boys and girls side.

The EHS tennis program is led by Dave Lipe, who some would call the Pied Piper of Tennis in the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon area. He has attracted and produced a mound of outstanding tennis players over the years. Lipe enters his 21st season as the boys coach this spring and just completed his 21st season as girls coach.

Lipe said he doesn't see himself as the Pied Piper of tennis, but more of somebody just trying to get people out and get them involved in the sport and seeing the game.



“Throughout my 21 years, I have had a number of assistant coaches and a number of dynamic and committed players who have helped built the program,” he said. “We have had a lot of hands in the program. The Edwardsville School District, Dr. Ed Hightower, Dr. Dennis Cramsey and Brad Bevis have been incredibly supportive during my tenure. I am very fortunate to be associated with the district. For my money, we have the best high school tennis facility in the state.”

Last year, EHS cracked the top 10 statewide in both the boys (eighth) and girls (seventh). EHS qualified six boys and girls to state. The Tigers also won both the girls and boys sectional in tennis. The Edwardsville girls have won 17 straight sectional titles, while the boys are up to 14.

“I am also tournament director of a pro tournament we host at the end of July,” Lipe said. “We have had a lot of success in the program over the last 21 years. I played in college at SIUE and I also became a pro at a club for a couple years then I decided I would teach and coach.”

While Lipe is proud of his tennis team’s accomplishments on the court, he is equally as proud for their academic success.

“Players on our team are consistently among the leaders at the high school in GPA,” he said. “We have created a lot of outstanding programs that help us develop players and help them succeed beyond the tennis court. A number of our players find opportunity to play at the next level.”

In the beginning, it took a while to build the EHS tennis program. Lipe said at first the goal was to beat certain schools Edwardsville had not topped in 25 years and beat them consistently. The next goal was to finish top 20 in state. Now, the goal each year is to finish in the top 10 at state.

“We have been in the top 10 at state on a consistent basis, but we have never finished higher than fourth,” he said. “We are shooting for the next thing and the next thing is clearly to finish first at state.”

Lipe credited his assistant coaches for providing the help that makes the program what it is today.

“We have such an incredible group of assistant coaches who assist,” he said. “They do a phenomenal job of teaching the kids and bringing a lot of enthusiasm to the program.”

The EHS tennis coach values most the relationships that have been built with players, coaches and other coaches throughout the state, nation and even world, who come to play on the courts in Edwardsville because of the Pro-Am Tournament.

“All together because of these relationships, we have been able to make our program successful and always try to improve our practice and operate better,” he said.

Lipe said the culture that has been created at EHS is one that has been healthy for the players both academically and athletically.

“Winning is not the only measure of success,” he said. “We have been able to create an excitement about tennis in the area. We also have one of the greatest high school facilities for tennis in the state. Our amenities are off the charts.”