

From Qualifier To Champion, Vandecasteele Takes Down No. 1 Seed McHugh - Edwardsville Futures Seen As Biggest And Best One Yet

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE - It was a match that has been more accustomed to The Futures singles final, the No. 1 seed taking on a streaking college player.

That No. 1 seed was Scotland's Aiden McHugh going up against tournament qualifier Quinn Vandecasteele, a sophomore at the University of Oregon.

It was the American out of Murray, Utah that went on to a dramatic two set win 6-3, 7-6.

Vandecasteele came out flying and had a quick 3-0 lead in the first set and eventually a 5-1 gap. McHugh tried to rally back and made it a 5-3 Vandecasteele lead, but the Scotsman eventually dropped the opening frame.

The second set was arguably one of the best of the entire tournament.

Vandecasteele jumped out to a 2-0 lead before McHugh came right back and tied it up at 2-2 before taking a one-game lead.



Each time McHugh went ahead, Vandecasteele would tie it right back up. This happened four times until the set was tied at 6-6, forcing a tiebreak.

Vandecasteele went up 5-0 in the tiebreak before McHugh cut that lead down to 6-5. Eventually, Vandecasteele won the final point to go on to his first ITF singles championship, continuing his stellar summer.

It was his third time in a singles championship, but the first time he's been able to get over the hump.

"It feels very good," Vandecasteele said after the match. "You start to let a little doubt creep in sometimes you know, two finals, losing them both, it's a little bit of a barrier to get over, so it was great to do it out here in front of such a great crowd."

These players like McHugh and Vandecasteele are constantly traveling from tournament to tournament, but most players would agree that the support shown by the city of Edwardsville for The Futures is phenomenal.

"It's amazing," Vandecasteele said. "I played those other two finals and they tried to get some people out, but it's nothing like this. So, it's amazing for a small little city like Edwardsville to do such a great job with this. Blew my expectations out of the water for this place."

He refers to Edwardsville, a town with a population of just over 25,000, as small, and it sure is when compared to Eugene, Oregon, the home of the Oregon Ducks with a soaring population of over 175,000 people.

So, when Vandecasteele saw that he would be playing at a local high school, he was a bit nervous.

"That's not the best sight," he said jokingly. "Usually it's some sort of country club or nice tennis club, so seeing a high school isn't the best first impression, but they do an amazing job and it's the best Futures I've played by a long shot."

Vandecasteele was staying in Edwardsville with friend and doubles partner Ishaan Ravichander, also a qualifier for the singles tournament. The two were eliminated in the second round of doubles by Australia's Patrick Harper and Japan's Shunsuke Matsui.



In the doubles final, one that started bright and early at 8 a.m. Sunday saw George Goldhoff and Mac Kiger taking on Kareem Al-Allaf and Colin Markes. It was the prior who won the all-American final in two sets by scores of 6-2, 6-1.

Overall, a great final day to wrap up The Futures tournament, one that director and Edwardsville High School tennis coach Dave Lipe was pleased with.

"Big crowd, great weather," Lipe said about the final day.

He mentioned that on multiple occasions the tournament had to be delayed due to the extreme heat or intense storms, but everything still worked out.

"But, you know, it is what it is. These fans came out this morning and supported the event because they love the game, love the tournament, and it's fun to watch," Lipe added.

"I'd say this was our biggest and best year ever in a lot of ways."