



Edwardsville, Alton advances players to semifinals of IHSA boys tennis sectional

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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Both Alton and Edwardsville's boys tennis teams advanced players to the semifinals of the IHSA Alton Sectional tournament Friday.

The Tigers led the team standings at the end of the first day of competition with 16 points; the Redbirds were second with 10 points. Also taking part in the sectional are Marquette, Civic Memorial, Metro-East Lutheran, Roxana and East Alton-Wood River.

Players reaching the semifinals in both singles and doubles competition automatically qualify for the IHSA State Tournament, which runs May 28-30 in the Chicago suburb of Arlington Heights.

“We had a pretty good day,” said Tiger coach Dave Lipe. “We had some good results today and got all our guys through to the semifinals, which is always good.

“We've played up in the Chicago area before this season, so we've seen some of the best teams and players they have. Playing up at the state tournament won't be a shock, having played them already.”

“It's always good to get our guys up to the state tournament,” said Redbird coach Jesse Macias. “We played well overall today and we're looking forward to the semifinals tomorrow and to the state tournament.”

In singles competition, Edwardsville's Erik Weller defeated opponents from Jersey and East Alton-Wood River to move into the semis without losing a game, while the Tigers' Luke Motley defeated players from Roxana and EA-WR to get to the final four.

“The first set (against the Oilers' player) was tough,” Motley said, “but I found my groove in the second set and played better.”

“I'm hoping to get past the first round in the state tournament,” added Weller. “I'm getting more confidence in my game.”

Edwardsville's doubles teams of Jon Koons and Alex Gray and Joe Mezo and Carson Ware also moved into the semis, Koons and Gray taking their opening-round doubles match over EA-WR without losing a game, then defeating a team from Roxana in the quarterfinals to qualify for the state tournament.

Mezo and Ware also won their first-round contest over Civic Memorial without dropping a game, then eliminated a team from Metro-East Lutheran in the quarterfinals to advance.

Alton's doubles team of Carl Stradel and Drew Hays moved into the semifinals by defeating a team from Marquette in the first round, then eliminating a team from Jersey in the quarters. Kain Henson and Jackson Heiter also moved into the semis with wins over teams from Jersey and Roxana.

The Redbird and Tiger doubles teams will both clash against each other in Saturday morning's semifinal matches. Play at both singles and doubles commences at 9 a.m. at Alton High School.