

# **U of I Tennis Team returns to L&C Men's Pro Tennis Classic USTA qualifying play starts Saturday, July 18**

July 17 2015 3:27 PM



GODFREY – Players from the University of Illinois men's tennis team will be among more than 100 of the world's top-ranked players participating in the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Lewis and Clark Community College Men's Pro Tennis Classic when qualifying play begins at 8 a.m. Saturday, July 18.

The tourney is a United States Tennis Association (USTA) Men's Futures Pro Circuit event. Players from as far away as Australia, Japan, Argentina and India will compete for this year's \$15,000 prize, up from \$10,000 in previous years.

"We've been coming to the tournament for years, and our team looks forward to it," said Brad Dancer, University of Illinois head men's tennis coach. "(The Andy Simpson Tennis Complex) is a wonderful facility, the people are great to work with and the professional-level tournament is a good experience for our players."

For the second consecutive year, Illini player Julian Childers won the Bud Simpson Open earlier this summer, which earned him a spot in the individual main draw of L&C's USTA Futures tournament. Childers and Illini teammate Brian Page won this year's Simpson Open doubles championship, which earned them a spot in the doubles main draw as well.

"I feel good and am playing well," Childers said. "Winning the Simpson Open for the second year and earning a spot in the main draw of the USTA tourney at Lewis and Clark is a great opportunity. Then, winning doubles with Brian at the Simpson Open and earning the spot to play doubles in the USTA tournament is a confidence booster for both of us."

The USTA tourney is held at the college's Andy Simpson Tennis Complex, on the Godfrey campus, and admission is free and open to the public. Spectators are provided with covered stadium seating to keep them comfortable and shaded from the heat.

Play will continue daily, with the doubles championship set for Friday, July 24 and the singles championship set for Sunday, July 26.

"I really like coming to the Lewis and Clark and Simpson tournaments because the facility is a great place to play. People make you feel at home there, and the U of I fans are terrific," Childers said.

To kick off the tournament, the college will host a free children's tennis clinic from 9:30 a.m. to noon, Saturday, July 18, in the George C. Terry River Bend Arena. Children of

all ages will have a chance to learn racket positioning, how to serve, volley and more from some of the tournament's professionals and Lewis and Clark tennis players. Free lunch and prizes will be provided.

For more information about the tournament, visit [www.lc.edu/usta](http://www.lc.edu/usta) or call (618) 468-6252.