

Singles final set for Lewis and Clark Futures event

by Daniel Winningham
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Jared Hiltzik hasn't enjoyed much success while participating in Godfrey, but that's changing this year. Hiltzik moved on to the singles championship match at the 2015 Lewis & Clark Community College Men's Future Tournament with a quick 6-2, 6-3 victory over Clay Thompson in a little more than 70 minutes. Hiltzik competed at the Futures event in Godfrey in 2012-14 but didn't advance past qualifying matches. Hiltzik, who will enter his senior year at the University of Illinois later this year, is from the north Chicago suburbs. Hiltzik competed against Thompson earlier this summer in singles competition. "I've played him a couple weeks ago in Wichita, and I think both

times I don't think he's been at his best but I've competed well, and just pushed him to play the way he has so I'll take some positives from that."Favorable matchups have helped this week in Godfrey, he said."Matchups has been a big thing, just being ready to compete against whoever I play against, and working hard," Hiltzik said.Hiltzik, the No. 8 seed in singles competition, cruised to a 4-0 lead in the opening set, earning two break points.Thompson showed a little emotion by flipping his racket high into the air after Hiltzik's volley sailed long and past the end line. It would be one of the few bright spots for the unseeded Thompson.Later, leading 5-1, Hiltzik mishit a volley and sent it sailing over the south fence, giving Thompson the game, but still holding a comfortable 5-2 edge.Arguing a close shot near the end line with an official toward the end of the first set, Thompson admitted it may not be his day."I don't think anything could get worse for me today," Thompson said to himself.The first set didn't include any deuce points, but that wasn't the story in the second set.With Thompson serving, the game went to seven deuce points. Thompson maintained the advantage in six of the seven deuces, and eventually earned the point by slamming an ace down the middle that Hiltzig let go. Hiltzik trailed 2-0 in second set, but took control by winning six of the next seven points to take the match.Thompson trailed 40-15 on the second point but rallied to take the second game."Would you look at that, what a shocker!" Thompson said.After the final July 26, Hiltzik plans to compete in the remaining Illinois events of the USTA Pro Circuit, which include stops in Edwardsville (July 27-Aug. 2), Decatur (Aug. 3-9) and Champaign (Aug. 10-16), before taking time away.Mmoh advances in other semifinal (subhead, if necessary)Michael Mmoh, a 17-year-old high student from the Washington, D.C. area, advanced in the other semifinal with a 6-4, 6-3 victory over Evan King. Mmoh, the No. 6 seed, appeared in control before King most things a little interesting, battling back to 5-4. But Mmoh finished off the first set victory.Mmoh held leads of 4-1 and later 5-2 in the opening set before notching the clinching sixth point.Mmoh said the key to earning the semifinal victory was "staying mentally strong."After advancing the semifinals with a 6-3, 6-1 victory over Ben McLachlan July 24, Mmoh knew he had too many double faults."I tried to work on that after the match, and I think I did a good job of that," Mmoh said. "I wasn't dropping too many today. I was constructing my service games really well. I thought I played to my game plan perfectly. I just got a little nervous in the first set closing it out but the second set was beautiful tennis for me." King, a 2013 graduate from the University of Michigan, advanced to the semifinals on his previous time in Godfrey.King spoke highly of Mmoh's effort and game."He's obviously a really, really good player, extremely athletic, really quick defends really well," King said.Despite the loss, King enjoyed his time competing at Lewis and Clark."It was an awesome tournament," King said. "Everyone's been really friendly. Conditions have been fair. It's pretty humid out there. Overall, it's been a good week."King plans to participate in Edwardsville next week and then in Decatur the first week of August in upcoming Futures events.Final Sunday at 10 a.m. (subhead, if needed)The singles championship match is scheduled for Sunday, July 26, at 10 a.m. at the Andy Simpson Tennis Complex.Mmoh won a singles event in Texas in 2014, and is the No. 3 ranked

junior player in the ITF World Junior Rankings. But getting past the more experienced Hiltzik will be a challenge. "He's a very physical player, he doesn't make a lot of mistakes," Mmoh said. "He doesn't hit aggressively too many times so it will be similar to today. I'll have to be mentally strong. You have to go for your shots because it's tough to outgrind him."