

USTA Edwardsville Futures Tourney off to excellent start on opening day, despite high temps

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EDWARDSVILLE – The opening day of play in the fifth USTA Edwardsville Futures tennis tournament hosted by the EGHM Foundation may well have been better suited for a sauna.

Hot, humid conditions plagued players and spectators alike at the Edwardsville High School tennis courts, especially as the day wore on, but it didn't sap the quality of play as a pair of upsets were recorded in the singles competition.

Both the third and fourth seeds of the tournament were eliminated in surprising fashion, with New Zealand's Ben McLachlan ousting three-seed Kaichi Uchida of Japan 6-1, 6-4 and Mexico's Daniel Garza on the receiving end of a 6-1, 6-1 loss to Clay Thompson of the USA.

The tournament's top seed, Gerardo Escobar of Ecuador, advanced in a 5-7, 7-5, 4-4 (retired) win over Gonzalez Austin of the USA; Escobar will take on Great Britain's Richard Gabb in the second round, Gabb advancing with a 5-7, 6-4, 6-3 win over Michael Grant of the USA.

One of the more popular players in the tournament, Chicagoan Evan King (who finished second in the inaugural 2011 Edwardsville Futures and who is the eight seed for this year's tournament), advanced with 6-4, 6-3 win over Great Britain's Scott Clayton, and King, who played for the University of Illinois, is taking things just one game at a time.

"I felt good about how I won today," King said. "It's great to start the tournament off on a positive note; I served pretty well and received good too. I got off to a bit of a slow start, but once I found my rhythm, things went pretty well."

The sultry conditions seemed to take a toll on some persons, but for King – who had an early-morning start time – the heat and humidity really didn't affect his approach.

"I thought I handled the heat well," King said. "I know a few players had some issues with it, but you have to go out and handle it as best as you can."

King is taking things one at a time – one match, one set, one game, even one point. "That's how you have to approach it," King said. "The main thing I want to do is to continue to get better as a player."

The only other singles match Tuesday saw American Mico Santiago eliminate Canada's Pavel Krainik 6-4, 6-2.

In doubles play, top-seeded Clayton and Gabb moved into the quarterfinals with a 6-4, 7-6 (7-4) win over Americans A.J. Catanzariti and Aron Hiltzik; Ryan Agar of Australia and Sebastian Bader of Austria defeated Maximiliano Estevez of Argentina and Daniel Garza of Mexico 6-2, 4-6, 10-7; fourth-seeded Jarryd Chaplain of Australia and McLachlan downed American Michael Grant and Frenchman Arthur Surreaux; Mexican Gerardo Lopez Villasenor and Uchida eliminated Americans Nick Chappel and Will

Stein 7-6 (7-1), 6-1; Americans Dominic Cotrone and Grayson Golden advanced with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Americans Alexander Jesse and Tim Kopinski; three-seeds Escobar and Krainik downed Americans Patrick Daciek and Tom Fawcett 6-3, 6-2; Argentina's Alan Kohen and America's John Lambie went on with a 4-6, 6-4, 10-5 win over Israeli Dekel Bar and American Collin Johns; and second-seeded Nicholas Meister of the USA and Ante Pavic of Croatia ousted Americans Felix Corwin and Kyle Koch 7-6 (7-4), 6-4.

Wednesday's play begins at 8:30 a.m. with four singles matches, seventh-seed Pavic against American Patrick Daciek; American George Goldhoff meeting up with Chaplin; Hiltzik meeting up with American Nicholas Meister; and Chappel taking on Myles Schalet. Matches that will begin no earlier than 9:30 a.m. include six-seed Estevez meeting up with Israel's Dekel Bar; Corwin taking on Cotrone; Jared Hiltzik of the USA meeting up with Harry Bouchier of Australia; and Brazil's Gabriel Friedrich meeting Kohen; and in matches that will begin no earlier than 11 a.m., Lopez Villasenor meets with Johns and Great Britians Luke Bambridge meets Australian Ryan Agar.

The tournament runs through Sunday.

