

# Evan King captures USTA Edwardsville Futures singles championship

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** – A pair of champions were crowned Sunday as the **USTA Edwardsville Futures** tennis tournament, hosted by the EGHM Foundation, came to a close before an appreciative crowd at the Edwardsville High School tennis complex.

The singles championship went to 2011 runner-up **Evan King of Chicago**, who defeated **Clay Thompson of Venice Beach, Calif.**, 6-4, 6-3 after King got a pair of

huge service breaks in both the first and second sets, while the doubles crown was won by **Alan Kohen of Buenos Aires, Argentina**, and **John Lamble of Saratoga, Calif.**, as they defeated Scott Clayton and Richard Gabb of Great Britain 3-6, 7-6 (7-4), 10-7.



The tournament, which featured a purse of \$15,000, is part of the USTA ProCircuit tour that features up-and-coming professional players who are seeking a chance to move on to the international ATP Tour and the Grand Slam tennis tournaments (the Kia Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open).

The pairing of Kohen and Lamble didn't take place until the two had met recently, and when it started, Lamble admitted he wasn't sure what to expect. "I knew about his record in singles," Lamble said, "but I wasn't sure what I could expect. It's turned out well, no doubt; this is our third final in a row but the first one we've won.

"We were returning serve pretty well today and it was a great experience overall."



Clayton and Gabb got off to a good start, winning the first three games of the opening set before Kohen and Lamble won the next two games to cut the lead to 3-2. The Britons, however, took control and won the next two games before going on to take the opening set.

The teams split the first two games of the second set before Clayton-Gabb seeming things had under control soon after, but Kohen-Lamble won four games in a row to take a 5-2 lead before Clayton-Gabb bounced back to forge a tie and eventually force a tiebreaker. Kohen-Lamble, though, came up with a lead in the tiebreaker (first to seven points by at least a two-point margin) and eventually came away with the win to set up the winner-take-all third-set tiebreaker.



In the third set, the lead changed hands several times before Kohen-Lamble took control at 9-6 to reach match point. Clayton-Gabb managed to stave off elimination with the next point, but Kohen-Lamble took the next point to win the crown.

“We played all right,” Clayton said. “We didn’t play our best, but that’s not taking away from them; they played well and deserved to win.”

“Credit them, they fought hard all day and it came down to the tiebreaker,” added Gabb. “We started out well but they kept coming and took the win.”

In the singles final, both King and Thompson held serve through the first eight games, both players serving well and coming up with big aces or winners – several in spectacular fashion – as the first set went on. King managed to break Thompson’s serve in the ninth game of the set and went on to close out Thompson with a big shot that landed on the line in the left-side corner of the far court.

The second set started out similarly; both players held serve until game seven, when King broke through and took the game on Thompson’s serve. King then went on to take the final two games to claim the championship.

“He played well,” Thompson said of his long-time friend; both have known each other since they were 12 and have been practice partners on the tour, though they had never met in a match until Sunday. “I was serving well; getting those aces is one of my biggest weapons and I need it to be firing to be successful. It was; he just got the breaks and went on to win.”

“Clay’s a strong server,” King said. “He’s a big guy, about 6-7 or 6-8, and I needed to take care of his serves to be successful. It was a really good match and I’m just glad I won today.”

All the players took time to thank the tournament organizers for their efforts. “Dave’s (Lipe, the EHS tennis coach and tournament director) the best director we’ve got,” Clayton said. “It’s a well-run and well-organized tournament and we’re all happy to play here.”

“It’s a good tournament,” said Kohen, who played in his first **Edwardsville Futures** this year. “It’s an awesome facility and a perfect place for a tournament.”

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[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)