

Washington girls net 3rd place

Written by Tom Fruehling

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IOWA CITY – The Washington girls were unable to defend their Class 2A state tennis title Saturday, but they did the next best thing.

Routed by eventual champ Des Moines Roosevelt in the morning semifinals, the Warriors bounced back to whitewash Urbandale 5-0 in the afternoon consolation match to claim third place.

No. 1 singles player Lilly Hartman was the only one taken to three sets in the afternoon session. After losing her first game 6-3, she rallied to win the second 6-2 and took the tiebreaker 10-6.

Straight-set victories were notched by Hannah Sherman (6-1, 6-1), Kelly King (6-3, 6-3), Jennifer Greif (6-2, 6-0) and Laura Gibson (6-0, 6-0). Eliza Sundermann did not need to finish her match once the Warriors clinched the meet.

The shellacking of Urbandale was sweet revenge for the loss in the doubles competition on Friday. And it took some of the sting off the complete dominance by the Roosevelt Rough Riders in the team semifinals on Saturday.

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First-year Washington Coach Spencer Eells noted that No. 3 singles player Kelly King, undefeated all year, played her best game of the season Saturday against Roosevelt freshman Eren Sagun. Yet King lost, 6-1 6-0, after winning the first game and losing the next 12.

"I thought I played really well," said King. "I was pretty pleased with my game. But there was nothing I could do against her."

It was that kind of match for the Warriors, who lost 5-1. Only senior Laura Gibson in the No. 6 singles slot salvaged a victory. She claimed a hard-fought 6-2, 6-3 struggle with Jenna Pokorny.

Gibson, who will major in music education and play tennis at Coe College, said she was happy with her overall game. "I hit the ball really well," she said. "And it was nice to get one win in the books."

Otherwise, it was a match to forget.

Sherman, also undefeated in singles this year at the No. 2 position, lost 6-1, 6-2 to Roosevelt sophomore Alex Kozlowski.

"Alex is a great player," Sherman said. "But I had no forehand today, and that's usually my strength. It just didn't show up today."

"I knew my chances were pretty slim going in, but I just wish I'd given Aher a better match."

Hartman, likewise, was crushed by Riders ace Mary Hill (part of the doubles championship duo). She never did get untracked and fell 6-2, 6-1.

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Although she normally has a powerful serve, Hartman had her serve broken five times in the two sets by the crafty Hill.



Hill also displayed a masterful touch hitting the back line and corners and rarely missed a shot.

“I tried to be aggressive,” said Hartman, who will play tennis at Gustavus Adolphus in St. Peter, Minn. “But Mary was on fire.

“We knew they’d be really deep. We battled them the best we could.”

Fellow Warrior senior Greif, who will study pre-medicine at Washington University in St. Louis, put up a hard fight against Roosevelt’s Meera Rrasad (the other doubles champ) before falling 6-2, 6-3.

“I tried to make it close,” said Greif. “But they’re really, really good.”

Sundermann, a sophomore transfer from Xavier, also challenged Roosevelt’s Shivani Kumaresan but lost 6-3, 6-4.

Eells said it was no disgrace to lose to the very talented Des Moines team, which went on to beat Pleasant Valley in the finals.

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“They have a great team,” he said. “Their top four players are all high level tournament players.”

Washington, a perfect 20-0 last season, finished the year at 19-2.