

Galbraith 4th, Linn-Mar duo 3rd at state

Written by Tom Fruehling

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There was both heartbreak and elation Saturday for local players in the finals of the Class 2A boys state tennis tournament.

Giant slayer Riley Galbraith of Kennedy, who had knocked off the second-seed in singles competition on Friday, lost a grueling semifinal match that started at 10 a.m. outdoors at Veterans Memorial Tennis Center and finished at 3:30 p.m. indoors at the Coe College Clark Racquet Center.

In between was a 2 1/2-hour rain delay before afternoon play was moved to Coe and the Westfield Tennis Center.

With less than an hour's rest following the three-set marathon with singles runner-up Naveen Nath of Des Moines Roosevelt, Galbraith then lost another slugfest to friend and nemesis Kyle Appel of Iowa City West to finish in fourth place.

The only bright spot in an otherwise gloomy day for the Kennedy junior was that the Cougar soccer team with which he normally plays advanced to the state tournament with a 1-0 victory over Cedar Falls.

Galbraith watched part of the soccer game from his car at Kingston Stadium as rain drenched the nearby tennis courts.

Meanwhile, the Linn-Mar doubles duo of Tyler McCann and Gavin Young rebounded from a loss to the eventual state champions from Des Moines Roosevelt to capture third place in the tournament.

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After losing the first set 6-1 to Pleasant Valley's Max Bramer and Andrew Hartman, the Lions stormed back to claim the second set 7-6 with an 11-9 tiebreaker and then won a 10-7 tiebreaker to take the match.

And indoors at Westfield, Washington's Clayton Hoyt and Mitch Anderson won their third straight match of the tournament Saturday afternoon to claim fifth place. The Warrior pair had dropped its opening match Friday to tourney runners-up Victor Wang and Calvin Song of Ames. Following consolation bracket victories over teams from Marshalltown and Ankeny, they completed the sweep by outlasting Nirvan Tyagi and Alex Huang of Ames, 1-6, 7-6 (11-9), 1-0 (with a 10-7 super tiebreaker).

"They had a little trouble adjusting at first to the faster surface," Washington Coach Frank Howell said of his players' move from outdoors to indoors. "But once they figured out both teams were playing on the same surface, they started holding serve and getting to the net much quicker. They just kept fighting and found a way to win."

Linn-Mar's McCann said he and partner Young may have gone into their last match overconfident since they had easily beaten the Pleasant Valley pair earlier in the season.

"But they played really well today, so props to them. We were disappointed we didn't get into the finals, but we're happy with third place."

Lions Coach Chris Wundrum said there was no shame in losing the semifinal match to the Roughriders of Des Moines Roosevelt, who demolished Ames to win the championship.

"They're a special team," Wundrum said. "They were just a head above the rest of the field. I'm just proud that we came out a winner."

In what tournament director Randy Krejci called "arguably the best match of the tournament," Kennedy junior Galbraith and fellow junior Nath of Roosevelt battled tooth-and-nail for three hours on two different courts. They'd played twice before in their sparkling youth tennis careers, each winning once, so this was a grudge match, in more ways than one. Late in the second set, Nath felt Galbraith was making improper calls and asked that a line judge be present the rest of the way.

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The match was marked by long back-and-forth volleys throughout, with the unseeded but scrappy Galbraith going toe-toe-toe with the third-seeded lanky Des Moines lefthander.

Galbraith took the first set 6-4, but Nath came back to cop the second 6-4 when play resumed at Coe. Kennedy's ace broke serve and led 6-5 in the third set, but Nath rallied to tie it up and finished the match with a 7-3 tiebreaker.

The consolation contest between Galbraith and fourth-seed Appel of Iowa City West pitted two tired and emotionally-drained buddies who team up for doubles in summer tournaments. Appel prevailed (for the third time against Galbraith this season), 4-6, 6-1 and 1-0 (with a 10-5 tiebreaker).

They weren't the only ones to be worn out for their last match of the tournament, though.

Against top-seed Elliott Baker of Dowling Catholic of West Des Moines, who had eliminated Appel, 6-2, 6-1, the struggling Nath was bushwhacked, 6-0, 6-1. In winning his first singles title in four straight state tournaments, Dowling's Baker lost just five games in four matches.

"I was at the top of my game," he said afterward. "I wanted to keep all my opponents off-balance and uncomfortable. I felt good."

[Saturday's Class 2A results](#)