

Anderson nets 2A title with rare feat

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 25 May 2013 20:11 -

Linn-Mar junior Brady Anderson flashed a shy, almost embarrassed smile after he cruised to the Class 2A state tennis title Saturday afternoon at Coe College.

He should have done back-flips, but that's not his style.

Anderson overwhelmed Pleasant Valley freshman Charlie Humes, 6-0, 6-0, in the championship match to become the first player in 58 years to capture the title without losing a single game in the finals.

He also became the first state singles champion from Linn-Mar since Hunter Skogman claimed top honors in 1998.

The state tournament was moved indoors to the Clark Racquet Center due to a day-long rain, which was perfectly all right with Anderson. He plays on Coe's indoor courts during the winter to keep his game in top form.

"I played my best tennis today, which was my goal coming into this tournament," he said. "I play here all the time. I feel at home playing here.

"I'm glad I was able to play my best."

Art Andrews of Iowa City High School won back-to-back state titles in 1954 and 1955 by 6-0, 6-0 scores. Anderson became the first champion since 1955 to duplicate the feat and joined Andrews as the only players in the 84-year history of the IHSA tournament to win love-love.

"He played phenomenal," said Linn-Mar Coach Chris Wundram. "Brady has the potential to play better than anybody else in the state. He doesn't always play that way, but he's pretty level.

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"For the most part, you're not going to see a bad Brady Anderson. What you saw is the best player in the state."

Anderson, the No.1 seed, won four straight matches in the tournament in straight sets, winning 49 games and losing only 13.

He took command in the finals and never let go as the freshman from Pleasant Valley made a string of unforced errors and became more and more agitated with himself.

Anderson kept the pressure on, despite being in command from start to finish.

"You have to stay focused, because he's a good player and he could start clicking," said Anderson. "You have to stay focused on the moment, and I was able to do that, thankfully."

"I had to stay aggressive," he said. "Stay confident, stay aggressive, so when I get a chance to attack I can execute and get the points that way."

Anderson clipped David DiLeo of Iowa City West, 6-2, 6-3, in the semifinals Saturday morning before breezing through the finals. All of his shots were working with his serve, forehand, backhand, lobs and drop shots on display.

"Yeah, it was pretty good," he allowed. "Hopefully I can keep improving and play like this next year. We'll see how it goes."

Andrews became a Big Ten champion at the University of Iowa after graduating from Iowa City High School. Anderson would like to follow that path as well after he graduates from Linn-Mar in 2014.

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"I'll try to play well in the summer tournaments and maybe get a chance to play at Iowa, which is where I want to play," he remarked. "It will be tough to play there, but if I keep improving and getting stronger I think I have a shot."

Anderson stands a slender 6-foot-1 and 150 pounds. He grew a few inches since last year and gained a few pounds.

"I'm sure I've put on some weight," he said. "I'm not sure exactly how much. I still need to get bigger."

Anderson became the third player from Linn-Mar High School to win a state singles title, joining Todd Shale (1990) and Skogman (1998). He'll try to become a two-time champ next year after putting on a special performance Saturday.

"He did it all," said Wundram. "The state tournament is two days. Sometimes you just have to catch fire. When Brady's on, there's not too many people that can beat him.

"He plays tennis so much and works so hard at it," the coach said. "He plays the year-round. He'll play in the summer. He'll travel all across the midwest this coming summer. That experience, that dedication certainly helps."

The Cedar Rapids Washington doubles team of Mitch Blades and Jackson Hoyt lost in the semifinals to Kyle Appel and Blake Oetting of Iowa City West, 6-3, 6-2. Blades and Hoyt then lost to James McManus and Roy Ju of Cedar Falls, 6-1, 6-1, to finish fourth out of 16 doubles teams.

Appel and Oetting defeated Alex Qin and Tommy Pitcher of Ames, 1-6, 6-2, 6-3, for the doubles title. Qin and Pitcher were the defending state champions.

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Tim Paulson of Linn-Mar lost both of his matches in the consolation bracket Saturday and placed eighth. He lost to Jackson Guilford of Indianola, 6-4, 6-1, and fell to Andrew Ellis of Ames, 6-3, 6-4.

STATE SINGLES

Semifinals

Brady Anderson (Linn-Mar) def. David DiLeo (IC West), 6-2, 6-3

Charlie Humes (Pleasant Valley) def. Alex Huang (Ames), 6-4, 2-6, 7-5

Finals

Anderson (Linn-Mar) def. Humes (Pleasant Valley), 6-0, 6-0

STATE DOUBLES

Semifinals

Alex Qin/Tommy Pitcher (Ames) def. James McManus/Roy Ju (Cedar Falls), 6-2, 6-1

Kyle Appel/Blake Oetting (IC West) def. Mitch Blades/Jackson Hoyt (Washington), 6-3, 6-2

Finals

Appel/Oetting (IC West) def. Qin/Pitcher (Ames), 1-6, 6-2, 6-3