

Linn-Mar netters cruise to state tournament

Written by Tom Fruehling
Saturday, 19 May 2012 23:50 -

The entire Linn-Mar boys tennis team mobbed the center court at Jefferson Saturday afternoon and piled on senior Tyler McCann after his singles win cinched a trip to the state team championship in Urbandale.

For the Lions, it will be the first time at the tourney in 24 years. They won the meet the last time they played in 1988. And while they've won the MVC division title four years in a row, up to now they fell one win short of making it to state.

"It's fitting that Tyler was the one that clinched it for us," said Linn-Mar Coach Chris Wundram. "He's been a three-time state qualifier (in doubles), but this is his first time with the team."

With the tennis team, that is. As the No. 1 player on Linn-Mar's golf team, he was on the squad that qualified for state but finished a disappointing 11th last fall. McCann's younger brother, Trevor, was also on the golf team and now plays No. 4 singles in tennis.

"That has to be some sort of record," said the boys' dad, Tom, the golf pro at the Cedar Rapids Country Club. "To have two brothers qualify for the state tournament in two sports in the same year."

Making it to the semifinals at the state tournament in tennis was a fairly easy matter on Saturday. They first dispatched Pleasant Valley in the morning, 5-0, on their home court, with only one of their singles matches going to three sets.

"We knew Pleasant Valley was improved from when we played them before," said Wundram. "But our kids came to play."

Then, after a four-hour interlude between matches, the Lions made quick work of Clinton, 5-0, in the afternoon's substate finals. In winning his match 6-2, 6-4, Tyler McCann was the only Lion who lost more than two games.

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Linn-Mar has a 17-1 record, with its only defeat coming at the hands of always-powerful Iowa City West. The undefeated Trojans will also play for the team championship a week from Tuesday in Urbandale.

In their one meeting this year, West beat Linn-Mar, 8-1. Tyler McCann and partner Brady Anderson pulled out the only win.

"We had a lot of close matches," McCann said. "We have a deep enough team that we've got a great chance if we face them again."

Clinton Coach Dave Moore said the Lions should be a formidable force in the state tournament. "I really don't think there's a monster team this year. And they were certainly the best team today," he said.

By the time the finals started at 2:30 Saturday afternoon, his River Kings had barely survived a marathon 5-4 match over Kennedy that started at 9 a.m. and ended four hours later.

"There were some awfully long games," Moore said. "If we'd taken care of business in the morning we might have done better in the afternoon."

Clinton and Kennedy split their singles matches 3-3. The Cougars' Brett Bloomberg became weak from heat exhaustion in his match and ended up losing in three sets. He was then scratched from doubles play.

"You never know, but if we would have won that three setter, the doubles might have been different," said Kennedy Coach Craig Bova.

Clinton won two of the three doubles to move into the finals with Linn-Mar.

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Kennedy senior Riley Galbraith, who will vie for a state singles championship next weekend, ended his four-year team competition on the Cougar squad with two wins on a gimpy left foot. A star soccer player as well, he sprained a tendon at soccer practice Wednesday and did not play in his team's game with Washington Thursday.

An X-ray showed no serious damage, and he said the tenderness didn't affect his tennis play too much on Saturday.

"There's more support with tennis shoes," he said after claiming victories in singles and doubles. "But it's different playing in soccer cleats."

The Cougars are set to play Washington again in soccer on Wednesday in substate semifinal competition, if the Warriors survive their first-round game Monday against Western Dubuque. The Cougars have a first-round bye. The soccer semifinal is two days before the start of the state singles and doubles tennis tourney. At this point, Galbraith said his status for soccer is up in the air.

He has said repeatedly this season after coming in fourth in singles at last year's state meet, "My goal is to win the state singles title."

CLINTON 5, KENNEDY 4 Semifinals

Singles

1. Riley Galbraith (K) def. Mitch Schumacher, 6-3, 6-0.
2. Ryan Schroeder (C) def. Mitch Martin, 6-1, 6-2.
3. Arjun Venkatesh (K) def. Yamsi Marla, 6-3, 7-5.
4. Tony Hurlburt (C) def. Brett Blomberg, 4-6, 7-6, 6-2.
5. Cody Nolan (C) def. Quinn Jamrock, 6-3, 6-2.
6. Jimmy Cunningham (K) def. Kevin Claussen, 6-4, 6-1.

Doubles

1. Schumacher/Schroeder (C) def. Martin/Venkatesh, 6-0, 6-0.
2. Galbraith/Jamrock (K) def. Hurlburt/Nelson, 6-4, 6-4.
3. Marla/Claussen (K) def. Trevor Oates/Cunningham, 6-4, 3-6, 6-4.

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LINN-MAR 5, PLEASANT VALLEY 0

Semifinals

Singles

1. Brady Anderson (LM) def. Jason Stewart, 6-1, 6-0.
2. Tyler McCann (LM) def. Steve Kardell, 6-1, 6-3.
3. Dillon Einck (LM) def. Cooper Odegard, 6-1, 6-1.
4. Trevor McCann (LM) def. A.J. Smit, 6-2, 6-2.
6. Tim Paulson (LM) def. Abhishek Gouda, 6-3, 5-7, 6-1.

LINN-MAR 5, CLINTON 0

Finals

1. Brady Anderson (LM) def. Mitch Schumacher, 6-2, 6-1.
2. Tyler McCann (LM) def. Ryan Schroeder, 6-2, 6-4.
4. Trevor McCann (LM) def. Tony Hurlburt, 6-0, 6-0.
5. Blake Young (LM) def. Cody Nolan, 6-0, 6-2.
6. Tim Paulson (LM) def. Kevin Clausen, 6-0, 6-0.