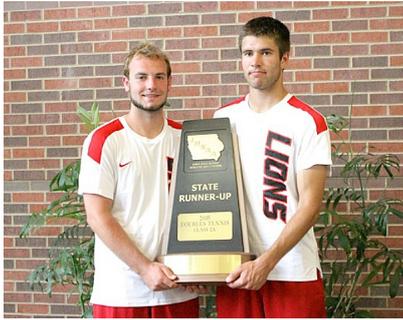


Lions take 2nd at state doubles

Written by Tom Fruehling

Saturday, 30 May 2015 20:25 - Last Updated Saturday, 30 May 2015 20:44



Denied of their long-time dream of winning a state doubles championship together, Linn-Mar seniors Tim Paulson and Trevor McCann are down but far from out.

Losing the Class 2A tournament final in three sets Saturday after winning the first set over the No. 1 seeded duo from Fort Dodge was tough, Paulson admitted.

“But we’ve got bigger and better things ahead of us,” he said following the 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 loss to Dodgers Brian Murman and Jon Bowser. “We want to win the state team title in Ankeny on Tuesday. That’s more important than winning this one.”

With an unblemished 17-0 record and the unanimous top team in the Class 2A polls, the Lions will be the favorite in the four-team field.

“Our goal from day one has been to win the team championship,” said Linn-Mar Coach Chris Wundrum. “But it was hard for them to lose today. They played really well, the best match they played in the tournament. But they fell a little bit short.”

Though they’ve played together since picking up the game as little tykes, this was the first

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season McCann and Paulson had joined up for doubles competition. McCann was a state runner-up last year, as well, teamed with current Coe College freshman Brady Anderson.

Prior to Saturday's championship loss, the second-seeded Lions had wins on 17 of 18 doubles matches, losing in a dual meet only to Iowa City West's Jiung Jung and David DiLeo.

Jung beat DiLeo, 6-3, 6-4, Saturday for the state singles title, the first time two players from the same school have been in the finals since a pair from Des Moines Roosevelt in 1941.

Wundrum called pair from Fort Dodge (20-0 for the season) the best doubles tandem Linn-Mar has faced.



"They're phenomenal," Paulson agreed. "They just execute well in all areas. They don't have a lot of weaknesses."

Still, after falling behind 3-1 in the first set, the Lions steadied themselves to take the next three games and closed out a 6-4 one-set lead.

Paulson's big serves in the final game clichéd the win.

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“We really got into a groove,” he pointed out. “We had a lot of confidence and came out ready to play in the second set.”

They jumped ahead in that one, too, but the top-seeded Dodgers refused to fold.

“They play really well together,” said McCann. “They just don’t miss many shots.”

With the senior Murman buoying his sophomore partner Bowser, the pair rallied back to tie the match with a come-from-behind 6-3 victory.

“When we missed a couple of chances to go up on them, that shifted the momentum,” Paulson said. “They had all the momentum going into the final set.”

The 6-2 finale was a quick one.

“Our energy level seemed to drop,” McCann noted. “We didn’t have the same confidence.”

They had loads of confidence coming into the championship, which was played indoors at Coe after rain chased all afternoon matches from the outdoor courts at Veterans Memorial Tennis Center.

In their morning outdoor semifinal against third-seeded rivals Jackson Hoyt and Oliver Hammond of Washington, McCann and Paulson prevailed 7-5 in a first-set tiebreaker and then coasted 6-2 for the win.

“We played well that first set,” said Hoyt. “But then we hurt ourselves by getting down 5-1 in the

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tiebreaker. They had all the momentum after that."

He and Hammond finished fourth in doubles competition, losing their consolation match 7-6 (7-5) 6-3 to Gus Zuccaro and Jacob Mozena of Dubuque Senior.

Paulson said he and his longtime tennis pal were pleased with their play against the Washington duo.

"They're both great players," he said. "But we had a solid performance. We felt good going into the finals."