

Linsly Wins 1A-4A Title, University Takes Overall



Photos by Josh Strope

Top left: Wheeling Park's C.J. Petrini returns a shot during action of the OVAC Tennis Tournament on Thursday in Wheeling. Center: St. Clairsville's Brittanni Rauschenberg eyes her shot.

It's the first conference crown for Morgantown school

By **JOSH STROPE**
Staff Writer

WHEELING — It was a little like *deja vu* for Linsly coach Dave Reithmiller.

His Cadets were crowned the OVAC Class 1A-4A girls' tennis champions for the second consecutive season Thursday at the Wheeling Park Bubble. But like last year, it was a team from Morgantown that took home the big red banner.

University won its first OVAC championship, claiming the 5A tennis title and the overall crown. The Hawks and Cadets finished tied with 21 points, but University won the tiebreaker with four champions to Linsly's two.

"This happened to us last year but I think it's great that they give out a small school title," Reithmiller said.

"Those big schools are hard to beat. But I am so proud of these girls. Two years in a row to not be out-pointed by a big school.

"This means a lot to our seniors and they are a great group. This was one of our goals."

Leading the way for Linsly, again, was Jackie McDermott.

Last season she was the freshman that took the tournament by storm. This time around, she made it look easy in winning the No. 2 Singles title for the second straight year.

The top seed received a bye and made quick work of Weir's Meghan Finton and University's Meghan Zerker before setting up a championship bout with Morgantown freshman Abby Rosiello.

The two played a couple weeks ago and Rosiello took McDermott to

the limit before falling in a tiebreaker. Rosiello took the first point Thursday, then it was all McDermott.

The Linsly sophomore ran Rosiello all over the court, placing her shots in perfect spots to run off the next eight points and win the championship.

"I felt a lot better playing her this time," McDermott said. "I knew her style, and I knew what to expect. (Reithmiller) knew how to coach me. We did a lot of drills in practice leading up to it that really helped to prepare me.

"She serves and volleys and (Reithmiller) had my sister serve that way. The first time we played it kind of overwhelmed me because people don't normally serve that way. Coach really coached me up to be strong

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mentally for it. I might not be the fastest but I know how to keep myself under control."

While McDermott is obviously proud of winning her singles title, it was the doubles trophy she took home with her sister, Morgan, that meant the most.

The two teamed to defeat Rosiello and Stephanie Arnold for the No. 1 Doubles championship Tuesday.

"It's like surreal," Jackie said. "My doubles title means so much because my sister means so much to me. It's not easy to play with your sister but Coach always tells us that any thing that is

worthwhile is difficult. At times it was difficult, but so worth it."

McDermott wasn't the only repeat winner.

The No. 1 and No. 3 Singles matches were rematches from last season and both went by the same script.

At No. 1, Arnold defeated Wheeling Park's C.J. Petrini, 8-1, while Alyssa Rees defeated Linsly's Regan Stein, 8-3, at No. 3.

The final match of the day was the No. 4 Singles showdown between University's Cassie Seamon and Linsly's Hannah Soloninka. At this point, the Cadets held a one-point lead on the Hawks. Because of the tiebreaker, the winner of this match was going to win the overall title for her team.

Seamon didn't prolong the suspense, winning 8-0. The victory kept Seamon, and University, perfect for the season. The Hawks are 16-0 as a team.

"I have always told them that has been a team-winning thing," University coach Tom Bloom said. "University High has a very good tennis program and this is the next step in the process of heading toward states.

"It came down to the last two matches with Linsly and Alyssa came through and Cassie wanted to prove a point and she won 8-0. University High is looking forward to being around playing tennis for a while as part of the OVAC."

Morgantown was the runner-up in Class 5A, while Wheeling Central was second place in Class 4A-1A.

Oak Glen's Solita Krauss was the recipient of the Carol Strasser Sportsmanship Award.

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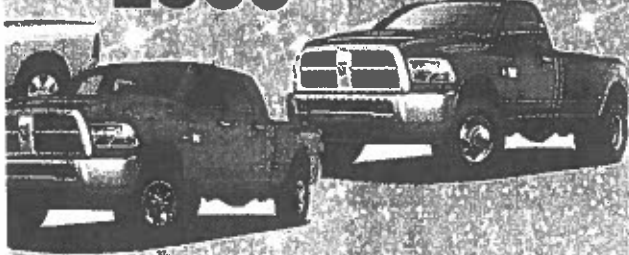
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Photo by Josh Strope

Linsly's Jose Bird rips a backhand during the OVAC Boys' Tennis Tournament on Wednesday at West Liberty.

Linsly Boys Win Title the Hard Way

Cadets are 1A-4A tennis champions

By **JOSH STROPE**
Staff Writer

WEST LIBERTY — When the four singles and three doubles championship trophies were handed out at the conclusion of the OVAC Tennis Tournament on Wednesday, not a single one was presented to a Linsly player.

Still, you won't hear any of the Cadets complaining. That's because Linsly walked away from the Edgar Martin Tennis Complex

with the one trophy that matters — the Class 1A-4A championship.

Linsly finished with seven points, two better than runner-up East Liverpool. The Potters were tied with Wheeling Central and Indian Creek but won the second-place plaque via a tiebreaker.

"They did really well considering we were down this year, or at least weaker than last year," Linsly coach Mike Church said. "Westen Mead had a big win and Jose (Bird) making it to the finals secured the championship.

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"I'm pleased with everything they did. It has been a good year."

Bird was the winner at No. 1 singles last season and at No. 2 in his sophomore campaign. Unfortunately for him, that run of championships came to a halt at the hand of Morgantown's Max Schulz-Mullensiefen.

Schulz-Mullensiefen and Steven Wu (No. 4) were individual winners in leading Morgantown to the Class 5A championship and the overall title. The Mohigans finished with an impressive 22 points, easily outdistancing the 16 scored by Parkersburg South and Cambridge.

South won the runner-up title on a tiebreaker.

While Bird had been arguably the story of the tournament a year ago, this time the "oohs" and "ahhs" were for Schulz-Mullensiefen, a foreign exchange student from Germany.

The two had faced off a couple weeks ago and Schulz-Mullensiefen had his way with Bird. The Linsly senior was able to close the gap as Schulz-Mullensiefen used his powerful serve to keep Bird off-balance and cruise to an 8-2 victory.

"I think Jose played much better this time," Church said. "Jose played well but the kid from Mor-

gantown deserves all the credit. He is just an incredible player. They had some nice points and some of the games could have gone either way, but I was really pleased with Jose's performance."

Along with Schulz-Mullensiefen and Bird, from Puerto Rico, the No. 1 Singles semifinals featured plenty of international flavor. Schulz-Mullensiefen defeated Wheeling Park's Jacopo Chiarlo, from Italy, and Bird topped Indian Creek's Fabio Mattina, from Germany.

Like his teammate, Wu earned his championship in impressive fashion. The freshman defeated Wheeling Park's Zac Marra, 8-2,

in the final.

"This was a good barometer for our region and states," Morgantown coach Dan Martinelli said. "The kids worked real hard. They did a great job.

"Max, both he and Steven lost against Charleston Catholic and that was their first loss. They were 17-0 at the time. They really bounced back. They were seeded No. 1 and came through.

"This is like a stepping stone. They were all business and they all went out and did their job. With regionals next week, they are all playing well at the right time."

Two-time defending champion Parkersburg South didn't walk away empty-handed as Brandon Galiei captured the No. 2 Singles championship with an 8-3 victory against Cambridge's Connor Engstrom.

At No. 3 Singles, Cambridge's Aaron Ruby defeated Wheeling Park's Mitch Baranski, 8-1.

All four brackets featured the top two seeds playing for the title with Galiei as the lone No. 2 seed to win.

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Central, Linsly looking good after first day of OVAC tennis

WHEELING — Wheeling Central and Linsly are among the leaders after the first day of the OVAC Tennis Championships.

Boys' Doubles took center stage Monday inside the Wheeling Park Bubble and the Maroon Knights and Cadets both earned three points to share the lead in the Class 1A-4A Division. Oak Glen and Weirton Madonna each picked up one point.

Morgantown leads the Class 5A Division with 10 points after picking up a pair of victories (No. 1 and No. 3). Parkersburg South — Monday's other winner at No. 2 — has nine points, followed by Cambridge with seven, Brooke, University and Wheeling Park with two, and Indian Creek and John Marshall with one.

The Mohigans' Max Mullenssiefen and Raymon Yao defeated Parkersburg South's Joe Holland and Brandon Galici, 8-5, at No. 1, while Morgantown's Adam McKnight and Daniel Pan topped East Liverpool's Alex Hoeffler and Nick DiLoreto, 8-2, in the No. 3 final.

Parkersburg South's Garrett Dailey and Adam Shaffer won the No. 2 title by defeating Cambridge's Aaron Ruby and Anthony Miller, 8-3.

Girls' Doubles competition begins at 10 a.m. today, also in the bubble. Boys' Singles and Girls' Singles are slated for 8:30 a.m. Wednesday and Thursday, respectively, at West Liberty University's Edgar Martin Tennis Complex.