

PENGUINS STRIKE FIRST

Pittsburgh scores three unanswered goals in the third period in taking a 1-0 series lead on the Washington Capitals/12

The Intelligencer. SPORTS

FRIDAY
APRIL 27, 2018

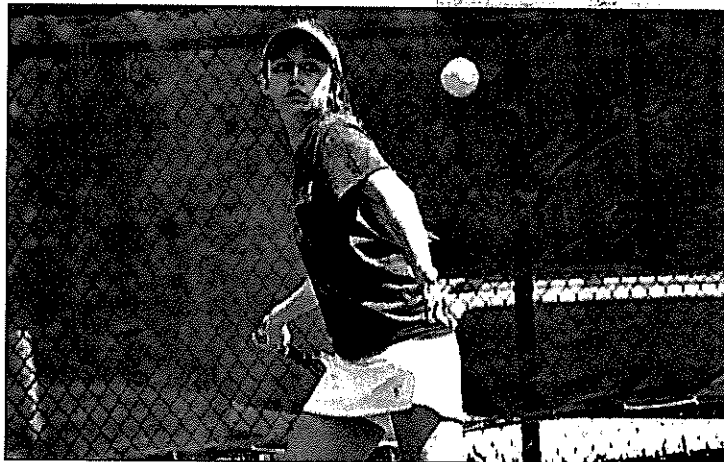
Stocks14-15

11

Central Freshman Anderson Wins OVAC Title

Wheeling Central's Laina Anderson returns a serve during a match at the girls OVAC Tournament at West Liberty University.

Photo by
Kyle Lutz



Linsly captures eighth straight 1A-4A crown

By KYLE LUTZ
Staff Writer

WEST LIBERTY — Thursday is going to be a day that Wheeling Central's Laina Anderson is going to remember for the rest of her life. After four matches in about nine hours, Anderson walked off the courts at the Edgar Martin Tennis Complex a winner as she secured the No. 1 singles title at the OVAC championships on the campus of West Liberty University.

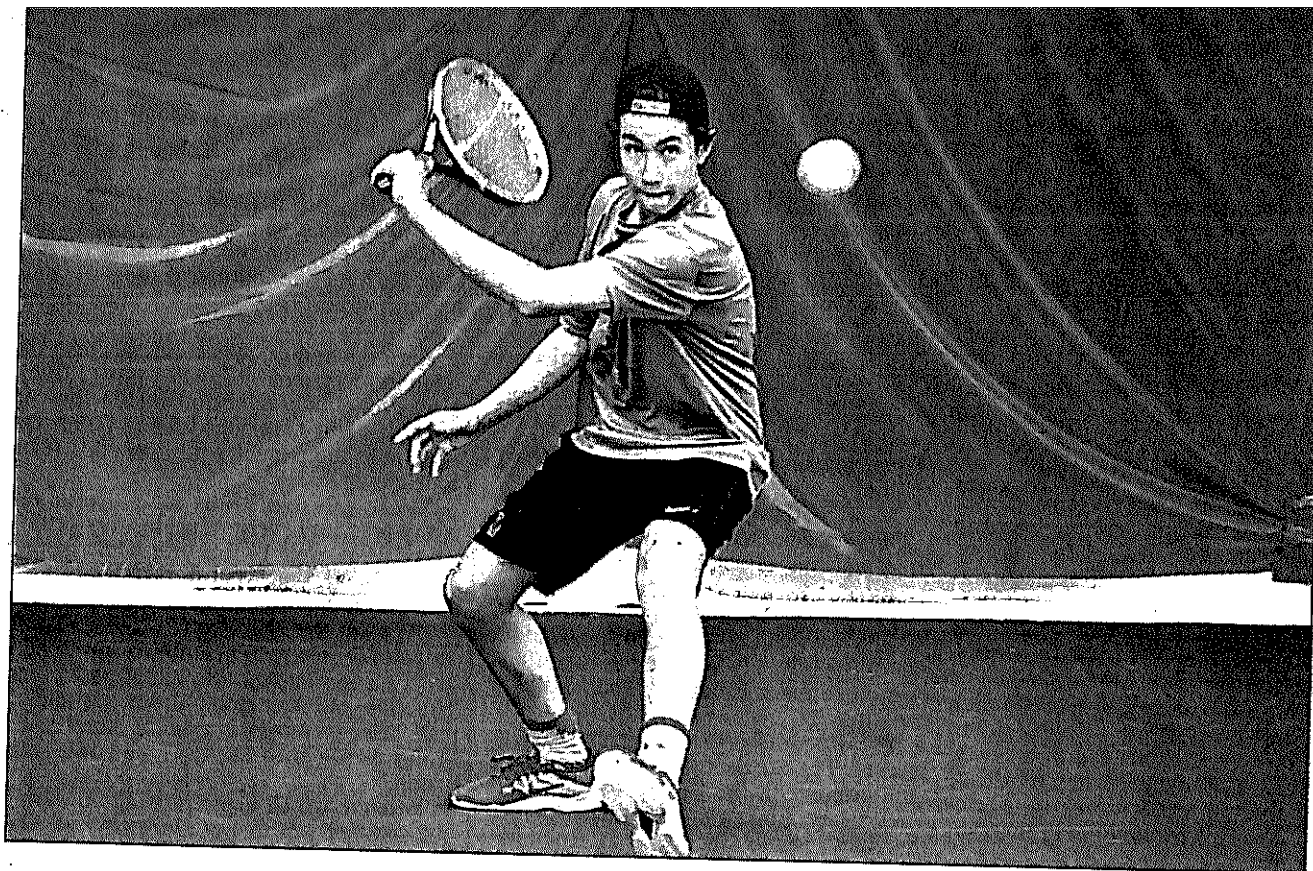
"Laina played a wonderful match," Wheeling Central coach Peggy Dailer said. "She was so smart. She played the match just

the way it should be played and she just did an outstanding job. We're real proud of her."

Anderson went into the OVAC Tournament as the top seed in No. 1 singles. What was even more impressive was that the freshman had not lost a match the entire season. In the first round, she defeated University's Maya Gharib, 8-1, followed by a shutout win over Magnolia's Logan Riggs.

In the semifinal round, Anderson bested Parkersburg South's Jordan Mader, 8-2, to make it to the championship. In a hard-fought match against No. 2 seed Emme McKnight of Morgantown, Anderson got the upperhand, 8-3, as the emotions came pouring out when she secured the match.

See ANDERSON, Page 12



Above: Linsly's Federico Navarro makes a play on the ball during Tuesday's No. 3 Singles OVAC match at Wheeling Park. Below: Wheeling Park's Jitesh Pujara, left, and Ben Ridgewell stand proud holding their plaques after winning the No. 2 Doubles OVAC Championship on Monday. Photos by Cody Tomer

Hawks Rule the Nest At OVAC Tennis Tourney



Park's Pujara, Ridgewell earn No. 2 doubles title

By CODY TOMER
Staff Writer

WHEELING — After a 14-hour and 41-minute day, the final boys' OVAC singles champion was crowned at 11:11 p.m. inside the Wheeling Park Bubble on Tuesday.

Wheeling Park's Jitesh Pujara and Linsly's Federico Navarro each delivered fierce comeback attempts in their singles championships but ultimately fell by narrow margins.

Navarro dropped an 8-6 decision to Cambridge's Mason Long, while Pujara was ousted in a 7-3 tie-breaker.

"I'm very proud of Pujara," Park coach Tim Ickes said. "It seems like he is not playing as well during the year but when it comes to tournament time, he is killing it. That's the time to be playing well."

University was the 5A team champion, as Drew Hawthorne, Kyle Hawthorne and Andre Barcinas all claimed singles titles for the Hawks' third consecutive crown.

"This is the best we have ever done at OVAC's at University," Hawks coach Tom McClellan said. "All the kids worked really hard. It was great competition

See TENNIS, Page 15

TENNIS

(Continued from Page 13)

and this is my favorite tournament by far."

Cambridge picked up the 1A-4A championship, sparked by Long's No. 3 Singles triumph. East Liverpool was runner-up.

Wheeling Park earned runner-up honors in the 5A as Ickes' squad continued to "Defend the North."

"We knew University is good and we wanted to beat everyone in the Northern Panhandle and defend the North," Ickes said. "Now, we have beat everyone in the Northern Panhandle and also reached our second goal in coming in second place. It doesn't sound right but University is unbelievable. So, getting ahead of Morgantown in OVACs is huge."

In the No. 4 singles final, Pujara found himself trailing 4-0 and 6-2, only to record an amazing rally to capture an 8-7 edge. The match eventually went to a tiebreaker, where Barcinas jumped out to a 6-1 advantage en route to a victory.

"I felt like I just had a great recovery," Pujara said. "Coach Ickes helped me to get my confidence up to push through. Eventually, I got the 8-7 lead but sadly lost the tie-breaker but it was a good experience."

"If I don't go through the tough times in tennis, I wouldn't be able to learn from my mistakes, which will eventually help me do better."

Navarro's run at the title was quite similar. The

Cadets' sophomore trailed by 4-1 and 5-2 margins in the championship before coming back to knot the score at 6-6.

Eventually, it was Long taking home the trophy by an 8-6 mark.

"Navarro has been so much fun to coach," Linsly coach Rebecca Upton said. "He is so tough, fiery and passionate. He is a three-sport athlete in soccer, wrestling and tennis."

"It has been an exhausting and mentally challenging day for him but I hope it was fun for him. I'm really proud of what he did."

Making a run to the semi-finals from Wheeling Central were David Agcaoili and Issac Smith, while Park's Ben Ridgewell and Oak Glen's Connor Blake also reached the semis.

"David played very well and we are really proud of him," Central coach Peggy Dailer said. "Issac played a kid from University and they have a wonderful team but we did our best. We always do."

The doubles duo of Pujara and Ridgewell took home the No. 2 doubles championship on Monday by an 8-5 score.

"It was a great experience for me and my partner," Ridgewell said. "We got down 7-4 in one game but we knew we could battle back because we have that relationship. It's kind of like shake and bake. We just work really well together."

Weir's Brett Hinchee was named the winner of the Carol Stasser Sportsmanship Award.