

Seward Opens Fall Tennis Season

Playing in the first college matches of their careers, most would expect the five Seward County Saints doing so at the Wichita Intercollegiate Tournament over the weekend, to struggle some. However, that was certainly not the case as freshman Alejandro Gonzalez and Ronzai Saurambe dazzled onlookers throughout the tournament, reaching the finals where they matched up against each other with Gonzalez coming out on top to win the tournament championship in his first competition.

Seward Head Coach Jerry Thor knew he was getting a couple of blue chippers when he signed Gonzalez and Saurambe, from El Salvador and Zimbabwe respectively, but I'm not sure that the second year coach new that he was getting quite this much talent in the two. Saurambe opened the tournament with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Miguel Bendito of Newman to get things going for the Saints in the Flight A bracket while Gonzalez had an even easier time with a 6-0, 6-0 blanking of Rene Turti of Nebraska Wesleyan in his first collegiate match. Saurambe cruised again in the second round, getting past Mark Mahan 6-4, 6-0 to reach the semi's while Gonzalez was nearly upset, having to come from behind to beat Joan Marc Rodriguez 6-7, 7-6, 10-3 in what was likely the match of the tournament. In the semi's Saurambe dueled with the reigning KCAC Player of the Year Rafa Bulnes, but the accolades didn't impress him much as he came out and put a 6-0 score on Bulnes in the twos first set. In the second set Bulnes made Saurambe work overtime as the two were tied 6-6 before Saurambe won the tiebreak 10-3 to take the match 2-0 and reach the final. Gonzalez didn't have nearly as much trouble in his semifinal tilt, making quick work of Lucas Asnis of Nebraska Wesleyan 6-1, 6-1 to setup an all Seward County final between himself and Saurambe. In the friendly final it was Gonzalez who prevailed, winning the Wichita Intercollegiate Championship with a 6-2, 6-4 win over Saurambe to finish the weekend on a high note for both.

The Saints split four matches in the first round of the Flight B draw. Trevor Kipping and Collin Glassman picked up wins while Brandon Kafarela and Adrian Amado were unable to come back from slow starts. Kipping was nearly unstoppable in his match against Seth Peters of Nebraska Wesleyan, winning 6-0, 6-0 to advance to the second round. Glassman earned his first collegiate win with a 6-4, 6-3 victory over Trevor Adams to join Kipping in the quarterfinals. Kipping continued his strong play, putting matching 6-2 scores on Max Pyle of Newman in the second round to reach the semis while Glassman wasn't as lucky, falling 6-3, 6-2 to Mitchel Whitmer of Newman to end his weekend in singles play. Kafarela bounced back with a pair of wins in the consolation bracket, first beating Seth Shimerda of Nebraska Wesleyan 8-3 and then dropping Pyle 8-1 to reach the title match where he fell 6-1, 4-6, 10-8 to finish as the runner up. Kipping was tripped up for the first time in the semis where he split a pair of 6-2 sets with Alex Jackson before

again going the distance with Jackson in the tiebreaker where he fell 10-8. In the third place match Kipping was victorious, beating Whitmer 6-3, 6-2 to end the weekend on a positive.

Saurabme and Kipping teamed up in the Flight A doubles bracket for a win over Turti/Millburn of Nebraska Wesleyan in the first round, but were ousted in the second round by Chai/Dullaghan 8-3 to end their weekend together. On the other side of the bracket Gonzalez and Kafarela paired, but were unable to get any steam going as they lost 8-2 to Ansis/Plentz of Nebraska Wesleyan to knocked them out. Amado and Glassman took the court for the Saints in the B Flight, but were never able to make a mark against Wherritt/Whitmer of Newman as they fell 8-0 in the first round.

The Saints start the season 14-10 overall as a team. They will continue their fall season this weekend when they go to Salina for the Bethany Invitational where Thor expects the competition to be another notch up for his young Saints.

The Seward County Lady Saints Tennis team got their 2013 fall season going in Wichita over the weekend, taking on a slew of teams from the Sunflower State in the Wichita Intercollegiate Tournament. Six Lady Saints saw their first collegiate action in the tournament with Paula Coyos and Paula Lopez leading Seward in the Flight A draw. Coyos and Lopez tied for 5th in the A draw while four Lady Saints made up the field of the Flight B semifinals to highlight the weekend.

In the top flight of the tournament, Coyos and Lopez matched up against a number of top notch competitors from Newman University, Nebraska Wesleyan University, and Wichita State University among others. Coyos earned a win in her first match as a Lady Saint, defeating Katherine Terner of Nebraska Wesleyan by matching 6-2 scores in the first round of the tournament. Lopez followed suit in her opener, downing Hillary Hicks of Newman 6-1, 6-3 in quick order to advance to the quarterfinals. In the quarters Coyos battled tough against Kirstie Symon, another Newman Jet, and the Seward freshman led 4-3 and up a break in both sets, but in the end it was Symon coming away with a 6-4, 6-4 win to knock Coyos from the tournament. On the bottom half of the bracket Lopez drew a tough matchup with Abby Stevens from Wichita State and wasn't able to overcome a slow start as she went down 6-2, 6-4.

Seward sent five players to the court in the Flight B draw of the tournament. Unfortunately for the Lady Saints, their only win in five first round matches came from freshman Jackie Arnold who played a long battle with Courtney Harder from Nebraska Wesleyan before finally coming out on top 2-6, 6-0, 10-5. Kathryn Roohan played the closest match in a losing effort for the Lady Saints, winning four games in both sets against Lexie Klingler of Newman, but she fell 6-4, 6-4 to fall to the consolation bracket. Arnold had some trouble in the second round of the tournament and was blanked 6-0, 6-0 by Carissa Villator of Newman to end her weekend in singles play. Three Lady Saints cruised in the first round of the consolation bracket as Roohan defeated Jamie Bridges of

Nebraska Wesleyan 6-1, 6-0, Naomi Bukassa knocked off Courtney Harder also of Nebraska Wesleyan, 6-0, 6-2, and Vippavee Ngamsiri picked up a default win to send four Lady Saints to the semifinals. In the semi's it was Bukassa over Grace Golden 6-1, 6-1 and Roohan over Ngamsiri in a good 7-5, 6-7 (5), 10-8 match before Roohan outlasted Bukassa 6-0, 6-1 in the consolation final to win that bracket.

The Lady Saints didn't fare quite as well in doubles play. In the A Flight, Lopez and Coyos picked up Seward's only win in doubles action, knocking off Symon/Jordan of Newman 8-6, but had their tournament ended by Scholterback/Stevens of Wichita State, who played unattached, 8-2. Golden/Arnold gave it a go in the Flight B bracket but fell 8-4 to Harder/Boyd of Nebraska Wesleyan and Ngamsiri and Roohan suffered the same fate, losing 8-3 to Klingler/Pold of Newman in the first round.

The Lady Saints finished the tournament 10-13 overall in matches as a team their first time out in 2013. Next up will be another step up in competition when they travel to Salina for the Bethany Invitational Friday and Saturday.

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