

## Saints Come Up Short in OKC

With high hopes of an ITA Regional Championship and a trip to the ITA National Tournament on their minds, the Seward County Saints traveled to Oklahoma City over the weekend. The Saints struggled in singles action, sending just one player past the round of 16, but had a chance to win another tournament title before Ronzai Saurombe and Alejandro Gonzalez were edged in the doubles final to end their tournament one win short of a championship.

Six Seward players hit the court in the singles draw of the tournament. The Saints managed just one win in five first round matchups, that coming from Alejandro Gonzalez who knocked off Mitch Vechione of Seminole State 6-4, 6-0 to advance to the second round. In other first round matchups, the Saints had some troubles. Adriam Amado went down 6-2, 6-0 to Brady Matthews of Seminole State, Brandon Kafarela fell 6-3, 6-0 to Tyler Bridges also of Seminole, while Trevor Kipping lost 6-2, 6-3 to Ryan Hoverson of Cowley and Colin Glassman dropped his match 6-1, 6-1 to Alex Clerihew of Seminole State.

In the second round Ronzai Saurombe, who got a first round bye as the 5 seed, went up against Kavin Kochersperger of Johnson County. Saurombe battled through a tough first set to pull out a 7-6 win and cruised in the second 6-3 to reach the quarters. Gonzalez was the other Saints representative in the second round and he looked like he was on his way to joining Saurombe after he beat Josh Coleman of Cowley 6-4 in the first set, but Colwman stormed back to win the second 6-2 and buried Gonzalez in the third set tiebreaker 6-2 as well to take the match. In Saurombe's quarterfinal match he met up with 3rd seeded Harry Busby of Cowley. With action forced inside due to inclement weather, Saurombe had a tough time adjusting and Busby took advantage with a 6-2 win in the first. With momentum on his side, Busby continued to roll, downing Saurombe 6-2 in the second set as well to eliminate him from the tournament.

In doubles action the Saints had three duo's in action. Amado and Glassman were the only pair in action in the first round and their chances were dashed quickly with an 8-1 loss to Bridges/Brown of Seminole State. Kafarela and Kipping as well as Saurombe and Gonzalez both got first round byes and started in the quarterfinals. Kafarela/Kipping battled hard against Clerihew/Vechione of Seminole, but went down in the end 8-5 to get knocked from the draw. Saurombe/Gonzalez had better luck against Bridges/Brown, atoning for their teammates earlier loss with an 8-4 win to move them to the semis. The 3rd seeded Saints faced a stiff test in 2nd seeded Busby/Moore in the round of four. Saurombe/Gonzalez played a grinder against the pair, going the distance in a tight 8-6 upset win to reach the tournament finals yet again. In the final Seward's top duo took on what could be

the #1 ranked team in the nation in the upcoming rankings in Surduk/Tapfuma of Seminole State. The Saints fell behind early, dropping the first 6-2 and never recovered as the Trojans top squad kept the championship trophy in Oklahoma with a 6-3 win in the second to force Saurombe/Gonzalez to settled for 2nd place.

While disappointed with their loss, Saurombe/Gonzalez will still hold out hope of receiving one of two "wild card" entries to next week's ITA National Tournament in Florida.

The Saints finish the tournament with a 5-9 match record and are now 52-40 overall in matches this fall. Next up for the guys in green is a trip to Winfield, Kansas on Saturday where they will take on Southwestern College at 1:00. While it certainly wasn't a bad weekend, the Seward County Lady Saints came up short in their ultimate goal of an ITA Regional Championship this weekend in Oklahoma City. After winning a boatload of titles in their past two weekends, the Lady Saints came home empty handed after their biggest tournament of the fall. Paula Lopez and Paula Coyos led the Lady Saints, reaching the finals in doubles and Lopez, the semifinals in singles, before falling to nationally ranked foes to end their weekend.

Seward sent seven players into the mix in singles action against competition from Seminole State and Cowley. The Lady Saints picked up two first round wins in the tournament as Paula Coyos defeated Sherrill Marble of Seminole State 6-0, 6-1 and Paula Lopez downed Jordan Baker, also of Seminole, 6-0, 6-0 to move onto the quarterfinals. Jackie Arnold was defeated 6-0, 6-0 by 4th seeded Shawnee Ann-Brelsford of Seminole State, Kathryn Roohan was knocked off 6-0, 6-2 by Sarah Giraldo of Cowley, Naomie Bukassa was beaten 6-4, 6-0 by Ashley Bryen of Seminole State, and Vipavee Ngamsiri lost a nailbiter 6-7, 6-3, 7-6 to Hannah Tomlinson of Seminole to be eliminated from the main draw.

In the quarterfinals Coyos matched up against Ana Ruzir of Cowley, who ended 2013 ranked 6th in the ITA Rankings. Coyos could never get things going, falling to Ruzir by matching 6-2 scores to finish her run at the tournament. Lopez had better luck, easily defeating Giraldo without losing a game, 6-0, 6-0 to earn her way into the semifinals. Lopez struggled to find a rhythm against Helga Pinones-Haltenhoff of Seminole State in the semis as the tournament was forced inside due to rain. Haltenhoff blanked Lopez in the first 6-0 before knocking her off 6-4 in the second set to end Lopez's tournament in 3rd place.

In the consolation draw Roohan earned a win over Jordan Baker of Seminole State 6-0, 6-2 while Ngamsiri defeated Arnold in another consolation match 7-6, inj.

In an eight team doubles field, the Lady Saints sent three duo's to the court. Arnold and Grace Golden were the first to play and were knocked out in the first round 8-2 by Seminole's combo of

Bryen/Marble. Also going down in the opening round was Ngamsiri and Roohan for Seward as they hung tough before bowing out 8-3 to Brown/Ruzir of Cowley. The Lady Saints lone first round win came from Coyos and Lopez who had no trouble with Baker/Hurta of Seminole in their first match of the tournament, winning 8-1 to reach the final four. In their semifinal match the competition ramped up for Coyos/Lopez as they battled Brown/Ruzir from Cowley. Coyos was able to get revenge from an earlier loss in singles play to Ruzir as the Lady Saints duo bounced Cowley's top team from the tournament with an 8-4 win. With a trip to the ITA National Tournament on the line, Coyos/Lopez met up with Brelsford/Haltenhoff of Seminole in the final. The Trojans were able to capture a close first set 6-4 before breaking Seward twice to win the second 6-2 to win the championship.

The Lady Saints finish the ITA Regional with a 7-11 overall record and see their total match record for the fall move to 46-49 on the year. Next up Seward travels to Winfield, Kansas where they will battle Southwestern on Saturday at 1:00.

Roy Allen

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