

THE EUREKA REPORTER

Print

Arcata mixes teams, sweeps doubles championships

4/20/2007

With their No. 1 singles player Casey Mansfield forced to stay out of the doubles conference championships, the Arcata Tigers mixed teams and played with enough chemistry to sweep all three brackets on Friday.

Arcata's No. 1 doubles team of Alex Kusmack and Ben Miller lost one game in the first two rounds before defeating North Coast Prep's Mack Madonick and Josh Van Allen 6-0, 6-4.

The Tigers won five of six crowns in the singles championships last week, but for head coach Jason Maki, the team's ability to adjust on the fly was more impressive.

"I had seen everybody play in those spots (as singles) all season," Maki said. "Today everybody had different partners. I knew we had the ability to do it, but you never know — that's why you play the matches."

North Coast Section rules prohibit league singles champions from playing in their doubles tournaments. Likewise, a player must declare whether they are going to compete in the singles or doubles bracket when they get to the NCS tournament.

As far as Friday's matches were concerned, Arcata had just three days of practice to get the new pairs used to playing with each other, but all three teams seemed to have found a rhythm.

Tigers freshman Brendon Winnacott, who played his first match of the season last week, continued his impressive late-season run. He teamed with Erick Martini and they won their championship match in the No. 3 bracket 6-3, 6-4.

Charlie Hankin and Edward Hunter of Arcata won their No. 2 championship match 7-5, 6-4.

"We were confident," Hankin said. "We know what we're capable of and we tried not to worry too much."

The Tigers now will prepare for the NCS tournament. Mansfield will compete in the singles bracket and the rest of the team will go out for the doubles.

They have had limited success in the NCS tournament in the past, but they will try a new approach this time around.

"We have to create a different mindset," Hankin said. "We're going to play 'first strike tennis' where we go after any opportunity we see. It's going to be a lot of fun. There's no pressure and that's the best way to play."