

Never-say-die Hawks rule courts at Pius Invitational

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
Wednesday, 14 May 2014 15:29

Tiebreaker success helps Grafton tennis team surge to tournament championship

A never-say-die attitude worked wonders for the Grafton boys' tennis team last Saturday.

Prevailing in several matches that went to tiebreakers, the Black Hawks secured top honors at the Milwaukee Pius Invitational.



Grafton won two titles in singles and another in doubles and scored 28 points, four more than runner-up Cedarburg in a seven-team field.

Pius was third with 22 points.

“We won a lot of close matches. I was very proud of how our guys hung in there,” Hawks coach Nick Kassens said. “It was a tough tournament with some real quality teams.”

Grafton put itself in line for the team title by reaching championship matches in six of seven positions.

The Hawks got first-place finishes in singles from senior Jake Willms at No. 2 and sophomore Sam Bucheger at No. 3. Both went 3-0.

In their finals, Willms outlasted Cedarburg's Mitch Ramuta, 6-3, 2-6, 11-9, and Bucheger edged Steven Mulvey of Pius, 3-6, 6-4, 12-10.

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Grafton's other first came from the No. 2 duo of Andrew Mosin and Tommy Makela, who won twice before receiving a forfeit from a Greenfield team in the final.

Placing second for the Hawks with 2-1 match records were Ben Bauman at No. 1 singles, the No. 1 duo of Jon Kottke and Jacob Lang and the No. 3 duo of Alex Keefe and Rob Neuser.

Bauman lost to undefeated Enrico Arduini, 6-2, 6-0.

Kottke and Lang rallied to defeat Cedarburg's Aidan and Gavin Stumpf, 3-6, 6-1, 11-9 in the semifinals before losing to Ben Kotz and Noah Styza of Pius, 6-1, 6-1.

Keefe and Neuser won twice in straight sets before losing to Cedarburg's Billy Cobin and Gieter Rippberger, 6-1, 6-0.

The Hawks' Mike Rathke was fifth at No. 4 singles.

Grafton goes 2-1 in NSC dual meets

The Hawks won two of three dual meets against North Shore Conference foes last week.

Grafton capped the week with a 7-0 road win over Port Washington on May 8.

The Hawks won six matches in straight sets. Their closest call came at No. 1 doubles, where Kottke and Lang prevailed, 3-6, 6-2, 6-2.

Two days earlier, host Grafton edged Germantown, 4-3.

Germantown won the No. 1 spots in singles and doubles. However, the Hawks got straight-set wins from Willms, Bucheger and Mike Rathke at Nos. 2 through 4 singles, respectively, and the No. 3 duo of Makela and Lang.

Grafton opened the week with a 5-2 loss at Whitefish Bay on May 5.

The Hawks' success came in singles, with Bauman defeating Brennan Gregg, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-4 at No. 2, and Bucheger downing Jack Mueller, 6-3, 4-6, 6-1 at No. 3.

Getting two wins against a perennial power such as Bay "was a good confidence boost for us," Kassens said.

This week, Grafton was scheduled to face Cedarburg on Tuesday, will host Milwaukee Lutheran on Thursday and play a makeup meet at Homestead on Friday.

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Image information: GRAFTON JUNIOR Ben Bauman finished second at No. 1 singles at the Milwaukee Pius Invitational. His team reached first-place matches in six of seven positions on its way to the overall title.

Photo by Sam Arendt