



LOCKPORT GIRLS TENNIS



By Randy Whalen

Kamila Kalinowska had just put together one of her best tennis matches of the season.

In the end, the Lockport Township senior lost the match to the top singles player in the Southwest Suburban Conference. That's Sandburg freshman Phenom, Maia Loureiro, who entered the season ranked in the top 60 nationally in the USTA 14-and-under grouping.

But the score was 6-1, 1-6, (10-5) in the super tiebreaker third set.

While disappointed she couldn't complete a nice victory against a top opponent, Kalinowska hasn't been disappointed by much this season. In fact, she's downright happy that she and her Porter teammates are having a season.

"I was praying for a season," Kalinowska said of high school tennis being able to be played in the fall during the coronavirus pandemic. "We got one, we got to play.

"It was a great match and the first time I got a set off of her (Loureiro). I'm proud of myself to come back and get that one. I've gotten better so hopefully, there's one more meeting in the conference tournament."

A 4-year varsity veteran, Kalinowska enjoyed playing in The Lockport Invitational on Friday, Oct. 2, and Saturday, Oct. 3 at the Lockport main campus, which was one of three sites where the 12-team tourney was held.

In the two days, both Kalinowska and the Porters went 3-2. But they were happy that it went on and they got to play a variety of opponents on the last weekend of the regular season.

"It's been as big as 32 teams in the past with a few schools entering more than one team," Lockport coach Bob Champlin said. "We've had a lot of different teams over the years including (downstate) teams from Belleville and Edwardsville.

"All our other tournaments this season were canceled. But this is the second one we've hosted this season and we can thank (athletic director) Mike Dwyer for that. We tried to make it evenly matched by doing a bunch of quads."

Sandburg, which remained undefeated and improved to 16-0 on the season, went 5-0 in the two days and won the tourney. The main Lincoln-Way East team was 4-1 to finish second and the Porter's primary squad went 3-2 to finish third.

Minooka was also at Lockport for the Saturday portion of the tournament. That same day there were two other host sites. A second Lockport team and a second Lincoln-Way East squad were at Lincoln-Way West, along with Oswego East and Plainfield North. At Lincoln-Way Central was Andrew, Providence, Lincoln-Way West, and the host Knights.

While the Porters lost 4-1 to Sandburg, they did get a nice win at second doubles by the score of 2-6, 6-4, (10-6) from junior Heather Heintz and freshman Martyna Kalinowska. In a 3-2 loss to Lincoln-Way East, Kalinowska breezed to a 6-0, 6-1 win at top singles while junior Catherine Suchocki and sophomore Ellet Pryor registered a 6-2, 6-1 victory at third doubles.

While all three of the Lockport losses to the Griffins were in straight sets, all three also involved a tiebreaker to determine one of the sets. The Porters played well but came out on the wrong end of them.

Against Minooka, the Porters prevailed 4-1. Kamila Kalinowska cruised to a 6-1, 6-0 win at No. 1 singles while junior Patricia Miszczak managed a 6-0, 6-0 victory in her second singles match. In doubles, it was Heintz and Martyna Kalinowska with a 6-1, 6-3 win at No. 2, and junior Catherine Suchocki and freshman Jessica Ing teamed up to win 6-2, 6-2 at third doubles.

It's been a nice season for Ing, one of four freshmen on the team. She's often been paired with fellow freshman, Bre Schultz, and has bounced between second and fourth doubles as well as getting in an occasional singles match.

"I was hoping so and I did," Ing said of making the varsity as a freshman. "I don't know how it's usually been (on the high school level before the coronavirus). I just know I was practicing a lot over the summer. I had a little rocky start but have kept working hard to get better."

Due to time constraints, the matches on Friday were played with a single pro set, which is played till eight. Lockport defeated Andrew 4-1, with Kamila Kalinowska getting an 8-2 win at top singles and Miszczak coasting to an 8-0 victory at second singles.

In doubles, the sister combo of junior Emilia Jurzyk and freshman Patricia Jurzyk had an 8-4 win at the top spot. Heintz and Martyna Kalinowska came away with an 8-2 victory at No. 2 doubles.

In a 3-2 win over Providence, it was Miszczak with an 8-1 win at second singles, the Jurzyk sisters juked out an 8-5 victory at first doubles, and Heintz and Martyna Kalinowska also won 8-5 at third singles.

While Kamila Kalinowska fell 8-1 at top singles to Providence junior Emma Davis, she felt good to have the opportunity to play top-notch completion.

"Emma Davis is the No. 1 player for Providence," Kamila Kalinowska said. "The biggest difference this season is that we haven't had the big tournament and only get to play teams in our area. We miss out on playing some of the other top competition."

Last year, Kalinowska went to State with then-senior Natalie Barth as part of the Porter's top doubles team. She also went to State as a sophomore in doubles with then-senior partner, Maddy Grcevic. This is her first season as a full-time singles player.

"It's Kamila's fourth year here and she's made such an improvement," Champlin said. "Singles and doubles is a different mentality and her consistency is so much better. She wants to play in college."

This weekend Kamila Kalinowska and her teammates will look to play well in the SWSC Blue Tournament, which will start on Thursday, Oct. 8, and conclude on Saturday, Oct. 10, and is hosted by Lincoln-Way East. Sandburg tied the Porters for the conference crown two years ago, which was the third straight for Lockport. Last year, the Eagles won it outright for the first time since 2006.

Due to COVID-19 concerns, the State Finals will not be played this year. That means the season will end after the sectional. Lockport will host its own Class 2A Sectional again this season with the dates being Friday, Oct. 16, and Saturday, Oct. 17. There the Porters will be aiming for their fourth straight sectional championship and 12th in the past 18 years.

"We have a young team with four of our top 11 being freshmen." Champlin said. "The future looks bright."