



LOCKPORT TENNIS SECTIONAL



By Randy Whalen

For the Lockport Township girl's tennis team, the doubles made sure it was four times the fun.

For the fourth straight season the Porters top two doubles teams played each other for the sectional championship. And for the fourth straight season, Lockport won the Class 2A sectional title as a team.

But this season was a bit different. That's because Martyna Kalinowska and Heather Heintz are sectional champions.

The duo started out as the season as the third doubles team for the Porters. Now they will get their names on the sign at the Lockport tennis courts as sectional champions.

Kalinowska, a freshman, and Heintz, a junior, defeated their teammates junior Emilia Jurzyk and freshman Patricia Jurzyk 6-3, 7-5 on Saturday, Oct. 17 to win the finals at Lockport East campus.

The four of them, along with senior Kamila Kalinowska, who won the singles championship, gave the host Porters their fourth straight sectional championship, 11th in the past 15 years, 12th since 2003, and 13th overall. It's also the fifth consecutive year the Porters have won the doubles crown.

The five would have qualified for the State Finals but due to COVID-19 concerns, that is canceled this season. Still, it was a great year for the Porters and especially Kalinowska and Heintz, who were seeded fifth.

"It took a bunch of teamwork," Martyna Kalinowska said. "At the beginning of the season, we were third doubles so I'm kind of surprised. We won our (quarterfinal and semifinal) matches in three sets and this is the first time we won against our teammates."

In the round of 16, the Porter partners toppled Plainfield Central juniors Juliana Macauley and Jenna Mohler 6-2, 6-2. Then things got tougher as they slipped past Plainfield North seniors Hannah Aylsworth and Gabrielle Ballard 4-6, 6-0, 6-3 in the quarterfinals. From there they toppled Bolingbrook sophomore Tatiana Overton and senior Lauren Mirocha 6-4, 4-6, 6-1 in the semifinals to advance to face their teammates for the title.

"They were just so consistent in the finals," Lockport coach Bob Champlin said of Kalinowska and Heintz. "They played relaxed and loose. It's really neat that they came from the fifth seed to win it."

In the second set, Kalinowska and Heintz were ahead 5-2 only to see the Jurzyk sisters, who were the top-seed, battle back to tie it at 5-5. But Kalinowska and Heintz regrouped to capture the final two sets and the sectional.

"We just had to get it together," Martyna Kalinowska said. "I'm kind of used to pressure. I started playing tennis at age five and have been playing tournaments since I was 11."

That's quite a contrast to her partner.

"I just started playing tennis last year," said Heintz, who was mostly on the JV tennis team last season and also plays badminton. "I always wanted to play and last year I just decided to do it."

"We played them (Jurzyk sisters) every day in practice for the past week and never beat them. It definitely does feel great. We did a good job adjusting to the wind and in the end, we got the adrenaline and went with it."

Although the Jurzyk sisters were the top seed, they had a close match to start. They were two points away from losing their round of 16 match before rallying for a 5-7, 7-5, 6-0 win over Minooka senior Mariah Duarte and junior Kaleigh Serra. In the quarterfinals, the Porter pair was back on track with a 6-2, 6-1 win over Joliet juniors Ashley Fabbre and Megan Miller. In the semifinals, the siblings defeated Plainfield Central seniors Kaylie Dahms and Brooke Cornell 6-3, 6-0.

Lockport finished with 32 points, while Plainfield Central, which would have qualified four to state, was second with 22 points. Minooka and Joliet (Co-op) tied for third with 18 points apiece. Bolingbrook (15) was fifth followed by Plainfield North (12), Plainfield East (12), Yorkville (6), Romeoville (6), and Plainfield South (4).

Kamila Kalinowska, the older sister of Martyna, was part of a sectional championship for the second straight season and would have gone to state for a third consecutive season. She won the sectional doubles last year with then-senior Natalie Barth. This was her first time playing singles in the postseason.

"It's just excellent," Kamila Kalinowska said of winning the sectional singles her senior season. "But I'm kind of upset that I don't get to go to state. It would have been my first time there in singles."

"I've enjoyed doubles but I've always been playing singles, it's my main game. I like being out there on my own. It's all up to you."

The older Kalinowska was the top seed in singles and showed why as she only lost three games the entire tournament. She defeated Plainfield Central junior Mikayla Kelly 6-0, 6-2 in the final. In her first match, she toppled Yorkville senior Nicola Betz 6-0, 6-0, and then won 6-0, 6-1 over Minooka sophomore Alaina Dorman in the quarterfinals. It was 6-0, 6-0 against Plainfield Central senior Madigan Kearney in the semifinals.

Lockport's second singles player, junior Patricia Miszczak who was the sectional runner-up in singles last season, won her first match before falling to Kelly 6-1, 6-2 in the quarterfinals. Kelly defeated Minooka senior Isabelle Figarelli 6-4, 6-4 in the semifinals.

Kearney closed her high school career with a 6-2, 4-6, 6-2 victory over Figarelli in the third-place match. The Wildcats would have advanced four to state as Dahms and Cornell placed fourth in doubles.

Overton and Mirocha, who were the Raiders top singles players during the season and never played doubles until the sectional, placed third with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Dahms and Cornell. Bolingbrook hadn't qualified anyone for state since Nneka Onyejiaka went in singles in 2012.

While there isn't a state this fall if there is next year the Porters should be in good shape as five of their sectional players are slated to return.

"We've had a lot of great girls over the years and this year we had an influx of freshmen," said Champlin, who had four freshmen on the varsity team this season. "For Kamila Kalinowska to switch over to singles this year and win it like that is pretty amazing."

"Usually you would have to win state or be one of the top placers there to end your season and high school career with a victory. But because there's no state this season, Kamila got to end hers with a win."