

Sports

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(F18)

Hoffman wins U.S. clay-court tennis crown

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

If winning his second national tennis title in less than a year was a boost to Seth Hoffman's ego, he got a dose of humility when he got home to West Bloomfield.

Hoffman was trying to answer questions on the telephone Tuesday while his older brother, Matt, provided a background distraction.

So what did his brother think of Seth winning the 16-and-under, clay-court championship Sunday in Nashville, Tenn.?

"He said I probably got lucky."

On the serious side, Hoffman is becoming one of the top young amateur players nationally in his age group, having added the clay-court title to the indoor championship he won last November in Boston.

"I THINK I proved it was more than just a fluke when I won the first one," Hoffman said.

"I thought I had a pretty good chance going in. I did a lot of cross training with my brother and was in pretty good shape."

"This was more exciting because it was harder fought. I had harder matches because you have to move your feet more on clay court. You have longer volleys because the ball moves slower."

Hoffman, who will be a junior at North Farmington in the fall, was seeded eighth in the 128-player field in Nashville.

He anticipates a No. 3 national ranking provided he does well in the national hard-court tournament in Kalamazoo Aug. 3. After his latest victory, he should be one of the favorites in that event.

Hoffman has the attitude of a winner and will always rely on that for a certain edge. Some may interpret it as being cocky, but Hoffman says that's not exactly the case.

"It's a different attitude that I carry on the court," he said. "It's just a winning attitude. It doesn't have anything to do with rubbing anyone's face in it. It has to do with winning. All tennis players have it."

HOFFMAN, who played seven matches at Belle Meade Country Club during a nine-day stay in Nashville, had to rally from opening-set losses in two of his last three matches.

He defeated JJ Jackson of North Carolina in the quarterfinals (6-7, 7-5, 6-0) and Nick Williams of Washington in the semifinals (6-2, 7-6).

Hoffman faced Eddie Jacques of Alabama, who had a surprising tournament run in which he upset the top-seeded player, in the final and won 3-6, 6-4, 6-4.

"He was unseeded and I was a little nervous," Hoffman said. "The papers had written a lot about him being the Cinderella player in the tournament, and I guess it got to me."

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Erica Zonder of Farmington Hills won the Michigan Women's Amateur golf championship earlier this month in Gaylord. The 21-year-old Zonder is a student at the University of Michigan.

Zonder claims state amateur championship

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

Unfortunately for her, Erica Zonder never saw the golf shot that enabled her to win the Michigan Women's Amateur championship.

The 21-year-old from Farmington Hills eventually made par and defeated Amy Klingenberg on the 20th hole of match play at Hidden Valley Golf Course in Gaylord July 12.

Zonder, who graduated from North Farmington High School in 1988, hit her third shot on the par-4 hole 70 yards to the green and within an inch of the cup.

Her tee shot hit a tree, and she was still in the rough after making a sideways chip with her second stroke. Klingenberg, meanwhile, was on the green in two.

But the situation changed when Zonder used a sand wedge to launch the shot that put her in position to win.

SHE DROPPED the easy putt for par while Klingenberg of Hickory Corners failed to capitalize on her advantage and three-putted for bogey.

"I saved my butt with that shot," Zonder said. "I didn't see it because I was blocked out."

"I made this once-in-a-lifetime shot and just wanted to go on to the next hole, but she missed her putt and it was over."

"On the last 10 holes, I was hitting my irons pretty well, and I thought I could still make par because I had been putting well. I'd rather have a one-inch putt than a four-footer any day."

Zonder, who will be a senior at the University of Michigan in the fall, qualified for the championship flight during 18-hole stroke play the first day, finishing fourth in the 112-player field.

It was the first time she did so in three years. Zonder was a semifinalist in the first flight last year.

SHE THEN defeated Jean Murray of Mount Pleasant, 6-and-5; Susan Palmer of Linden, 4-and-2; and defending champ Mary Jane Delcamp of Clarkston in a one-hole playoff during three rounds of match play.

In the final, Klingenberg was 3-up after six holes, but Zonder rallied to go 1-up heading to the par-3 18th.

Zonder's tee shot landed within 10 feet of the pin, Klingenberg's 12 feet. But her opponent made a birdie putt to tie after Zonder missed hers. Both parred the 19th hole.

Zonder apparently created some momentum for herself by winning the amateur. She qualified this week for the U.S. Amateur in Hutchinson, Kan., in two weeks.

"I've been kinda down on myself and my golf game lately, and it helped my confidence a lot," Zonder said. "I'd say it's my biggest thrill in golf."

Zonder already is thinking about the 1992 Michigan Amateur tournament since it will be played at Radrick Farms in Ann Arbor where she plays regularly as a member of the U-M women's team.

"I'M LOOKING forward to defending," she said. "I'm the club champ there, so I look forward to next year."

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NFWB survives test of endurance to win invite

North Farmington-West Bloomfield I survived a three-game marathon played in temperatures approaching 100 degrees Saturday — with two games going extra innings — and still had enough left to collect the championship of the Trenton Baseball Invitational Sunday.

NFWB I, champions of the Little Caesars Amateur Baseball League's Mickey Mantle Division, struck for three runs in both the second and third innings to beat Monroe 6-2 in Sunday's title game. Starter Dave Eitlinger (from West Bloomfield HS) went the first four innings to collect the victory, as NFWB I improved its overall record to 32-2.

Eitlinger also singled in two runs in the second inning, one of his two hits in the game. Craig Peterson (Milford HS) added a eighth to secure the second the went 2-for-3 and Derek Fox (Birmingham Brother Rice) had a two-run single and John Heller (Detroit Country Day) clubbed a run-scoring double in the third. Heller also had two hits in the game.

baseball

IN A SEMIFINAL that started Saturday and ended Sunday, NFWB I edged past Dearborn 7-6 in eight innings. Dearborn finished second to NFWB I in the league, but the two teams never met — until Saturday (and Sunday).

The game-winning rally started with a double by Adam Wood (Milford-Lakeland). Jay Davey (West Bloomfield) doubled, but Wood stopped at third. Jason Farrell (West Bloomfield) loaded the bases with an infield single, and Doug Gaughan (West Bloomfield) walked to force in the go-ahead run. Fox then struck out the side in the bottom of the eighth to secure the victory.

Wood led the attack with two hits and two RBI. Davey added two hits and an RBI. Farrell and Peterson each had two hits, and Heller had two RBI. The eighth inning was played Sunday morning, after Dearborn rallied for a run in the bottom

of the seventh Saturday to tie it at 6-6.

EARLIER SATURDAY, NFWB I whipped Tecumseh 9-5. Davey got the win, in relief of Wood, who started and walked the first four batters he faced. NFWB I rallied with a pair of three-run flurries in the second and third; Eitlinger and Davey each drilled two-run singles. Peterson had three hits and Eitlinger had two.

In its opener Saturday, NFWB I broke a scoreless tie with nine runs in the 10th inning to subdue Northville 9-0. The key blows: a grand slam home run by Gaughan and a three-run double by Wood. Heller's squeeze bunt scored the first run and Mitch Rivet (Birmingham Groves) singled in the second.

Rivet was the winning pitcher, tossing a one-hitter through 10 innings. He walked five and struck out nine.

NFWB I now travels to Coldwater for the American Amateur Baseball Congress Regional, which starts Wednesday. NFWB I will play the northern Indiana region winner in its opener of the eight-team, double-elimination tournament.

NSSL plans celebration for 30th championships

The Northwest Suburban Swim League will conclude its 30th Anniversary season this weekend with its annual championship meet at Beech Woods Park in Southfield.

Six fledgling clubs from Oakland and Wayne counties — Forest Hills, Cranbrook of Birmingham, Pleasant Ridge, C-B of Livonia, Woodbrooke Hills and Beverly Hills — banded together in 1962 to form the NSSL and remain as part of a larger 16-club organization today.

The NSSL, which provides a competitive venue for more than 2,000 girls and boys between the ages 8 and 18, will offer a touch of nostalgia at this year's meet.

The "birthday party" will offer more than just quality competition for spectators and the 700 swimmers expected to participate. A special ceremony on Sunday will include the introduction of past NSSL presidents, swimmers, coaches and others who helped to nurture the league to its current status.

"Two months ago, we set out to chronicle our roots," meet director Gretchen Gonzalez said. "Today I have a suitcase full of news clippings, past programs, minutes of meetings and names of volunteers. For example, we learned the first league meet was held in 1962 at Beverly Hills, and Forest Hills won the meet with 262 points."

PRELIMINARIES FOR this year's meet begin at 7 a.m. Saturday for 12-and-under swimmers in individual events. Relay prelims start at 11 a.m., followed by prelims for individual swimmers in the 13-18 age groups.

The top 12 swimmers in the 46 individual events, plus the top 12 teams in the six relays, return for the point-scoring finals on Sunday. Warm-ups begin at 8:45 a.m., followed by the Parade of Clubs at 9:30 and the meet at 10.

The championships follow a six-week, dual-meet season in which perennial powers Woodside Athletic Club of Birmingham and Bloomfield Surf tied for the Division A title.

Those clubs plus Orchard Valley of West Bloomfield, Heart of the Hills from Rochester and Beechwood of Troy are expected to vie for first place this weekend.

Division B leader Farmington Glen won all six of its dual meets and should make a strong bid for moving up to Division A.

Also expected to do well in the lower division are C-B and Beechwood of Farmington Hills. The latter team is coached by Patrick Dutlie, the girls swim coach at North Farmington High School and 1990 Observer Coach of the Year.

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