

Dallas tennis

(continued from page 9)

"Kavanaugh has been really impressive," said Matysczak. "He's pushing Brian for that number one spot and I see those two interchanging all year."

Risch will have plenty of company in his attempt to regain the number four position. Four other players in contention include sophomore Jeff Faneck, who saw considerable doubles action last year, as well as freshman Rich Kurilla, Bryan Balutis and Marcus Sowcik.

Those four are also battling for playing time at the number three doubles position. Right now it's Faneck and Kurilla. Blase and Cleary, the number two doubles team, start the first of what could be three seasons as a formidable duo. The number one team of Kavanaugh and Germick earned all-scholastic status with an 8-2 mark last spring.

"The kids are real anxious this spring," said Matysczak. "They feel they can have a good season and are looking forward to it."

While expectations were high to improve on a 4-8 season a year ago, the Dallas coach was figuring on three or four losses. With the team improving even more than anticipated Matysczak is coaching against overconfidence.

"Again, we had five 4-3 wins that could have gone the other way," Matysczak stressed. "We always emphasize to win your match and not give one away. These kids are positive and mentally tough."

To make another playoff run will probably take another season of close victories. Most of the top players in the league are back and five other schools field a quality team up and down the lineup. Matysczak foresees intense battles with Wyoming Seminary, Wyoming Valley West, Hazleton, Wyoming Area and Lake-Lehman, which may feature the best 1-2 players in the league with Jay Sudhakaran and Avesh Jain.

In addition to improving his mainline players and building depth, the Dallas mentor hopes to prepare for the future. He feels the program is headed in the right direction and is thrilled with the turnout this spring, especially among freshman. The two main reasons being the Mounts fine showing last year and the increased number of junior players in the Wyoming Valley area.

There's one female among the varsity roster of 12. Alish Hyde, a junior, is out for the first time.

Lehman tennis

(continued from page 9)

ished 8-3. With those two leading the way, Lehman will be good for winning three matches against most teams. Again, getting that fourth and deciding win will not always be easy, especially since most of the league's best players return this spring.

Last year's number three singles player, Anu Das, has since transferred to Wyoming Seminary. It appears that role now belongs to J.J. Kopko, who won a letter last spring on the volleyball court. The Lake Township native would have been one of 14 returning letterman for John Baranowski, but hopes to give the tennis team a big lift.

"I think he'll help," Edwards said. "He has some experience recreationally and has some knowledge of the game."

Quite to her surprise, Edwards welcomed another senior trading one spring sport for another. Jonelle Elgaway, bound for Ohio State on a field hockey scholarship, passed up softball for tennis. Girls are eligible to participate on the boys team at any school that isn't able to field enough girls for a complete team in the fall. The other senior girl is Marijon Brondsma a transfer stu-

dent from Holland.

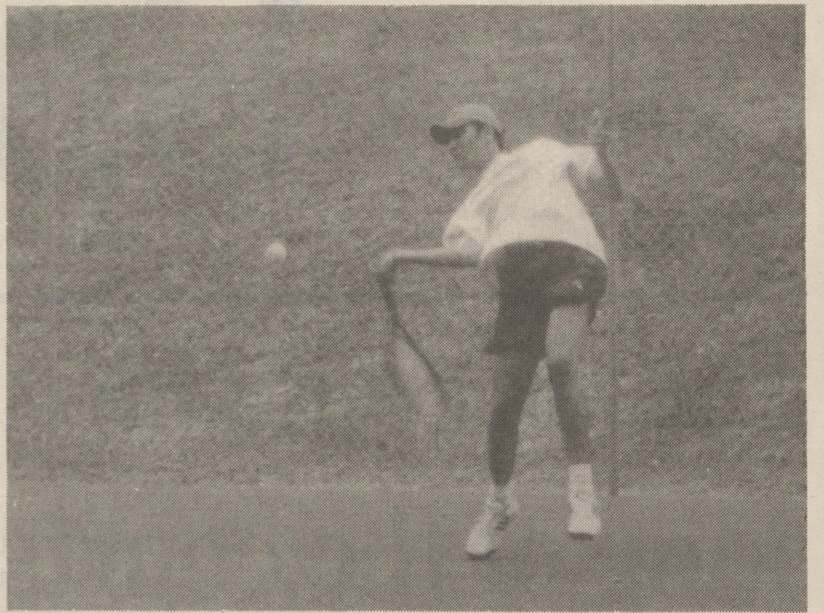
"Marijon has played before and Jonelle brings great athletic skill as well as leadership" said Edwards.

The two are fighting for the number four singles spot and will see considerable action at doubles. In the early going, Kopko and Brondsma will form one doubles team with Elgaway and Matt Link the other. Link is a junior and saw some playing time last year.

As usual, practice has been difficult during the early going, but the kids come to learn and have approached the game in a positive manner thus far. Some of the younger players appear to like the challenge and may be heard from before the seasons is over.

Sudhakaran and Jain also serve as ideal leaders for the younger set. With two of the best players in the league in her lineup, Edwards is excited about the season herself.

"If some of the underclassmen step up, we can hold our own against most teams," Edwards said. "We need the less experienced players to do well and need to improve at the three and four singles positions. One of our doubles teams needs to step up."



Avesh Jain, Lake-Lehman's number two singles player, ready to return against Quinn Kavanaugh of Dallas.

Lehman volleyball

(continued from page 1)

are the other two returning all stars. Brooks has been hitting the ball very well at practice, while Snyder is one of four strong players Lehman will showcase in the middle.

Other Knights in the middle include senior Jeff Castellano, junior Dave Milunic and sophomore Brian Smiglelski.

Mark Steele, a key server a season ago, looks to take Jeremy Fleeger's spot in the lineup and has been passing well thus far. George Frank will see a lot of playing time at outside hitter, while Mike Tribendis and Chuck Snyder anchor the right side.

The back row is in good hands with seniors Ryan Bombick and Dave Rogers as well as John Mendygral. Bombick is considered one of the top defensive players in the conference.

The road to the league championship won't be easy despite the caliber of play the Knights are capable of. Tunkhannock, Lehman's regular nemesis and a team that gave them two touch battles last spring, also returns an experienced senior lineup, losing just two of their top eight players.

Baranowski is also wary of North Pocono and Wyoming Valley West and possibly Dallas and Pittston. Dallas appears to be a year away while Pittston may be troubled by two coaching changes since the conclusion of last year.

The Knights have a coaching change of their own. Jim Donnelly replaces Bob Rogers as assistant coach.

"He's a welcome addition," said Baranowski of Donnelly, who leads the Hanover girls team in the fall. "He has a good outlook to the game and is a nice breath of fresh air for the program."

Last season Lehman entered the Northeast Regionals unscathed, rolling through the league and districts with a 15-0 mark. But during regionals the Knights played well below their status, losing to Hempfield and Parkland before defeating Lackawanna Trail. Poor passing and inconsistent serving were the major weaknesses.

A year older and wiser the Black Knights have what it takes to go a step further and reach the state finals - if they can put it all together.

They're potentially dangerous...

Back Mountain players will help on court at Sem

By LEN KRYESKI
Sports Writer

KINGSTON - The Wyoming Seminary tennis team has won the Southern Division of the NEPTC every year since 1988. This season legendary coach Chuck Lull is expecting a battle and welcomes the challenge.

"I think there's more balance in the league this year than I've seen in some time," said Lull entering his 25th season as head mentor for the Blue Knights. "Wyoming Area has put together enough talent to be a contender."

Lull went on to say that Dallas and Wyoming Valley West are both strong and deep while Lake-Lehman could surprise some people.

While the Blue Knights lost the number one player in the league, Jim Matysczak, the balance of the teams return their top players and have added depth in the process. Matysczak, son of Dallas head coach Len Matysczak, captured the district singles title each of the past three seasons and has since taken his talents to M.I.T.

Don't go feeling too sorry for Seminary though. With a roster of 40, the Blue Knights attract more players than other local high school programs.

Joel Barros is among the returnees and finished 11-0 at the number two singles position. The first team all-scholastic made it to

WYOMING SEMINARY TENNIS
Head coach: Chuck Lull
Assistants: Bryan Rutledge and Daniel Krueger
Players out: 40
'95 record: 12-1 Southern Division champs
Home court: Nesbitt Field tennis courts

the fourth round of districts before being eliminated.

Other returning starters include sophomore Dave Matysczak, and Back Mountain native Rob Ciaruffoli.

"Barros and Ciaruffoli are seniors, but most of our players are sophomores and freshmen," Lull said. The future looks promising; it'll be interesting to see how the younger players come along."

Rohan Ramakrishna, a sophomore from the Back Mountain is among the players pushing for the fourth singles position. Lull mentioned three other Back Mountain players among his top 15: John McLaughlin (jr.) of Dallas, Kevin Shaw (soph.) and Anu Das (jr.). Das transferred from Lehman where he was the number three singles player last spring. He's been working hard in practice and has a chance to be among Seminary's top 10 players.



POST PHOTO/JIM PHILLIPS

Big scorers

Six prolific Gate of Heaven scorers gathered for a group shot Saturday. From left, front: Chelsey Ostrowsky, Mike Regan, Maria Wright. Back row, Andrew Lohin, Brad Feleccia, J.C. DeRojas.



POST PHOTO/JIM PHILLIPS

1000 points

J.C. DeRojas scored his 1000th point in a Gate of Heaven uniform Saturday. With him are his mother, Alma, father, Juan, and assistant coach, Joe Lohin, far left.

Dallas volleyball

(continued from page 9)

ready to play and hit the floor. We stand a good shot at meeting our goal. At the minimum we want a better season."

With five victories, the Mounts improved by four games in the win column last season. Dallas won their final three contests and despite losing five seniors, Straka believes the winning attitude carried over into this season. In order to qualify for districts they'll need at least a fourth place finish in the Wyoming Valley Conference. The only thing standing in their way are perennial favorites Lake-Lehman, Tunkhannock, North Pocono and Wyoming Valley West.

"Those are the four hardest teams out there," Straka said, adding that other than Lehman and Tunkhannock, most schools were depleted by graduation. "If we can beat any one of them or maybe all of them, we can move into districts."

In just a short time, Straka's influence has begun to take shape on the program. In addition to being fundamentally prepared and developing good practice habits, the Mounts believe in themselves. Districts may not be such a far-fetched idea after all.

The squads level of play is much better than a season ago. Dallas is relatively strong in passing and hitting, and lack of height will not be a factor this season.

"We don't have a major weakness," added Straka. "We need to get the transition game hammered down and just get together on timing."

Nine of the 16 varsity boys will see plenty of action including five seniors. Don Holdredge received second team all-scholastic honors last year and is the most expe-

"This team comes ready to play and hit the floor."
Kevin Straka
Dallas coach

rienced player on the roster. The swing hitter is easily the Mounts' strongest hitter.

Matt Sowcik returns for his senior season after a year off. Sowcik plays the middle and hasn't missed a beat. Amro Najib has played elsewhere, but will fill the setter's shoes in '96. Jared Dukas is just one of number of versatile players. He'll start in the back row, but may also rotate to a hitting position.

Walter Davis is a senior out for the first time, but has gained experience by playing in church and recreation leagues. Getting to the ball may be a problem, but he's been relied on to become a big hitter.

Junior Kevin Burkhardt participated in the Keystone games and gives Dallas a quality passer. Classmate Joe Dreier can play back row, setter and adds hitting ability. Sophomore Erik Steltz is a swing hitter while Straka refers to Pete Redmond as the ultimate utility player. Redmond is actually the number two setter, but can play a number of positions.

"This team is not afraid to put in some hard work," said Straka. "They're not tested, they lack game experience, but they're aggressive and we stress lots of hitting."

The Mountaineers will do some fine tuning before next week's regular season opener. Dallas hosted a five team tournament at the school gymnasium last Saturday.



Straight shooters

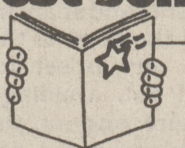
Back Mountain winners of the 1996 Knights of Columbus free throw shooting contest sponsored by the Father John O'Leary Council 8224, are in their respective divisions, bottom row, from left, 11-year old, Colin Donnelly; 10, Anna Bruns; 10, Phil Engler; top row from left, 12, Russ Susko; 13, Bryan Wagner; 12, Chelsey Ostrowsky; 14, Erica Turner; 11, Sarah Armand; and 13, Jen Noon.

Game notes

(continued from page 9)

Now is the time for all first time hunters to contact their regional office to see when the next available Hunter/Trapper Education course will be held. Every year, the Game Commission receives many calls from people who wait until the last minute to attend one of these courses. Unfortunately, they usually find that the majority of them are held early in the year. Also hunters planning to hunt out of state should obtain a hunter education card before they can apply for a license. WCO James F. Jolley

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