

Mounts serve up championship

By DAVE KONOPKI
Dallas Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. — Four years ago, the Dallas girls tennis team struggled to its second consecutive 1-11 season. Three years ago, there were hardly enough players to put a team on the court.

This season, the Mountaineers can call themselves champions.

The Dallas program capped its remarkable resurgence by posting a perfect 11-0 record in division play en route to winning the Northeast Pennsylvania Tennis Conference Northern Division championship. The Class 2A Mountaineers finished with an overall record of 12-2, losing to unbeaten Southern Division champion Berwick and Coughlin. Both of those schools compete in Class 3A.

"It's a real tribute to the girls," said fifth-year coach Mike Balutansky. "They kept working hard and they never gave up. It was a great season."

The coach didn't always think his team would capture the championship. In fact, he says there were many times when he wondered whether or not it would win another match.

"They're awful in practice, just awful," said Balutansky, with a laugh. "There were times when it looked as though we couldn't beat anyone. But once match time comes, they know how to focus and win."

Balutansky praised the leadership of seniors Paige Kyle, Claire Mitchell, Rachel Schaub, Alicia Evans, Nicole Madden and Jamie Novitski, and says all 23 players on the roster contributed to the title.

"It's a team sport. I try to express that to all the players," he said. "We received a lot of support by the non-regular players. Our seniors did a great job. Alicia, Paige and Rachel have been with us for all four years. I'm very happy for them."

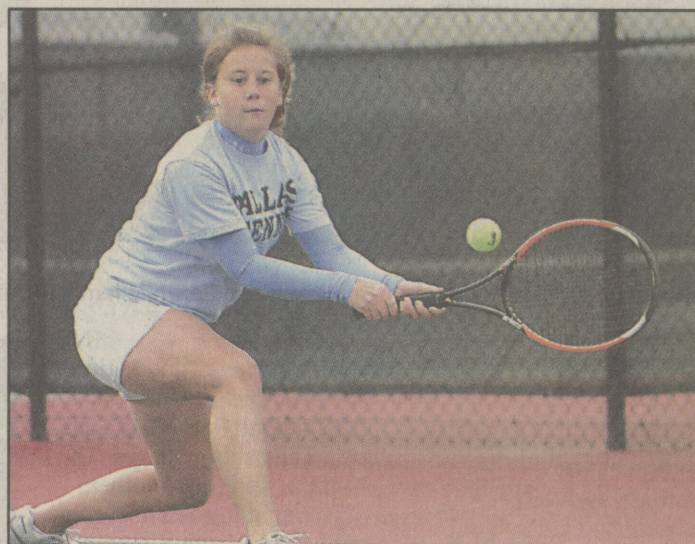
Several attempts to interview the three four-year seniors were unsuccessful before press time.

On the court, the Mountaineers were led by No. 1 singles player Erica Lisses; Kyle was the No. 2 singles player; and Schaub was No. 3. The No. 1 doubles team of Alicia Evans and Kristen O'Brien only lost one match in Class 2A.

But perhaps the most incredible statistic involved the No. 2 doubles team of senior Claire Mitchell and freshman Danielle Harding. Seven times this season, the match went down to the final competition with the score tied at 2-2. And all seven times the team of



Paige Kyle was one of six seniors to lead Dallas to a championship this season.



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"It's a real tribute to the girls. They kept working hard and they never gave up. It was a great season."

Mike Balutansky
Dallas tennis coach

Christina Toussant was a key player for Dallas this season.



Rachel Schaub was the No. 3 singles player for Dallas.

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Christian Pyros, left, of Dallas and Kevin Cope of Lake-Lehman scramble for control of the ball during a junior high school soccer game.



David Miller, left, of Dallas dribbles the ball ahead of Lake-Lehman's Jay Dawson.

A young backyard rivalry

It might not be as intense as their counterparts on the high school level, but the backyard rivalry between Dallas and Lake-Lehman continued on the junior high school level last week. The schools competed in soccer and field hockey games, both being played at the Lake-Lehman fields. Attempts to obtain the game results from both schools were not successful.



Alicia Kaiser, left, of Dallas challenges Lake-Lehman's Nikki Sutliff for the ball during a junior high field hockey game.



Lake-Lehman's Sara Hagenback and Salena Adamshick keep the ball away from Casey Scafella of Dallas.

PHOTOS FOR THE DALLAS POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK