

Boys tennis earns win over Estacada

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

The boys tennis team started their week with a 4-3 win over Estacada at home at Black Butte Ranch on Tuesday, April 19. Two days later, the Outlaws fell hard to Philomath.

Last week, the boys squad had their matches canceled and because of that were able to put in a week of good, hard practice, which helped produce their win over Estacada.

In their match against the Rangers, Sisters' No. 1 and No. 2 singles players and No. 1 and No. 2 doubles players posted wins for the Outlaws, which was enough for the victory.

Jonny Gurney (No. 1 singles) earned a decisive 6-0, 6-2 win over Edwin Mendoza. Gurney did a great job executing both his forehand and backhand groundstrokes.

"Jonny plays best when he moves well on the court," said Coach Bim Gander. "He gets to the ball early and that preparation allows him to strike the ball well. No matter how hard his opponent hits, he's ready to return it. And that good movement is an essential skill for a No. 1 singles player."

Michael Commins (No. 2 singles) beat Will Dutil 6-1, 6-0. Commins is the Outlaws' most experienced player, and

the tallest by far at 6 feet 4 inches, and that advantage is starting to pay off.

"We've been working on his serve all year, and it's finally coming together," said Gander. "He's made a minor grip change, which has made him much more comfortable with his serve."

Although Jed Kizziar lost his match at No. 3 singles, he played a terrific match against Ivan Pinto, and played dozens of very long, competitive points. Jed lost to Pinto with scores of 5-7, 2-6.

"Jed is picking up the game quickly, and has exceeded my most optimistic expectations for his progress as a freshman," said Gander. "That close loss was as good as a win for me."

Pierce Wehrle and Josh Kizziar's (No. 1 doubles) aggressive play at the net led to their 6-3, 6-2 win over Seth Miller and Dylan Guthix.

"Their volleys and overheads are more effective with every match played," stated Gander. "They practiced extremely well last week and it showed in their play today. They won their match in routine fashion."

Sean Willitts and Jacob Gurney beat Fabien Riep and Matt Mantei 6-0, 7-6 (7-4). The win marked the duo's first win of the season at the No. 2 doubles position.

"This was their best match of the season," commented

Gander. "Jacob is performing beautifully. It's a tall order to ask him to play No. 2 doubles in his first year on the team, so for him and Sean to rise to the occasion and win is quite an accomplishment."

Gander was happy with his team's efforts.

"Overall, I'm pleased with the results," said Gander. "It bodes well for a pretty hectic schedule we have from now to the end of the season."

Thursday at Philomath was a different story, as the Outlaws lost 7-1 to the Warriors. Willitts and Gurney (No. 2 doubles) were the only team to post a win. The duo tallied a quick 6-2 victory over Connor Ringwald and Cecil Carlisle in the first set. In the second set, they had a brief lull and went down 4-0, before rekindling the spark and coming back to win the last six games in a row for the



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Pierce Werhle plays the net in a doubles win vs. Estacada.

victory.

"Jacob is charging the net after the serve or the return of the serve, and then hitting a winning shot from that position," said Gander. "He did that throughout the match."

"Philomath was definitely a stronger and more experienced team than Estacada," said Gander. "We are a very inexperienced team, except

for Michael (Commins). This is totally a rebuilding year for us. It's definitely been tough, but all the kids are improving and we're setting up nicely for next year."

The boys tennis team was scheduled to play at home against Madras on Tuesday, April 26. On Thursday, April 28, Sisters will play at home against Cottage Grove.

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