

AHS rules tennis singles

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CRESCENT CITY -- Everything seemed to be going according to plan, as the Arcata Tigers had placed all six players into their respective title matches at Saturday's Humboldt-Del Norte Conference singles championships played at Del Norte High School.

After dropping no more than two games in any one match throughout the afternoon, the stage was set for the Tigers to complete an undefeated season and waltz into Friday's H-DNC doubles championships at Del Norte unscathed and virtually untouched.

The script played out to the letter, as No. 1 seed Casey Mansfield dropped just one game in his first two matches before disposing of Eureka's Kyle Carbis 6-0, 6-1 in the championship match to keep his two-year long unbeaten streak intact in H-DNC competition.

Then things got interesting.

After Arcata's Brandon Winnacott breezed to a 6-0, 6-1 victory over St. Bernard's Hee Choi in the opening round, Winnacott followed that with a straight set win over Eureka's Vince DeGraff, putting himself in the title match with relatively little difficulty. Also in the draw was Del Norte's David Standing, who also had little trouble in advancing to the title match with consecutive straight set victories, setting up a third meeting with Winnacott who had beaten Standing handily during the regular season in their two meetings.

Standing captured the first set 6-4 before

Winnacott responded with an emphatic 6-0 victory in set number two, setting the stage for one of the more competitive conclusions to a match of the day. With Standing holding a 5-4 lead in the decisive third set, Winnacott proceeded to break serve, putting the momentum back on his side. Standing followed with a service break of his own, knotting the set at 5-5 as the drama built with every stroke. Standing then held serve before breaking Winnacott's serve in the final game of the match to walk away with a dramatic 7-5 victory.

Arcata's Edward Hunter was able to recapture the Tigers momentum, earning a bye in his opening round before defeating Fortuna's Kyle Herrera in the semifinals. Hunter then completed his afternoon with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over Trevor Nesvold of Ferndale to keep his unbeaten season intact.

After Dunn Ratnitsakul gave the Tigers three championship victories in four matches with his 6-1, 6-2 win over Ferndale's Zach Leonardi from the No. 4 position, Ferndale's Ryan Shields gained a measure of revenge for his team, adding to the drama of what had already been an exciting day of tennis.

Shields, who had to overcome a 1-6 deficit against Adam Coppini of Fortuna in his first match of the day before rebounding with a 6-1, 6-0 showing over the final two sets, reached the final of the No. 5 bracket with a 7-5, 6-2 win over Del Norte's Joel Bruhns. While Shields was laboring and faced two tough matches en route to the finals, Arcata's Ian Hunter was having no such problems. Hunter followed up a first-round bye with a straight set win over North Coast Prep's Sylvan Arevalo and then proceeded to win a 7-6 (7-2) first set tiebreak over Shields. Shields then responded with a fury, evening the match with a 6-2 win in the second set before ending his dramatic



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day with a 6-1 win in the final set as he pumped his fist in victory on match point.