

Times-Standard

Macan capture H-DN singles tennis title

Erik Fraser/The Times-Standard

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MCKINLEYVILLE -- It was no surprise that St. Bernard's Catherine Macan and Del Norte's Emma Wilson met in the Humboldt-Del Norte Conference No. 1 singles tennis final for the second straight season.

The surprise was that Macan won the match in straight sets.

A year after Wilson won the title in a grueling 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (9-7) marathon, it was Macan's turn to advance to the North Coast Section tournament, as she won 6-4, 6-4 at McKinleyville High School on Saturday.

The win was Macan's third straight this year against Wilson after Wilson won the first five meetings between the two juniors, including last year's singles final.

"Emma has several ways to attack you," said St. Bernard's coach Lee Friebel, "and Catherine this year had the answers."

Where did she get the answers?

"I've worked really hard," Macan said.

It was evident Saturday that the hard work has paid off. After falling behind 3-0 in the first set -- all on games that went to deuce -- Macan had had enough.

She took off her Crusaders visor -- which

apparently had been hampering communications in the part of her brain that controls physical activity -- and proceeded to win the next three games, eventually taking a 5-4 lead in the set.

She then shrugged off a double fault on her first set point that allowed Wilson to earn a deuce, and won the next two points to take the set.

Losing the set after being up 3-0 seemed to deflate Wilson a bit, and Macan seized control of the second set early, winning the first three games, including two breaks.

Wilson won the fourth game to earned a break back, but Macan won the next two to go up 5-1 and put herself on the verge of a trip to NCS.

Refusing to concede, Wilson fought back to win the next three games, two of which she served.

But Macan slammed the door in the 10th and final game, winning four straight points to claim the H-DN singles title that had eluded her the year before.

Macan and Wilson -- probably the two best girl's tennis players on the North Coast -- have starkly contrasting styles. Wilson is calm and compact, and generally prefers to force the other player's hand, while Macan likes to attack.

"I try to be the aggressor," Macan said. "That works for me."

It certainly did on Saturday.

"I though Emma played a really good match," said Del Norte coach Jane Rumiano. "The difference was that Catherine was just nailing the corners. She set up her points well. The points that Emma won she set up pretty well, too, so it was a really, really good match. But somebody has to win, and somebody

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loses.”

Wilson had a more difficult road to the final than Macan, who enjoyed a first-round bye before dispatching McKinleyville's Abby Arndt 6-2, 6-4. Wilson had to play two matches, beating Chisa Hughes 6-1, 6-1, then outlasting Arcata's Katie Erickson 7-6 (4), 6-1.

The bright side for Wilson is that she has a good chance to play in the Section tournament anyway -- as the doubles partner of teammate Rebecca Cink.

Del Norte's doubles teams have been unbeatable this year, and since she didn't win the singles title -- singles champions are ineligible for the doubles tournament -- she and Cink will be looking to win the H-DN together on Friday.

SLICES:

In No. 2 seed action, top-ranked Rachel Cink of Del Norte had a bye and then defeated Fortuna's Niki Green 6-4, 6-1 to reach the finals.

Her opponent in the finals, Ashley Balke, arrived there by defeating North Coast Prep's Genay Pilarowski 6-1, 6-2 in the quarters, and Mack's Rachel Marrs 6-1, 6-2 in the semis.

In the finals, Balke took the first set 7-5, and Cink took the second 6-2, before play was suspended due to darkness. The match will be completed next Friday at Mack High prior to the start of the doubles competition.

Darkness also caused the suspension of the No. 3 seed finals between Arcata's Liana Mitlyng Day and Eureka's Jenna Madsen.

Mitlyng Day reached the finals by defeating Del Norte's Jennifer Gustafson 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 in the

quarters, and then upsetting top-ranked Rachel Dvorak of Fortuna, 7-6(5), 4-6, 6-1 in semifinal play.

Madsen first defeated McKinleyville's Aunna Cabeceira 6-0, 6-1 in the quarterfinals, and then beat North Coast Prep's Amy Wolfberg 6-1, 6-3 in the semis.

Arcata's Molly Ryan won the No. 4 seed title, beating Del Norte's Lauren Godla, 6-1, 6-4.

Ryan got to the finals with a bye in the quarters and a win over Mack's Meghan Walsh 6-1, 6-0 in the semis.

Godla downed North Coast Prep's Hayley Connors-Keith 6-1, 6-4 in the quarters and then blanked Eureka's Viivi Smith 6-0, 6-0 in the semis.

Another Arcata player-- Jenny Durina -- took a title, as she won the No. 5 seed over Eureka's Elise Adams in an exciting finish, 6-2, 3-6, 7-6(7).

The top-ranked Durina had a bye and then defeated Fortuna's Robin Palmer 6-0, 6-0 in the semis.

Adams beat North Coast Prep's

Olmstead 6-1, 6-2 in the quarters, and then defeated second-ranked Ashleigh Speaker of Del Norte 6-3, 6-7(6), 6-2 in the semis.

Eureka's Tara Matruolo won the No. 6 seed title, beating Arcata's Breanne King 6-4, 6-4.

Matruolo beat Fortuna's Katie Huddleston 6-4, 6-1 in the quarters, and then defeated top-ranked Kelsey Hintz of Del Norte, 6-3, 6-4 in the semis.

King reached the title match by beating North Coast

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Prep's Anuya Ketkar 6-0, 6-0 in the quarters
and St. Bernard's Gloria Sun 6-2, 6-4 in the
semifinals.

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