

H-DN tennis: Nauer's power too much for speedy Winnacott

Ray Aspuria The Times-Standard

Posted: 04/18/2010 01:52:47 AM PDT

EUREKA -- When an athlete is in trouble, they usually go to their strengths to dig themselves out of a hole.

Eureka High's Tobias Nauer did exactly that, going to his trusty and powerful forehand en route to a 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-1 victory over Arcata's Brendan Winnacott in the top-seeded match during the Humboldt-Del Norte Conference tennis singles championships on Saturday.

"Brendan is really good on defense," Nauer said after the match. "It was a dogfight. He was good on defense so I trusted my forehand. It's the best hit in my game. Like (Roger) Federer's and (Rafael) Nadal's, my forehand is fast and has lots of spin."

Nauer and Winnacott, the two top singles players in the conference this year, did not meet during the regular season. Still, the pair didn't disappoint.

"We figured it was going to be a good match," said Eureka head coach Karen Griffith. "(Nauer and Winnacott) hadn't been pushed in league."

The two surely pushed each other on Saturday.

Nauer went to the power game early to take a lead in the first set while Winnacott was more tactful and responsive. The strategy resulted in a rally by the Tiger as Winnacott came back to take the set.

Set two saw Nauer once again jump out to a lead only to see Winnacott cut it down to 3-2. A strategy change was needed by the Logger and he made it.

"In the first set, I was trying to play defensive. It didn't work,"

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Nauer said. "The next two sets I improved my offense and went to the forehand."

With Nauer going on the offensive, Winnacott went into more of a defensive mode. The switch allowed the Logger to force the Tiger around the court by painting the corners. While Winnacott showed great

hustle by getting to many of the directed shots, his returns were right back to Nauer. He was able to stand in his place and once again pick away at the corners.

And to compound matters, the unforced errors didn't help Winnacott's chances as Nauer took the second set.

The third and deciding frame saw Naeur continue his strategy of making Winnacott move. Unforced errors hurt both players, but the toll of those mistakes weighed heavier on Winnacott as Nauer jumped out to a 5-0 advantage.

Still, he showed no remorse, once again directing forehand and backhand shots opposite of where Winnacott was.

"In the end, conditioning decided the game," Nauer said.

The decisive point went to four deuces before Winnacott's shot went wide and Nauer walked off the court the victor.

Winnacott's loss marked the only blemish for Arcata. The team earned the No. 2 through No. 6 seed titles. Seth McFarland took the No. 2 crown with Ian Hunter, Blair Winnacott, Elliot Claasen and Hayden Ryan following.

Saturday's Results:

H-DN Singles Championships

at Eureka High

Finals

No. 1 Tobias Naeur (Eur) def. Brendan Winnacott (Arc) 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-1

No. 2 Seth McFarland (Arc) def. Kevin Suiker (Eur) 6-0, 6-0

No. 3 Ian Hunter (Arc) def. Pedro Cortes (Fort) 6-1, 6-3

No. 4 Blair Winnacott (Arc) def. Austin Schmalz (Eur) 6-0, 6-2

No. 5 Elliot Claasen (Arc) def. Nathan Hill (Eur) 7-5, 7-5

No. 6 Hayden Ryan (Arc) def. Keenan Hilton (NCP) 6-2, 6-1