

Paulson, McCann eye state doubles title

Written by Jim Ecker

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Tim Paulson and Trevor McCann met when they were eight years old at Bowman Woods Elementary School and have been tennis buddies ever since.

Now the Linn-Mar High School seniors hope to finish their prep careers by capturing the Class 2A state doubles title at the Veterans Memorial Tennis Center.

Paulson and McCann won both of their matches Friday in convincing style and will face Jackson Hoyt and Oliver Hammond of Cedar Rapids Washington in the semifinals at 10 a.m. Saturday.

"This is it. The last hurrah, I guess," McCann said Friday.

Paulson and McCann, the No. 2 seeds, clipped Tyler Kruzan and Sandeep Yeturu of Waukee in the first round, 6-2, 6-1, and they cruised past Cole Schneider and Ryan Smith of Iowa City West in the quarterfinals, 6-1, 6-0.

Now they'll face Hoyt and Hammond, the No. 3 seeds, with top seeds Jon Bowser and Brian Murman of Fort Dodge possibly waiting in the finals.

Paulson and McCann edged Hoyt and Hammond in a tiebreaker during the regular season, so

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their clash in the semifinals could go either way.

Paulson and McCann looked good Friday, dropping only four games in two matches.

"Today was definitely a solid day," said Paulson. "We're feeling pretty confident and I think we'll have an even better day tomorrow."

Paulson and McCann met in class at the Bowman Woods school about 10 years ago. They formed an early friendship that has stood the test of time.



"He told me his dad had played tennis, and I had been playing tennis a little bit," said McCann. "He picked it up a little bit after I did. We became friends and it just made sense to play doubles together."

They complement each other on the court very well and know each other's moves after all this time.

"Trev is an outstanding net player. He has quick hands," said Paulson. "And I have a pretty good serve and I'm good at the baseline. I think we mix together pretty well."

The Linn-Mar tennis team is ranked No. 1 in the state, with Paulson and McCann playing key roles.

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"I think he has a great serve," said McCann. "So with a big serve like that, it's tough for people to return it and I just pick off shots.

"And he's really good at the baseline. He's probably one of the best base-liners I've seen in a long time. He's probably one of the best in the state, I'd say.

"His baseline game and my net game really complement each other well in doubles."

Paulson and McCann do not plan to play tennis in college. Paulson is headed to Iowa State and McCann is going to Iowa, so the state tournament will be their final competition unless they decide to play some tournaments this summer.

They want to finish their careers in style.

"We just need to be confident and aggressive," Paulson. "Just play smart tennis and not beat ourselves up too much if we make mistakes. Just be solid."

They think their mental approach Saturday will be important. "I think we're both emotional players," said McCann. "I don't know if we get too upset over certain things. We play with a lot of passion and stuff, so when we need emotion we have that."

McCann reached the championship round of the state tournament in doubles last year with Brady Anderson, who enjoyed a successful season as a freshman at Coe College this year. Now McCann is back in the semifinals with Paulson, his long-time buddy.

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"I kind of know what it takes to get to the finals, because I've been there," said McCann. "You just have to be solid. It's good to play with emotion, but you can't get too upset. You have to have a short-term memory and just play with confidence.

"Playing with confidence is huge," he said.

Hoyt and Hammond of Washington won two hard matches Friday. They defeated Andrew Ellis and Sam Nettleton of Ames, 3-6, 6-2, 6-4, in the first round and slipped by Jeffrey Kardell and Sriram Sugumaran of Pleasant Valley, 6-3, 6-4, in the quarterfinals.

Rami Hemaïdan of Kennedy defeated Tyler Follett of Ankeny Centennial, 6-1, 6-0, in the opening round, but lost to Charlie Humes of Pleasant Valley, 6-1, 6-0, in the quarterfinals.