

ISU men's tennis splits 1-1 at home

Written by Kevin Powell, Daily Vidette Reporter
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After dropping their match against DePaul in Chicago on Friday, 5-2, the Illinois State men's tennis team won its home match against Evergreen Racquet Club in Bloomington, Ill., Saturday afternoon to split the weekend.

On Friday, Alexander Pelaez and Tumoas Manner teamed up to beat George Chanturia and Filip Dzanko in the No. 1 spot.

Muddappa Appanervanda and Willi Peter followed up by dropping their match to Mathias Hambach and Sven Kasper, 9-8, in the No. 2 slot.

In the No. 3 position, senior Skip Span and Jusso Ojanen fell to Matija Palinic and Adam Reinhart, 9-7.

"This was a tough match," head coach Cris James said after Friday's meet. "We played hard but they're a good team. Although we weren't able to get the point in doubles, we played better than we had been playing earlier this season, which was good to see ... We fought hard and came up short."

In singles play, Dzanko beat Pelaez, 6-4, 7-5, in the No. 1 spot.

Span and Manner won their matches in the No. 2 and No. 3 positions, respectively. Hambach beat Ojanen, 6-3, 6-4 in the No. 4 spot.

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Palinic beat Peter, 6-2, 6-4, in the No. 5 position, and Adam Reinhart beat Appanervanda, 6-3, 7-5, in the No. 6 slot.

James hopes the younger athletes can follow the veteran leaders.

"A couple guys have to play harder in their singles," James said. "The bottom of our line-up ... all lost, which are our young guys, so they have to play a little better next time."

After the loss on Friday, James was adamant about his team improving.

"We have to find a way to get that doubles point," James said. "We have to be determined and play with the intent to win from start to finish. I'm confident that if we do that, we will see success."

On Saturday, the Redbirds were able to protect their home court when Cleveland State visited after a little experimenting on James' part.

"We tried new combinations," James said. "We seem to have been able to put together two good teams, but we haven't been able to put together three good teams yet. We are trying to figure out how to do that. We split up our usual No. 1 doubles team, thinking that would work, but obviously we haven't found the solution yet, since we lost the point."

The doubles team didn't perform at a high level as Peter and Appanervanda lost in the No. 1 position to Nolan Marks and Ali Shabib, 9-8.

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Pelaez and Ojanen won in the No. 2 position as they beat Yannick Goosens and Matt Ford, 8-6.

Manner and Jordan Badenko paired in their loss to Matt Kuelker and Jorg Can Der Vloet, 8-4.

"Tuomas, Skip, and Alex have been leading the way on the singles court," said James. "They are our veteran guys so it's good to have that leadership and consistency. I have been extremely proud of each of their performances lately."

Pelaez beat Ali Shabib, 6-0, 6-2, while Manner won his match against Matt Kuelker, 6-3, 6-1, in the No. 3 spot. Span won his match in the No. 2 spot, 6-4, 6-3.

"We need our young guys to follow Tuomas, Skip, and Alex's lead in terms of determination and the sheer will to get the job done in singles play," James said.

The 'Birds will travel to Vestal, N.Y. on Friday to battle Binghamton.