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Wissahickon tops Springfield, wins American Conference tennis title

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By Mike Prince
Sportswriter

Just one year ago, Wissahickon's girls' tennis team was starting its season with a brand new head coach and a team that looked like it might be in a rebuilding stage.

That never happened, however, and the Lady Trojans played their way all the way to the state championships last year, thanks to a combination of new freshmen and veteran seniors with solid leadership.

That experience and success has now rolled over to 2009, where Wissahickon found itself on the brink of the Suburban One American Conference championship after going perfect in its first six matches, not to mention being undefeated in 14 total matches this season.

Last Thursday, Wissahickon hosted Springfield (5-5, 3-4) with a chance to win the league championship – and the Lady Trojans didn't disappoint, losing only one set in the entire match en route to a 7-0 win that gave Wissahickon the league title, an undefeated season and also secured a spot in the upcoming district tournament.

"All the girls played very well and they definitely boosted their confidence with a secure of the league and hopefully a strong seed in the district tournament for our team," Wissahickon coach Mary Ellen Devlin said. "I think we should at least get a strong seed, if not the highest seed thanks to our season. That will give us home court advantage, which is not only fun, but gives us some empowerment going in. Hopefully, we go as far as we can there and then go into the state championships."

Wissahickon's 15th match of the year was as good if not better than most of its previous matches in 2009.

Michelle Satterfield (6-2, 6-2), Claire Uhle (6-0, 6-0) and Anne-Marie Devlin (6-2, 6-1), the three singles players for the Lady Trojans, all won their respective matches in straight sets, as they have been doing all season long.

"I thought that going in, based on common opponents and league record, that we were a heavy favorite," Devlin said. "It was good for the girls to go out and peak at the right time and play their best since the level of competition is starting to heighten. The girls played great today and have been playing great all year."

And that goes for the doubles teams as well.

The first doubles team of Rachel Fein and Katie Kennedy, two of the team's seniors, won their match 6-1 and 6-1 over their

opponent and proved yet again to Devlin that they have been an integral part of the team not only this year, but over the last four years.

“I think the highlight of the match and this season has been the leadership of our seniors, Rachel and Katie,” Devlin said. “They have been the backbone of this team for four years and hopefully, we can see them be able to move into higher gear and take this team as far as we can go. I’d have to point to them for their leadership and their performance more than anything.”

While Devlin is only in her second year with the program, Kennedy has seen her fair share of players come through Wissahickon, and she believes that this could be the best team that she has seen in her four years in high school.

“It felt really good to win the league and especially to be undefeated,” Kennedy said. “It’s such an accomplishment for us. I think that we can do really well in districts. This year, we have a really strong team and a good lineup and I think that is probably up there with my sophomore year as the best team we’ve had since I’ve been here, with this year’s team being slightly better. I think everybody has played well and always come out and played to win.”

The other three doubles teams came to win as well, as they all won their matches fairly easily.

Sam Stutman and Danielle Mustin won their match 6-1 and 6-1, Anissa Boyko and Kathleen Fuh won their match 6-1 and 6-0, and Darcy Horn and Maddie Sharp won their match 3-6, 6-2 and 6-0.

“We came out to play in the match, but Wissahickon is a very strong team in the league and we just struggled and ultimately lost to a very tough team,” Springfield coach Tom Hawley said. “Against a team like (Wissahickon), you have to bring your A-game to compete.”

With a 15-0 overall record and 7-0 league record, Wissahickon will get that high seed, if not the number-one overall seed in the districts and hopefully, for the Lady Trojans, another shot at states after losing in the first round to Manheim Township last year.

“We are a relatively young team, so when I assumed the position and became the head coach only last year, it was claimed to be more of a rebuilding year,” Devlin said. “But with a couple new freshmen, as well as some new girls in our starting line-up this year, we are more than a rebuilding team. We’re a strong team, just like we were last year. And we are even stronger now.”

Wissahickon 7, Springfield 0

Singles

Michelle Satterfield (W) def. Rebecca Sherwood (S) 6-2, 6-2; Claire Uhle (W) def. Kellie O’Donnell 6-0, 6-0; Anne-Marie Devlin (W) def. Sarah Thomas (S) 6-2, 6-1

Doubles

Rachel Fein and Katie Kennedy (W) def. Rafiat Kasumu and Leah Krumbhaar (S) 6-1, 6-1; Sam Stutman and Danielle Mustin (W) def. Jocelyn Bookman and Emily Ball (S) 6-1, 6-1; Anissa Boyko and Kathleen Fuh (W) def. Samantha Mikels and Allison Goetz (S) 6-1, 6-0; Darcy Horn and Maddie Sharp (W) def. Rosalie Good and Michelle White (S) 3-6, 6-2, 6-0

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