

Northern Region girls tennis finals: Chantilly 5, Langley 3

Underdog barks loudest

Chargers win first girls tennis title

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They entered the Northern Region Tournament as a district runner-up. It had been a nice season for Chantilly's girls tennis team. But there was little reason to believe the Chargers would finally earn the program's first-ever championship.

But the banner hanging in Chantilly's gym isn't blank anymore. Not after the Chargers beat three-time defending champion Langley, 5-3, in the region final at West Potomac on Saturday afternoon.

It is the first title of any kind for Chantilly's girls tennis program. The Chargers (11-2) handed the Saxons (16-1) their first loss of the season and will host the Northwestern Region

runner-up on May 31. Langley travels to face the Northwestern Region champion the same day.

Chantilly had to beat Patriot District champion Robinson (5-4) and Liberty District runner-up W.T. Woodson (6-3) to even reach the Saxons, who had a 62-match winning streak against region competition, including a 5-4 tiebreaker in the semifinals over Concorde District champion Jefferson.

"I can't even believe it," said Chantilly junior Kristi Kegerreis. "We were total underdogs coming into this tournament. But we were also ready for a fight. I don't think any of us want to see the tennis season end yet."

Kegerreis led the way with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Langley senior Liz Emery at No. 1 singles. And freshman Annie Holm notched a win over Saxons' No. 2 Sammy Kingsley, who was nursing an injured shoulder and finished the day with her entire left arm wrapped in ice. Holm lost the first set, but fought back for a



Jack Nevitt/For The Examiner

Chantilly senior Jenna Marson won her singles match and later paired with senior Stephanie Chung to win their doubles contest.

3-6, 6-4, 6-0 victory. Chantilly senior Jenna Marson was a 6-2, 6-1 winner over Langley senior Alx Lienhard, leaving the match tied at 3 after singles play.

Junior No. 3 Emily Poe (6-4, 3-6, 6-3), junior No. 4 Kristy Lippard (4-6, 7-5, 6-1) and sophomore No. 6 Stephanie Cafferty (7-6, 6-3) all won singles matches for the Saxons. But Cafferty was

left dehydrated for her doubles match with Poe, a 6-0, 6-4 loss to Marson and senior teammate Stephanie Chung. Emery and Kingsley, tied, 5-5, in the third set against Kegerreis and senior Amy Chang at No. 1 doubles, could only watch as Holm and freshman Debby Chang finished off Lippard and Lienhard, 6-2, 6-2, to clinch the championship.

Northern Region boys tennis final: Robinson 5, Jefferson 1

Robinson's boys tennis team did not take long to prove it was the best team in the Northern Region this season.

The Rams lost just two matches out of 15 en route to their third region championship in five years, culminating with an impressive 5-1 victory in the region final over Concorde District champion Jefferson on Saturday afternoon at Wakefield.

Robinson (19-0) remained perfect on the season. It advances to the Group AAA state quarterfinals on May 31, when the Rams host the Northwestern Region runner-up. Jefferson travels to the Northwestern Region winner the same day. No Northern Region team has won a state title since Langley in 1994.

The Rams beat Chantilly 5-1 in the quarterfinals and needed little more than an hour to dispatch Langley, 5-0 in the semifinals. Freshman No. 1 Drew Courtney (6-2, 6-2), junior No. 2 Mike Smith (6-0, 6-4) and sophomore No. 4 Riley King (6-3, 6-0) all won singles matches against Jefferson. Sophomore No. 3 Matt King lost to Jefferson's Jason Luu (6-0, 6-3) for his first loss of the year. But Robinson senior No. 5 Cory Vesay (6-1, 6-2) and freshman No. 6 Billy Nason (6-3, 7-5) both won in straight sets as well to clinch the match for the Rams.

"This team has just been blowing people away," said Robinson coach Paul Fisher. "I thought we had a chance at winning in singles just because Jefferson had some lineup changes. But their guys are all good players and you can't have a letdown. And we didn't have that at all."

— Brian McNally

Baseball district finals preview

Concorde District

No. 3 Herndon vs. No. 1 Oakton 7 p.m. Monday at Westfield

Looking ahead: In the first meeting, Herndon (14-5) rallied from an 8-0 deficit to tie the game at 8, only to lose when Oakton (16-4) scored six times in the bottom of the sixth. In the second game, Herndon won with a homer in the bottom of the seventh. Similar dramatics are expected Monday night with these perennial contenders.

Herndon, which has reached the final in three of the last four years, hasn't won the district since 2002. The Hornets aren't sure who will pitch, having used their top two pitchers Saturday. Senior Josh Hammonds, who started the first meeting, threw just 40 pitches and might be available. The Hornets could turn to junior Jason Tate. Oakton, which last won two years ago, will counter with senior Evan Frederickson, who took the loss in the second meeting. The Cougars remain motivated by missing the Northern Region tournament last season. They'll keep playing minus first-base standout, junior Chris Despina, now out for the season after undergoing knee surgery last week.

Semifinal standouts: That's easy for Oakton, even in a game in which Bryan Kidwell pitched six shutout innings. But junior Curtis Eward homered three times in Saturday's 7-0 win over Chantilly. He finished with four RBIs. Eward is the last

Oakton regular to have homered, though he's belted several balls off outfield fences this season. "The team was on my back," Eward said, "they were saying, 'You're so big, why can't you hit one out?'" But I felt a lot more confident at the plate."

For Herndon, senior pitcher Josh Hammonds entered with a 4-1 deficit with two outs in the fourth inning Saturday. But he held Westfield scoreless the rest of the game, enabling the Hornets to rally for a 6-4 victory. Senior Matt Theis tied it in the sixth with a single, scoring senior Eric Krznaric, who had doubled. They scored twice in the seventh. Krznaric, senior Bryan Endahl and sophomore Ben Calacci each had two hits. Senior Chris Nehl drove in two runs.

Liberty District

No. 2 Langley vs. No. 1 W.T. Woodson 7 p.m. Monday at Madison

Looking ahead: Long ago, top-seeded W.T. Woodson (16-5) competed regularly for district titles. But the Cavaliers haven't done so in the Liberty District — and now they have a chance to win their first tournament title since 1990, when they played in the old Northern District. The Cavaliers split with Langley this season, though Monday night's pitcher, senior Ross Taranto (6-0), has not yet pitched against the Saxons. He's recovered nicely from arm problems that limited him as a

junior. Langley (18-3), which last won four years ago, likely will counter with junior Bryce Morrison (6-0, 2.93 ERA). He beat Woodson, 4-2, thanks to his curveball and help from his defense.

Semifinal standouts: Woodson defeated fourth-seeded Marshall, 6-1, behind a complete-game effort from senior Mike Bianucci, who struck out eight. Bianucci also homered and drove in two runs. Senior Brian Kramer had two hits, including a two-run double.

Langley beat third-seeded McLean, 8-0, as senior Jimmy Saris threw a complete-game three-hitter, striking out 10. Saris had pitched mostly in relief this season. Saris is now 5-0 with a 1.16 ERA. Six Saxons had two hits, including Danny Brown, Kyle Fraser and Tommy Tysse — all of whom had two RBIs as well.

Patriot District

No. 3 West Springfield vs. No. 1 Lake Braddock 7 p.m. Monday at Hayfield

Looking ahead: West Springfield (13-8) was close to breaking through against the top teams all season. But the Spartans lost twice by one run to top seeds Lake Braddock and Robinson. In the first meeting against the Bruins, West Springfield rallied from a four-run deficit to tie the game at 6, only to lose in the bottom of the seventh. The defending champion Bruins beat them, 8-4, in the second

game — but snapped a tie with four runs in the top of the seventh. West Springfield likely will pitch either senior Kiernan Whitworth, a first-team all-district performer, or senior Chris Peacock, a second-team pitcher. Lake Braddock (17-3) will start senior Dan Seymour (7-1), a first-team all-district pitcher who has pitched several big games for them the past two seasons. The Bruins' senior leadership has carried them all season.

Semifinal standouts: Lake Braddock beat Hayfield, 10-6, on a two-out game-ending grand slam by senior Charley Daley. The Bruins had loaded the bases with no outs, but didn't score until Daley's hit. Seniors Greg Hoyt and Johann Tiamson both homered. Hayfield's Matt Lawler had a two-run double. West Springfield beat No. 2 seed Robinson, and ace Spencer Wiggins, 3-1 Saturday behind a complete game effort from junior pitcher Matt Weaver.

National District:

No. 3 Washington-Lee vs. No. 1 Edison 7 p.m. Monday at Mount Vernon

Looking ahead: Washington-Lee (14-7) hasn't been in the district final since 1999 — also the last year it won the crown — but don't try telling the folks at Edison about the Generals' five-year drought. They know of such things, hav-

ing last won a district tournament title in 1982. But the Eagles (14-4) enter tonight having won 11 straight games. They split with W-L this season, beating them 7-0 with tonight's starter, sophomore Josh Miller, on the mound. Miller barely breaks 75 mph on the radar gun, but his curveball is dominant. W-L counters with senior Regis Diethorn (4-0, 1.08) and a solid hitting attack, though the Eagles anticipate lots of bunt attempts against Miller (5-0, 0.65). Diethorn gives the Generals a feisty competitor on the mound, plus someone who has a good fastball and curve.

Semifinal standouts: Edison senior pitcher Thomas Gibbs had another standout game, striking out 11 in a 12-1 win over Falls Church. Gibbs was the National District's co-player of the year. But, as usual, the Eagles' offense provided power. As usual, sophomore Seth Williams and junior John Barrett homered, with both going deep over the right center field fence at Mount Vernon. Williams now has 14 homers — five more than Barrett. W-L beat No. 2 seed Mount Vernon 11-2, thanks to clutch hits by junior catcher Sam Farber, who had two doubles and three RBIs. His two-run double highlighted a four-run first. Senior Alex Schlichting had two hits and two RBIs while senior Chris Bowlds had three hits. Sophomore Rob Jennings pitched a complete game five-hitter for the win.

— John Keim