

# New Trier tennis team searching for second state title

NT tennis faces obstacles, but season looks promising

by Jack Soble

As the spring season begins, the tennis team kicks off their quest for a second consecutive state title.

They won't be without challenges, though, after losing some of their best players to graduation, but Head Coach Tad Eckert maintains confidence in those who remain.

"Our number one goal is to defend our title," he said.

"That's not going to be easy, considering we have to replace five of six state lineup participants, but I think we've got a capable group and we'll see what we can do at the end of May," Eckert said.

The players lost are two sets of twins, the Bickels (Scott and Tom) and the Mayers (Wyatt and Ricky).

They, along with Michael Kusznerko, left New Trier after Scott Bickel's 2016 Quarterfinal win against a Rockford Christian senior clinch the state title.

Only then-Sophomore now-



NT singles player Scott Bickel (16) claims lead title for state | Chicago Tribune

Junior Jeffrey Chen remains from that state squad, but he feels optimistic about how his team will react to so many new faces.

"The team chemistry is definitely important and returning Varsity members feel it's our duty to integrate the new players into our team. It's certainly a very different team dynamic but I think the team is getting along well," Chen said.

Helping with the transition from veteran experience to young talent are three new captains: Junior Peter Leutz, Junior Reed Bianucci, and

Senior Nathan Friedman.

Along with Chen and the captains, a player quickly making a name for himself is Sophomore Jake Zipoli, who plays #2 singles, just behind Chen. Zipoli has high hopes for his second season on varsity.

"My expectations are to get a top three finish as a team at state. I think that we as a team are more than capable of achieving that," he said. "Our team has great chemistry and the new guys fit in well."

Zipoli is a three star recruit, according to tennisrecruiting.net.

## Spring sports teams travel far and wide to compete nationally

New season brings new wave of sports teams out of hibernation

by Danny Kogan

Baseball, softball, and water polo athletes stayed home over Spring Break due to their commitments.

The New Trier Varsity Baseball Team travelled to Memphis, Tennessee.

"We drove down to Memphis on the Sunday spring break started, and came back Thursday.

We played two high school teams from Tennessee and then played Mundelein before we came back on Thursday," said senior Sean Douaire.

While many students were on vacation, athletes were hard at work. "The first half of break while in Tennessee was pretty busy. We had two rain out games and then played 4 more. Once we got back to Chicago we had the weekend off," said baseball player Will McNulty.

The baseball team was not the only team to have games canceled due to the weather.

The Varsity softball team was scheduled to play games in Central Illinois.

"We were supposed to have six games in Bloomington but we only got to play two due to the weather. We also got some practicing in," said softball player Gillian Gossard.

Students involved with spring sports had more games, and spent longer hours practicing over the break.

"The first half of break while in Tennessee was pretty busy.

We had two rain out games and then played four more," said McNulty.

"We did have some practices on the same day that we had games which I thought was a little tough," said Gossard.

Remaining committed to one activity over break can seem stressful, but athletes understood their responsibility towards their team, "I



Sean Douaire up at bat against the Vernon Hills Cougars. | Victory Views

believe you need to stay sharp over the break so you don't come back rusty, and lose everything you have worked on during the preseason," said Douaire.

The baseball team had the opportunity to relax and bond with their friends.

"We did partake in some great team building activities such as a high ropes courses, frisbee golf, paint ball, and escape rooms.

From breakfast through curfew at night we are on a loaded schedule but we did find a nice balance," said senior Kevin Donahue.

Still, athletes had a few days off towards the end of their break. "Once we got back to Chicago we had the weekend off," said McNulty.

Athletes were told in advance not to make travel plans in order to accommodate their games and practices.

"Baseball has been doing a spring break trip for many years so everyone on the team planned accordingly," said McNulty.

"I think my parents have figured out that a cool vacation wasn't going to happen this year. However, last year my whole family went to see the

Grand Canyon and I didn't get to see it because I had the softball trip," said Gossard.

"My friends had plans over spring break to go to Cabo but I never planned on going. We give up a week in exchange for four months of baseball.

Baseball is a very competitive team to make and there are plenty of kids cut who would give up their spring breaks in a heart beat to be able to suit up in a new trier uniform and play baseball," said Donahue.

Packed with activities to busy themselves, students remained positive.

"I think it's great we have this spring break trip. Weather sucks here in Chicago and having the ability to play a few games while 70 and sunny is well worth it than taking a week to relax," said McNulty.

Spring break for spring athletes is spent working on improving skills, in order to succeed in future games.

"We have one goal as a team and that is to bring home a state championship, all the extra practice and fine tuning the spring break trip offers is essential in order to achieve that goal," said Donahue.

He is ranked ninth in the state, 24th in the Great Lakes region, and 225th in the nation, with a winning record against five-star recruits (3-2).

Chen is just ahead of him, coming in at eighth in the state, and he's also a three star recruit.

Coach Eckert spoke very highly of his top two players.

"From what I've seen so far this season, I think both of them want to be great. They're really buying into our philosophy, and for the most part the results have been there. They just need to work on consistency a little bit, and I know they're both capable of playing great matches, but part of being a top-level singles player is eliminating the bad match," he said.

The outlook when it comes to doubles teams is less clear. Eckert said that they're still experimenting with different combinations, but he noted the potential and that there's still time to get them right.

"It is early in the season, obviously," Eckert said.

"But I think all the returning players are really embracing the new faces, and the chemistry has been great, and it helps when you win, and

we've been doing more winning than losing so far this season."

The talented albeit inexperienced Trevians hit a bump in the road when they lost to Hinsdale Central, their biggest rival, 3-2.

However, the team and its coaches feel that they're "moving in the right direction."

According to Chen, the team has been "doing a great job to meet expectations," other than the Hinsdale loss.

While the team is thinking big for this season, the two top players both pointed out that there is not much pressure to repeat as state champions, due to the loss of almost all of the 2016 state lineup. But that may play to their advantage.

"I don't think there is as much pressure as people might expect, and lots of schools are writing us off as a weaker team," Chen said.

And that could add a chip onto the shoulder of the team, and history shows that an extra piece of motivation can propel a team to victory.

## NT swimmer Ingrid Wall signs to swim at Harvard

Wall continues to break records at New Trier and beyond

by Rebecca Lee

In the four years that Ingrid Wall has attended New Trier, she has made her mark as a swimmer.

Wall, a sprinter who specializes in free and breaststroke events, is ranked 4th in the state.

She was the 104th most heavily recruited swimmer of the class of 2017 in the country, according to collegeswimming.com.

Senior Kathyne Tao has swam with Wall for over ten years and has seen Wall grow into a fierce competitor.

"She's always been super fast ever since we were little," Tao said, "and it just comes to her naturally."

Wall, who has been swimming for twelve years, spent her freshman year on the New Trier High School team and the New Trier Swim Club.

Since then, she continued swimming for the New Trier Swim Club, where she trains two hours a day, five days a week.

While this kind of schedule is considered light in the world of swimming, Wall said it is designed specifically for her.

"My training regimen is very focused and short for a more intense race pace. I do high quality workouts, no garbage yardage," Wall explained.

Wall is also a member of the National Club Swimming Association Junior National Team.

Throughout her high school career, she has competed in some of the biggest meets across the country.

Wall even represented the United States at the Irish Open Championships held in Dublin, Ireland in April 2015. There, with a time of 32.84, she placed third in the 50 breaststroke.

In 2017 alone, Wall has placed in a number of events at the state and national level.

Most notably, she took 1st place in the 100 breaststroke at the Illinois Swimming Senior Championship, as



Ingrid Wall signs letter of intent to swim at Harvard U. | swimntsc.org

well as 4th place in the 50 breaststroke at the NSCA Spring Junior National Championship.

As such an exceptional swimmer, Wall always knew she wanted to swim in college.

She explained, "The recruiting process was time consuming and required a lot of preparation but was one of the best experiences of my life. During my recruiting trips, I met some very talented swimmers, including Olympians who won medals."

Wall ultimately committed to swim for Harvard University.

"I chose Harvard for the academics and the outstanding quality of the swimming program. The members of the swim team made me feel at home and I connected so well with the coaches," she said.

After college, Wall has her sights set on the NCAA Championships as well as the Olympics.

In 2016, Wall qualified for the U.S. Olympic Trials, which were held in Omaha, Nebraska.

"Last summer was so surreal. I had so much fun seeing and meeting Olympians like Michael Phelps and Katie Ledecky.

It was a little intimidating knowing tens of thousands of people were watching in the stands, but it was an experience like no other," Wall recounted.

As she spoke of her future plans and goals, Wall concluded, "I cannot wait to explore the endless opportunities."