



NEWS RELEASE

CENTENNIAL GIRLS TENNIS TEAM LOOKS TO TAKE FINAL STEP

PHOENIX, AZ (April 13, 2009) – Peoria Centennial coach Barbara Saunders and players from her girls tennis team are excited about what the team has accomplished thus far this season.

Through April 7, Centennial was No. 2 in the Arizona Interscholastic Association's Class 5A Division II power points standings with a 12-0 record.

Saunders and her players know that the potential of feeling even better exists if they can earn the championship in the state tournament that begins April 20.

Centennial lost to eventual state champion Phoenix Horizon in last year's semifinals as the No. 6 seed. Most of the players returned from that team and want to avoid a similar fate.

"I keep telling them, "Remember how you felt walking off the court that day? Now think about how good it would feel walking on the court that final day and walking off as the champions.' I think that is good for motivation," Saunders said.

The Coyotes' singles lineup likely will look like this:

No. 1 Alana Wiesing (junior), No.2 Candace Walker (sophomore), No. 3 Erica Meza (senior), No. 4 Bryana Edgell (senior), No. 5 Kayla Hooley (senior), No. 6 Amanda Scott (senior) and No. 7 Andrea Crandall (senior).

Saunders said she usually has no set doubles teams, preferring to pair the players on how they are playing at a particular time and how their style fits in with that of their teammates.

Wiesing is a solid No. 1 player.

"She has a fabulous serve, controls the court and has good placement with a deep, heavy topspin," Saunders said.

Saunders added that Wiesing also is a top student, is a very good percussionist (she has played with the Phoenix Symphony) and if there is any time left over, helps her parents by working in their restaurant.

Walker was No. 3 a year ago behind now-graduated No. 2 player Lexi Mudrick, and has made a smooth transition to No. 2.

"She has an excellent slice, good drops and generally is a good all-around finesse player," Saunders said.

Meza is entrenched at No. 3, and Saunders sometimes flip-flops Edgell and Hooley at nos. 4 and 5.

"They both have hearts of gold. They work extremely hard. They're good examples of what good teammates should be about," Saunders said.

The team will lose a number of seniors to graduation, but the long-range forecast for Saunders' program looks good. The school's junior-varsity team has done well and has improved by working with the varsity team on several occasions.

The final two regular-season matches were scheduled against Tolleson and Avondale La Joya, followed by an open week of preparation for the state tournament.

Saunders plans to put that time to good use, working with her players on situations they could encounter during their matches, such as a tie-breaker, also using team-building techniques to unify the players.

"Last year, we were one step away and this year we want to make that final step," Saunders said.

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