

Four seniors set the tone for Floyd Central

Written by Administrator

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In high school, oftentimes you have friends, and hang out together at a local restaurant or else at each other's houses, but you don't necessarily play on a varsity athletic team with them. Often, the sports teams can be competitive within the ranks.

But in the case of the Floyd Central boys' tennis team, they have four seniors, and they not only are good friends with each other, they enjoy spending time bonding with the freshmen players and helping them along.

Seniors Dillon Evanczyk, Reed Emerson, Ryan Smith, and Steven Schultze are the four Highlanders who have reached the final year of high school, and have all shown the ropes, so to speak, to the freshmen on the team.

They also enjoy cheering for each other when they aren't playing in a match themselves.

Floyd Central boys' tennis coach Rick Miller said that their leadership and experience have done much to boost team morale and help with the wins too.

"They're pretty much the core of the team," Miller said of the four seniors. "These guys are really great leaders. It's nice to have four seniors."

Ryan Smith for example has been his class' vice president all four years of high school, and is on the Floyd Central student council.

Over their four years, they have already competed in the semi state, have won the Hoosier Hills Conference this year, and have won close to 70 percent of their matches out of what Miller estimates is already 100 varsity matches played

"They've helped the program out," Miller continued. "The other kids look up to them for leadership."

There is no hazing going on at Floyd Central in boys' tennis, either. Miller said that the seniors accept the younger guys coming into the program, although being a freshman means you often have extra duties in finding and picking up tennis balls in the woods behind the courts.

Evanczyk has been best friends with Emerson and Smith since their elementary school days, and they all try to include the freshmen as well as the other younger players, in team outings to help with the team chemistry.

"That really helps our team," Evanczyk explained. "We're really close."

A senior does have the duty to lead the 'break down' before each match, where the leader asks the other team members "Who are we?-We're FC!" in a huddle.

All four point out that if they are done with their match, they will go over to the bleachers of the players still playing to cheer them on. This especially true if they are in a match where the score is 2-2 with the third and winning point still on the court.

As Emerson put it, "We just try to encourage the person playing as much as we can."

Smith said, "We really have the greatest guys on the team. We're always having fun. I think we did a good job of trying to incorporate the freshmen. We've become really good friends."

One plan the seniors had was to go out to eat at Buffalo Wild Wings a number of times before conditioning started.

Evanczyk said that they have gone to Subway to eat several times, and said that the team stopped at White Castle after a match earlier this year, but that it "didn't sit well with a few people."

Smith added that after the White Castle run, they decided to "stick to Subway."

Evanczyk also hates to see freshmen hazed, and hated to be hazed when he was a freshman himself. "We don't really want anybody to be left out," he said.

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“There’s a lot of good freshman talent on this team this year,” Evanczyk continued. “I think in a couple of years, they’ll be better than we are right now.”

Smith agreed that the freshmen have been included in the team well this year: “I think we did a good job; we’ve become real good friends. We really have the greatest guys on the team.”

Smith claims that Emerson is the jokester of the team, and said he often pulls pranks on other team mates while on bus trips to places like Fort Wayne or Indianapolis. When they travel that far, they go up on a Friday afternoon, eat dinner out in a restaurant, spend Friday night in a motel, and then play Saturday during the day, having dinner in a restaurant on the way home Saturday night.

Things aren’t taken too far, though, with regards to practical jokes.

“We’re pretty clean cut guys,” said Smith. “We don’t take things too far.”

Besides, Smith said that with all of the intensity the players have to have for the matches, they need a way to unwind and have fun afterward.

Schultze (along with Emerson) plays whatever position that is needed, according to the circumstances of the match.

He often acts as team cheerleader, and as far as his are concerned, that is an important position to have.

Evanczyk said that Schultze was “a really good team mate. He really cheers us on whenever we need it.”

Schultze will often try to get the others pumped up by hollering for them during the matches, and thinks that it helps both the younger and the more experienced players to play hard. His career highlight so far has been playing the No. 1 singles position in the team’s 3-2 win over Hoosier Hills Conference rival Jeff in the HHC Tourney, which Floyd Central won as a team. Schultze might have lost at the No. 1 singles position in the match, but he was there for the team members still playing after his match was done. Floyd Central won both doubles matches and the No. 3 singles spot.

As Schultze put it, “We have fun, and goof off; but we get work done.”

Schultze has another role on the team, that of an unofficial tutor. He has taken honors courses in biology, and has helped the freshmen in their biology homework.