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Frederica drops opener against Trinity Christian

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In the team's first game back from spring break Frederica Academy (10-7, 5-5) hosted Trinity Christian (9-8, 4-3) to start their final region series of the season, falling 5-2 in the opener.

Frederica's Hayes Carter took the mound and started the night off in an unordinary way.

Having the leadoff batter pop out to Jordan Triplett at second base, the next batter hit a single, stole second base, and proceeded to move to third on a ground ball. Facing the fourth batter of the inning, Carter threw a pitch in the dirt that was trapped Sutton Ellis behind the plate. With the runner midway between the bags, Ellis trapped the Crusader in a rundown, tagging him to end the top of the first.

In the bottom of the first, Frederica's Ashton Frankel delivered a single to the outfield, with two outs before the inning ended on a Ellis ground out.

Carter returned to the mound in the second, striking out the first batter before facing trouble. Giving up a double and a walk, Carter struck out his second batter of the inning, before forcing a routine pop-out to left fielder Colt Howes. Howes misplayed the ball and couldn't secure it into his glove, allowing the first run to score. Carter got out of a bases loaded jam to limit the damage to just one run.

Manager Tim Orlosky made a pitching change to start the top of the third, giving the ball to John Havens.

Havens struck out his first batter, before hitting opposing pitcher Dalton Price. With a courtesy runner on for Price, the runner stole second base and scored the second run for his team on a fielders choice.

Triplett started the bottom of the third with a leadoff walk, but his teammates failed to move him around the base paths, leaving the Knights still trailing 2-0.

Havens returned to the mound for the fourth inning and recorded two quick outs after allowing a leadoff walk. Forcing a pop-out to center fielder, TJ Sunderhaus, it looked to be a routine play for the Knights' outfielder. With the ball popping out of his glove, Trinity waved its runner towards home. Sunderhaus threw a laser to the plate with Ellis preparing to place a tag on the runner. With the play being bang, bang, the umpire ruled the runner out, ending the inning.

Trinity's manager argued the call with the umpire saying Ellis was blocking the plate and was pulled back by his assistant coach.

Trying to find momentum after another big defensive play by Ellis, Frankel recorded his second single of the game. However, Frederica couldn't find ways to move runners around the base paths, recording three straight outs to end the inning.

"Their pitcher did a good job tonight. He kept us off balance and he did what he was supposed to do," Orlosky said.



Sebastian Emanuel/The Brunswick News

Frederica's Harry Driggers watches the foul ball leave the stadium, during the 5-2 defeat to Trinity.

"We put some good passes on the ball, we had a couple of balls that were caught that we drove pretty well. We had some balls on their half that found some holes or dropped. I thought we did a good job working out of jams. Some of our guys showed some grit and toughness out there. We are a young team and still learning. We are far from perfect."

Harry Driggers took the mound for the fifth inning, and Trinity attacked the newest Knights pitcher. Trinity's leadoff batter issued a walk, stole second, and moved to third on a sacrifice bunt. Price gave himself another insurance run when he connected on a pitch to the outfield for the first run of the inning to score. Trinity loaded the bases before scoring runs on a sac-fly and a single to the outfield.

Trailing 5-0 Orlosky talked to his team in the dugout, looking to light a spark under his team with two innings to play.

Driggers opened the bottom of the fifth on an infield error, before seeing the next two Knights batters strike out. With two outs, Grant Moore drew a walk to put runners on first and second for Sunderhaus. In what seemed like a routine pop fly to the outfield, Trinity's outfield failed to control the ball, allowing Driggers and Moore to score for Frederica. Sunderhaus would be caught down in a rundown between second and third to end the inning.

Jackson Lewis took over for the Knights on the mound for the final two innings of play. Lewis struck out four, allowed three hits, and gave up zero runs.

"Jackson's worked really hard," Orlosky said. "He's one of our most improved players and every time he goes out on the bump, he gets a little better. He's gonna be really good one day, he's just got to keep doing stuff like that. Keeping guys off balance and pitching with confidence. He should be a guy for us for sure."

After recording the final Crusaders out in the top of the seventh, Orlosky could be heard telling his team to find a way to get on.

The players answered their managers' message with Sam Norris and Driggers hitting singles to put runners on first and second with no outs. Price locked in for the Crusaders by forcing a pop out on Triplett and recording back-to-back strikeouts to end the game.

"I would say my expectations are we are going to get better these next two days of practice," Orlosky said. "We just had spring break and our guys have been gone up to Sunday. We will be sharper in those two games. I think our offense will definitely perform a little better once we start swinging more. We are just going to continue playing our game and get a little better each day. Hopefully we can make a run close to the end of the season here."

Frederica closes out its three-game series with Trinity with a doubleheader in Dublin on Thursday.



Derrick Davis/The Brunswick News

Frederica Academy's Merrill Been and Kate Walbridge embrace following their finals match in the GISA Region 2-3A Tournament on Monday at the Marta B. Torrey Tennis Complex.

REGION REPEAT

Frederica rolls through region tennis tournament

By DERRICK DAVIS
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Neither the graduation of a couple state champions nor nagging injuries could stop Frederica Academy tennis from doing what it does best: winning region championships.

A few weeks after the Knights' boys and girls won team league titles, the program added individual region championships in girls singles, boys singles and boys doubles Monday at the Marta B. Torrey Tennis Complex.

Frederica's girls entered the season fresh off the program's first GISA Class 3A state title led by the senior duo of Rebekah Brooks and Rebecca Tiller, who also finished as doubles runners-up at the individual state championship.

Though Brooks and Tiller graduated, the Knights still have plenty of talent, especially in its singles lineup as demonstrated by the all-Frederica region finals between Merrill Been and Kate Walbridge.

"I think for this year, I'm lucky to have two seniors who have been region runners-up and region champions for the last few years, so I think that has definitely been the key to the region this year so far," said Frederica head coach Brian Wyrick.

After earning a first-round bye, Been promptly defeated challengers from St. Andrew's and Bulloch Academy to fill her familiar spot in the region title match. Walbridge also rolled through the bracket, winning matches against players from St. Andrew's, Bulloch Academy and even teammate Ali Brown-Winans in the semifinals, to challenge Been in a rematch of last year's finals.

But nothing could stop the top seed from claiming her fourth region crown since her eighth-grade season. The only year Been didn't win a region title at Frederica Academy was the year the tournament was canceled due to COVID.

Looking forward to state, the Knights' girls are in a strong position with a trio of singles players that laid claim as three of the four best players in the region.

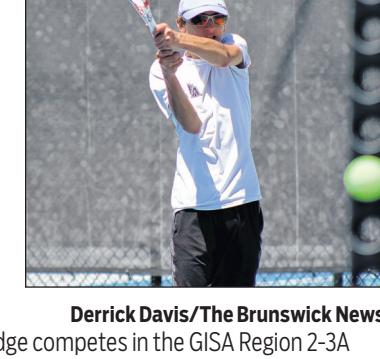
"I feel like I have three girls who can beat anybody's first in our region," Wyrick said. "As we go towards state, I still think that pretty much any team we play, we're always going to get two out of three wins. It doesn't matter which team we play against in state, at least we have a shot."

On the doubles side is where the Frederica girls will need to come together if it hopes to repeat as state champions. The Knights' team of Marvy Driggers and Emily Wyrick and the duo of Oleta Kate Mitchell and Maggie Kaselak were each underdogs in the region



Derrick Davis/The Brunswick News

Frederica Academy's Adam Elsharkawi competes in the GISA Region 2-3A Tournament on Monday at the Marta B. Torrey Tennis Complex.



Derrick Davis/The Brunswick News

Left: Frederica Academy's Kate Walbridge competes in the GISA Region 2-3A Tournament. Right: Frederica Academy's Grant Offner competes in the GISA Region 2-3A Tournament.

tournament, and both squads fell in the quarterfinal round.

In boys' doubles, Frederica's top-seeded team of Jaxon Grotz and Grant Offner received a first-round bye, as did third seed Andrew Kaminer and Trey Walbridge, before each duo proceeded to mow down the competition en route to a finals matchup.

A year ago, Grotz and Kaminer fell just short of the region doubles title in third-set tiebreaker, and both got the opportunity to avenge that loss against one another with a different partner.

In the end, it was Grotz and Offner who prevailed in a 7-5, 7-6 matchup against Kaminer and the freshman Walbridge.

Grant Offner and Jaxson Grotz, who are both seniors, have just been a rock in doubles the last few seasons," Wyrick said. "Every time I put the four guys together, it was just tight. It was always a tiebreaker, it was always a 7-5 set, and that's exactly what happened yesterday."

"I knew that I could put those guys with either partner and we would be pretty successful, and it showed yesterday."

In the singles bracket, Frederica's top player Adam Elsharkawi completed his another fantastic season in region play — capping an undefeated season against league opponents.

Despite managing a lingering Achilles injury, Elsharkawi was hardly challenged until the final

set of the tournament, winning the finals 6-0, 7-6.

"Adam really worked hard, he went down to IMG for a couple of weeks in the summer, and was really expecting to go into this season in a really good place," Wyrick said. "We started off the season with a match against Valwood, and Adam played last year's runner-up. I have to say, it was the best I've ever seen Adam play; it was a very, very competitive match..."

"Adam got done with that match and he said his foot and his ankle was feeling really not good, and that was at the end of February. The good part is he's still been good enough to still go undefeated, still win region, but he's definitely not where he physically wanted to go into state."

Whitmarsh Tennant also competed for Frederica in the boys' singles bracket, winning his first-round matchup against Bulloch Academy before falling against a foe from St. Andrew's in the quarterfinals.

But the Knights feel good about their chances to advance to the state semifinals for the second consecutive season, especially as the with an addition to the boys lineup in Roy Boyd, who missed the region tournament with a golf event.

"I think where (the team) is at now mentally, I think that we can definitely be competitive," Wyrick said.