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Winnetka Talk

NEW TRIER

Bickel twins work together on the court

Brothers say they can predict where each other will hit it

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HINSDALE — At the age of 4, Tom and Scott Bickel picked up their tennis rackets for the first time. Ever since then, the two have been inseparable on the court. The twins, who are now

sophomores on the New Trier boys tennis team, started playing together in doubles competitions when they were 7. They have used this experience and their brotherly bond to become the Trevians' No. 1 doubles team.

"I can predict where he's hitting," Tom Bickel said. "We're totally in sync for the most part."

The two emerged on the scene last year, playing in the No. 2 doubles slot as freshmen. Tom Bickel said that their move to No. 1 came with some added pressure, but their ability to communicate

made the transition easier. "We talk about our losses so we make sure we can learn from them," Tom Bickel said.

This communication isn't always verbal for the Bickels, who finished second in the first doubles competition at Saturday's Jay Kramer Invite. Because they know each other so well, Scott Bickel said he can often guess what his twin brother will do next.

"Sometimes, I feel like we don't communicate, but for a reason," Scott Bickel said. "We know what we're going to hit. We're just com-

pletely on the same page."

Spending so much time together can come with a small element of sibling rivalry. New Trier coach Tad Eckert said that being brothers may actually serve as a disadvantage at times.

"They can be their own harshest critics," Eckert said. "It's a good thing they're playing tennis and not boxing."

The minor squabbles don't matter much to Tom Bickel, though. He said that being with his twin brother pushes him to be better. "I don't think I'd be able to do

as well with somebody else," Tom Bickel said. "They just don't know my game style as well."

The two have set their sights high for the remainder of the season. Eckert said that their goal is to win doubles at the state tournament this year. Scott Bickel said that the time he gets to spend with his brother is even more important than a title.

"It's something I'll take with me for the rest of my life," Scott Bickel said. "Sharing these years with him as the No. 1 doubles team is something I'll always remember."