



## BOYS TENNIS: STATE FINALS

# Bickels through to Day 2

BY ROB VALENTIN  
for Sun-Times Media

Sophomore identical twins Scott and Tom Bickel started the season as New Trier's top doubles team.

But the brothers were moved to singles after a back injury to teammate Alex Galoustian.

Both adjusted pretty quickly, as evidenced by their performance on the first day of the IHSA boys tennis state tournament held at various sites in the northwest suburbs Thursday.

The brothers advanced to Friday's round of 16 in the singles draw with nearly identical scores. Scott (10-2) defeated Marion's Ezra Frick 6-0, 6-0, St. Ignatius' Crofton Kelly 6-0, 6-1 and Lemont's Nick Urban 6-2, 6-1. Tom (12-0) beat Latin's Noah Cook 6-0, 6-0, Springfield's Evan Truong 6-0, 6-0 and Champaign Central's Austin Aten 6-2, 6-1.

"The scores are deceiving," Tom said. "Both my 0-0 matches took a lot of work. I'm just glad I could pull through."

Because they were playing at dif-

ferent sites, the hardest part for the brothers was not seeing each other on the tennis court.

"It's definitely weird," Scott said. "I had no idea this was coming. The entire season we had our sights set on doubles and getting as high a seed as possible. But we're really excited now. It's always fun playing the state tournament."

Their reward for playing well on the opening day is getting to face the top two seeds in the fourth round Friday. Tom plays the No. 1 seed and defending state singles champion, Hinsdale Central junior Martin Joyce (29-0).

"I have a lot of respect for him, but I always want to square off against the best players," Tom said. "No matter what the seed is, I think there's always a way. Hopefully I can get some more points to help the team."

Scott will face the No. 2 seed, Lake Forest senior Peter Tarwid.

"I'm not real familiar with his game, but I think I know what's coming," Scott said. "I have to make

sure I get a lot of his tough serves back. I have to play defense and get some good looks on offense."

Both the singles and doubles draws were relatively upset-free. The only entry seeded in the top 16 that failed to get through was the New Trier doubles team of Thomas Hanley and Wyatt Mayer. They were defeated by Buffalo Grove's Peter Georgiades and Anton Levitin 4-6, 7-5, 6-3.

Hinsdale Central and Lake Forest are currently tied for first place with the most points possible, 24. New Trier is third with 22.

Joining Tarwid in Friday's singles round is teammate Brice Polender. He dropped just five games in Thursday and will face Metamora's Will Koehrsen in the fourth round. His main focus was scoring points for the Scouts.

"It's definitely crucial that all our teams stay in the [championship] draw," Polender said. "Tomorrow is a big opportunity and I have to perform well if we want to win a team state title."



New Trier's Tom Bickel won his three matches Thursday to cruise into the singles round of 16. His twin brother Scott also advanced. | BRIAN O'MAHONEY/FOR SUN-TIMES MEDIA