

November 14 - 21, 2009
Atkins Tennis Center - University of Illinois



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November 14, 2009

Two Illini Advance in Qualifying Play at JSM Challenger Connor Roth, Abe Souza claim opening round matches

URBANA, Ill. – Qualifying play began earlier today at the JSM Challenger held at the Atkins Tennis Center in Urbana, Ill., highlighted by Illini juniors Connor Roth and Abe Souza, who each claimed their first-ever victory in the tournament.

“This is my third year playing in the tournament and it’s always a little bit of an adjustment with the ball kids and chair umpires and people everywhere,” Souza said. “Because of all that, the first round can be pretty stressful, so it’s nice to get through and advance.”

Souza topped UI women’s tennis volunteer assistant coach Adam Chervin, 6-0, 6-1, while Roth defeated former LSU men’s tennis All-American, Colt Gaston, 7-6 (9), 6-4.

One of the keys to Roth’s success was his ability to convert on the first-serve, in addition to capitalizing on his lone break point opportunity in the second set, which ultimately won the match.

“I’d seen him (Gaston) play when I was a freshman, so I knew he would be tough,” Roth said. “My serving and returns definitely helped keep me in the match.”

Despite an aggressive attack, senior Marek Czerwinski dropped a three-set battle to Phillip Simmonds, 6-4, 6-7 (9), 6-4.

“I thought I played really well overall, but I was a little over energetic in the beginning of the match and that cost me an early break point,” Czerwinski said. “At this level of play, one break of service can cost you a set right away and that’s exactly what happened. Phillip’s extremely talented and athletic, so I knew I would really have to focus and make use of all the little chances and opportunities and take advantage of them. I did in the second set, but in the third set I just couldn’t pull it out.”

Also in action was UI men’s tennis volunteer assistant coach Scott Denenberg, who defeated Aaron Trent, 6-4, 6-2, while former Illini Ryan Rowe fell in three sets to Nicholas Edlefsen, 6-7 (3), 6-4, 7-5.

Highlighted matches for tomorrow include Denenberg vs. Bjorn Rehnquist (Court 1) and Souza vs. Richard Bloomfield (Court 2) at 10 a.m., followed by Roth vs. Treat Conrad Huey (Court 2).



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Qualifying Singles - First Round

Qualifying - R Berankis (LTU) d P Raja (IND) 62 76(3)
Qualifying - B Rehnquist (SWE) d B Joelson (USA) 62 62
Qualifying - A Musialek (FRA) d F Wolmarans (RSA) 64 76(5)
Qualifying - C Mamiit (PHI) d A Kumar (USA) 63 61
Qualifying - R Bloomfield (GBR) d E Schacht (USA) 60 61
Qualifying - K Hensel (AUS) d J Fruttero (USA) 76(5) 64
Qualifying - T Huey (PHI) d C Pollock (USA) 76(4) 63
Qualifying - A Hubble (AUS) d [WC] J Jung (USA) 63 36 64
Qualifying - B Agostinelli (CAN) d R Rizza (USA) 62 61
Qualifying - N Edlefsen (USA) d [WC] R Rowe (USA) 67(3) 64 75
Qualifying - [WC] C Roth (USA) d C Gaston (USA) 76(9) 64
Qualifying - [WC] S Denenberg (USA) d [WC] T Aaron (USA) 64 62
Qualifying - [WC] A Souza (USA) d [WC] A Chervin (USA) 60 61
Qualifying - B Battistone (USA) d D Battistone (USA) 62 62
Qualifying - P Simmonds (USA) d [WC] M Czerwinski (USA) 64 67(9) 64

Quotes

Marek Czerwinski on playing in the JSM Challenger:

“There’s a lot of energy and commotion. In a sense it’s good, because it makes the matches more exciting and fun and gives you more motivation, but at the same time, sometimes it’s tougher to focus. It’s fun to have the alumni back cheering everyone on.”

Additional information can be found at <http://illinoischallenger.com>.

