

EHS Principal Dr. Steve Stuart Looks Ahead To Edwardsville Futures, Proud Tennis Center Hosts Event

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville community and people around Edwardsville High School are very proud to host the annual Edwardsville Futures tennis tournament, presented by the EGHM Foundation, but there's one person who is very much looking forward to this year's event, which occurs July 24-30 this year.

Dr. Steve Stuart, the principal of Edwardsville High School, is exceptionally proud that his school and the Edwardsville Tennis Center, where the tournament will take place, is host to the annual event, the only professional tennis tournament currently held in the St. Louis area.

"Oh, yes," Stuart said during an interview held at a press conference to promote the tournament at the Holiday Inn Express hotel, one of the flagship hotels for the tournament. "This is an exciting time. The work that Dave Lipe (the tournament director and head tennis coach at EHS) puts in, along with the foundation, is just incredible. The fact that we get to highlight and show off our high school facilities is wonderful and it's an event that I've loved being a part of for the last 12 years."

The fact that the Edwardsville Tennis Center is the only high school facility where a United States Tennis Association (USTA) sanctioned event is played is a big feather in everyone's caps.

"Correct," Stuart said. "The fact that this event is housed at a high school, the fact that we have the facilities that meet the standards that the USTA wants is incredible and we're just fortunate to be able to host it."

The annual event means much to Edwardsville High itself, as students are encouraged to come out and watch the matches and volunteer as workers during the tournament. The visiting fans get to see things that they might never have realized otherwise as well.

"Well, the students of ours, they get to come out and work it and watch it," Stuart said. "They get to see high-level tennis like they've never seen before. They get to relate to these young men who are working hard, they get to see the work ethic they put in. Otherwise, it just means that we also show off our facilities to our visitors. People come, they don't realize that we have such beautiful buildings and sports complexes and the fact we have so many great restaurants in walking distance. It's just a great feather in our cap."

Stuart is very much looking forward to the tournament and seeing how everything unfolds during the week of the event.

"Of course," Stuart said. "I'm in a fortunate position where Dave (Lipe) does all the hard work and I get to kind of come out and just enjoy the event and just to be part of it and be a super fan. So I'm very excited for it."

And being the principal of a school that hosts such an important event as the Futures is a source of pride for Stuart.

"It does, it does," Stuart said. "Being an Edwardsville native and working in the district for as many years I have, to be able to say I'm a principal at the high school that hosts a USTA event and basically, the only principal in the nation who gets to say that," he said with a smile, "it's exciting. Just an exciting time and I encourage everybody to come out and spend some time with us next week."