

15th Edition Of Edwardsville Futures Tennis Tournament Set For July 26-Aug. 2, 2026

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - The 15th edition of the \$30,000 Edwardsville Futures Tennis Tournament, presented by The EGHM Foundation, will be held July 26 through Aug. 2, 2026, at the Edwardsville Tennis Center, with organizers on Monday, July 13, 2026, holding a press conference about the event as the only professional tennis tournament in the St. Louis area and highlighting its role in the community and local economy.

At a press conference Monday afternoon at the Holiday Inn Express next to the tennis center, tournament director and Edwardsville High boys and girls tennis coach Dave Lipe said the milestone year offers a chance to reflect on the event's growth and the people behind it.

"In year number 15, it's a time for reflection," Lipe said, "and also, to celebrate what we've done. And I think it comes down to this: What make our event unique, and what makes it special, are the people."

Lipe pointed to tournament treasurer Paul Abert, The Bank of Madison County President Joe Gugger, EGHM Foundation President Joe Gugger and front desk coordinator Emily Cimarolli, who handles court assignments and player needs.

The tournament has grown into one of the area's premier annual sporting events, according to organizers, who said its location near hotels, restaurants and other venues within walking distance of the tennis center is a distinctive feature.

Gugger said community and school district support have been central to the tournament's success.

"This is, as Dave said, the 15th year," Gugger said in his remarks. "And I remember when we first started this, this can't happen without without getting support from the school board, and also, the superintendent Allen (Dr. Allen Duncan, Jr., the Edwardsville District 7 superintendent) has been great this year, as has been the school board entirely supports this. They know it's just more than tennis courts for the high school. It's a community event. If anything we can do, within the community, that strengthens the relationship between the city and the school is a positive, and that's why it's been successful."

Gugger also said the tournament brings economic benefits because of its length and the number of visitors it attracts.

"It's a two-week event," Gugger said. "It's not a one-day event, it's not a one weekend event, this is a two-week event that starts next Wednesday, with the play-ins. So you have a lot of people coming in with their coaches, with their parents, staying in hotels, buying food, doing all these other things that have helped the community from a revenue standpoint."

Organizers also stressed the level of competition. Many players who have competed in Edwardsville have gone on to play in Grand Slam events, including the Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.

"This is not third-rate tennis," Abert said. "This is first-rate. It's like in baseball, it's AAA in just moving up the ladder. It's really encouraging to see the players that have played here, and may not have won the tournament here, that are now making it to the third round at Wimbledon."

Lipe said one-eighth of the men's field in both singles and doubles at Wimbledon once played in the Futures. He said tournament alumni have won 47 Association of Tennis Professionals championships, 270 Challenger titles, seven Grand Slam titles and have produced four Grand Slam champions.

The tournament's play-in events are scheduled for July 22-24, beginning with the Pro Wildcard Challenge, presented by The Gori Law Firm, on July 22-23. The winner receives a wildcard berth in the qualifying stage. The Doubles Shootout, a one-day

event, will award the winning doubles team a wildcard berth in the qualifying stage at the start of the main tournament.

The main tournament opens July 26 with Kids Night, presented by The Village of Glen Carbon. The event includes a free kids clinic at the center with Edwardsville Tennis Academy players providing coaching. The One Point Tournament, presented by Mike's Automotive, returns July 27 at 5 p.m. after debuting last year. In that event, pro players compete against members of the public in a single-elimination format with one point played in each match.

Diversity Day, presented by McConnell and Associates, is scheduled for July 29. Minority players will take part in a clinic at Liberty Middle School and a lunchtime program at the Jon Davis Wrestling Center at Edwardsville High that will feature guest speakers. The annual Mitch-N-Friends clinic for special needs players, sponsored by the Edwardsville YMCA, will be held the evening of July 30 at a new venue, Liberty Middle School.

Fan Appreciation Day is set for July 31, with free admission for Edwardsville Township residents throughout the day and the doubles final that night. The singles semifinals are scheduled for Aug. 1, followed by Championship Sunday, presented by The City of Edwardsville, on Aug. 2 with the singles final in the morning.

Lipe also recognized Cimarolli, marketing director Kirk Schlueter, social media director Mia Heuser, volunteers, ball kids and players for their roles in the event.

"This is a world-class professional tennis tournament, and that comes first," Lipe said. "These guys are trying to make a living at this. This is not a recreational tournament where we stand and take a picture, and if something goes wrong, or if someone misses a call, oh well. This is a professional tennis tournament, and these guys, this is how they want to make a living; this is their dream. And that comes first."

For more info:

<https://www.edwardsvillefutures.com/>