

No. 1 Ohio State Men's Tennis Advances To NCAA Quarterfinals

The No. 1 Ohio State men's tennis team defeated No. 16 Columbia, 4-1, in front of a home crowd to advance to the quarterfinals of the NCAA Tournament May 11.

The Buckeyes continued their excellent season, with big-time performances from J.J. Wolf, Martin Joyce, John McNally and Hunter Tubert giving them an advantage in doubles play.

"We had a quick start in doubles and I think that was really big for us," Wolf said. "Martin Joyce and I have had a couple tough matches the past few, and I think it was good. We worked hard this week and really showed we got better."

Ohio State captured its 32 of 34 doubles points on the season. Alex Kobelt and Kyle Seelig trailed early in their doubles match, but eventually rallied to tie it at 5 before the other two pairs won the point.

In singles play, No. 26 McNally fell behind early in his match, but made a strong comeback, rallying behind the home crowd. Despite trailing 2-4 in the second set, McNally clinched the Scarlet and Gray victory with a win (6-3, 7-5) against No. 22 Jack Lin.

No. 2 Wolf struggled against No. 37 Victor Pham, losing the first set 4-6, but bounced back with consecutive 6-1 sets for the win.

"J.J.'s the best player in the country, so he's a little tight out there," Ohio State head men's coach Ty Tucker said. "I didn't think he played his best tennis in the first set, but he stepped it up and started playing 90 percent of his level, and we needed it."

No. 60 Seelig defeated No. 107 Adam Ambrozy in the first set, 7-6, but faltered in the second set and the match was unfinished.

After winning his first set 6-2, No. 111 Joyce played to a 6-6 tiebreaker in the second set, but fell 2-7 in the tiebreaker and the match was unfinished.

Tubert won the first singles match for Ohio State, defeating Austen Huang 6-1, 6-4. Then, Timothy Wang put the Lions on the board with a 6-4, 6-3 victory against Kobelt.

McNally's comeback win clinched the match against Columbia, improving the Buckeyes' record to 32-2 and propelling them to the NCAA Quarterfinals.

Ohio State improved to 327-6 at home since 2000, and the win against the Lions marked ranked win No. 177.

Ohio State will take on No. 9 UNC on May 16 in Orlando, Fla., at the USTA Tennis Campus.

McNally was glad to see the home crowd show up for Joyce's and Tubert's final home match at Ohio State. And despite the adversity, the sophomore from Cincinnati knew he and his teammates were not going out at the hands of Columbia.

"The crowd man, we tried all week to try to get a big crowd here," McNally said. "I've never played a match at Ohio State with that many people here. I mean, when you have that many people screaming your name and cheering you on and 'O-H-ing and I-O-ing,' you can't give up.

"J.J. had a tough first set, I had a little bit of resiliency in the second set, but we're never going to give up on this team. We work too damn hard and we work way, way too hard to give up. And J.J. and I have grown up together, we have really big dreams, and winning a national title for the Buckeyes is one of them."

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