

Ohio State Men's Tennis Moves On To National Semifinal



Dreams of national semifinals in the NCAA Tournament for both No. 3 Ohio State and No. 6 Georgia in Orlando, Fla. would all come down to one final set after hours of matches.

With the score knotted up at 3-3 in a best-of-7, only one singles match would make it to a third set — that between the Buckeyes' No. 41 Alexander Bernard and Georgia's Miguel Perez Pena.

At least, that appeared to be the case as Bernard trailed 5-3 with Perez Pena on serve in the second set after Bernard took the first, as all the other matches between Ohio State and Georgia came to a close.

But Bernard broke Perez Pena in that game to extend the set, then held serve to knot things up at 5-5. His momentum didn't subside — he broke Perez Pena a second time, the Bulldog not recording a single point to make it so that Bernard was serving for the match and a spot in the Final Four.

A shot beyond the boundary from Perez Pena trailing 40-30 in the final game sent the Buckeyes onward.

Ohio State defeated Georgia 4-3, and will advance to play No. 2 TCU with a spot in the National Championship on the line Saturday.

Doubles play set Ohio State behind the 8-ball early. Georgia captured two 6-3 victories in short order, the first from No. 6 Trent Bryde and Ethan Quinn against the Buckeyes' No. 21 Justin Boulais and Robert Cash. Georgia's Blake Croyder and Britton Johnson then beat J.J. Tracy and Cannon Kingsley to secure a 1-0 advantage heading into singles matches.

That meant OSU needed to win at least four of the six single matches thereafter to advance to the national semifinals.

No. 34 James Trotter finished his match the quickest of any, defeating No. 106 Croyder 6-2, 6-2 and letting out a shout of encouragement to his teammates around the court as he evened the team score at 1-1. No. 2 Quinn bested No. 24 Boulais immediately after, however, putting the Bulldogs back ahead 2-1.

Ohio State's Jack Anthrop responded in kind with a 6-4, 6-0 win over Teodor Giusca to knot the contest at 2-2. But a 6-4, 6-3 win from No. 113 Bryde over No. 22 Tracy put the Buckeyes on the ropes, down

3-2.

No. 11 Kingsley fell behind No. 19 Philip Henning by a break in his first set, but rallied with two breaks of his own to take it 6-4. That bled into a back-and-forth battle in the second set, and with one chance to take the match at 40-40 up 6-5 and off serve (there's no deuce in the NCAAs), Kingsley and Henning embarked on a vicious rally that ended with a ball hit into the net by Henning to give Kingsley the win, tie the score at 3-3 and set the stage for Bernard and Perez Pena's final set.

Ohio State will meet the Horned Frogs in the National Semifinals Saturday at noon in Orlando, Fla.