



- ROB McCALLUM / The News-Review

CCA's Chen quietly reaches new heights

PREP TENNIS

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CANYONVILLE — Tim Chen's poker face betrays no emotion on the field of play, whether he's ahead or behind.

Lately, the Canyonville Christian Academy tennis player has only had to stifle his own fist pumping rather than wipe sweat from his brow.

Chen is perfect in seven matches this season as he tries for his third consecutive berth to the 4A/3A/2A/1A state tournament. In his last two, Chen has served up what they call in tennis jargon “double bagels” by beating Klamath Union's Kris Crawford and Hidden Valley's Kevin Payne by scores of 6-0, 6-0.

Not that Chen would rub an opponent's nose in such a feat.

“He's a pretty calm player,” said teammate Steven Huang. “He might shout at himself if he misses a shot, but other than that he's pretty quiet out there.”

Chen owns many records for the five-year old CCA tennis program. He was the first player to qualify for the state tournament in 2009, and as a junior last year he got the program's first win at state, clinching a top eight finish. Chen was there for CCA's first home match, and inaugurated that with a win too.

He owns a career mark of 29-7, with two of those losses coming at state.

“I've had more that one coach tell me ‘he has the best forehand I've seen at this level,’” CCA coach Brian Fye said. “He's stinkin' quick so he can hit balls that nobody else gets to.”

Chen is among the best in District 2 — a far-reaching league that stretches from Sisters, to North Bend and the California border. He was the district runner-up last year, finished third as a sophomore and is gunning for the top seed at this year's tournament, Tuesday and Wednesday in Medford. Today's match at Henley and its No. 1 singles player Alex Mangan will be crucial.

“So far this season has been really good,” Chen said. “I've just been trying my best.”

Chen only started playing competitive tennis when he came to Douglas County from Taiwan two years ago.

“In Taiwan, I would get to play on weekends, maybe once or twice a week,” said Chen, a native of Taipei City. “Now I get to play everyday. I get a lot more practice in and experience.”

Coincidentally, Chen and Huang were part of the same tennis club in Taipei five years ago.

“I had no idea he was so good,” Huang said. “It was just a practice situation, not competitive really, so you couldn't really tell who the best players were. Now seeing him play is awesome.”

Chen has been working on complimenting his forehand attack, which has helped produce straight-set wins in each of his matches this season.

“So far I've been working on developing my backhand shot and my serve,” he said.

Fine-tuning has been easier said than done this spring, as unusually wet weather has limited practice time and canceled some matches.

Space is limited in Canyonville, where there are two courts on campus, and a handful of asphalt courts at Pioneer Park a few blocks away.

But Chen has no complaints about boarding at CCA.

“We're like a big family,” said Chen, one of a dozen or so Taiwanese at the school. “The staff treats us really well.”

Chen enjoys basketball, both real and virtual. He played on the Pilots' basketball team this past winter and takes his turn on the dormitory's oft-used NBA 2K11 for the Xbox.

Chen has already been accepted at the University of Oregon next year, and Fye thinks he has enough potential to play there.

“I'm trying to get video of (Chen) to the coach there, and because state is held at the U of O, I'm hoping he'll get a chance to see him in person,” Fye said. “He might have to red-shirt, but if he can get the time in and get more practices, the potential there is great.”

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