

# 2001 IHSAA STATE FINALS

June 2, 2001

North Central High School, Indianapolis

## Terre Haute South Clinches

### First State Championship in any sport

It took Terre Haute South three consecutive trips to the championship round, but the Braves finally won the big prize with a convincing 5-0 victory over Anderson Highland in the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual IHSAA Girls Tennis State Finals on Saturday, June 2, 2001 at North Central High School in Indianapolis.

It was the school's first team championship in any sport in 30 years as an IHSAA-member school (1971-72). The third-ranked Braves (20-0-1) of coach Bill Blankenbaker returned following state runner-up finishes the last two years to North Central of Indianapolis in 1999 and to Park Tudor a year ago. The Braves also had finished in a second-place tie in 1981, their first appearance, when the state finals were run on a point system.

With the Braves leading 2-0 on wins at No. 2 and 3 singles, the No. 1 doubles team of Amberlee Jackson and Katie Knepper clinched the crown with its 6-3, 6-1 victory over Aimee Ripberger and Ellen Keris.

Kristen Clary completed a perfect 27-0 season at No. 2 singles defeating Betsy Gentry of Anderson Highland, 6-2, 6-4. Helen Hildebrand took a 6-0, 6-2 decision from Evonne Hammel at No. 3 singles.

With the overall outcome already decided, Terre Haute South's Lauren Clary was a 6-3, 6-3 winner over previously unbeaten Ashlee Davis of Anderson Highland. Davis, last year's runner-up in the state singles competition as a freshman, completed her sophomore campaign 17-1.

Michelle Favila and Laura Hodge managed to complete the sweep at No. 2 doubles with a 6-4, 4-6, 6-0 win over Lora Ashton and Stephanie Smith.

Seventh-ranked Anderson Highland, coached by Jim Hostetler, finished out 20-4 in its first appearance in the state finals. The Scots also were looking to capture the school's first team championship in any sport.

In the morning semifinals, Terre Haute South pulled off the upset knocking off top-ranked North Central, 3-2. Though both schools hail from the Metropolitan Interscholastic Conference, they did not meet during the regular season. North Central, which beat Terre Haute South for the 1999 state championship and owns a state-best 10 titles, finished 20-3, under coach Heather Iffert. In 14 trips to the state finals, it was just the second time (1994) the Panthers had not finished either first or second.

With the match knotted at 2-2, Hildebrand won a three-setter from Serena Burkard at No. 3 singles, 3-6, 6-4, 6-2, to clinch Terre Haute South's spot in the championship round.

North Central's No. 1 doubles tandem of Karin Agness and Hillary Friedman won twice on the day to keep its perfect record intact at 27-0 and will play in next weekend's doubles state finals.

Anderson Highland took all three singles matches in straight sets and beat 18<sup>th</sup>-ranked Merrillville, 4-1, in the other semifinal match. Merrillville (17-3), under coach David Zimmerman, also was making its first appearance in the state finals.

North Central swept Merrillville, 5-0, in the consolation round.

### Lauren Clary Selected for Mental Attitude Award

Lauren Clary of Terre Haute South was selected by members of the IHSAA Executive Committee as the recipient of the Mental Attitude Award in Girls Tennis.

The award is presented annually to the senior girl who best exemplifies mental attitude, scholarship, leadership and athletic ability in the state finals. Clary is the second Terre Haute athlete to win the award in the sport and the first from her school. Mary Ann Shouse of Terre Haute North was named the recipient in the inaugural year of the tournament in 1974-75.

The No. 1 singles player for all three of Terre Haute South's state finalist teams, Clary finished the season 26-1 from her position at No. 1 singles. She also played basketball for the Braves as a freshman and sophomore.

Academically, she rates third in her senior class of 407 students. She serves as vice president of her class, is a member of the National Honor Society and has been involved with numerous other school activities. She has signed with Xavier University in Cincinnati on a tennis scholarship.

Farm Bureau Insurance, the IHSAA's corporate partner, presented a check for \$1,000 to Terre Haute South High School in the name of Lauren Clary.

## **Championship**

### **Terre Haute South 5, Anderson Highland 0.**

#### Singles

1. Lauren Clary (12) (THS) def. Ashlee Davis (10) (AH), 6-3, 6-3.
2. Kristen Clary (11) (THS) def. Betsy Gentry (10) (AH), 6-2, 6-4.
3. Helen Hildebrand (12) (THS) def. Evonne Hammel (12) (AH), 6-0, 6-2.

#### Doubles

1. Amberlee Jackson (12) / Katie Knepper (10) (THS) def. Aimee Ripberger (12) / Ellen Keris (12) (AH), 6-3, 6-1.
2. Michelle Favila (12) / Laura Hodge (12) (THS) def. Lora Ashton (10) / Stephanie Smith (11) (AH), 6-4, 4-6, 6-0.

## **Consolation**

### **North Central (Indpls.) 5, Merrillville 0**

#### Singles

1. Brookley Crews (12) (NC) def. Casady Pruitt (10) (M), 6-1, 6-0.
2. Cameron Benjamin (12) (NC) def. Tiffany Sajdera (12) (M), 6-0, 6-0.
3. Serena Burkard (9) (NC) def. Jennifer Ramirez (12) (M), 6-1, 7-5.

#### Doubles

1. Karin Agness (11) / Hillary Friedman (9) (NC) def. Radhika Dave (12) / Kathleen Szot (10) (M), 6-0, 6-0.
2. Lindsay Ray (12) / Pam Gesellchen (9) (NC) def. Julie Lesniak (11) / Lisa Ross (11) (M), 6-1, 6-0.

## **Semifinals**

### **Terre Haute South 3, North Central (Indpls.) 2**

#### Singles

1. Lauren Clary (12) (THS) def. Brookley Crews (12) (NC), 6-2, 6-0.
2. Kristen Clary (11) (THS) def. Cameron Benjamin (12) (NC), 6-4, 6-7 (7-4), 6-3.
3. Helen Hildebrand (12) (THS) def. Serena Burkard (9) (NC), 3-6, 6-4, 6-2.

#### Doubles

1. Karin Agness (11) / Hillary Friedman (9) (NC) def. Amberlee Jackson (12) / Katie Knepper (10) (THS), 6-0, 6-0.
2. Lindsay Ray (12) / Pam Gesellchen (9) (NC) def. Michelle Favila (12) / Laura Hodge (12) (THS), 6-2, 6-1.

**Anderson Highland 4, Merrillville 1**

Singles

1. Ashlee Davis (10) (AH) def. Casady Pruitt (10) (M), 6-1, 6-0.
2. Betsy Gentry (10) (AH) def. Tiffany Sajdera (12) (M), 6-1, 6-2.
3. Evonne Hammel (12) (AH) def. Jennifer Ramirez (12) (M), 6-1, 6-1.

Doubles

1. Aimee Ripberger (12) / Ellen Keris (12) (AH) def. Radhika Dave (12) / Kathleen Szot (10) (M), 2-6, 6-1, 6-3.
2. Julie Lesniak (11) / Lisa Ross (11) (M) def. Lora Ashton (10) / Stephanie Smith (11) (AH), 6-4, 7-6 (7-4).