



Ronald Case
Athletic Director
rcase@gccnj.edu
(856) 415-2207

Brian Rowan
Assistant Athletic Director
browan@gccnj.edu
(856) 415-2263

Leanne Schoening
Athletics
lschoeni@gccnj.edu
(856) 415-2207

NJCAA Men's Tennis National Championships

Plano, TX, May 16, 2009

The men's tennis team has finished play at the NJCAA National Tournament with a fourth place finish. In addition, GCC sophomore Nick Shepherd became the first men's tennis national champion in school history by winning the 6th singles flight. This culminates a fine season that saw the Roadrunners finish with a 14-4 record, a Garden State Athletic Conference championship and an NJCAA Region XIX Tournament championship.

Below are daily recaps from the tournament and photos from the action...

Day 4 Recap:

GCC Sophomore Nick Shepherd (Clearview Regional HS/Mullica Hill, NJ) today became the first men's tennis national champion and first team All-American. Shepherd, the #3 seed in the sixth singles flight, defeated #2 Chris Spika from Onondaga CC 6-2, 6-2 to take the championship. Shepherd played the best tennis of his career this week at the NJCAA Men's Tennis National Championships.



GCC men's tennis on the last day of the 2009 Men's NJCAA National Tennis Tournament in Plano, TX



Photo captions: Shepherd at coin flip with his opponent and chair umpire Elaine Barrett; Shepherd pumps his fist after winning match point; Shepherd accepts All-American award from Bob Zelinski

Shepherd was a member of the team last season but battled shin splints and various other injuries that kept him out of the tournament lineup. He worked hard to improve over the off season and made it his goal to win the regional championship at his flight and help the team win a regional championship. He

did both and then added the national championship today. After the match, he emphatically pumped both fists into the air before shaking hands with his opponent.

In the other final match that GCC was involved in, freshman Steve Suboleski competed for the prestigious national championship at first singles. The winner of this match is considered the best Div. III singles player in the nation. Suboleski fought valiantly but fell 6-1, 6-2 to the #1 seed Sardorjan Mamamdjanov from Kingsborough CC. Suboleski was named a second team All-American for reaching for the final match at his flight.



Photo Captions: Suboleski with his opponent and chair umpire Cliff Ferry; Suboleski serving in the championship match; Suboleski accepts his All-American award from Bob Zelinski

Overall, the team finished with 25 points which put them just two points out of a top three finish. The fourth place ties the previous best for GCC in men's tennis at the national tournament. The team champions were Oxford College of Emory with 34 points followed by Suffolk CC (28.5) and Onondaga (27).

Day 3 Recap:

GCC freshman Steve Suboleski will play for the NJCAA Div. III Singles National Championship Thursday in Plano, TX as part of the NJCAA Men's National Tennis Championships. Suboleski, seeded #3 at first singles, played his best match of the season today against #2 seed Emilio Casillas from Oxford College of Emory (GA). After losing the first set 7-5, Suboleski recovered to win the second set 6-4 and then emphatically won the third set 6-0. He will be the first GCC men's tennis player to compete in the national singles championship match. The match will be played Thursday morning at 8am at Collin County Community College against #1 seed Sardorian Mamadjanov from Kingsborough CC (NY).

Joining Steve in the finals round will be GCC sophomore Nick Sheppard in the 6th singles flight. Sheppard, also a #3 seed in his flight, today defeated #1 seed Matt St. James from Suffolk CC (NY). Sheppard came out firing and won the match 6-3, 6-0. This was the best match of Sheppard's career and he will face #2 seed Chris Spika from Onondaga CC (NY) in the final also Thursday morning at Collin CCC at 8am.

GCC lost in their three other semifinal matches on the day but played valiantly in each match and have earned the respect of the teams from around the nation. In the team competition Oxford College is currently in first place followed by Onondaga CC, Suffolk CC and then GCC.



The team visited historic Dealey Plaza in Downtown Dallas



Coach Rowan discussed conspiracy theories on the "grassy knoll"



Sharing a moment at the JFK Memorial in Dallas, TX

Day 2 Recap:

The GCC Roadrunners are in contention for a national title after two days of play at the NJCAA National Tennis Championships. The team is in a solid fourth place with semifinalists in five of the nine flighted draws. While it would be an outside chance for the Roadrunners to win the title, any finish in the top five is good in this very tough tournament.

On the opening day of play the Roadrunners went 5 for 5 in so-called "pig tail" matches that brought the tournament to the quarterfinals at each flight. The second day of play is when the seeded players, including GCC's Steve Suboleski (#3 seed 1st singles) and Nick Sheppard (#3 seed 6th singles) begin play and you can get a real feel for who are the most dangerous teams. The Roadrunners won a solid five out of nine matches on day 2 which put them in a strong fourth place behind Suffolk CC, Oxford College, and defending champs Onondaga CC.

GCC's two seeded players both advanced to the semifinals of their flights as did #2 singles Dave Reich, #4 singles Thuan Lo, and the first doubles team of Suboleski and Taylor Devlin who knocked off the #3 seeded team from Onondaga on the way.

Big matches on Wednesday include: GCC frosh Suboleski against #2 seed Emilio Casillas from Oxford College at 8am in the first singles semifinals. Second singles Dave Reich in the semifinals against defending #2 singles national champion and #1 seed Maksim Vergazov from Kingsborough CC at 8am. And GCC first doubles Steve Suboleski and Taylor Devlin against the #1 seed's from Kingsborough in a semifinal doubles match starting at 1:00pm.





For more information on Men's Tennis at GCC or Roadrunner Championship Tennis Camps:
Head Coach: Brian Rowan (856) 415-2263 or browan@gccnj.edu