

Northern's Chris Adams named Tennis Player of the Year

Matt Sheehan, Times Herald 5:14 p.m. EST December 3, 2016



Port Huron Northern senior Chris Adams is the Times Herald Tennis Player of the Year. (Photo: JEFFREY M. SMITH, TIMES HERALD)

Chris Adams knows how to win on the tennis court.

Anyone who watched the Port Huron Northern senior play in No. 1 singles this year knew that as he only dropped four of his 24 matches this season. His winning took him to the heights of the Division 1 state semifinals, a Division 1 regional title and the Times Herald Tennis Player of the Year award.

"He didn't really have a bad loss on his record," Northern head coach Chris Smith said. "All of his losses were against quality players and they could have gone either way."

The winning habit for Adams is rarely new to him, going all the way back to his first tournament as a 7-year-old in Midland. Even though it was his tournament debut as a youngster, he took home the title and also caught a fever for competition.

"I ended up winning it, granted it was a local tournament, but I thought I was great at the time," Adams said. "It wasn't really high-level, but that's what got me excited with competing."

Adams wasn't just a solid player on the court while helping the Huskies capture a ninth-place finish at the Division 1 state tournament. Even when he wasn't playing he was lauded for his passion on the sidelines watching his teammates play.

That wasn't just a good support system for his teammates, but also the first-year head coach stepping into the program.

"I didn't really have much of a background other than Northern would be a good team, and I kept hearing whisperings that Chris was going to be the guy that year," Smith recalled. "He had a level of composure and focus you usually don't see at that age ... and other kids on the team kind of took his lead and followed."

Adams did enter the season as "the guy" after playing his previous three years as one of the best No. 2 singles players in the state. When his good friend and former Times Herald Tennis Player of the Year, Franklin Brozovich, graduated last year, it meant Adams was finally going to have his shot as the No. 1 singles player for Northern.

"I didn't think there was much pressure," Adams said. "I played a lot of the kids before so I knew what to expect."

Over the last decade, Adams has been seen in the Port Huron Tennis House as much as the rackets have. He credits much of his talent today to tennis guru Dave Brown, who's helped him grow his game.

"He's helped me a lot with my game, but he also makes it fun for me," Adams said. "He helps me improve and keeps it relaxed and fun."

Adams also said Smith came in and helped him with his mental game in the short time they had together as coach and player. In return, Smith and senior teammate Abhishek Tekumulla helped give the entire team another season to remember.

"We had a very fun season and it was a great group of kids, and it wouldn't have been without any of the seniors," Smith said. "If our senior leadership with Abhishek and Chris isn't there, it could have turned into a mess."