

Ole Miss Defeats Northwestern To Advance To Second Round Of NCAA Regional

After losing the doubles point, the Rebels won four consecutive singles matches.

NOTRE DAME, Ind. --- In the first round of the 2014 NCAA Men's Tennis Championship, the 38th-ranked Ole Miss Rebels upset No. 30 Northwestern, 4-1. The match took nearly four hours at the Courtney Tennis Center in Notre Dame, Ind.

Northwestern took a hard-fought doubles point to start off the match. Northwestern's Fedor Baev and Strong Kirchheimer defeated Joe Rogers and Johan Backstrom, 8-5, at No. 3 doubles. The matches on courts one and two were both tied at 5-5, but Raleigh Smith and Mihir Kumar of Northwestern pulled ahead to beat William Kallberg and Stefan Lindmark, 8-5, sealing the doubles point for the Wildcats. The match between Sam Shropshire and Alex Pasareanu of Northwestern and Nik Scholtz and Ricardo Jorge of Ole Miss at No. 2 doubles was abandoned.

The No. 3 singles match was the first off the court when Lindmark defeated Konrad Zieba, 6-2, 7-5, to give Ole Miss its first point and tie up the match, 1-1. The Rebels' Jorge then defeated Kirchheimer, 7-6, 6-3 at No. 5, giving Ole Miss the advantage in the match.

The remaining four singles matches all went to third sets, leaving the outcome for the taking of either team.

Despite losing his first set to Northwestern's Pasareanu, 6-1, Vinod Gowda came back to win his match at No. 6, 1-6, 6-1, 6-1. The Rebels were just one match away from upsetting Northwestern with three matches left on the court. Backstrom clinched the match for Ole Miss with a 3-6, 6-2, 7-5 victory over Kumar at No. 4.

"I want to give Northwestern a lot of credit," said Ole Miss head coach Billy Chadwick. "They played really well in doubles, but they also played extremely well in singles. It was an uphill battle the entire way. I was really proud of our guys because they just didn't quit. Any less effort on any court and we don't win this match. And so it's really a great thing to see guys through the spring have gotten tougher and tougher, and they really did a good job toughing one out because that was a good Northwestern team."

The Rebels advance to the second round of the NCAA regional tomorrow, playing either Notre Dame or Green Bay tomorrow at 1 p.m. (EST).

"The margins are so small with these teams, and so we know it's going to be a close match," Chadwick added. "It's going to be something very similar to this, and we're in hopes that maybe we can get those close ones."

Singles

1. Nik Scholtz (OM) led Raleigh Smith (NU), 6-5, 3-6, 4-2, unfinished
2. William Kallberg (OM) led Sam Shropshire (NU), 5-7, 7-6 (3), 6-5, unfinished

3. Stefan Lindmark (OM) def. Konrad Zieba (NU), 6-2, 7-5
4. Johan Backstrom (OM) def. Mihir Kumar (NU), 3-6, 6-2, 7-5
5. Ricardo Jorge (OM) def. Strong Kirchheimer (NU), 7-6 (4), 6-3
6. Vinod Gowda (OM) def. Alex Pasareanu (NU), 1-6, 6-4, 6-4

Doubles

1. No. 39 Raleigh Smith/Mihir Kumar (NU) def. No. 49 William Kallberg/Stefan Lindmark (OM), 8-5
2. Nik Scholtz/Ricardo Jorge (OM) led Sam Shropshire/Alex Pasareanu (NU), 7-5, unfinished
3. Fedor Baev/Strong Kirchheimer (NU) def. Joe Rogers/Johan Backstrom (OM), 8-5

--Lauren Chval, Media Relations Assistant

--ND--