

St. Fred's duo honors friend in title match

By Keith Prince

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St. Frederick freshman Elaine Simon has moved into the spotlight early with her recent tennis state championships in the Class A singles competition while her brother Jason Simon and his doubles partner Nathan Ryan have provided an even more inspirational memory while winning the state doubles title.

Ryan and Simon both wore t-shirts that said "Altick 7" while playing the championship match, honoring the memory of good friend Trey Altick on the anniversary of his death from a boating accident.

Although Altick was making his mark as a student at Neville, Ryan said, "We had known Trey since we were kids and played a lot of tennis together at the MAC. I had been thinking about Trey a lot and I had the t-shirts made up about a week ago. We asked Coach (Kathryn) Waters if it was okay if we wore them in the finals to honor Trey and she said it was fine."

Waters remarked, "I think it says a lot about these two young men to want to honor the memory of a friend. I even had some comments from some south Louisiana folks who said they had know Trey and that it was 'classy' for our boys to remember him this way."

Simon said, "I think it gave us an extra edge, a little chip on our shoulder. Trey was better than both of us and it always helped to play against him. He was someone we looked up to and we wanted to get to his level. Maybe this state championship is a step in that direction."

Ryan added, "Trey was a great young tennis player. He beat up on us a lot back then. He was the nicest guy I ever met and he had a ton of friends. We've had a lot of positive feedback from people about the t-shirts, because everybody thought so much of him."

As for their state tennis title, Ryan said, "We've really worked hard as a team the past year. We've play a lot together, even away from school. The guys we beat (from Episcopal School of Acadiana) are the same ones who beat us last year in the finals, so I think this shows we have improved."

"I know our service game has gotten much stronger and I think we are volleying much better now, too," added the St. Fred sophomore.

"We were really glad to get another shot at these same guys," said Simon, a junior, noting that the ESA duo are seniors. "We were really pumped up for the

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match and stayed pretty much in control most of the way, although they made a run late in the second set.”

The St. Frederick team won 6-2, 6-4 to claim the title.

Meanwhile, Little Sister (Elaine Simon) continues showing why he is ranked No. 3 in state girls 16s (although she is only 14), winning the state finals over the defending champion, 6-3, 6-4.

The state runner-up in the Class A tourney last year as an eighth grader, Simon said, “I can see a lot of improvement this year, especially in my footwork.

“I am working out a lot at Athletic Republic and that is really helping my speed, quickness and my footwork.”

In addition to winning state, Simon is also playing in Southern junior competition throughout the region. She was in Mobile, Ala., for an event earlier this week and has already played this year



Courtesy photo

The St. Frederick tennis team poses at the state tennis finals at ULM.

in Jackson, Miss., Memphis, Tenn., Little Rock, Ark., and Baton Rouge.

She had already won four of five matches in Mobile when we caught up with her for a phone visit.

“Last year I very seldom won a match at these tournaments, now I am a lot more competitive and able to win my share. It’s just a process of hard work and gaining experience,” she said.