

# Tiger duo battles back after tough decision

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**Nicole Mazzeo and Ali Dreves win doubles consolation title at the Class 6A state tennis tourney**



PMG PHOTO: DAN BROOD - Tigard High School senior Nicole Mazzeo (left) and sophomore Ali Dreves won the girls doubles consolation title at the Class 6A state tennis tournament.

BEAVERTON — Even before they stepped onto the court at the Class 6A state tennis tournament, the Tigard High School girls doubles team of senior Nicole Mazzeo and sophomore Ali Dreves faced an uphill battle.

But the Tiger duo took on that challenge and came away with a championship. Mazzeo and Dreves, after having to forfeit their first-round tournament match because of a scheduling conflict, came roaring back to win the girls doubles consolation title at the event held last Thursday through Saturday at the Babette Horenstein Tennis Center.

"It means a lot to us," Mazzeo said. "It just reaffirms all of the hard work we put in. It makes what our coaches do, what our teammates do, what our family does, and all the support they give us all worth it."

"It's an amazing feeling," Dreves said. "We did have that little bump in the road in the beginning, but to come back and win this, and following through with what we were taught, is amazing."



PMG PHOTO: DAN BROOD - Tigard High School senior Nicole Mazzeo hits an overhand shot during the Tigers' consolation bracket semifinal match at the Class 6A state tournament.

Mazzeo and Dreves were scheduled to open the tournament last Thursday with a first-round match against McMinnville's Ainsley Ridgway and Mariah Arnold. But that match, tentatively scheduled for 1:30 p.m., conflicted with Mazzeo's International Baccalaureate testing at Tigard High School.

The Tigard duo decided to forfeit the match, allowing Mazzeo to complete her IB testing.

"Unfortunately, the OSAA does not accommodate for IB and AP exams, and I'm a full IB student, so as much as I love tennis, and as much as I love playing with Ali, being a student comes first for me," Mazzeo said. "My coaches support me in that endeavor. There were a lot of other players who had to make similar choices — either forfeit, or cut their tests off early."

And, Mazzeo, who plans on attending California Polytechnic State University, where she'll study Computer Science, says those aren't each choices to make.

"It's a rough situation, because you're forced to look at your values," she said.

"You have to decide and choose. It's frustrating, because you work so hard to get to a point, and it was tough for Ali, because she didn't have an exam. It was a tough decision. We tried to fight it, and get the word out and have something happen, but it didn't work out. Life doesn't always work out. Everything happens for a reason."



PMG PHOTO: DAN BROOD - Tigard High School sophomore Ali Dreves hits a shot during the Tigers' girls doubles consolation semifinal match at the Class 6A state tournament.

"I was supporting her all the way," Dreves said. "I wanted her to take the IB test, and I supported her. I knew this would be a good chance for us to come back and win for her final season."

Despite the unfortunate start to the tournament, Mazzeo and Dreves took a tough situation and turned it into a positive.

"We turned it into motivation," Mazzeo said. "We wanted to make the most of what we were given. I really wanted to play well for my coaches, for my family and for Ali, and we went out and did that."

"We wanted to come in and show the OSAA that we deserved it," Dreves said. Mazzeo and Dreves opened play in the consolation bracket by scoring an 8-4 pro-set win against South Eugene's Janie Lapray and Erin Cridge. In the consolation second round, the Tigard duo got an 8-2 victory over Sandy's

Sydney Stratton and Emma Reiser. In the consolation semifinals, Mazzeo and Dreves rolled to an 8-4 win over South Salem's Suzie Kawano and Esha Puri.

That put the Tigard team in the consolation title match against the Clackamas team of Olivia Morris and Meiling Masterson, who won the Mt. Hood Conference district title.

"We knew Clackamas was a good team," Mazzeo said. "Our strategy was to come in solid, play smart and then get aggressive. That's what we did, and it seemed to work out pretty well."

It sure did, as Mazzeo and Dreves roared to a 6-1, 6-0 victory.

"That made this super special, especially with everyone supporting us," Mazzeo said. "It means a lot to do the most we can with what we were given. It was unfortunate that we couldn't play in the main draw, but again, we made the most of it, and I'm super proud of what we accomplished."



PMG PHOTO: DAN BROOD - Tualatin High School senior Jensen Barnes hits a shot during her 6-0, 6-0 first round victory at the Class 6A state tennis tournament.

Tualatin senior Jensen Barnes, playing in singles competition, opened the state tournament by scoring a 6-0, 6-0 win over Sherwood's Kolleen Peters in a first-round match. In the second round, Barnes fell 6-1, 6-3 to Wilson's Eryn Fiabane. Sunset won the Class 6A girls tennis team title.