



**TAYLOR HERSHEY
NVHS BOOSTER CLUB FEATURED ATHLETE OF THE WEEK
GIRL TENNIS PROGRAM**

The NVHS Athletic Booster Club is proud to present the featured athlete of this week, tennis player Taylor Hershey. The criteria we give each coach to nominate her/his athlete is their contribution to the team and their sportsmanship and leadership. When we asked coach Bennorth what specifically were the reasons why she had nominated Taylor, she responded: "Taylor is responsible, hard working, social, respected by her peers, competitive, always striving to improve, coachable, great team spirit and one of the Captains of our team. I am very proud of her!". The Booster Club is too!

Booster Club Reporter: When have you started playing tennis?

Taylor: I can't remember the first time I started taking lessons! It was just around my 6th or 7th birthday. I started playing competitively and in tournaments when I was about 12 years old. I play year round, with the high school season being in the fall. My dad played tennis for Ball State when he was in college so he has played his whole life. He is the one who started me playing tennis and I guess I stuck to it because when I was little I didn't really know what else to do! As I got older, I really started to love the sport and I love watching the pros. Now I realize I am somewhat good at it I guess! I love it and I couldn't imagine not playing.

Booster Club Reporter: You told me you take lessons and compete year round. What is different about playing for a High School team?

Taylor: In the USTA tournaments you play for yourself. In high school you are still trying to play your best and win all of your matches, but you are still playing for a team and helping your team by winning your matches. On the second half of my freshmen season I started playing Varsity and competed with them for conference. What an experience! After that I had no doubts that I went out for the team in the first place, I loved it and I loved my team. Going out for the team that year made me love tennis even more and it gave me a new perspective on a sport that I had been playing for so long.

Booster Club Reporter: What has the HS tennis experience taught you?

Taylor: You will always have people telling you that you're a good player, like your coaches and parents. But, sometimes it is hard for you to believe it as a player. Last year at state, my partner and I beat one of the 17-28 seeds to move onto the next round, which is where we received All-State honorable mention. We were not even expected to make it to state, but the fact that we did, and we ended up getting Top 24 at state was amazing. I learned that I really do have the potential of being a top player and that I have to let the people who are dragging me down go, prove them wrong and exceed everybody else's expectations.

Booster Club Reporter: What is your secret for keeping your cool during matches?

Taylor: I try to let the outcome go and not think of that when I am playing. I do my best to just play like I do in practice and in my lessons. I tell myself to play like I know how to and I take it one point at a time. Sometimes I get good nerves before matches and that helps me play and hit out on the ball. When it's the bad nerves, my dad will always tell me to move my feet so that I don't get stuck hitting a shot and not getting ready for the next ball.

Booster Club Reporter: What makes you a winner?

Taylor: I am a competitor. I play with my heart. I don't give up. I will keep fighting until the very last point of the match is over. Don't ever count me out of a match even if I lost the first set and am down 2-0 in the second. I've had some great matches that stand out and that I clearly remember from my years of playing, and those are the ones that were super close and it could've gone either way. Fortunately, I played my best and did everything I could and knew how to at that point and I came out a winner. But, don't forget that you can learn a lot from matches that you lose as well.

Booster Club Reporter: Who is your role model? Why?

Taylor: My role model is Maria Sharapova. I love how she remains so calm on the court; she always takes a couple of seconds before each point and turns around from her opponent to collect her thoughts. I tend to do this sometimes when I feel rushed on the court or if I just need to take some time to think of the next play.

Booster Club Reporter: Do you have a favorite quote?

Taylor: "Somewhere behind the athlete you've become is a little girl who fell in love with the game and never looked back. Play for her." It can apply to any and all sports and people, but it reminds that tennis is just a game- I love it and I am so thankful I am able to play it; but, at the same time, you really need to enjoy what you do and what you choose to play.