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DHS Tennis Opens Season Thursday

MARCH 21ST 2012 BY UNKNOWN

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By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

The DHS Tennis team has been hard at work preparing for the upcoming season; the Bearcats advanced one player to State last season, and are extremely young in 2012.

Head coach Leanne Dooley noted the double-edged sword of youth on her squad; she doesn't have much experience coming back, but will only lose two players (one with no experience on the Varsity level) to graduation this year.

"I've got three experienced Varsity players returning; the bottom part of the Varsity will be kids that played JV last year and have little to no Varsity experience," Dooley said. "I only had two seniors last year, and we only have two seniors this year: Tyler Miller and Dalton Putnam, who played baseball until this year. I've got a couple juniors who are showing great promise; Kyle Willis played on varsity all season last year."

Miller, the lone returning senior and a 2011 State qualifier, is expected to be the Number One player this spring. Dooley noted that there was still some speculation on the team's doubles pairings for the year.

"Tyler will be my one, Sam Ward my two, and Kyle [Willis] my three; I don't see that changing," she said. "We haven't decided what we're going to do on doubles yet - three games out of the match have to be doubles, and I've only got one solid set of doubles in

Tyler and Sam. It may not stay that way, and I might just let them play with who they want to play with. It will make them happier, but they won't win as much. We'll have to wait and see - we have a long way to go and a short time to get there."

Dooley noted that two of the Bearcats'

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tougher opponents, Kennett and Charleston, were unable to field teams this season. The 'Cats have a nine day layoff in April, but were able to fill the other hole with an additional match against the Sikeston Bulldogs on May 1. The Bearcats also picked up Notre Dame as an annual opponent, after facing them twice last season.

"We picked up Notre Dame this year; we played them twice last year and beat them, but their program is just starting out," she said. "They have beautiful facilities and a wonderful coach, so they'll come along fast. I like going over there and playing - I like their coach and the way he teaches the game."

The Bearcats are set to open the 2012 season on Thursday (March 22) afternoon, when they host the Poplar Bluff Mules in a JV and Varsity match. Things are set to get underway with doubles matches at 4:00 p.m., and singles matches immediately following.

Click here to download the 2012 Tennis schedule.

Photos above:

Top: Tyler Miller returns a serve during practice on Monday afternoon. The senior looks to return to the MSHSAA State Tournament in 2012.

Bottom: Joseph Greer (left) and Dalton Putnam (right) learn proper technique from assistant coach Roy Dooley.

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