Younger Lake, Boetsch win doubles crown

BY ERIC SPROTT
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SALEM — To win the doubles portion of the Keowee Key Pro Tennis Invitational, Bobby Lake knew getting through his uncle, Andy, would be the toughest part.

And there was no sitting around waiting for that moment to come, as Bobby and his partner, John Boetsch, squared off with Andy, the Keowee Key tennis pro, and Gera Boryachinskiy right off the bat on Friday evening.

"I was a little down, because when I saw who we were playing in the first round, I figured that was the best team in the group," Bobby said. "I knew if we were going to win it, we had to beat them."

A sound 6-2 win in that opening match set the tone for Bobby and Boetsch, who went 3-0 on the way to winning the doubles event, and splitting the $1,400 purse.

Bobby and Boetsch clinched their tournament victory with a 6-1 win over Christian Hand and Marcus Sarstrand to close out the round-robin event, as the energetic duo was unstoppable over the course of the evening.

"I think it was our energy," Boetsch said. "From the first point, we seemed to get energetic and gel well together, so that really helped."

While Bobby and Boetsch finished the day with an unblemished 3-0 record, they only had to play a pair of matches, as a first-round injury to Sandy Franz knocked he and his partner, Cal Hilsman, out of the competition.

During a tiebreaker point, Franz took a bad step, which irritated a condition he has called plantar fasciitis, which is a painful inflammatory process of the plantar fascia, a band of connective tissues on the bottom of the heel bone.

Barely able to walk, Franz left the court and is unlikely to take part in singles action this evening.

"Sandy getting hurt is too bad," Andy said. "We want everyone to play, but hopefully he'll be okay. We'll just see how it goes, and we'll play with seven guys if we have to."

With Bobby earning a share of the doubles title on Friday, he has now been a part of the winning team in two out of the last three years, dating back to a title with Andy in 2008.

It is also the third consecutive year a Lake has been a part of the winning doubles team, as Andy also won the event in 2009 with Trent Constance.

The focus today now turns to the singles event, which begins at 6 p.m., with Andy having won each of the last two years, and the Keowee pro never having lost the event.

Bobby is hoping to end that streak, but at least keep the title in the Lake family, as a $1,000 prize awaits the winner.

But that's not the important thing for Bobby, who has different aspirations.

"I'd rather win so I can talk trash at dinner," Bobby said. "That's the important thing. The money is second."

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Bobby Lake, nephew of Keowee Key pro Andy Lake, hits a forehand during the doubles portion of the 5th annual Keowee Key Pro Tennis Invitational on Friday.