

# Nicholls trying to make his point

## TENNIS PLAYER TRYING TO EARN FIRST ASSOCIATION OF TENNIS PROFESSIONALS POINT

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Shane Nicholls from Deer Lodge Tennis Club is leaving it all out on the court for a chance to become a professional tennis player.

The 21-year-old Westwood local was seeded to come first in the Manitoba Clay Court Challenge tournament held at Taylor Tennis Club on July 9 to 12 and lived up to his preliminary ranking. In the 32-draw tournament, Nicholls earned his second open tournament win after defeating Trevor Borland from Winnipeg Winter Club in the final.

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Westwood local Shane Nicholls recently won the Manitoba Clay Court Challenge tournament and is spending his summer playing in professional tournaments to try and earn his first Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) point.

"The match started at 2 p.m. and it was 42 degrees with the humidity," Nicholls said. "It was the hottest match I've ever played for sure, even just after the warm-up I was very tired."

Walking into the tournament, he said his footwork was bad and his movement from side to side was tough because he rarely plays on clay courts. Taylor Tennis Club is the only location in Winnipeg with outdoor clay courts and Nicholls prefers to play on a hard court surface.

In the final, Borland stole the first four games of the set and each set only goes up to six games. Nicholls thought the first round was already accounted for and started to focus on how to improve for the next set. As the heat started to get to Borland, Nicholls put a lot more balls in play, minimized his errors and made a major comeback late in the game.

"Before my mental game hasn't been the strongest but I feel now after going to college and playing in a lot of pro tournaments, my mental game has picked up a little bit," Nicholls said, referring to his last year playing on a scholarship at Colorado State University. "To stay focused through a tournament final is one thing but to stay focused during a tournament final in 42 degrees is another, especially since it's only you out on the court trying to motivate yourself."

The first set resulted in a 6-4 win for Nicholls followed by a 6-2 victory in the second set. This marked an important tournament win for Nicholls as he is about to head into a couple of entry-level professional tournaments in the coming weeks including: The Manitoba Open Championship and the Mansfield Tennis Futures tournaments in both Winnipeg and Calgary. His sights are set on trying to earn his first Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) point.

"Once you get that point you are considered a professional tennis player and you are ranked in the world," Nicholls said.

Last year, Kevin Kylar became the first Manitoba tennis player in 25 years to earn an ATP point and Nicholls is now looking to do the same. Nicholls grew up being coached by Kevin's dad, George Kylar and still trains with Kevin during the winter months.

"I basically spend my life on a tennis court," Nicholls said.

He spends three or four hours a day playing tennis, a couple hours in the gym and instructs tennis day camps to kids at Deer Lodge Tennis Club for four or so hours a day, which is also where he initially picked up the game. He also teaches private lessons to up and coming junior players at Glendale Golf and Country Club. On top of tennis, he balances a heavy course load during the school year, as he is working towards being accepted into medicine at the University of Manitoba.

With a number of big goals on the horizon, Nicholls is willing to do whatever it takes to turn his dreams into a reality.

"Anyone's dream would be to go pro obviously and that's been my dream since I picked up a racket when I was young," Nicholls said. "It's the goal I've been trying to thrive on the next couple months and I feel like I'm in a good place to try and get that first point."

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