



# 2011 Missouri Valley Conference *Tennis*

Missouri Valley Conference  
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ST. LOUIS, Mo. - Sophomore Stefanie Youngberg was the Illinois State women's tennis team's golden ticket Saturday as they defeated No. 2 seed Northern Iowa, 4-2, in the semifinal round of the 2011 State Farm Missouri Valley Conference Championship, advancing to the finals Sunday.

The Redbirds came into Saturday's match after upsetting No. 3 seed Drake Friday in the quarterfinals, 4-3.

Head coach Chris Hoover couldn't be prouder of his team.

"It feels good," said Hoover. "Whatever talent difference there was in this tournament was neutralized with the type of matches that have been played. This just shows how tough and competitive the (Missouri Valley Conference) is."

The Redbirds came out strong at the start of the day, winning the doubles point in a tie-break thriller. At the No. 3 position, Heather Nisbet and Carolina Abello lost to Krissy Lankelma and Jessica Kunzelmann, 8-4, while Hannah Esker and Ariane Maack defeated Chelsea Moore and Lara Okicki at the No. 2 spot, 8-6. Sealing the `Birds doubles point, Aniko Kiss and Phyllis Tigges pulled off a stellar performance against Laia Gonzalez and Phoebe Walker, winning in a tie-break, 9-8 (7-5).

Illinois State continued their success during singles action as Esker beat Kunzelmann, 6-2, 6-1 at the No. 4 position and Kiss defeated Walker, 6-3, 6-2, at the No. 1 spot, bringing the Redbirds lead to 3-0. Northern Iowa came back, however, winning at the No. 2 position as Tigges lost to Gonzalez, 8-6, 6-0. The Panthers also picked up a win at the No. 5 spot when Gabby Phillips was defeated by Moore, 6-3, 6-3. Youngberg clinched the winning point as she beat Kunzelmann at the No. 6 position, 8-6, 6-4.

"Stefanie (Youngberg) was everything we needed (Saturday)," said Hoover. "She made all the difference to us and really kept her game going good. The doubles point was also key in the win, Aniko (Kiss) and Phyllis (Tigges) really brought it home for us. This is a great win and we can't wait to show what we've got (Sunday)."

Illinois State will compete in the final round of the MVC tournament Sunday against the Wichita State Shockers at the Dwight Davis Tennis Center in St. Louis, Mo., at 10 a.m., CDT.

Courtesy: Illinois State