

CITY MIXED DOUBLES TOURNAMENT

Mixed doubles tourney begins

■ Top seeds in two of three divisions advanced to today's finals at Pioneer.

By JOHN HEUSER
NEWS SPORTS REPORTER

While Mother Nature was washing out Wimbledon, Ann Arbor tennis aficionados were coping with overcast, blustery conditions — but no rain — as the city's mixed doubles tournament opened play at Pioneer High School.

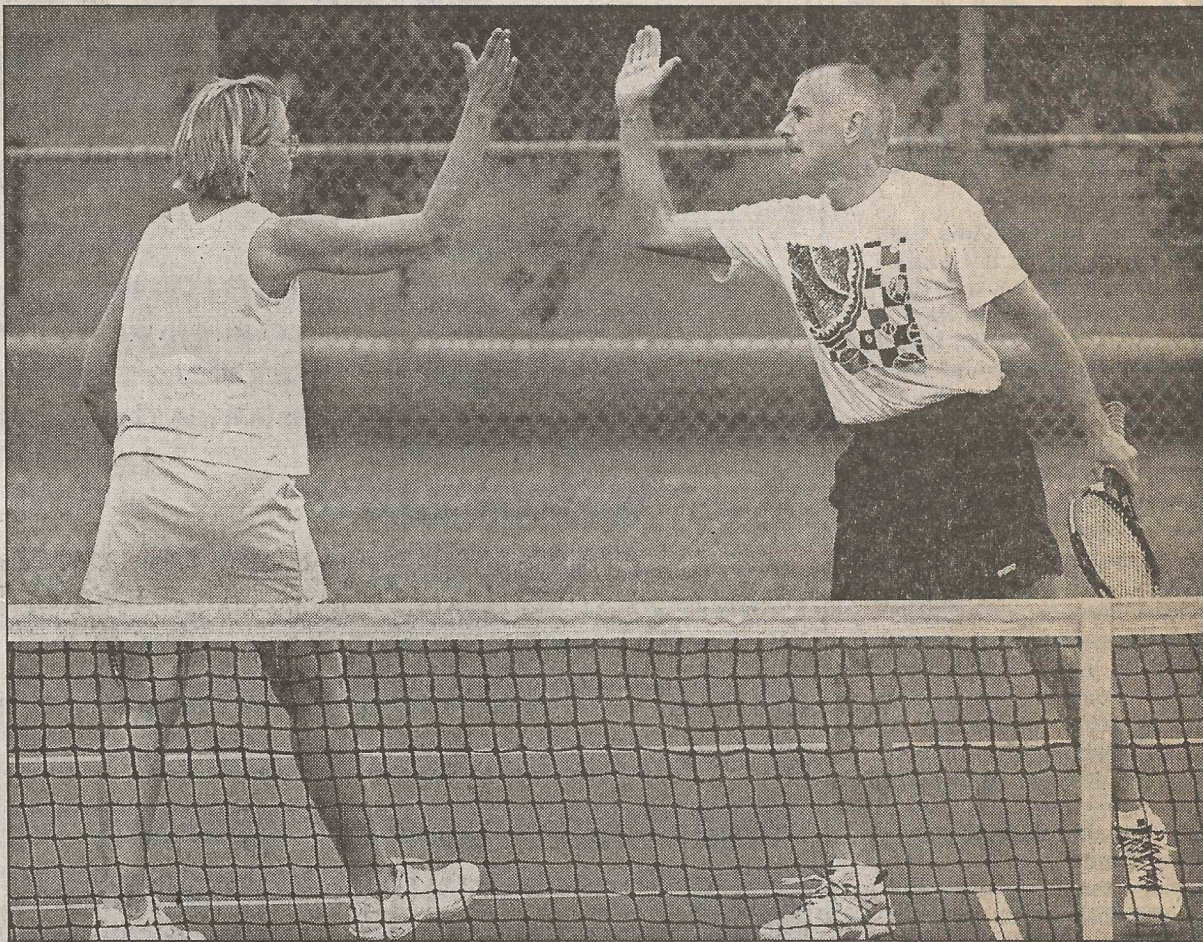
The top seeds in two of the three divisions advanced to today's matches at Pioneer, which will include finals that are set for 2 p.m.

In the 9.0 division, which includes the field's best players, No. 1 seeds Kristina Glusac and Dan Morgan will face Sue Bishop and Eric Topliss in the championship. The top-seeded 8.0 duo of Susan Kessler and David Smith must get through their morning semifinal match in order to reach the final.

A year ago, Kessler teamed with her husband, attorney Jon Rowe, to win a mixed doubles title. But with Rowe immersed in preparations for a trial, he suggested that Kessler combine with Smith, who beat Rowe for a city singles title last summer.

The newly formed duo did just fine, beating Bill Hinton and Barbara Wasneski 6-2, 6-3 to reach the semifinals.

"He really knows how to play doubles," Kessler said of Smith. "He's really aggressive at the net, so he's doing a lot of the work."



Mixed doubles partners Sandell Bennett, left, and Ed Evans high five each other after taking a game from their opponents during the Ann Arbor City Mixed Doubles Tournament Saturday at Pioneer.

NEWS PHOTO • LON HORWED

The day's sole three-set match produced an upset as United States Tennis Association teammates Steve Jensen and Linda Vengroff toppled No.1-seeded Don Tarpley and Sherrie Fountain in a 7.0 division semifinal, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

Ironically, Vengroff and Fountain play doubles together at Chippewa Club.

"At our level, the goal is to decrease unforced errors rather than hit winning shots," Vengroff said. "In the third set, we decreased our errors."

QUICK WORK: A layoff of 12 years didn't do much to slow the mother-son team of Leslie and Andy McGowan. The duo — which last played a tournament together in 1989 — rolled into the 8.0 semis by virtue of their hour-long 6-0, 6-4 win over Sandell Bennett and Ed Evans.

"It was wonderful," Leslie McGowan said of the win and the opportunity to play with her son. "Things worked out great."

Andy McGowan, a 1984 Saline graduate who played tennis in high school, recently returned to the Ann Arbor area after living in Vermont.

DEFAULT DIVISION: It was survival of the fittest in the 9.0 division, where defaults eliminated three of the bracket's seven teams. Topliss and Bishop, along with Donna Banks and Wellington Chu met in the semifinals after winning their quarterfinal matches by default.

"It was a tough match," Topliss said after the 6-1, 7-5 semifinal victory. "There were a lot of good points at the net in the second set."

Top seeds Glusac and Morgan

will play for the championship without the benefit of winning a single set. They received a by into the semifinals, then earned the win there when Scott Healey and Amy Mehaffie retired while trailing 5-2 in the first set. Healey, who was struck in the eye with a ball during warmups for a prior match, had complained of blurring vision, tournament director Karen Miller said.

NEW SPONSORSHIP: With Ann Arbor's Community Education and Recreation Department experienced cutbacks in funding and personnel, the newly formed Ann Arbor Area Community Tennis Association has picked up sponsorship and coordination of the city tournaments. Snazzy brochures available at the tournament describe the organization and its goals.