

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?: Brothers left their mark on Edwardsville tennis

Jordan and Justin Leskera among top players in program history

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Brothers Justin Leskera, left, and Jordan Leskera celebrate a point during their days as a doubles team at Edwardsville.



EDWARDSVILLE – With a combined 339 victories, brothers Jordan and Justin Leskera have plenty of fond memories of their tennis days at Edwardsville High School.

But for Jordan, one memory stands out above the rest.

“The biggest highlight of my career would definitely be playing with Justin, especially those two years we played doubles together at the state tournament,” said Jordan, who graduated from EHS in 2010. “It’s always a great opportunity to compete at any level, but to do it with a family member made it even more special.

“We put so much time and effort into it. We were definitely a tennis family and it was great to have that experience with my brother.”

Jordan finished his prep career with 162 wins, which at the time was second in program history behind 2007 graduate Michael Chamberlain, who was the career leader with 163.

Jordan was the first Tiger to win Southwestern Conference championships at No. 1 singles and No. 1 doubles. He was the second Edwardsville player to win three sectional titles and the third to qualify four times for state.

Justin Leskera, a 2012 EHS graduate, surpassed his brother’s total and finished with 177 wins, which was first in program history until Zach Trimpe broke the mark with 185 career wins in 2018.

Justin’s fourth-place finish with doubles Cameron Randall in the 2012 state tournament was the highest finish in program history until Trimpe and Alex Gray won the Class 2A doubles championship in 2017. They were 5-2, winning their first five matches, after going 3-2 as juniors in 2011 and reaching the fifth round of consolation.

The Leskera brothers were 4-2 as doubles partners at state in 2010 and reached the seventh round of consolation after going 3-2 and reaching the sixth round of consolation in 2009.

“I had never qualified to play on Saturday at the state tournament and it seemed like I was always sent home that last night on Friday,” said Justin, who was a four-time sectional doubles champion, including two years with his brother, and a three-time SWC champion. “Our goal for the entire year was to be playing tennis on Saturday and to accomplish that goal with Cameron (who had 167 career wins) was incredible.”

Justin, 27, is an associate attorney working with his father, Jay, for Leskera Law Firm in Collinsville. He joined the firm as a law clerk in 2017 and started his current job after passing the bar exam in April 2019.

He doesn't play much tennis anymore, but he has vivid recollections of his time spent playing with his brother and with Randall and how it paid off at the state tournament.

"My senior year we were seeded 9 to 16, which was the same seed we had been the year and the same seed my brother and I had been my sophomore year," said Justin, who is single and lives in Collinsville. "We really didn't expect to break through, but we happened to play our best tennis of the year at the right time."

Jordan, meanwhile, is 29 and is attending law school at Washington University in St. Louis. He recently finished his second year and has one more year to go before graduating and taking the bar exam.

Jordan, who has been taking virtual classes at Washington University for the past year-plus, currently lives in Makanda, Illinois, with his wife Nicole, who is a behavior analyst and works with kids with autism in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

He and his wife have been married for more than five years and they are expecting a baby girl in August. They plan to move back to the St. Louis area when Washington University resumes in-person classes next fall.

Unlike his brother, Jordan never earned a medal at the state tournament. But the impact that EHS tennis had on him is as strong as ever, and he credits longtime coach Dave Lipe for being a lasting influence.

"I'm grateful for the mentorship and many life lessons that Dave Lipe and the rest of the coaching staff provided," Jordan said. "For example, the EHS tennis program taught me how to perform under pressure. In high school tennis, a super tiebreaker often determines the outcome of a match when the players split sets. Tiebreakers create added stress because a few unforced errors may determine the outcome of the match.

"Dave would end dozens of practices, when the entire team was exhausted, with tiebreaker drills throughout the season. Often the loser will owe some additional physical payment, usually in form of sprints. Those drills illuminated the importance of remaining calm and focused during stressful events. I've kept that lesson, and many others, and applied it throughout my professional career."

Justin, likewise, notes that Lipe's coaching extended well beyond the tennis court.

"Coach Lipe was a big influence on both me and my brother, especially with his focus on mental toughness," Justin said. "That helped me on the tennis court, and it helps me today in a court of law."

After graduating from EHS, Justin spent one year at the University of Missouri, where he concentrated on academics.

He then spent one year at McKendree University, where he played on the tennis team, before transferring to the University of Illinois.

"I had a good experience at Mizzou, but it wasn't quite the right fit for me," said Justin, who graduated from Illinois in 2016 with a bachelor's degree at history. "At McKendree, I was able to reconnect with Cam Randall, who was playing tennis there, and we played some doubles together."

"McKendree was a good experience for me as well, but I was the third generation of my family to go to Illinois. That was probably the biggest reason why I transferred there."

Justin went on to the Saint Louis University School of Law, where he graduated in December 2018.

At his family's firm, he specializes in personal injury, worker's compensation and employment discrimination.

Jordan's path after high school took him in a different direction.

After graduating from Edwardsville, Jordan attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

For him, it was a dream come true.

"I always felt a calling to serve in the military," said Jordan, who joined the Illinois National Guard at 17 and completed basic training after his junior year at

EHS at Fort Benning, Georgia. “I wanted to enlist in the Army after high school, but my family encouraged me to apply to ROTC programs and the United States Military Academy. I was fortunate to have been offered an appointment at West Point.

“West Point was a transformative experience. I discovered who I was as a person and a leader through that four-year process.”

Jordan spent the next five years as an Army infantry officer, including two years at Fort Benning and three years at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. At Fort Bragg, he was a Rifle and Pathfinder Platoon Leader in the 82nd Airborne Division.

Jordan transitioned from the Army in September 2019 and enrolled in law school at Washington University. When he graduates and takes the bar exam, he will join the family law firm in the fall of 2022.

It’s hard to find an environment where an experienced and talented attorney, like my dad, is willing to provide unmatched mentorship to young associates,” Jordan said. “To be able to also work with my brother, who will have three or four years of experience before I get there, makes it even better.”

Both brothers, for the most part, have hung up their tennis racquets.

But their competitive spirit remains strong.

“I don’t have as much involvement in tennis as I would like to, but I take all the values I learned from tennis and use them every day,” Justin said. “After high school, I picked up the game of golf and as a competitive person, I’m constantly challenging myself on the golf course rather than the tennis court.”

Written By

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