

St. Paul's junior plans tennis tourney to aid Miracle League

BY DARRIN COOPER | Contributing writer Oct 11, 2024 2 min to read

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Harrison Mayfield, a junior at St. Paul's School in Covington, is organizing Miracle Match, a doubles tennis fundraising tournament for young players at Tchefuncte Country Club on Oct. 26. Proceeds will benefit Miracle League Northshore.

PHOTO BY GRANT THERKILDSEN

Tennis has given Harrison Mayfield so much enjoyment, he wants to serve it forward.

Mayfield, a junior at St. Paul's School, has organized a "Miracle Match" doubles tournament on Oct. 26 at the Tchefuncte Country Club courts near Covington. All proceeds will finance maintenance of the Miracle League Northshore's multipurpose recreation facility at Coquille Sports Complex, also near Covington.

"It's going to be a great event," said Mayfield, 16. "I think everyone will have a blast. It's not for a tournament ranking; it's just for a great cause. My hope is some kids from Miracle League show up and watch. Those kids are a part of our community, and they need to have things to do."

Miracle League Northshore is a nonprofit organization devoted to giving kids with special needs an opportunity to play team sports, such as baseball, soccer and basketball.

Mayfield is a Miracle League "buddy" on Saturdays, and the time he's spent with special needs friends has impacted him.

"We have a close family friend who has an autistic child, and I have been doing Miracle League with him for years," said Mayfield. "Some other kids are in wheelchairs or have cerebral palsy; some are very high functioning. I just really loved (being there to help)."

Mayfield grew up playing tennis and has been on the St. Paul's prep team since he was a freshman. The idea of merging two of his passions made sense.

"Tennis has been a super important thing for me in my life," he said. "The coaches at Tchefuncte have brought me in to be a junior tennis pro, so this tournament was kind of a no-brainer."

Mayfield has already signed up a handful of teams. Players have to register in pairs — \$55 per player. He hopes to fill out complete eight-team brackets in four different age divisions: 18-and-under, 16-and-under, 14-and-under and 12-and-under. Ariana Chetta, a junior at St. Scholastica, and Harrison Sawyer, a fellow St. Paul's student, are helping Mayfield organize the benefit tournament.

Tchefuncte Country Club donated court time and balls for the benefit, and the Northshore Community Foundation, which works to improve the quality of life on the northshore by uniting human and financial resources, also stepped up to help Mayfield launch the tournament. The foundation helped him write a mission statement for his event and is keeping watch over funds as they roll in.

More than \$7,000 in donations had been collected by early October, Mayfield said.

"My hope is this becomes an annual event," he said. "Our slogan is this is run by kids, played by kids, helping kids. We can do a lot of different things to donate to worthy causes."

Mayfield said the teamwork of doubles tennis is one of his favorite aspects of the sport. That he's teaming with community partners to help a sometimes underserved population isn't lost on him.

"If you've never interacted with kids with special needs, I can tell you it will change you," Mayfield said. "I look at my life differently after interacting with these kids. They are so amazing."

Anyone interested in registering for the tournament can send email to miraclematchtennis@gmail.com.