

## Robinson Tournament picks up steam

Charlotte Fajardo, from St. Clair High School, returns the ball during a match at the Francis J. Robinson Memorial International Tennis Tournament Thursday, Aug. 1, 2019, at Sanborn Park in Port Huron. (Photo: Brian Wells/Times Herald)

It was another flawless day of tennis.

A light breeze flowed through the Sanborn Park tennis courts Thursday, as players enjoyed another round of matches during the 62nd annual Francis J. Robinson Memorial International Tennis Tournament.

The warm temperatures, mixed with the breeze, made it an overall enjoyable experience for the athletes as the tournament picked up momentum on its second day.

"You just have to keep a good mental health game," St. Clair High School junior Charlotte Fajardo said in between matches. "You have to keep yourself in a good mental space. I'm trying to get better during the week, but I like winning.

"I have been working on my serve and my backhand. I'm playing singles, doubles and mixed doubles. The new courts feel good. More and more people are coming out."

While Fajardo was playing her singles match, 11-year-old Lina Cortes of New Jersey was a few courts down, also playing singles.

Cortes was pushed to three games before finally prevailing in her match and taking a deep breath upon exiting the court.

"I thought it was a great match," she said with a smile. "It was really tough. For a second, I thought she was going to win. It was really tough. I hope to get better and to meet new people this week."



Olivia Ameel, from St. Clair High School, returns a hit during a match at the Francis J. Robinson Memorial International Tennis Tournament Thursday, Aug. 1, 2019, at Sanborn Park in Port Huron. (Photo: Brian Wells/Times Herald)

Not everyone at Sanborn Park was there to participate in tennis. Austin Paehlig showed up to root on his friend Christian Harris, who was scheduled to play in a doubles match. But as they waited for Harris' match, the two decided to square off in a friendly, albeit competitive, game of table tennis on the side of the park courts, as they waited for the doubles match to begin.

"He's not into tennis," Harris said of Paehlig. "But he said he's good in ping-pong, so we had to play a game. I think it's cool they have a table here that we can play while we wait."

And what if Paehlig were to actually win?

"I would never let him forget it," Austin said with a laugh. "If I did beat him, I would be rubbing it in a lot."

On Friday, the tournament will resume in the morning, and then pause in the afternoon as the attention will turn to Kids Play Day, which will dominate the courts at 3 p.m. as children 10 years old and younger learn about the game in newfound ways.

Fun activities with games and prizes will be handed out to the participants for the second straight year. Around 100 children are expected to participate, with each receiving a free T-shirt.

Contact Joseph Hayes at (810) 989-6268 or at jahayes@gannett.com. Follow him on Twitter @Joseph\_Hayes11.



Charlotte Fajardo, from St. Clair High School, returns the ball during a match at the Francis J. Robinson Memorial International Tennis Tournament Thursday, Aug. 1, 2019, at Sanborn Park in Port Huron. (Photo: Brian Wells/Times Herald)



Amolia Rossow, from Fort Gratiot Middle School, serves the ball during a match at the Francis J. Robinson Memorial International Tennis Tournament Thursday, Aug. 1, 2019, at Sanborn Park in Port Huron. (Photo: Brian Wells/Times Herald)