Cajuns sweep Battle of the Bayou tournament

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The Ragin Cajuns men’s tennis team started the year off with a bang two weeks ago at the Cajun Classic, and have done it again at this year’s Battle on the Bayou Tournament.

Arthur Libaud and Jamie Fraser produced exceptional results, claiming the first doubles title for the team this year. Nice Sojka also made a deep run in singles, but fell out in the championship match. Competing teams for this year’s event were University of Southern Mississippi, Prairie View A&M, the University of Xavier of New Orleans, Loyola and Alcorn State.

Because of Tropical Storm Nate, the teams were forced to play all of the matches in one day, so one set matches were used for doubles, and pro sets were used for singles.

The doubles teams were giving it their all as all three of them rallied to reach the semi-finals. In the first round, Vlad Kramarov and Sojka beat the Prairie View A&M pairing of Cesar Reyna and Kevin Ugarteche. Once in the quarterfinal stage, Kramarov and Sojka upset the number one seeds of the tournament from USM, 6-3.

The Alcorn State pairing of Johnatan Parat and Suyash Gupta proved not to be enough for the Louisiana team as Kramarov and Sojka took them out 6-1 to set up the final against Fraser and Libaud.

Elio Lago and Silvio Cocito-Monoc raced to the semifinals to meet Fraser and Libaud, but lost the match, 6-2. Fraser and Libaud completed their run for the title by beating the other Cajun pairing of Kramarov and Sojka 6-2 to claim the title for the men’s team.

Although doubles had the team claim their first title, Cajuns singles were also fortunate. First up for flight one singles, Libaud held his position as the first seed of the tournament as he dispatched Parat 8-3 in the first round.

Kramarov, however, was the first to upset a seed during his match against Catalin Fifea from Xavier. Kramarov beat the number four seed 8-3 to move on to the quarterfinals. In his quarterfinal match, Kramarov lost to USM’s Daniel Merker 8-3.

Both Fraser and Dolan lost their matches in the first round, losing 8-5 and 8-7 respectively. Next in flight two singles, both Lago and Sojka made their appearance in the quarterfinal with their 8-1 and 8-2 sweeps over Ivan Matas and Brandon Abdella. Another notable match was freshman Pierce Gilheany’s win over Tiger Cheung of Loyola in the first round of singles.

To put a fourth Cajun in the quarterfinals, Cocito-Monoc beat Alcorn State’s Joel Cattrell 8-2. However, only two of the Cajuns, Sojka and Gilheany made it to the semifinals. In the quarterfinals Sojka won 8-4 against Pierre Andrieu of Xavier while Gilheany beat Alcorn State’s Gupta 8-5 to move on to the semifinals. With another 8-4 win, Sojka moved on to the championship after taking out Loyola’s Galileo Cabrales. Mikhail Esipov of Southern Mississippi took the title however, defeating Sojka 8-1 in the championship final.

The Ragin Cajuns men’s tennis team will compete in the official matches after this tournament. On Oct. 19 they will display their skills at the Southern Regionals at Louisiana State University.