

Boys Co-Coach of the Year

Josh Leighton - Deerfield High School

Josh Leighton's Deerfield tennis program continued to have remarkable success in 2016. The Warriors finished 3rd in the state while boasting the state singles champion (Vuk Budic) as well as the state doubles runners-up (Niko Wasilewicz and Chris Casati). This success continued a trend at Deerfield of exceptional tennis results. Here are a few highlights from Josh Leighton's 11-year tenure:

- Eleven consecutive top ten team finishes in the state meet
- Four state trophies
- Six singles players have finished in the top eight (including two state champs)
- Five doubles teams have finished in the top eight (including one state champ)

Josh's 2016 tennis team won the loaded Highland Park Sectional, his fifth sectional title in the last eleven seasons in the most highly competitive region in Illinois. Earlier in the year, Deerfield finished 10th at the National High School Tournament in Chattanooga, TN, despite playing without their eventual state singles champion.

Robert Ruiz, Deerfield's athletic director, had the following comments about Josh:

“When I look at Josh Leighton, I see a man of high morals and integrity. Although competitive, he also demonstrates a great deal of humility in or out of the winner's circle, something all of our athletes can and will benefit from. When I hear Josh talk to kids about work ethic and adversity and that you have to earn your spot, it makes me smile because this is a critical life lesson he is trying to teach. The idea that you have to earn your way despite obstacles and setbacks is such a valuable lesson. Josh is a very straight-forward, honest, and hard-working coach. His decisions are not made lightly, and he is very reflective of any decision he makes that will impact kids. These are just a few of the characteristics that Josh models every day without exception.”

Deerfield is widely regarded as one of the top tennis programs in our state. Josh Leighton continued to show in 2016 why he is one of the most respected head coaches in Illinois.

Congratulations, Josh, on your 2016 award as the IHSTCA Boys Coach of the Year!