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By Dennis Garcia  
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CLIMAX - There was almost a little bit of a chuckle when Providence Grove High School tennis coach Rick Thomas found out the Patriots would be playing Trinity in the second round of the NCHSAA State 2-A Dual Meet Tournament.

The two teams were well acquainted.

"We really enjoy playing them, but by the fourth time, it's like, this is getting old," Thomas said after the Patriots advanced to Monday's third round with a 5-2 win over Piedmont Athletic Conference rival Trinity.

"After playing them two times and then three, we knew what to expect."

After defeating the Bulldogs for the third time in the four meetings - two regular-season battles, one playoff battle to determine seedings after the two tied for the top spot in the league and once in the state tournament - the Patriots will face a team they know little about in Burns. Burns is the fourth seed in the West Region, while the Patriots (12-3) are fifth.

After both teams received first-round byes, PG topped Trinity and Burns posted an 8-1 win over North Surry.

"I really know nothing about them," Thomas said of Burns. "But actually I think we play better away than at home. They seem too comfortable at home."

The Patriots have looked pretty comfortable all year. Especially after opening the season with a loss to Bishop McGinness. The Patriots won 12 of their final 14, losing only to Trinity once and to Chatham Charter by a 5-4 count.

"It's really a pretty big accomplishment," Thomas said of the season. "The biggest thing is letting them know how far they have gone. Not knowing the history, if they have gone this far before, it's been a long time."

The Patriots have ridden an experienced lineup this season. Senior Audrey Frazier won the league's singles title, with senior Mya Barber at No. 2 singles, senior Caroline Tidwell at No. 3, senior Abby Greeson at four, and juniors Liz Shoe and Alisa Shaw rounding out the top singles performers.



Frazier placed third in the individual regional meet and participated in the state tournament this week.

Thomas said this team has the capabilities to go further, if they approach the match the right way.

"The biggest hurdle is their heads," Thomas said. "It's the mindset of what you are going into. If they go into it scared, you won't play to your ability."

They haven't played scared yet.



*2024 Providence Grove womens tennis team. Photo provided.*