

“Stacking the Courts” by Kevin Mueller: The Cavalier Volume 38 Issue 2 December 2018

According to the South Carolina High School League rules, all Varsity Girls Tennis teams are required to rank themselves through ladder matches in the preseason. Head coaches are then required to sign and submit these rankings to the league, and these rankings are not to change unless an athlete is deemed unable to play. However, when Richland Northeast competed in an away game at South Pointe, these rules were violated. South Pointe switched their rankings without playing ladder matches, essentially stacking the courts in their favor by putting their higher ranking players against Northeast’s lower ranking players. This made the Richland Northeast players upset, as it gave the other team an advantage on the courts.

“This made our team really mad, as it resulted in our losing of the match,” said senior Kate Ellis. “We were angry because they did not win fair and square.”

It was during the match that head coach Scott Harling realized the advantage that South Pointe had taken, and broke the news to some of the players in between their sets. Senior Jamie Collins felt encouraged to “fight harder to win”.

“It was a very close game, but that night we ended up losing after playing our number one doubles as a tiebreaker,” Collins said. “It really upset me that the team took an unfair advantage and ended up winning in the end.”

Although South Pointe did win the match, their victory did not last long. Under league regulations, any coach who has record of a rule being broken is able to petition to the board of the SCHSL. After further review of the match, the SCHSL ruled that South Pointe needed to forfeit. Ellis felt relieved knowing that they did end up with the victory, but also felt that this rule needs to be kept under close supervision.

“I feel that they should look into other matches South Pointe played to make sure they didn’t cheat on those too,” Ellis added.