

New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight



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Hootman Twins Find a Passion in Tennis

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director

Quiet, reserved and shy are three words that describe Coleton and Hunter Hootman of Albuquerque Academy's tennis team. But, face them as a doubles team or in singles competition on the tennis court and you'll find out very quickly that these twin brothers are fierce and dominating competitors. Oh, did we mention the Hootman twins are just eighth graders?

The Hootman twins weren't born with a racquet in their hands like some stories you hear. In fact, tennis wasn't even the first sport the brothers tried. Coleton and Hunter took a stab at golf first but thought it wasn't exciting enough to stick with. At the age of 10, they started playing tennis and have never looked back.

"Tennis is just a fun sport to play and we really liked playing," Coleton said. "We were hooked right away. We started off playing golf but we didn't like it that much so we switched to tennis and it took off from there."

Over the next few years, Coleton and Hunter put in the hard work and became some of the best junior tennis players in the state. Albuquerque Academy head coach Ray Jaramillo said he knew the Coleton and Hunter were going to be a major part of the Chargers program. "I knew they were going to come to Academy because of what I had heard around the tennis community. We actually had a very good eighth grade class this year and Coleton and Hunter were a part of that group."

In 2015, as eighth graders at Albuquerque Academy, the Hootman brothers burst onto the scene as a doubles pair in class 5A. Coleton and Hunter suffered only one loss on the year in the district finals to their own teammates, senior Mason Caldwell and junior Jack Keller.

In the state championship, Coleton and Hunter cruised through the tournament, defeating teams from Farmington, Goddard and Centennial, setting up a rematch with their teammates, only this time it was for a state title. The Hootman twins would eventually come out on top, winning in three sets, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 earning the boys' 5A state doubles title.

Hunter says it was a great feeling to accomplish the feat along side his brother, "It was really cool and was probably the highlight of our tennis career so far. Everyone at school was excited for us and that was a great feeling. I think it gives us an advantage over our opponents because we know each other so well, where our opponents may not know their partner as well."

He continued by saying that playing against teammates was a good thing because, either way, they were going to win. "We really did feel a lot of pressure. Those guys are our teammates and either way our team was going to win so it was a good feeling."

Coleton commented on winning the doubles championship with his brother, "We thought that we needed to get ahead of



them early in the match and we would have a good chance to win. They beat us in the district championship so we wanted to go out and prove we could win. It was cool to know that we were the state champions in doubles and I accomplished that with my brother. It's fun to play doubles with Hunter. It's nice to have someone out there that you know instead of a random partner. We know our games, so that helps."

"I wasn't totally surprised with their success at state," Coach Jaramillo said. "I knew from the tennis community around Albuquerque that Coleton and Hunter had a very good reputation for being great tennis players. They only had one loss all year in doubles to their teammates in the District Championship."

In addition to individual success, Coleton and Hunter helped the Chargers win the boys' 5A team title, as Academy managed a 13th straight blue trophy.

Like most athletes, Coleton and Hunter turn up the intensity when they step on the court, however, it is unique for the Hootman twins because of their quiet demeanor off the court. "When they step on the court it's like a switch goes on," Coach Jaramillo explains. "They are still real quiet and the only time they really get vocal is if they have an unforced error but Coleton and Hunter are very reserved. Even around their teammates they are very quiet and really only open up to the other kids their age."

Both Coleton and Hunter agree that when they are on the court their intensity picks up. Coleton explains, "I would definitely say there is a switch when we step on the court. I'm a pretty competitive person and I want to win at whatever I do and that just motivates me when I'm on the court."

Although it seems like the game of tennis comes easy to the Hootman twins both say that it has taken a lot of hard work to get to this point. "Coleton and I really put in a lot of hard work to get ready for the state tournament and it paid off," Hunter said.

"The hours of practice we have put in over the years really prepared us to go out and compete at the state tournament," Coleton commented.

When asked if playing collegiate tennis was in their future plans, both said it would be a dream to play at the next level. "I want to play tennis in college and do something in engineering," Hunter said.

Coleton agreed, "I definitely want to play collegiate tennis but after that I'm not too sure right now."

So what's in the future for Coleton and Hunter? If their dominance continues like it did in 2014-15, the Hootman twins will be helping the Chargers win several more state titles, while winning individual gold for years to come.