



O.C. boys tennis coach of the year: Crean Lutheran's T.J. Reynolds

By [KENNY CONNOLLY](#)

2016-06-15 20:20:15



Crean Lutheran's boys basketball squad was all the rage around the school's campus in late February as the Saints made their first trip to the CIF-SS semifinals.

The school's boys tennis team, consequently, was forced to begin the year without three of its key players, including senior captains **Bret** and **Even Kittelsen**, who were part of the basketball team's breakthrough season.

The short-handed tennis team opened its 2016 campaign by going 0-5. Not exactly a confidence-building start for Coach **T.J. Reynolds** and his

team.

But for overcoming the bumpy take-off and leading the team to the school's first CIF-SS championship appearance, Reynolds has been selected by the Register as the Orange County boys tennis coach of the year.

"Some truly outstanding players really made the difference," Reynolds said. "We had a strong team a year ago, but we had a real boost from **Jae Min** and **Gavin Spencer** coming in. **Ryan O'Keefe** and **Steven Qin** were all new too, and they gave us a real boost."

The Saints didn't win their first match until Academy League play began, and entered the postseason as the No. 9 seed in CIF-SS Division 2.

In the playoffs, the Saints, who finished first in the Academy League, faced three teams they had lost to earlier in the season: Diamond Bar, Santa Margarita and San Clemente. Crean avenged those losses with three consecutive 13-5 results and advanced to the CIF-SS title match, where it lost to Arcadia, 13-5.

"It was truly amazing," Reynolds acknowledged. "I think it was a big psychological advantage for us having lost before and them probably thinking, 'We can beat this team again.' We were a different team by season's end."

Contact the writer: kconnolly@ocregister.com

© Copyright 2016 Freedom Communications. All Rights Reserved.
[Privacy Policy & Terms of Service](#) | [Copyright](#) | [Site Map](#)