

## News

### Kukharchuk, Libietis victorious in Mid-Atlantic sectional qualifier



By USTA Mid-Atlantic Staff

Nika Kukharchuk and Mikelis Libietis are one step closer to making their Grand Slam dreams come true after claiming the singles titles at the US Open National Playoffs – Mid-Atlantic Sectional Qualifying championships, held May 30 to June 2, at the College Park Tennis Club in College Park, Md.

In the women's singles final, Nina Kukharchuk defeated 2015 ACC Championship MVP Skylar Morton, 6-4, 6-1. A two-time winner of this tournament, Kukharchuk is No. 718 in the WTA rankings and has a career-high ranking of No. 456. She has won two ITF Pro Circuit doubles titles and an ITF Pro Circuit singles title in her career.

Recent University of Tennessee graduate Mikelis Libietis was nearly flawless in his first-ever US Open National Playoffs sectional event. Losing just 12 games in five matches, Libietis easily defeated fellow Volunteer and doubles partner of four years, Hunter Reese, in the men's singles final, 6-2, 6-0.

A native of Latvia, Libietis helped promote the country from Group II to Group I in Davis Cup play in 2013 after partnering with Ernests Gulbis and aiding the team in a 3-2 win over Finland. He teamed up with Reese last November to become the first all-collegiate doubles winners at the \$50,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Knoxville, Tenn. Reese also competed in the men's doubles draw of last year's US Open, earning a wild card with Peter Kolbelt.

Libietis and Reese returned to the court in the men's doubles final as partners. The 2014 NCAA doubles champions earned a 6-1 6-3 victory over incoming Virginia Tech player Jason Kros and his younger brother, Ryan.

In women's doubles, nationally ranked juniors and current Junior Tennis Champions Center (JTCC) students Mackenzie Clark and Lizzie Baker defeated former George Mason University player Catherine Crisostomo and Manhattan College alum Lindsey Keeler, 6-2 6-1.

Last year's Mid-Atlantic mixed doubles Champion, Matthew Stillwagon, switched things up this year and partnered with his opponent in last year's final, Sydney Rider, to earn his second straight title. They defeated former Christopher Newport University player Eric Shulman and junior player Nina Sorkin, 6-2, 4-6, [10-5].

Rider is a member of the University of Wisconsin Badgers women's tennis team and a JTCC alumnae. Stillwagon was a four-year letter winner at the University of Richmond and earned the Spiders their second conference title. He also competed in the NCAA Championships in 2004.

The US Open National Playoffs men's and women's singles champions earn a wild card into the US Open Qualifying Tournament, held the week prior to the US Open. The US Open National