

Rankin making his way in the US

The competitive tennis year is coming to a successful end for Matt Rankin, 19, from Edinburgh, as he adapts to life at his American university.

Matt, the 2022 Scottish junior player of the year, signed off by reaching the final of the doubles event in a \$15,000 Futures tournament at Lansing, Michigan.

He was partnered by Alafia Ayeni, an American alumni of the same Kentucky university where Matt is studying Business and Economics.

Matt said: "This was my last Futures tournament of the year and I wanted to finish on a high. So, it was good to reach the final of the doubles. We had a tough draw and had to beat the top seeds in the quarter finals – two Australians one of whom is ranked in the top 500 and won the NCAA doubles championships a couple of years ago.

"I met Alafia a few times when I visited the University before starting but we had never played together before the tournament in Michigan.

"I feel my tennis is developing well as there are always good players to train with. The facilities are great and plenty of courts are available all the time allowing me to train or hit anytime I want. The coaches are always there for you and willing to help whenever you ask. The standard is

exceptionally strong in the US College system.

“We train as a squad every morning from 8-10am then do fitness after that for 1-1.5 hours. We then do a more individual session later in the day to work on specific things with the coaches. Training happens Monday to Saturday. We have our classes in the afternoons and study and complete assignments in the evenings so days are long and tough.

“Kentucky is a huge sports school with an excellent tennis programme and fantastic coaches.

“I was very fortunate to have a number of options and it was an extremely tough decision choosing a school but Kentucky had everything I was looking for.”

One of several Scots in the USA college system – these include Jake Fearnley (Texas Christian University), Connor Thomson (South Carolina) and Euan Mackenzie (Delaware) while Vincent Gillespie is coaching at Wake Forest Uni in North Carolina – Matt has found time to indulge in some local sporting culture.

“I’ve managed to get to quite a few American Football games at Kentucky (UK) with attendances of over 70,000. I’ve also managed to get to men’s and women’s soccer, volleyball, softball and an ice hockey match.”

Matt will be back in Edinburgh for Christmas before returning for the start of the US College tennis campaign in January.



Matt Rankin, right, with his American doubles partner after reaching the final of a Futures event in Michigan.