

# BROWN LEADS NORTHWOOD INTO NAIA

**BYLINE:** MARCUS NELSON, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

**DATE:** May 16, 2005

**PUBLICATION:** Palm Beach Post, The (FL)

**EDITION:** FINAL

**SECTION:** SPORTS

**PAGE:** 9C

**MEMO:** NORTHWOOD

During a clinic for high school tennis players last month at the Delray Beach Tennis Center, Northwood senior Richie Brown was selected to face professional player Vince **Spadea**, a Boca Raton resident, in an exhibition match.

Brown didn't know what to expect, but it wasn't long before the playful lobs between Brown and **Spadea** began to fly with less of an arc and more velocity. "At the beginning, I was just hitting balls to him, but all of the sudden he was playing pretty serious," Brown said. **Spadea** won the match, but Brown held his own against an ATP Tour veteran. "By the last game, I saw that I was on my serve and he was playing hard, so I just let it rip and won the game. I'd love to see what I could do against a player of that level in a normal game," Brown said. "It was a great experience."

After facing **Spadea**, a St. Andrew's graduate, playing in the NAIA National Tournament, which begins today in Mobile, Ala., may not seem like such a daunting task. "I felt the most comfortable I've ever felt this season," said Brown, who was 14-4 this season in singles. "We are all playing well right now." Brown was the 2001 Palm Beach Post Player of the Year as a senior at Atlantic High School and in addition to being a four-year starter for the Seahawks, also was a member of the Trinidad and Tobago Davis Cup team.

Brown is preparing for a professional career after his collegiate career ends this week. In June and July, Brown will train at the Evert Tennis Academy in preparation for tournaments in Venezuela. In September, he hopes to play in Switzerland or India. The Seahawks (8-7) have a first-round bye in the NAIA tournament because of their No. 8 seed. At 9 a.m. Tuesday, Northwood will face the winner of a match between Lindsey Wilson and Spring Hill. The Northwood women's team, which won the tournament in 2003, will face St. Ambrose at 1 p.m. today. The Seahawks (12-6) are led by Melanie Roy and Veronica Perez, who were named to the All-Region XIV team.

marcus\_nelson@pbpost.com

NAIA tennis

The Northwood men's and women's teams will compete at the NAIA Tennis National Championships:

Where: Mobile, Ala.

When: Today-Friday