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HCC in the News: HCC women's tennis team united by sport

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TAMPA (FOX 13) - When Hillsborough Community College women's tennis coach Jennifer Gelhaus took over the Lady Hawks program, she went far and wide searching for some of game's best junior players.

The roster includes nine players from nine different countries.

"We have some eastern Europeans, we have a girl from Canada, we have a girl from England, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia; literally from everywhere," said Gelhaus.

The language barrier made it especially difficult sometimes for the girls to gel together.

"It doesn't happen automatically, you have to work at it," continued Gelhaus.

So, Coach Gelhaus took them away from the court. The team participated in community service activities and even shared Thanksgiving together last year.

"It was more of like, a new experience for them," Gelhaus explained. "A true American experience, you know. All the food and traditions of Thanksgiving."

It paved the way for this young team, comprised of seven freshmen and two sophomores, to win regional championships in both singles and doubles last semester.

"It gave us confidence to keep moving forward and work well as a team together," said Ceire Mullins, a sophomore. "We're hopefully going to use that."

The Lady Hawks' roster also boasts two of the top five players in the National Junior College Athletic Association. The team was also ranked number two heading into the spring.

"All of our different personalities, kind of at the start, we had to understand each other, respect each other as players, and as people," said Mullins. "Once we did that, and we got to know each other, it's worked out really well."

Language:
English

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