Flower wins state 'AAA' singles championship

By BOB MARKER
News-Messenger Sports Editor

COLUMUBS — It was one of those days when Pete Michaels called it right when he came up with what has become a familiar statement for him: "You can use all the adjectives you want when you describe this one."

Michaels was referring to Jim Flower of Fremont Ross who chalked up an impressive win in the singles finals of the state "AAA" Tennis Tournament.

The veteran Ross coach was probably the third happiest person in Columbus Saturday when it came to tennis; first was Flower and second was his mother.

But it was not happiness that won the state title for Flower, a runnerup in the singles division last year to Bob Gardner of Upper Arlington, it was a case of confidence.

"I knew I could beat him (Erick Iskersky of Toledo St. John's)," Flower smiled after the match. "I had beaten him the last two times that we played and I knew what he would try to do and what I had to do to win."

All Flower did was put Iskersky away in straight sets, 6-3 and 6-3. That score also made Flower a pretty good fortune teller.

"At noon while we were eating," Michaels recalled, "he said that if he won it would be by those scores."

Flower started the first set with a vengence. He won the first five games, breaking Iskersky's service twice. In the sixth game, the St. John's sophomore held his service that started a string of three straight wins before Flower held his service in the ninth game to win the first set.

Flower was rushing the net on Iskersky and taking away his apparent backhand shot down the line.

In the second set, Iskersky won the first game while holding his own serve. Flower roared back by scoring the last two points in the second game on services that Iskersky was unable to return. That win started a four-game run that stopped when Iskersky broke through on Flower's serve in the sixth game.

Iskersky held his serve to cut the Flower margin to 4-3 but the Ross junior hit his stride again in the 8th game. Scoring twice on hard serves to Iskersky's forehand, Flower won the game as Iskersky's lob was too long.

Flower broke Iskersky's serve in the final game to win the state title.

Was it the best tennis that Flower has played?

"The last couple of weeks I'd say that I have been playing my best tennis," he admitted. "Erick's a fine player but I felt that I could beat him today . . . it was just a question of doing it."

Flower reached the championship finals with a morning semi-final match win over Cleveland East Tech's Warrick Jones, 6-4, and 7-5. Iskersky had beaten Cincinnati Purcell's Tom Geraci, 6-1, 6-2.

ROSS' JIM FLOWER USES BACKHAND IN TITLE MATCH
. . .Flower defeated Erick Iskersky, 6-3, 6-3, for state singles title

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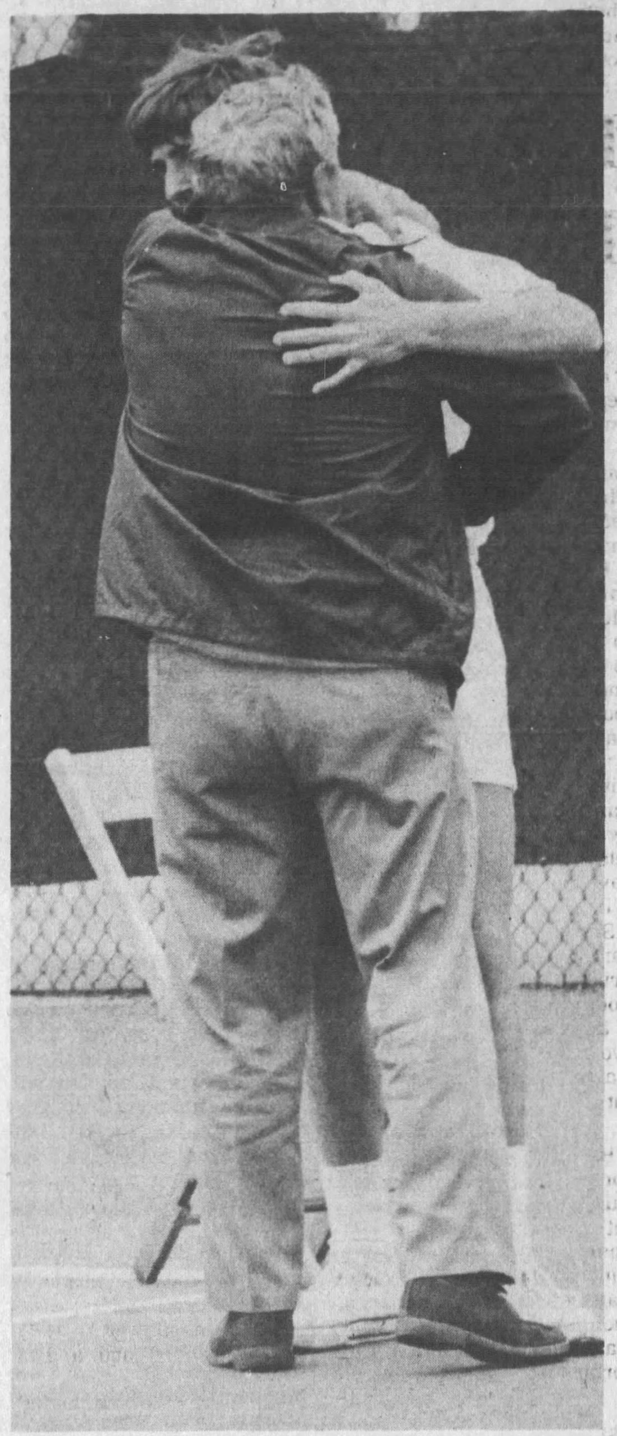

THEY'RE NOT DANCING, they're celebrating. Ross tennis coach Pete Michaels (in front) engulfs Jim Flower of Fremont Ross High School after Flower won the state "AAA" tennis title in Columbus Saturday. Flower was the runnerup in the singles last year.