



THE COURT REPORTER

Newsletter of the
Walnut Creek Racquet Club

April 2003

Karen Hirtzel prepares to rip a forehand as Pam Maloney waits for the volley during a first round Senior Womens 3.0 playoff match.



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Walnut Creek Racquet Club

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THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Siebel Open: another exciting night of tennis!



Jennifer Scriabine
2003 WCRC President

Once again Kent Lindeman put together a wonderful trip down to the Siebel Open in San Jose. In past years we've seen many big name players, playing tennis at their best and winning easily. This year we finally got one of those exciting matches that you always remember.

The evening started with sandwiches, beer and wine on our luxurious tour bus. No one minded the traffic and we arrived in plenty of time to catch the first serve. What we didn't realize is that we arrived in time to catch the end of a wedding! Since the quarterfinals were played on Valentines Day, the tournament decided to hold a wedding. They set up one half of the court with folding chairs, balloons and flowers, including a beautiful garden archway for the couple to exchange their vows under. We showed up just in time for the first kiss. They also received an extra special gift when Andre Agassi jogged out to pose for some pictures with them.

The match of the evening was Agassi versus Vladimir Voltchkov of Belarus. They both came out roaring and it was obvious from the start this was going to be special. Andre hadn't lost a single set in forever, but at the end of the first they were headed for a tie-break and Voltchkov won it 7-3. The second set was much of the same, great tennis and yet another tie-break. Once again Vladimir was up and had match point at 6-5. Andre held him off with a swinging volley into the corner that got the crowd up on its feet. He went on to play two more perfect points, punctuating his final winner up the line with a loud yell. The two tie-breaks had taken their toll on Voltchkov and Andre won the third easily at 6-1.

The second match was James Blake versus Nikolay Davydenko from Russia. Although the score in the first set would lead you to believe it had been close, Blake won the match easily at 7-5, 6-2.

Let's hope that next year the calendar will be kinder to us so that we can sell out the event once again; this year we only sold a little over half of the tickets we purchased. If the contented smiles on the bus (on folks both awake and asleep) were any indication this turned out to be a fantastic way to spend Valentines Day.

Jennifer Scriabine



FROM THE PRO...

Who's Making all that Racquet?

It's Spring time again and that means tennis manufacturers will be touting their latest and greatest equipment, racquet reviews become

Coach Mac

popular and suddenly your old "stick" seems outdated. In this article I want to dispel a few misconceptions about tennis racquets.

First, the racquet doesn't matter. If you don't think the racquet matters then go down to the thrift store where you will find armfuls of wooden and aluminum racquets all for under \$5.00 each. I get a kick out of reading the occasional article that puts wooden racquets up against today's graphite and composite technology. These articles report that the professional player only lost 1 MPH on his serve. Hmm, interesting how we don't see that same player using that racquet in his or her next \$500,000 tournament. Most tennis playing adults could beat a child with nothing more than a racquet ball racquet, but amongst equals they wouldn't stand a chance.

Second, a racquet can't make you better. Certain racquets are made for certain swing styles, the longer your swing is the more flexible your racquet should be, the shorter your swing is the more stiff your racquet should be. Are there exceptions? Venus Williams uses a Wilson oversized, mid-wide, 4.4 racquet and Cara Black uses a Prince mid-sized, thin framed, classic racquet. It's no surprise to me that Venus is not considered a very good volleyer and Cara is a doubles opponent to be reckoned with. From the baseline, well, we needn't talk about Venus from there, but I'd be interested to see how Venus would play while using her sister's racquet, a Wilson 6.2, mid-frame/mid-plus racquet. It's a more flexible racquet and I think a contributor to why Serena volleys better. I'd like to see Cara experiment with a more powerful frame. Yes, a racquet can make you better. One of the things I consistently tell parents of my younger students is that as soon as the child can keep the head of the tennis racquet "up" through-out the swing, it's time to get rid of that junior racquet and get the child into an adult racquet. To me, the measuring stick for choosing a racquet for a child is his or her strength. Listen, they have to change sooner or later anyway and the child is going to have to go through the frustration of developing a new contact point because junior racquets are shorter, and I'm not talking about an inch or two, some are a full 5 inches shorter! If they can swing your racquet without the head dipping down, it's time to purchase an adult racquet. Rarely do I find a child over the age of 8 that is unable to perform this.

Third, a lighter racquet is better for my arm and shoulder. Correct, it does make your bag lighter and therefore making it easier

to carry to and from the tennis courts, but that's about the only benefit you'll get from a 8 ounce racquet (in the shop we like to say an 8 ouch racquet). The tennis racquet and strings are going to have a collision with this thing called a tennis ball, do you want to be sitting in a Diesel truck or riding a tricycle? The collision is going to happen and the more mass you have the better your chances are of consistently winning this engagement. If you don't have mass or weight, then you're going to have to make it up with muscle, if your winning the war on tennis balls with muscle, then be prepared to lose the war with tendonitis.

At the risk of going on and on (never stopped you before coach) I would recommend that you demo, demo, demo. Demo racquets you'd never think about using. Find out what you hit well with and what feels good. Ask someone to mimic your forehand and backhand to see if you can notice how long or short your tennis strokes are. By the way, a long stroke would be that of Gustavo Kuerten—now those are long strokes. Did you ever have a racquet that you could hit good backhands with but struggled with that same racquet on the forehand side, probably the strokes are of 2 different lengths, you'll need to find a racquet that will give you the greatest benefit off both sides. There's nothing worse than stepping on the court with a new stick and switching racquets with a friend during warm-ups to let them try it out, then, you notice you're friends racquet hits and feels better than you're new one. When you switch back he or she always seems to say "yeah that's pretty nice", but I kinda like mine better. 🟡

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USTA Team Announcements

Men's 3.0 Team Players Needed!

Captain: Steve Schechter
Day phone: 925-355.0650
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If anyone has any announcements for the newsletter, please call Tammie Snyder at 925-957-0604, fax to 925-957-0804, or email them to tammie@gte.net.

NTRP TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE • 2003

May 3-4 & 10-11

JOHN CRAMER MEMORIAL NTRP
MW (3.5-4.0) sd; MX (3.5-4.0) d
Pacific Tennis Courts
Entry deadline: April 21
TOUCH TONE/TENNISLINK #500006603

May 3-4 & 10-11

LAKE MERCED 4.5, 5.0, 5.5 NTRP
MW (4.5-5.5) sd; MX (4.5-5.5) d
San Francisco State University
Entry deadline: April 21
TOUCH TONE/TENNISLINK #500006703

May 16-18

AD IN WOMEN'S DOUBLES NTRP
W (3.0-4.5) d
Sunnyvale Tennis Center
Entry deadline: May 7
TOUCH TONE/TENNISLINK #50007103

May 23-26

AVAC DOUBLES CLASSIC NTRP
MW (3.0-5.0) d; MX (3.0-5.0) d
Almaden Valley Athletic Club
Entry deadline: May 1
TOUCH TONE/TENNISLINK #500007303

May 31, June 1, 7-8

HIDDEN HILLS NTRP
MW (3.0-4.5) sd
Hidden Hills Racquet Club
Entry deadline: May 21
TOUCH TONE/TENNISLINK #50007903

June 6-7

GILROY JUNE 3.0 & 3.5 NTRP
MW (3.0-3.5) sd
Gilroy High School
Entry deadline: May 24
TOUCH TONE/TENNISLINK #50008503